

GRIEF AND LOSS

Grief is a normal and natural response to a painful loss. Examples are the death of somebody close, the end of a relationship, or a loss of something important, such as a job. Any significant change in someone's life can involve a loss of hopes and dreams. Grief will affect everybody at some point in their lives, and can present differently in each person. Some people can respond by becoming angry and wanting to take action. Others may become withdrawn and feel helpless or hopeless. Others may be in shock and denial of what has occurred. The support of others can help the grieving process as they work through their difficult and often painful emotions. It takes time to adjust to a loss and get back to a normal state of mind.

- **Feel your loss.** Allow yourself to cry, feel numb, be angry, or experience whatever you're feeling. Going through the pain helps move us toward healing.
- **Attend to your physical needs.** Get enough sleep, eat a well-balanced diet, exercise regularly, and drink water.
- **Express your feelings.** Talk about how you're feeling with others and/or find a creative outlet like art, music, or journaling.
- **Maintain a routine.** Return to your normal routine as soon as you can.
- **Avoid chemicals.** Mood altering chemicals may make you feel even more sad or angry. Any relief you get will be temporary.
- **Avoid making major decisions.** Making any decision as you're grieving could add more stress to an already difficult time.
- **Give yourself a break.** Take breaks from grieving by participating in activities you enjoy. It's okay to not feel sad all the time.
- **Ask for help if you need it.** If your symptoms aren't getting better or you feel like you need extra help, seek out friends, family, clergy, a therapist, or support groups. Grief is normal throughout life. We all experience loss in different ways. Implementing coping skills will assist your healing process.

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Staff and faculty at Southwest Minnesota State University are dedicated to helping our students succeed and thrive. There are a number of support services available on campus.

The SMSU Counseling and Testing Center has mental health professionals who can meet with you to talk about concerns ranging from adjustment difficulties to major mental health challenges. Services are confidential and free to students. We are open year round, Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm.

After hours crisis services are available through:

- Western Mental Health Center at 507-532-3236
- Avera Marshall Emergency Room and/or 911
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call 988)
- Crisis Text Line (Text HOME to 741741)

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING CENTER

BELLOWS ACADEMIC 156 | 507-537-7150 | MENTALHEALTH@SMSU.EDU