

Does this sound like you?

- You have experienced a significant loss such as the death of a friend or loved one, the end of a special relationship, or a serious illness or injury
- You feel like you are on an emotional roller coaster and it seems overwhelming at times
- Sometimes it seems like the pain of your loss will never go away
- Your loss has affected your sleep, your appetite, or has made it hard to live your daily life
- You feel emotionally out of control
- You have difficulty with memory, concentration, or making decisions
- Others have expressed concern with how you are dealing with your loss
- You don't care about many of the things that you used to

What is grief?

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, such as the death of a friend or loved one, the end of a special relationship, or a serious illness or injury. Grief involves physical, emotional, and cognitive components. Physically, individuals may experience an upset stomach, weakness, throat tightness, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Emotionally, individuals experience a wide range of feelings such as denial, shock, anger, sadness, guilt, despair, fear, anxiety, numbness, loneliness, frustration, irritability, and ambivalence. Cognitively, individuals may experience confusion, memory problems, decision making difficulty, and difficulty with concentration and attention.

What else should I know about grief?

- There is no "typical" length of time for grief to last, individuals experience grief in their own way
- You can't "just get over it"

- Reactions to a loss may be strongest during the initial period after the loss, but they may resurface at times such as birthdays, holidays, and the anniversary of the loss
- Most individuals experience ups and downs as they deal with grief

What can I do to help myself during this difficult time?

- Seek support from family, friends, and clergy
- Take care of yourself: exercise, rest, relax, eat well, and avoid drugs and alcohol
- Share your feelings with someone
- Don't make important decisions too quickly
- Don't isolate yourself
- Expect ups and downs
- Remember that grief is normal and expected

How can I help someone who is grieving?

- Listen
- Spend time with them, but give them space when they need it
- Ask about their feelings
- Let them know it's okay to grieve
- Don't minimize their pain

How can a counselor help me?

Sometimes grief can seem overwhelming. If that is how you feel, don't hesitate to seek help. A counselor can talk to you about your concerns and will try to help you work through your grief.