

The 5 Stages of Grief and How They Affect Us

The Presence Network considers it a privilege to participate in this stage of your life journey. Grief is a natural reaction to a mental and emotional distress caused by loss or an affliction, sorrow, or painful regret.

It is not uncommon to ask questions or to feel overwhelmed. Allow yourself time to grieve, to know when to seek help if the grief becomes overwhelming. Not everyone experiences the same order of grief stages or even experiences every stage. Grief is a normal reaction to loss, anticipate walking through the stages of grief rather than getting stuck. Everyone manages grief differently, give yourself time to grow and heal.

STAGE 1: Shock and Denial Shock and denial, is typically the stage when emotions are the most intense. Many people experience physical symptoms such as nausea or vomiting, difficulty sleeping, feeling emotionally numb, decreased appetite or heart palpitations. Some report feeling that the grief is inconceivable and must not be real.

Once the shock of loss starts to dwindle, many begin to notice the pain, the reality of the loss. You may start to feel guilty about something you could or should have done for the person to prevent the loss or you may simply feel remorse for not being able to make peace with this person. Feelings are natural emotions related to guilt, it is important to acknowledge your feelings as part of the healing process.

STAGE 2: Anger It is not uncommon to experience feelings of anger or frustration. Some people may feel angry at a person who caused a loss' others may have feelings of anger toward God, or life, for not preventing the loss.

STAGE 3: Depression, Reflection, and Loneliness The reality of the loss may be felt more during this stage, as attempts to bargain for more time are not realized. Withdrawal from others to deal with feelings of grief alone is a common occurrence during this stage. While personal time is important, it is also crucial to have a support system of people to lean on during this stage of grief. Research shows that therapy can help alleviate depressive symptoms.

STAGE 4: Bargaining Some experience anger toward the loved one who has passed and may even blame that person for leaving them and try to bargain for a chance to have things end with a different outcome.

STAGE 5: Acceptance and Hope (Reconstruction) Eventually, the long awaited sense of comfort and peace begins to emerge into your emotional consciousness. You may begin to feel less pain and sadness, a new, more tolerable emotional "normal" occurs as you will begin to work through the loss. "Acceptance", does not mean you "get over it"; hope is the essential part of the process where you acknowledge the loss and acknowledge a willingness to move forward with your life, to be able to talk about the loss with a greater sense of positive reflection.

Sincerely, Carlo Griseta
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Consider visiting www.griefshare.org

(under "find a group" tab, enter zip code/city to discover FREE online or in-person support groups in your area).