

Grief

- is a process
- is real and normal
- is unique and personal
- is neither right nor wrong
- needs expression and time
- is life changing
- needs to be lived through
- can pile up
- can be overwhelming
- can shake your faith
- is like a cut, it goes through stages of healing and may leave a scar
- is a walk through pain that can lead to healing and a new day dawning in your life
- Can become complicated by:
 - Sudden death
 - Trauma
 - Murder or suicide
 - Multiple losses
 - Involvement with the media or justice system

What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning.

The end is where we start.
T.S. Eliot

*Someday
you will wake up
and say hello
to a new life.*

For assistance please call the
Spiritual / Pastoral Care services at your
local Hospital or Health Centre.



Acknowledgement:

Materials compiled in this brochure have been drawn from a wide variety of excellent resources. Every effort has been made to present the materials in an original manner. We acknowledge, however, the expertise and scholarship of our resources.

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Are You Working Through The Layers of Grief?



If you are feeling the pain of loss and wondering what is happening to you, you need to know that you are not alone.

Many people experience grief in layers. This pamphlet can take you through some of those layers, toward healing.

LAYERS OF GRIEVING

Many people experience:

Feelings

- guilt
- fear
- anxiety
- anger
- shame
- loneliness
- conflicting feelings
- relief
- sadness
- longing
- hopelessness
- helplessness
- numbness & shock

Physical Sensations

- fatigue & lack of energy
- generalized tension
- weight loss or gain
- increased allergic reactions
- tightness in chest/throat
- hollowness/emptiness in the stomach

Thoughts

- confusion and difficulty in concentrating
- disbelief or denial
- preoccupation with thoughts about the deceased

Spirituality

- shattered safety
- shaken faith
- questioning why?
- spiritual distress

Behaviors

- appetite disturbances
- indecision
- sleep disturbances
- withdrawal
- crying
- restlessness

These responses to loss may occur in a wavelike fashion and without warning. Have support near at hand and you will be able to ride the waves.

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.

C. S. Lewis

LAYERS OF SELF CARING

Ask others to allow you the freedom to be you; to experience and feel what is right for you. Remember that we are all different.

- Let yourself be nurtured
- Be kind and gentle to yourself. Share your grief with others who are supportive and understanding
- Slow down and be patient with yourself
- Rest
- Eat balanced meals
- Risk trying new things
- Express your fears
- Explore what your anger/guilt/regret are all about
- Do what is right for you
- Care for your soul
- Laugh some - laughter is good medicine
- Express yourself
 - talk
 - write
 - find someone who will listen
- Wait before making major decisions
- Recognize you still have strengths and abilities
- Allow yourself to grieve in your own time frame, no one else's
- Seek professional help when needed

Hope

Without Hope it is like living in a dungeon without any window.

With Hope it is like living in a house with three hundred windows.

Sarah Kovar

LAYERS OF HEALING

Healing will happen in its own time with work and support.

Accept the reality of the loss that may include:

- shock, disbelief, denial
- accepting the facts surrounding the loss
- the knowledge that death is irreversible

Experience the pain of grief accompanied by:

- constant thoughts of the person who died
- yearning for the presence of the person who died

Adjust to an environment in which the person who died is missing

- being aware of all the roles the person who died played in his/her life
- learning to live without that person
- coming to terms with the loss of the future you planned

Say yes to life again

- experience energy in yourself and with others
- begin to trust and allow closeness
- imagine a future without the person who died
- begin to plan, gradually, for your new future

The goal is to strike that delicate balance between the past that should be remembered and a future that must be created.

Earl A. Grollman