

BEREAVEMENT & GRIEF: CAREGIVER BASICS

BEREAVEMENT & GRIEF: AN OVERVIEW

Bereavement is the situation in which someone you care about has died; **grief** is the natural response your body has to the loss including thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and physiological reactions. The intensity and pattern of experienced grief may vary and evolve over time as one adapts to the loss of a loved one. Grief is unique to each person and can be influenced by many factors including one's personal, cultural, and religious values. Adaptation to the loss of a loved one is also an individualized process, but usually healing has begun within six to twelve months. While healing will begin and experienced levels of grief may be lower, your loved one will never be forgotten and will still be missed, and this may flare-up around important dates, like holidays and birthdays or times experiencing higher levels of stress in life. We at Honor Hospice are here so that you are never alone. Our team is available to you 24/7 during care and after loss to provide you the support you need.

Anticipatory grief is a type of grief often experienced by those with terminal illness as well as their families. It includes many of the symptoms noted below and can include the planning and thoughts for the future without a loved one. Anticipating loss and preparing may help adapting to the future.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

As mentioned above, grief is specific to an individual, but some common signs and symptoms of grief may include:

- Seeking closeness to the deceased individual in physical proximity as well as drawn to things associated with a loved one
- Feelings of loneliness
- Crying/sadness
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Change in appetite
- Fatigue and sleepiness
- Disbelief
- Shock
- Social withdrawal
- Personal guilt/shame
- Emotional Numbness
- Insomnia



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COPING STRATEGIES

- Support is the main way to assist in times of grief. Drawing on family, friends, clergy, and the Honor Hospice team/other clinicians known to you.
- To help one another practice empathetic listening to one another's feelings.
- Try to maintain regular patterns of sleep, exercise/activity, and nutrition.
- Self-monitor to be aware of your feelings. Keeping a feelings log may be beneficial.
- Know when to ask for help and know you are not alone. These feelings are normal.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE HONOR HOSPICE TEAM

- When you experience overwhelming thoughts and emotions.
- You think you might need support or direction in grieving.
- Any time! Our trained staff are here for you 24/7 throughout the grieving process. No matter how you may be feeling, our team is here to support you and offer any assistance we can.

References

Shear, M. K., Reynolds III, C. F., Simon, N.M. & Zisook, S. (2021). Bereavement and grief in adults: Clinical Features. In P. Roy-Byrne (Ed.), *UpToDate*. Retrieved November 19, 2021, from https://www.uptodate.com/contents/bereavement-and-grief-in-adults-clinical-features?search=bereaveemtn%20and%20grief&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~139&usage_type=default&display_rank=1

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