

## Symptoms of Grief

### Physical symptoms of grief:

We often think of grief as a strictly emotional process, but grief often involves physical problems, including:

Fatigue  
Nausea  
Lowered immunity  
Weight loss or weight gain  
Aches and pains  
Insomnia

### Emotional symptoms of grief

Shock and disbelief. Right after a loss, it can be hard to accept what happened. You may feel numb, have trouble believing that the loss really happened, or even deny the truth. If someone you love has died, you may keep expecting them to show up, even though you know they're gone.

Sadness. Profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.

Guilt. You may regret or feel guilty about things you did or didn't say or do. You may also feel guilty about certain feelings (e.g. feeling relieved when the person died after a long, difficult illness). After a death, you may even feel guilty for not doing something to prevent the death, even if there was nothing more you could have done.

Anger. Even if the loss was nobody's fault, you may feel angry and resentful. If you lost a loved one, you may be angry with yourself, God, the doctors, or even the person who died for abandoning you. You may feel the need to blame someone for the injustice that was done to you.

Fear. A significant loss can trigger a host of worries and fears. You may feel anxious, helpless, or insecure. You may even have panic attacks. The death of a loved one can trigger fears about your own mortality, of facing life without that person, or the responsibilities you now face alone.

## Three Ways God Shows Up In Our Grief

### 1. In quiet expectation

The idea of quiet expectation came from two verses. Psalm 62:5 in the King James Version reads, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him." And, in Romans 8:26, the apostle Paul says the Holy Spirit will help us pray when we aren't sure what to say.

### 2. Through the support of Christian friends

Everyone needs time to mourn alone, but we also need each other. God promises, "For where two or three gather in My Name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).

### 3. When we invite Him into our pain

Isaiah 53:4 says about Jesus, "Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering." Jesus didn't only defeat death when He died on the cross; He defeated pain and suffering. Just as He gives Christians new life on this earth and forever in heaven, He bears our pain on this earth, before it will be gone fully in heaven.

To invite Jesus into your pain, when you are able, read your Bible, go to church or small group, pray, and quietly wait on Him.

## Grief Is Real and Right

First, don't add to your burden by thinking grief is foreign to the heart of God's children. They know this, but it might be good to hear it. First Thessalonians 4:13 says, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep" — that is, this brother-in-law who died — "that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope."

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## What is Grief?

**Grief** is a natural response to loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. Often, the pain of loss can feel overwhelming. You may experience all kinds of difficult and unexpected emotions, from shock or anger to disbelief, guilt, and profound sadness. The pain of grief can also disrupt your physical health, making it difficult to sleep, eat, or even think straight. These are normal reactions to loss and the more significant the loss, the more intense your grief will be. Coping with

the loss of someone or something you love is one of life's biggest challenges. You may associate grieving with the death of a loved one which is often the cause of the most intense type of grief but any loss can cause grief.



## HOW TO DEAL WITH THE GRIEVING PROCESS

While grieving a loss is an inevitable part of life, there are ways to help cope with the pain, come to terms with your grief, and eventually, find a way to pick up the pieces and move on with your life.

1. **Acknowledge your pain.**
2. **Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.**
3. **Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.**
4. **Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you.**
5. **Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.**

Recognize the difference between grief and depression.

## St. Paul United Methodist Church Grief Care

### 5 Prayers For Grieving Heart

#### 1. Pour out your Grief

"Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief" (Psalm 31:9, NIV). My heart is broken, my mind exhausted. I cry out to you and hardly know what to ask. All I can do is tell you how I feel and ask you to "keep track of all my sorrows. . . . [collect] all my tears in your bottle. . . . [and record] each one in your book" as I pour them out to you (Psalm 56:8, NLT). Amen.

#### 2) Ask for comfort

Jesus, You said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4, NIV). I am mourning; send me Your comfort now. Wrap around Your arms around me and hold me tight. Send angels of mercy to me. Shower Your comfort on me through those around me, and keep far from me those whose words and actions are no comfort. Amen.

#### 3) Ask for healing

O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, hurry to help me. Please take the consuming anguish I feel right now; take it from me and hold me in Your arms. Heal my broken heart and bind up my wounds (see Psalm 147:3). Amen.

#### 4) Ask for peace

Jesus, You told Your followers, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. . . . Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives" (John 14:1, 27, NIV). I need Your peace. I need "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding" to guard my heart and mind (Philippians 4:7, NIV). I need peaceful sleep. I ask for peaceful thoughts and emotions to rule my days and nights. Amen.

#### 5) Ask for hope

Lord, the Bible says You are "close to the brokenhearted and [You rescue] those whose spirits are crushed" (Psalm 34:18, NLT). Draw close to me and rescue me. Help me not to grieve like those who haven't discovered Your kindness and mercy, who have no hope (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13); lift me up and give me hope once more. Help me to believe that tomorrow will be better, and the next day will be easier, and that a day will come when I will feel a surge of energy and expectation for what You are doing and where You will take me. Amen.

## Grief Lessons

### What does grief teach us?

Grief has a lot to teach us about honoring where we have been so that we can welcome what comes next. It teaches us compassion for ourselves and others. When we lose something important to us the layers of sadness that we experience help us to acknowledge the many ways in which the loss affects us, our lives, and our relationships.

### The grieving process

Grieving is a highly individual experience; there's no right or wrong way to grieve. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and how significant the loss was to you. Inevitably, the grieving process takes time. Healing happens gradually; it can't be forced or hurried and there is no "normal" timetable for grieving. Some people start to feel better in weeks or months. For others, the grieving process is measured in years. Whatever your grief experience, it's important to be patient with yourself and allow the process to naturally unfold.

### THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

- **Denial:** "This can't be happening to me."
- **Anger:** "*Why* is this happening? Who is to blame?"
- **Bargaining:** "Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_."
- **Depression:** "I'm too sad to do anything."
- **Acceptance:** "I'm at peace with what happened."