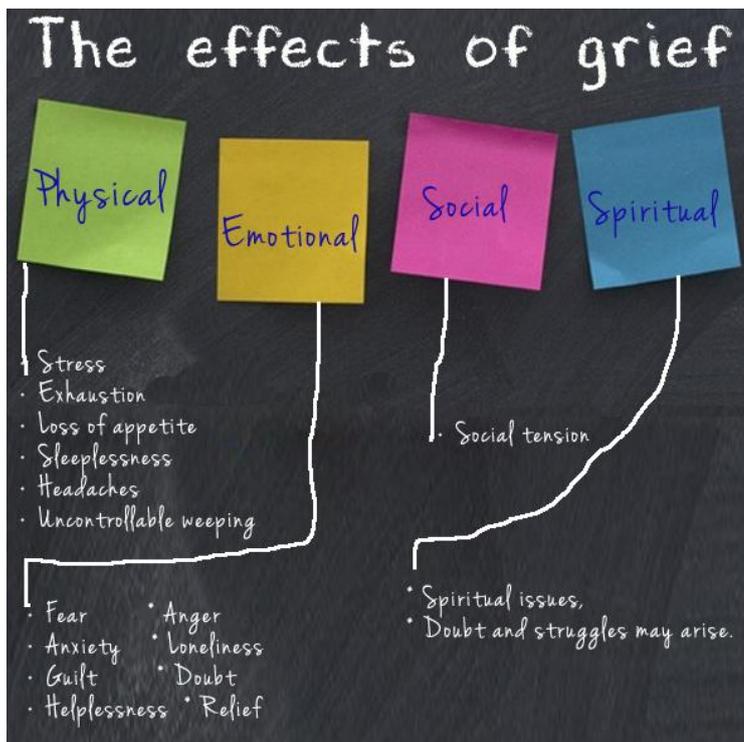




Grief is an important and normal response to loss or trauma. No two people grieve in the same way, and the methods of handling grief are unique and personal, but the pain of grieving is universal. I trust that the information below would not only engage with you but also be a source of education as you work through your own personal grief and or trauma.

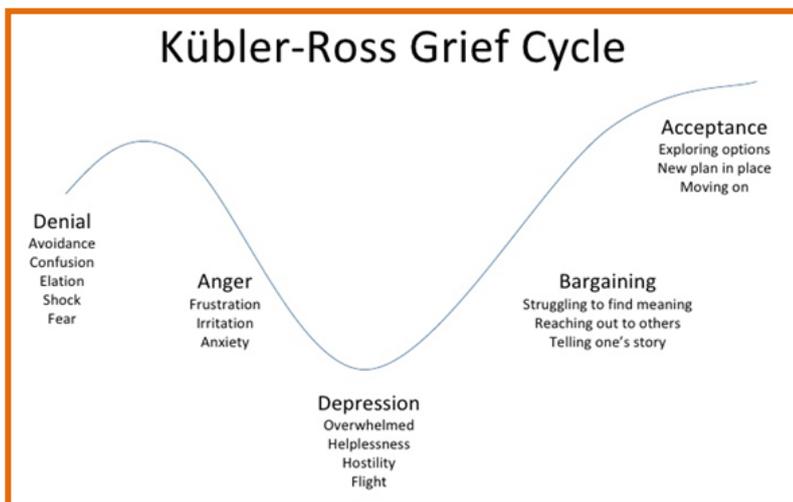
Causes of Grief

- Death / Loss
- Miscarriage
- Sickness
- Trauma
- Rape
- Abuse
- Disruption
- Disability
- Disfigurement



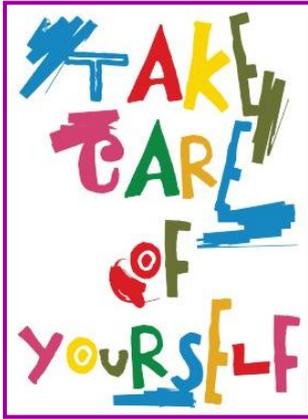
Understanding the Grief & Loss process

When someone experiences a traumatic situation, she / he will go through several different stages. The five listed below are typical; there may be others. A person will spend varying amounts of time in any one stage. Rather than stages, it might be better to describe them as five aspects of grief, and to depict them in the form of a circle rather than a line.



Denial is a conscious or unconscious refusal to accept facts, information, reality, etc., relating to the situation concerned. It's a defence mechanism and perfectly natural. Some people can become locked in this stage when dealing with a traumatic change that can be ignored. It is a temporary stage, but it may surface.

Stages of reaction to Grief and Trauma



When you're grieving, it's more important than ever to take care of yourself. The stress of a major loss can quickly deplete your energy and emotional reserves. Looking after your physical, emotional and spiritual needs will help you get through this difficult time. Here are simple ways to help you take care of yourself:

Face your feelings. You can try to suppress your grief, but you can't avoid it forever. In order to heal, you have to acknowledge the pain.

Keep a journal. Writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you to validate and work through your grief.

Look after your physical health. The mind and body are connected.

When you feel good physically, you'll also feel better emotionally. Combat stress and fatigue by getting enough sleep, eating right, and exercising. Don't use alcohol or drugs to numb the pain of grief or lift your mood artificially.

Don't let anyone tell you how to feel, and don't tell yourself how to feel either. Your grief is your own, and no one else can tell you when it's time to "move on" or "get over it." Let yourself feel whatever you feel without embarrassment or judgment. Many people do not know how to react appropriately to your grief. Some are more comfortable than others in responding to your situation. Be aware that people have different ideas not only about death, but also about how bereaved individuals should react. Be true to yourself and let others know if they say something inappropriate.

Plan ahead for grief "triggers." Anniversaries, holidays, and milestones can reawaken memories and feelings. Be prepared for an emotional wallop, and know that it's completely normal. If you're sharing a holiday or lifecycle event with other relatives, talk to them ahead of time about their expectations and agree on strategies to honour the person you loved.

Pamper yourself. Treat yourself well. Without breaking your budget, do things for yourself that are helpful like walks, being with people who are nurturing to you, and inexpensive activities.

Lower expectations for yourself. You can't expect yourself to run at full capacity for some time. Give yourself a break and don't expect yourself to perform as well as you did prior to your loss. Educate others that it will take some time before your performance is back to normal.



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