

# What is Grief?

What does it look like?

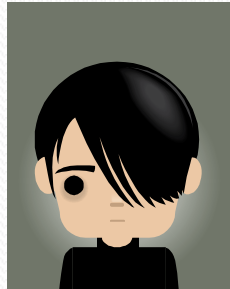
# Ten stages of Grief



- 1. Shock - This initial stage of grief is usually experience even if the death has been expected, as in a long terminal illness. There is only so much physical or psychic pain which can be endured. When that limit is reached, the mental/emotional system shuts down. This is expressed as a “numbness,” or as a sense of unreality. There is often denial which can last for quite some time. This stage is characterized by a kind of self-protection which allows only as much pain as can be coped with.

# Emotional Release

- 2. Emotional Release – As shock and numbness wear off, there is a need to release all the emotions which have been building up. The bereaved may experience intense emotions such as anguish, anger, relief, fear, ect., or may want to scream or strike out. One may also become super-sensitive to the behaviors and words of others at this time and may react out of proportion to their actions.





# Depression

- 3. Depression – There are often feelings of loneliness and utter isolation which comes with depression. The feeling of “there is no help for me,” is normal and very common. There is a push/pull situation, wanting to be alone and yet feeling a need for people at the same time. This frequently produces fear of panic and impending insanity.

# Physical Symptoms

- 4. Physical Symptoms – The bereaved may experience physical symptoms similar to those experienced by the deceased, as well as very real pains, weakness, nausea and changes in eating and sleep habits. The bereaved are known to be at risk for illness at a greater rate than usual.





# Anxiety, Fear, and Panic



- 5. Anxiety, Fear and Panic – A common response to loss is for the bereaved to experience vivid dreams of the deceased. Another common manifestation is that the bereaved will mistake another person for the deceased, usually on the street or in a store. This will sometimes cause great embarrassment as they may address the stranger, only to realize their mistake. Spiritual anxiety is expressed in questions attempting to make sense out of the loss ( “Where is he now, Why did she die?”) Fear of forgetting the deceased and of being alone are common, as is fear of new social situations.



# Hostility and Anger



- 6. Hostility, Anger – When a loved one has died, it is very common for the survivor to feel anger at those who were involved in the situation. There is a feeling of “why didn’t you do more?” “why didn’t god save him?” Feelings ranging from irritability to outright rage can be focused on medical personnel, clergy, God, the deceased and friends. Acknowledging the anger can be difficult for the bereaved and may be accompanied by feelings of guilt.



# Guilt



- 7. Guilt – Guilt is an ever-present component of grief. Following the death, it is common experience for the survivor to remember only the negative aspects of the relationship, those times of insensitivity or harsh words spoken in anger. The bereaved may feel that he or she did not provide adequate care or may not have attended to some part of the relationship with the deceased.





# Hesitancy to renew normal activities

- 8. Hesitancy to renew normal activities – There is often a fear of returning to the regular routine of living. This fear takes several aspects. There is concern about how people will respond to the bereaved; there is a desire to talk about the deceased but a fear of rejection; there is a pain that comes with hearing that special song, or seeing something in a store that brings back the memory of the loved one. This fear may be related to loss of identity and a search for new roles in life.



# Healing

- 9. Renewed Hopes and the Healing of Memories – this is a time of reaching out, however tentatively, to embrace fully all that has happened and to accept that life must change if it is to continue. The memories become less frightening, and the sky a bit brighter as the bereaved begins to face the world with more and more confidence.



# Acceptance



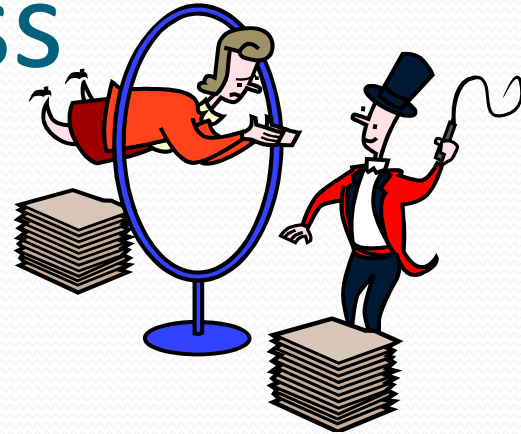
- 10. Acceptance on one's new role and readjusting to reality – Loss brings about changes. Whether it is the resumption of single life after years of marriage, or going on through the years without a parent, there must be the realization that a new role is to be accepted and lived. The cycle of life continues, and the bereaved can finally shed the cloak of grief and take on the robe of peace and renewal. With time, the loss may be touched, remembered and accepted.



# How to work the process

- **Four Tasks**

- Acceptance of the reality of the loss.
- Working through the pain of the grief.
- Adjusting to the environment in which the deceased is missing or the loss has occurred.
- Emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life. Finding an appropriate place for the dead in one's emotional life.

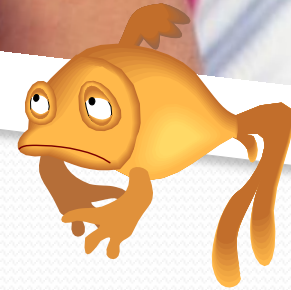




**When our clients (our kiddo's) go through grief and loss. We need to be a safe place for them to turn into. A place they can find solace and assistance.**

**The more we understand the process of grief and loss the better equipped we are to give aid.**

**Any child that comes into custody experiences some or all the feelings of grief and loss**



Special thanks to Northern Arizona Hospice for posting this article of ten stages of grief.

[http://www.nahealth.com/OurServices/NorthernArizonaHospice/EmotionalandSpiritualSupport/10\\_Stages\\_of\\_grief](http://www.nahealth.com/OurServices/NorthernArizonaHospice/EmotionalandSpiritualSupport/10_Stages_of_grief)