

Remember,
Aspirus Employee
Assistance Services
is confidential.



dealing with loss

tips for coping... (continued)

- Take care of yourself as best as you can in body, mind and spirit.
- Be as kind and gentle with yourself as you would be with a dear friend who has experienced a loss.



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aspirus.org/clinics/wwih/eap_overview.php

The Grieving Process

loss and grief

Grief is the healing process we go through after suffering loss, separation or change in lifestyle. We normally think of a loss as the death of someone close to us. However, some life situations can cause us to grieve.

- divorce
- losing a job
- recovery from alcohol or other drug abuse
- a chronic illness
- a child leaving home
- retirement
- moving to a new location

symptoms of grief

Grieving is a stressful and painful experience. The following are common characteristics of this process:

Physical Sensations:

- Tightness in throat or chest
- Lack of energy
- Hollowness in stomach
- Feeling short of breath
- Oversensitivity to noise

Behaviors:

- Insomnia
- Appetite disturbance
- Sighing
- Crying
- Restless overactivity

- Social withdrawal

Feelings:

- Shock or numbness
- Guilt
- Anger
- Anxiety, insecurity or panic
- Loneliness
- Sadness or depression

Thoughts:

- Denial
- Confusion
- Disbelief
- Preoccupation
- Sense of deceased's presence

Not all these feelings, sensations, thoughts or behaviors will be experienced by every grieving person. Likewise, intensity and duration will differ.

five stages of grief

Everyone's experience with grief is individual and personal. However, psychologists have found that many people experience five stages in the grieving process. It's important to remember that each stage is natural and healthy and moves us toward the acceptance of the loss. We may also move back and forth frequently between the stages.

The first stage of grief is denial. It's hard for our minds to accept that such a loss has taken place.

Anger is the second stage. We probably had no control over the loss, so we react to our vulnerability with anger. We lash out at others or blame ourselves for the loss.

The third stage is bargaining. We want to trade something we can do for the reversal of the loss. We say things such as "I'd do anything if only this hadn't happened."

Depression is the fourth stage. A feeling of hopelessness about the situation takes over.

The fifth and final stage is acceptance. We accept the reality of the situation and are able to move on in our lives.

tips for coping

- Be aware of the symptoms you are experiencing and know that they are normal.
- Give yourself as much time as you need to overcome your loss. Don't try to adjust to someone else's timetable.
- Reminisce and talk about your grief with people who are caring and supportive.

help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

715.848.4357 ~ 800.236.4457
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