

## GRIEF THERAPY

Grief therapy is sometimes indicated when individuals have more complicated grief reactions. The goal of grief therapy is to identify and resolve the conflicts of separation that interfere with the ability to mourn the loss. It is indicated when any of the previously described complicated grief symptoms are evident.

Complications in grief may occur if grief from previous losses resurfaces. Grief therapy addresses what is interfering with the grief process, identifies unfinished business with the deceased and other losses that result from the death.

## BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

Bereavement groups can help you recognize your feelings and put them in perspective. They can also help you understand that you are not alone. The experience of sharing with others who are in a similar situation can be comforting and reassuring. Sometimes, new friendships grow through these groups – even a whole new social network that you did not have before.

There are specialized groups for widowed persons, for parents who have lost a child, for victims of drunk drivers, etc. There are also groups that do not specialize. Check with your hospice or other bereavement support groups for more information.

If you find that you are in great distress or in long-term depression, individual or group therapy from a counselor who specializes in grief may be advisable. You can ask your doctor for a referral.

Many people discover that there is hope after death. Death takes away, but grief can give back. It is possible to recover from grief with new strengths and a new direction. By acting on our grief, we may eventually find peace and purpose.

*Call to Get Help*  
**1.866.751.7119**



*Program of*

### **Lutheran Community Services**

210 W. Sprague Ave.

Spokane, WA 99201

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Chapter Number: 2241

**509.993.8854**

Contact: Mary Ann, [migaki5@aol.com](mailto:migaki5@aol.com)

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**GRIEF & LOSS**

# SUDDEN LOSS

**T**he grief experienced after a sudden, unexpected death is different than from an expected death. Sudden, unexpected loss may overwhelm the coping abilities of a person, which may result in the sense of feeling overwhelmed and/or unable to function 'normally.' A person may not be able to realize the total impact of their loss. Even though one may be able to acknowledge the loss has occurred, the full impact of the loss may take much longer to fully comprehend than in the case of an expected loss.

## The Grief Experience

It is essential to allow oneself to feel all the emotions that arise, as painful as they may be, and to treat oneself with patience and kindness.

Grieving people have two choices: they can avoid the pain and emotions associated with their loss and continue on, hoping to forget. This is a risky choice, since experience shows that grief, when ignored, continues to cause pain.

The other choice is to recognize grieving and seek healing and growth. Getting over a loss is slow, hard work. Give into the pain, even over other emotions and activities, because grief is a pain that will get in the way later if it is ignored. Realize that grief has no timetable; emotions may come and go for weeks, months, or even years. While a show of strength is admirable, it does not serve the need to express sadness, even when it comes out at unexpected times and places.

## Talk About Your Loss

Take the time to seek comfort from friends who will listen. Let them know you need to talk about your loss. People will understand, although they may not know how to respond. If they change the subject, explain that you need to share your memories and express your sadness.

## Forgive Yourself

For all of the things you believe you should have said or done. Also forgive yourself for the emotions such as anger, guilt or embarrassment you may have felt while grieving. Remember that guilt implies something that is done intentionally. Don't feel guilty for things that you did not do intentionally.

## Eat Well and Exercise

Grief is exhausting. To sustain your energy, be sure to maintain a balanced diet. Exercise is also important in sustaining your energy, find a routine that suits you – clear your mind and refresh your body.

## Indulge Yourself

Take naps, read a good book, listen to your favorite music, go to a ball game, rent a movie. Do something that is fun, distracting and that you personally find comforting.

## Prepare for Holidays and Anniversaries

Many people feel especially 'blue' during these periods, and the anniversary date of the death can be especially painful. Even if you think you've progressed, these dates may bring back some painful memories. Make arrangements to be with friends and family members with whom you are comfortable. Plan activities that give you an opportunity to mark the anniversary.

## Learning About the Grief Process Will Help Support a Grieving Loved One

Formal and informal supportive services may be helpful to a person who is grieving. These support services can be guides through some of the challenges of grieving as a person adjusts to their loss. Professionals can provide grief counseling. Consult a hospice in your local community, as all hospice bereavement programs provide grief support to the community, regardless of whether their loved one was cared for by hospice or not.

Through learning about the grief process, you can help support a grieving loved one as well.

## Grief Support

Counseling and support services may be helpful to a person with normal grief reactions. They can be a guide through some of the challenges of grieving as they adjust to their loss. Grief counseling can be provided by professionals. Self-help groups are often available and are there for participants to support one another.

## Grief Counseling and Support

The goals of grief counseling include:

- Understand the natural process of grief
- Accept and adjust to the reality of the death
- Receive affirmation for the 'normalcy' of feelings
- Provide information about the grief process and common grief responses
- Understand common obstacles and how to deal with them
- Help the bereaved identify and utilize effective coping strategies

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