



What Is Grief?

Grief is the natural emotional response to loss. It is the way we process the changes that happen when someone, something, or a part of our life that mattered deeply to us is no longer the same.

While grief is often associated with the death of someone we love, grief can follow many different kinds of loss—including the loss of a relationship, a job, a home, health, independence, a dream, or the future we imagined for ourselves.

Grief is deeply personal. There is no single right way to grieve, and there is no specific amount of time that grief is supposed to last.

Grief Can Affect Every Part of You

Grief isn't just an emotion. It can affect your thoughts, body, relationships, and everyday life.

You may experience:

- **Emotional changes:** sadness, anger, guilt, fear, loneliness, relief, numbness, or even moments of happiness
- **Physical changes:** fatigue, changes in sleep or appetite, headaches, tension, nausea, restlessness, upset stomach, heart palpitations, weak muscles or joint pain, tightness in your chest or throat, or feeling physically drained
- **Mental changes:** difficulty concentrating and making decisions, forgetfulness, confusion, or feeling as if you have lost a sense of hope or direction
- **Social changes:** wanting to be alone, needing more support, or finding it difficult to connect with others

- **Spiritual or personal changes:** questioning beliefs, searching for meaning, or reconsidering what matters most to you

You may experience several of these at once, or none of them. Your experience is your own.

There Is No "Right" Way to Grieve

Grief does not follow a straight line.

Some days may feel manageable, while another day may bring an unexpected wave of sadness. A song, smell, photograph, holiday, anniversary, place, or simple memory can bring feelings rushing back.

This does not necessarily mean you are "back at the beginning."

Healing from grief is not about forgetting the person or experience you lost. It is about learning how to carry the loss while continuing to live your life.

Grief Looks Different for Everyone

Two people can experience the same loss and grieve very differently.

One person may need to talk about what happened. Another may need quiet and privacy. Someone may cry frequently, while someone else may rarely cry. Some people want to look at photographs and memories, while others may find them too painful for a period of time.

There is no timetable you have to follow.

Try not to compare your grief to someone else's. Your relationship, your loss, your circumstances, and your way of coping are unique to you.

Grief Can Change Over Time

Grief often changes rather than simply disappears.

In the beginning, grief may feel overwhelming and may take up much of your attention. Over time, you may begin to have moments when you can focus on other parts of life.

You may still miss what—or who—you lost. You may still have difficult days. At the same time, you may begin to experience laughter, connection, hope, or moments of peace.

These moments do not diminish your loss.

You are allowed to laugh while grieving.

You are allowed to have a good day.

You are allowed to move forward without leaving your memories behind.

Grief Is Not Something You Have to "Get Over"

There is often pressure to "move on" or "get over it." But grief isn't something that has to be erased.

Instead, many people find that they gradually learn to live with their loss in a different way.

Moving forward does not mean moving on without the person, relationship, dream, or life you lost.

It can mean finding a way to honor what mattered while making room for life as it is now.

Be Gentle With Yourself

Grief takes energy. Give yourself permission to take things one day—or even one moment—at a time.

You do not have to have all the answers.

You do not have to pretend you're okay when you're not.

You do not have to follow someone else's timeline.

Some days, getting through the day may be enough.

Your grief matters.

Your story matters.

Your loss matters.

And you don't have to navigate it alone.

A Note From Grief Connections

Grief Connections provides supportive, educational, and compassionate resources for people experiencing loss. Our goal is to provide a safe place to learn about grief, explore coping strategies, connect with others, and find support.

Grief Connections is **not a substitute for licensed mental-health or medical care**. If grief is becoming overwhelming or you are concerned about your safety or well-being, please consider reaching out to a qualified mental-health professional or other appropriate support service.

