

# GRIEF TALK

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## Introduction:

- LCSW/Presenter background/education

## Types of Losses:

- Death (loved one, pets, friends)
- Divorce, end of relationships, loss of jobs, homes, finances, move to new area/home/school
- Loss of health, mobility, day to day functioning, independence

## Stages of Grief:

- Shock/ denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

## Healthy Grieving

- Having positive support from others **\*number 1 factor for recovery\***
- Taking care of yourself: physical, mental/emotional, spiritual
- Expressing grievous feelings in healthy, creative and tangible ways
- Allow yourself to grieve and being patient with yourself through the grieving process
- Planning ahead for 'grief triggers': birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc.
- Use of positive coping skills
- Keeping sense of routine, creating a 'new normal', recognizing limitations

## Complicated Grief

- Intense longing/yearning/obsessive thoughts
- Prolonged denial/disbelief
- Extreme anger/bitterness
- Feeling life is empty/meaningless
- Avoidance of things that remind you of your loss/loved one

- Intrusive thoughts/images of the deceased or loss

### Grief vs. Depression

- Common symptoms: sad, lonely, agitation, change in appetite and sleep, etc.
- Grief: symptoms will wane or come and go and lessen over time. There are times of happiness and joy. There are good and bad days. A ‘roller coaster’ ride.
- Depression: symptoms are constant; feelings of despair and emptiness, *pervasive* sense of guilt, suicidal ideations/preoccupation with death/dying, slowed speech and body movements, significant impaired daily functioning and hallucinations.

### Myths About Grief

- The pain will go away faster if I ignore it
- I have to be ‘strong’
- If I’m not crying then it must mean I’m not sorry about the loss
- Grief should last about a year or has a definite timeline

### Facts About Grief

- Ignoring the pain complicates/prolongs the grieving process. Healing takes place when the feelings of grief are faced and healthily dealt with.
- Feeling sad, lonely and frightened are normal responses to grief. Crying does not indicate weakness. Trying to ‘be strong’ in front of others is not helpful. Showing your true feelings only helps you and others in the grieving process.
- Lack of crying does not indicate one is not grieving. The person may simply have other ways of showing and expressing their grief.
- Grieving has no right/wrong timeframe. The length of grieving differs from person to person, type and depth of loss.

### As Time Goes On

- Painful feelings lessen; feelings of calmness, security and/or simple pleasures or joy return
- Sometimes feelings of guilt are experienced when the person experiences a sense of pleasure or joy. This is normal, however, experiencing new joy, hope and pleasure does not mean the person has forgotten their loss. This indicates healing and moving forward in the person’s life.
- Moving forward does not diminish or deny the experience of the person’s loss.
- A person cannot grieve without finding their life unchanged.
- Gain strength from the loss and incredible awareness to how precious life is.

### Resources

Bereavement and Hospice Support Netline: <http://www.ubalt.edu/www/bereavement>

GriefNet: <http://rivendell.org>

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Alliance: <http://www.sidsalliance.org/> 24 hour hotline: 1-800-221-SIDS

The Compassionate Friends (loss of a child): <http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

Pet Loss.com: <http://www.petloss.com/>

AARP/Widows/Widowers Persons Service: <http://www.aarp.org>

\*Reference: LifeCare, Inc. 2001 <http://www.lifecare.com>