

Grief, Coping and Communication

Grief is experienced whenever you lose something important to you. It may be after a loss of a loved one or a significant life change. In the workplace, grief may be the result of a critical incident or traumatic event. Most experts agree that the best thing you can do for yourself is to work through grief and express your feelings.

Although tears and sadness are the most common expressions of grief, grief can be much more complex. Everyone's grief is unique and people deal with the emotion in their own way and timeframe. Having a practical understanding of the grief process will help you and those who are grieving. Following are some suggestions to put your feelings in perspective.

The Three Stages of Grief

- **Avoidance.** Feelings may include shock, denial and disbelief. Sometimes those who are grieving will avoid any talk about the loss or the feelings of grief.
- **Confrontation.** This can be a “highly charged and emotional state.” Feelings of sadness may turn into feelings of anger and frustration. Guilt and remorse (“I could have/should have . . .”) are also common.
- **Accommodation.** This typically signals the beginning of the healing process. Feelings of intense grief begin to decline. The grieving person is able to return to his or her previous level of functioning. This is often referred to as acceptance of the loss.

Myths About Grief

- All losses are the same.
- Grief gradually decreased over time.
- All people grieve in the same way.
- You should be able to “fix” the problem.
- Grief does not cause physical illness.
- Time heals all wounds.
- When grief is resolved, it never comes up again.
- Anger is wrong.
- Children need to be protected from grief and loss.
- We can always return to “business as usual”.
- Grief can be handled without support from others.
- Crying is a sign of weakness.
- Ignoring feelings will make them go away.
- Memorials and funerals are unimportant to employees.

- Strong employees don't show emotions at work.¹

Resources Are Available

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at www.FOH4YOU.com. Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.



Employee Assistance Program

We Care, Just Call

1-800-222-0364

1-888-262-7848 TTY Users

www.FOH4YOU.com

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¹ Rando, Therese A. (1988) *Grieving: how to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies*. New York, New York: Lexington Books. 19-20
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