

Helping others who are grieving:

Communicate your concern for the other person
...Initiate conversations, listen, and be willing to talk about the loss.

Be accessible

...Let the person know that you are available, if needed.

Avoid making judgments about how people should feel during their grief period

...People express their thoughts and emotions in a variety of ways, with differing levels of intensity and frequency.

Remember the importance of anniversaries, celebrations, and activities in which the loved one formerly participated

...Be sensitive to the memories, and special occasions.

Affirm the value of your relationship

...Be mindful of the importance of various types of relationships, (e.g., friend, classmate, family member, neighbor, colleague, partner, or intimate).

Be sensitive to the cyclic nature of the grief process

...Be patient. Remember that grief can appear to come and go for no apparent reason. There is no fixed time in which the bereavement process takes place.

Allow questions, and acknowledge the difficulties in finding answers to the hard questions about life and death

...Affirm the appropriateness of questions and encourage conversation.

If you are in doubt about where to turn for assistance, please feel free to call the Regent University Psychological Services Center at (757) 352-4488. You can find hope.



This document is based on material developed at the University of Florida Counseling Center and information from Ronald Kotesky's Missionary Brochures. With their permission, it was revised and edited into its present form by the staff of Regent University's Psychological Services Center.

Brochure author: Mary Beth Covert, M.A.

Series Editor: LaTrelle D. Jackson, Ph.D.

Published by: Regent University Psychological Services Center, 1000 Regent University Dr, CRB - 188, Virginia Beach, VA 23464

(757) 352-4488

Dealing With Loss...



Regent University Psychological Services Center

1000 Regent University Drive

Classroom Building Suite 188

Virginia Beach, VA

(757) 352-4488

In the course of our lifetime, each of us develops relationships with others that take on special meaning to us. We have relationships with our parents, other family members, friends, teachers, or even our pets. These are these supportive connections that nurture and challenge us, helping us to become who we are. Over the course of our life, each of us also experiences the death of someone we love. Whether this loss occurs as a result of an illness, accident, or other trauma, we are left with a mixture of thoughts and feelings. We deeply sense their absence. The following suggestions are offered to assist in understanding the process of grief and the importance of remembering a loved one.

It is important to accept yourself:

Grief is a natural and universal experience. However, each of us experience loss in ways that are characteristic of our upbringing and personality. While common elements exist in the bereavement process, there are no fixed formulas or schedules to which we must conform. Accepting yourself is an important step toward a healthy grief process.

Your feelings are normal:

Following the loss of a loved one, a range of emotions may be experienced. These feelings include sadness, fear, despair, confusion, anger, guilt, relief and even a sense of numbness. These emotions may surface with varying degrees of intensity and over differing periods of time. Daily living patterns may trigger memories of the loss and associated feelings. Family celebrations, holidays, favorite places, songs, and experiences, which were formerly shared with the loved one, may remind us of our suffering. In the midst of grieving, it is normal to wonder if our sorrow will ever subside. In time, memories of the loved one will remain, but the intensity of the grief is moderated. Even so, it is important to remember that over the years we do not forget the person. It may be helpful to think of your bereavement as a cycle in which periodically you are reminded of the loss and impact your loved one had on you.

Your daily routine may change:

Following the death of a significant other, a person may feel quite different. You may be physically fatigued, have difficulty with your usual sleep pattern, experience an inability to concentrate for long periods, and experience changes in appetite. You may also find that your interest in work, social activities, and being with others diminishes somewhat. Activities and people you usually enjoy may seem to hold less attraction. During this period, some people increase their involvement in work related and social activities in order to preoccupy their mind and energy and avoid some of the uncomfortable feelings associated with loss.

However a person chooses to adapt, it is important to value and maintain connections with others and engage in a healthy balance through work, leisure, and rest. Plan to participate in some form of relaxation and physical activity like walking, perhaps in the company of another person. If significant changes persist and affect your ability to function on a daily basis, you may consider seeing a professional for consultation and specialized assistance.

Be kind to yourself:

Try to establish reasonable expectations about your ability and energy to meet current responsibilities. Guard against taking on new projects too soon. Remember that bereavement, with its differing levels of intensity, is a natural and essential process for remembering the loved one.

Create ways of remembering your loved one:

Rituals can help us recall the positive dimensions of our relationship and connect us with community. Activities like journal writing, meditation, prayer, walking, singing, and visiting places formerly shared with the loved one can be creative outlets for your thoughts and feelings. They may also help remind us of the value of life itself.

Envision a hopeful future:

Share your thoughts and feelings with others. Allow them to be with you during this very important part of life. Try to remain physically active and sensitive to the beauty of life around you. Reflect on your sense of purpose and identify meaning in your future. Envision the love you felt for the person you lost and incorporate it in your foundation for a creative future.

Christian Integration:

- Be honest. The loss and grief you experience is real. Do not deny it; it really hurts. Do not over spiritualize it. Be honest and open about your feelings of loss.
- Be informed. Reading this brochure and other material about grief helps you become informed.
- Be grounded. Too often Christians deny their feelings of grief. They may state that we are not “to grieve like the rest of men” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). **Do not stop there because the rest of the verse is** “who have no hope.” We grieve, but like people who **have hope**. Look at what the Bible says:
 - Abraham grieved. Genesis 23:2
 - Jacob grieved. Genesis 37:35
 - David grieved. 2 Samuel 18:33
 - Jesus grieved. John 11:35. “Jesus wept” is one of the shortest but most important verses in the Bible. If he wept at the funeral of a friend, we certainly can grieve about our losses.

Take some time, and be patient with yourself. Reach out to others and allow them to help you share your burden.

