

Common Reactions to Grief

People often think of grief as an emotional experience. It is. Grief is also a physical, intellectual, and spiritual experience. Grief not only affects how a person feels, it affects behavior. Here are some common examples of how people react during grief.

Physical Reactions

- ◆ Hollowness in the stomach
- ◆ Tightness in the chest
- ◆ Tightness in the throat
- ◆ Overly sensitive to noise
- ◆ Feeling disconnected from reality
- ◆ Breathlessness, short of breath
- ◆ Weakness
- ◆ Rapid heartbeat
- ◆ Increased blood pressure
- ◆ Muscular tension
- ◆ Sleep disturbances
- ◆ Decreased resistance to illness
- ◆ Weight or appetite change
- ◆ Dry Mouth

Emotional Reactions

- ◆ Sadness
- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Guilt
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Numbness
- ◆ Loneliness
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Despair
- ◆ Hopelessness
- ◆ Helplessness
- ◆ Shock
- ◆ Yearning
- ◆ Emancipation
- ◆ Relief
- ◆ Bitterness - Vengefulness
- ◆ Peacefulness

Spiritual Reactions

- ◆ Emptiness / reason to live is challenged
- ◆ Destruction of ideas / beliefs
- ◆ Search for meaning / connectedness
- ◆ Pessimism
- ◆ Idealism
- ◆ Acceptance
- ◆ Forgiveness
- ◆ Experiences of connectedness / wholeness
- ◆ Compassion

Behavioral Reactions

- ◆ Searching and calling out
- ◆ Avoiding reminders of the deceased
- ◆ Disoriented to time and place
- ◆ Withdrawn from friends and activities
- ◆ Unable to concentrate
- ◆ Forgetful or absent-minded
- ◆ Blameful of others
- ◆ Apathetic regarding activities or future
- ◆ Preoccupied
- ◆ Crying
- ◆ Deep sighing
- ◆ Restless over activity
- ◆ Seeking solitude
- ◆ Visiting places or carrying reminders of the deceased
- ◆ Treasuring objects that belonged to the deceased
- ◆ Seeking and providing forgiveness
- ◆ Spontaneity

Cognitive/Intellectual Reactions

- ◆ Disbelief / denying / avoiding reality of loss
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Preoccupation
- ◆ Sense of deceased person's presence
- ◆ Hallucinations
- ◆ Impaired self esteem
- ◆ Impaired ability to concentrate
- ◆ Dreams of the loved one who has died
- ◆ Hyperactivity
- ◆ Suicidal thoughts
- ◆ Search to understand implications of loss
- ◆ Practical needs / problem solving
- ◆ Creativity
- ◆ Wisdom


Axelson
Funeral &
Cremation Services