

Advice that has worked well for those in grief

Try to

- simplify your life, reduce stressors and live one day at a time.
- eat well and regularly, despite lack of appetite.
- get a good night's sleep/rest, despite sleep disorders and tension. The old recommendations for an afternoon walk, a hot bath and milk with honey are helpful.
- Do not use intoxicants. Intoxicants hinder you in dealing with your emotions.
- talk to others. Social isolation increases your discomfort.
- Allow yourself to cry. Crying releases tension. You can cry in front of others.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise and outdoor activities help many to release tension. Engage others with you, even though you may just want to be alone.
- write a diary. It will help you track your progress.
- answer honestly if you are asked how you're feeling. There is no shame in grieving.
- practice seeking support and help. Remember that you are responsible for your own well-being. Thank yourself for a job well done. Dealing with grief is more than a full-time job.
- allow yourself to be happy. It is not disrespectful to the deceased. Laughter releases tension.
- set yourself the goal of making today a better day than yesterday.

Remember that the days of despair and melancholy will get fewer. You will feel better. There will always be a place in your heart where your loved one 'lives' in the warmth of memories. Life will be worth something again. Trust that.



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skjoldirentis

HOW CAN YOU PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT FOR MOURNERS?



Show up -
get in touch



Provide assistance
with everyday tasks



Show interest -
ask questions



Remember
important dates



Be present - you don't
have to say anything



The little
things matter



Keep
the memory alive



Grief takes time -
it is normal to grieve



It's okay
to feel awkward -
be yourself

You don't
have to be perfect,
just present



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Grief and grief reactions

Here you will find tips that have helped others,
whether you are a mourner, relative or friend.

What is grief?

Grief and painful emotions are normal reactions to death and loss. It takes on various forms because many hopes and dreams are shattered and future plans are disrupted by the loss. Grief manifests itself in various ways because the grieving process is subjective and everyone has their own "way of walking" through grief. But most commonly, grief is characterized by a great surge of emotions and there can be a big difference from day to day in an grieving person's emotional state and emotional fluctuations can be considerable.

Strong and unprecedented feelings can create insecurity and anxiety for the bereaved who need good support and care from friends, family, co-workers and/or schoolmates or professionals. With good support, people gradually learn to live with the loss, but that can take several years.

The Feelings of Grief

Often the bereaved express a great sense of numbness and de-realization after a loss and sometimes seem unable to hear or understand what is being said. Grieving people are often absent-minded and forgetful and may experience confusing thoughts. Some people fear that they are losing their minds and need to be reassured that this is a normal reaction to grief.

Denial is a protective feeling when the bereaved avoids facing the loss, in this way they can temporarily limit their pain and discomfort.

Anger is a difficult and strong emotion that can appear in the bereaved. It can take various forms and be directed against the bereaved themselves, the deceased, doctors, nurses, God and life itself, or as a strong feeling of unfairness. Accusations or feelings of guilt are emotions that are related to anger and can create a great deal of discomfort and stress. Questions like "Why me?" or "What did I do wrong?" can become intrusive.

Guilt manifests as a feeling that something is unsaid or overstated, undone or overdone with the deceased.

Loneliness can become very powerful and sadness and longing for the dead can become so unbearable that the bereaved feels that life is worthless.

The feelings of grief can also be positive and it is important to know that the surge can fluctuate between the extremes, but the bereaved will eventually regain balance. The first weeks of grief are characterized by reactions to the trauma, such as numbness, anger and denial. After that, an unbearable loneliness and longing for the dead can take over. The bereaved then finds it difficult to connect with other people and the environment and has neither the initiative nor the power to seek contact. This situation can prevent the bereaved person from being able to care for their children, so it is important that people in grief receive the support they need, as soon as possible, and that society understands the importance of caring for children in grief, no less than adults.

An altered role, such as that of a surviving spouse, calls for new skills that are often difficult to grasp in grief. Grief appears in various forms and it is important to know that many things can affect it, such as the relationship with the deceased, how the death occurred and the character of the bereaved.

Physical Reactions

Physical reactions in grief can be reminiscent of symptoms of illness. They are common in the grieving process and can cause the bereaved unnecessary concern. Grief is not an illness at all, but its symptoms often include difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, tightness in the chest, indigestion, headaches, dizziness, visual disturbances, increased sweating, loss of appetite, crying episodes, dry mouth, shortness of breath, drowsiness, muscle weakness, noise sensitivity and sleep disorders. In addition, there is often a lack of concentration and memory, fatigue and lack of endurance, and uncertainty about what constitutes normal grief. Therefore, it is important that the bereaved have access to professionals to express how they're feeling and are able to receive an appropriate solution.

Grief and Processing

The grieving process can be long and difficult. It doesn't have a designated time period and will probably always be a part of life for the person who has lost their loved one. But by recognizing difficult emotions and possible physical reactions, the bereaved gains more strength to cope with the grief.

A deceased loved one will always have a place in the hearts of those left behind, but it is important to continue to walk the path and find a place for new connections alongside the others as time goes on. People often have a great need to talk about the deceased and various things related to the death. Then it's good to have a friend who listens and have access to support. Targeted professional education about grief and grief responses can also be crucial on the path to self-help after a traumatic loss. In this way, the grieving person gains a better understanding of their well-being, which helps them to come to terms with their feelings and to cope with life. Seeking the help of professionals can be necessary and natural, but many people don't know where to look.

Sorgarmiðstöð

is a collaborative project of grassroots associations in the field of grief processing. They are **Ný dögun** (1987), **Birta landssamtök** (2012), **Ljónshjarta** (2013) and **Gleym mér ei** (2013). The aim of Sorgarmiðstöð is to support those who are grieving and those who work towards their well-being. Sorgarmiðstöð is a charity that bases its existence and activities on grants. **Sorgarmiðstöð** is open to everyone, the bereaved as well as professionals.

Advice for Relatives and Friends

Ignorance and fear of death and grief are often a barrier for those who want to provide support.

- Remember that the grieving person needs your support. Your presence and warmth are more important than what you say.
- Stay in contact to show that you care. Visit, call or send a personal message. Give of your time. The grieving person often finds it difficult to take initiative and doesn't have the strength to ask for help. Contact them on holidays and festivities too. During those times the pain is often greatest and the loneliness considerable.
- Realize the importance of family and friends supporting each other, not just immediately after the death.
- Be prepared to offer your help with practical things: Going to the store, preparing food, washing up, answering the phone and cleaning. Performing even the simplest household tasks can be overwhelming for those who are grieving.
- Show empathy, sincerity, and honesty. Do not be afraid to show your own helplessness.
- Keep your promises. That's very important.
- A hug and considerate touch provide strength and often say more than words. Keep in mind, though, that some people find physical contact uncomfortable. Respect that.
- Listen, listen, listen. It is very important for mourners to have a trustworthy listener.
- Active listening involves showing genuine interest. Don't give advice or interrupt the grieving person. Don't change the subject.
- Respect the grieving person's feelings and emotional state. It is important to acknowledge that various emotions are a normal reaction to grief.
- Avoid judging the reactions of those who are grieving. Grief manifests itself in different and individual ways.
- Remember that grief takes time and you need to be present.
- Those who are grieving often need to talk about the deceased and the circumstances of death, even long after the death.
- Show interest - be a real friend.

The Sorgarmiðstöð support account

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