



How Do You React When Someone You Love Dies?

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Because grief can be so painful and seems so overwhelming, it frightens us. Many people worry if they are grieving the “right” way and wonder if the feelings they have are normal. Grief is like a rollercoaster - it has many ups and downs. It is ongoing, coming and going when you least expect it. **Listed below are some grief reactions others have shared.**

Physical Responses:

- Tightness in the throat and heaviness in the chest
- Crying at unexpected times
- Sensing the loved one’s presence, like finding themselves expecting the person to walk in the door, hearing their voice or seeing their face
- An empty feeling in their stomach or a loss of appetite

Cognitive Responses:

- Feeling restless and looking for activity, but may find it difficult to concentrate
- Wandering aimlessly, being forgetful or failing to finish things
- Having difficulty sleeping and dreaming of their loved one

Emotional Responses:

- Feeling guilty at times and angry at others or the loved one who left
- Feeling as though the loss isn’t real, that it didn’t happen
- Feeling guilty or angry over things that happen or didn’t happen in the relationship with the deceased
- Noticing mood changes over the slightest things
- Feeling the need to take care of other people who seem uncomfortable around them, by politely avoiding any discussion of their feelings of loss
- The need and desire to tell, re-tell and remember things about the loved one and the experience of their death

These are all normal grief responses. It is important to cry when prompted and to share your feelings with others. If you’re concerned or worried about your personal reactions to grief, please seek counseling.

Companions on a Journey Grief Support

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