

NATURAL AND NORMAL GRIEF RESPONSES

Grieving over the loss of a loved one is very painful and at times can seem overwhelming. Many of us wonder if we are grieving in the "right" way, and worry whether the feelings being experienced are "normal".

Here are some common physical and emotional responses you may feel now and for several months:

Anger

- At others for being more fortunate
- At yourself for what you did/did not do in the past
- At the deceased for leaving you
- At God for not "healing"
- At the wrong person, wrong circumstance or the world

Guilt

- Regret not finding a cure
- Doubting that you gave adequate care
- Feeling responsible in some way
- Doubting decisions you made concerning end-of-life care

Frustration

- Inability to be in control
- Inability to change present situation
- Having difficulty making decisions
- Managing financial/paperwork

Idealization

- Trying to remember only "good" things
- Recognizing that accepting the faults of your loved one is part of grief work
- Remembering that you were an important part of the relationship

Sadness

- Feeling exhausted and lacking energy
- Feeling preoccupied with life of deceased
- Feeling that life is meaningless
- Feeling sad on holidays and special days

Responses and Behaviors

- Feeling emotionally numb
- Inability to believe death really occurred
- Expecting your loved one to come back
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping more than usual; nightmares
- Feeling tightness in throat or heaviness in chest or stomach; repeated sighing
- Experiencing mood changes
- Change of appetite
- Desiring to smoke, drink, or use drugs (especially tranquilizers" in a greater amount than before
- Telling and retelling of the death
- Assuming mannerisms or traits of your loved one
- Spending money on things usually not purchased
- Elevated blood pressure
- Lowered resistance to infection