



Walking Together Through Grief

Things to Avoid

- ❁ Don't believe that you are going crazy. It is extremely common and normal to experience strong and complex reactions after the loss of a loved one.
- ❁ Don't blame yourself. Guilt often stems from believing that you failed to save the life of the person you lost and your attachment to him/ her. In reality, you have already done the best you can. Try to let go and forgive yourself.
- ❁ Don't resort to excessive drugs, tobacco or alcohol to numb your feelings. This will only lead to more distress.
- ❁ Don't try to escape the pain by keeping yourself busy. This will undermine your ability to recover.
- ❁ Don't judge yourself for having feelings. Feelings come and go naturally like waves. Suppressing them will only bring more distress.
- ❁ Don't feel guilty for enjoying yourself. Pain often fades with time. This does not mean you no longer miss him/ her. It is okay to laugh and feel happy despite your loss.

When should I seek professional help?

The vast majority of people will walk through grief with the support from their families and friends. However, if your grief feels like too much to bear, or it has reached beyond your ability to cope and impacted your daily life for a long period of time, you should consider seeking professional help.

Hospital Authority Task Force on Disaster Psychosocial Services

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For more disaster-related psycho-educational resources, please visit <https://hadps.ha.org.hk/>.



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Grieving the loss of a loved one

Grief Reactions

The passing away of a relative or friend inevitably leads to grief. The loss and changes death brings will affect us physically, behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally to varying degrees. We may experience headaches, insomnia, a sense of frailty, nausea, weeping, shouting, avoidance of people, forgetfulness, shock, guilt, regret, and anger etc. Apart from these physical responses and mood changes, we may also experience the following reactions:

- ✿ Having symptoms of the illness that killed the deceased
- ✿ Talking to things left behind by the deceased
- ✿ Longing for the deceased's return, and even trying to look for him/ her
- ✿ Feeling that the deceased is around, e.g. seeing or hearing him/ her
- ✿ Worrying that you or other relatives may die
- ✿ Reliving times spent with the deceased
- ✿ Being preoccupied with the image of the deceased on his/ her deathbed
- ✿ Searching for or being preoccupied with the cause of death
- ✿ Feeling lonely and deserted
- ✿ Feeling a sense of relief
- ✿ Feeling calm

Grief reactions may vary among individuals. How people react differently to death can be affected by one's characters and life experiences. As time goes by, these reactions may gradually subside.



“When I am not around, you should take good care of yourself all the more.”



Here are some effective ways to look after yourself:

In the short run

- ✿ Get plenty of rest, ask your relatives or friends to help when needed, and allow yourself a break from work when necessary.
- ✿ Maintain a balanced diet; in case of poor appetite, eat less but more often and be mindful of your nutrition intake.
- ✿ Allow yourself to experience the pain of loss; you may like to cry, beat your pillow, shout, do exercises, keep a diary, or write to the deceased to express your feelings. You can gradually resume your life routine when you are ready.
- ✿ Talk to others, or reach out to people with similar experiences for mutual care and support. You may also talk to a mental health professional for professional help.

In the long run

- ✿ Arrange beforehand what to do during festivals and anniversaries. This will enable you to cope more easily when feelings of loss and grief are likely to be triggered.
- ✿ Give yourself a break from grieving. It is okay for you to enjoy yourself, care for others, or find peace again.
- ✿ Engage in leisure activities, start a new hobby, and find a new direction for life.