

NORMAL RESPONSES IN GRIEF

Grief is a normal response to loss. It sometimes manifests itself in ways that are surprising to everyone including the one doing the grieving. Every person will grieve in his or her own unique way. The following is a list of behaviors typical of grief. If you have experienced any of these, you are absolutely normal. That is not to say that they are healthy. In fact some may need to be changed, but they are understandable and do not indicate “insanity.” For instance, you may experience:

1. Anger at God and difficulty finding consolation in your faith.
2. Anger at medical personnel for not doing enough or not having the technical ability to save your loved one.
3. Anger at yourself for not properly interpreting the warning signs, statements, etc.
4. Anger at the deceased for: not taking better care of himself/herself; leaving you alone; not making proper financial/legal preparations; dying.
5. Inability to sleep without medication or you may be sleeping all the time.
6. A change in eating habits with significant weight gain or loss.
7. Increased susceptibility to colds, flu, and other physical ailments.
8. Inability to motivate yourself to do the things you need to do.
9. Inability to concentrate and/or remember things.
10. Much more irritable than usual.
11. Experiencing unpredictable, uncontrollable bouts of crying.
12. Fear of being alone or with people; afraid to leave the house; afraid to stay in the house; afraid to sleep in the bed.
13. Desire to “punish” something or someone for your pain.
14. Anger that no one seems to understand what has happened to you; anger toward people who expect you to “get on with your life”; anger concerning not being given the time you need to grieve.
15. Feelings of frustration that friends call too much, or not enough or don’t invite you out anymore or seem to be pushing you into socializing before you are ready.
16. Going to several stores instead of just one; buying things you don’t need and forgetting the things you do need.
17. Feeling guilty over little relationship issues that would not usually be a problem.
18. Experiencing panic/anxiety attacks.
19. Desire to talk about the deceased, but fearful of “burdening” friends or family.
20. Wearing clothing, jewelry, or other personal items of the deceased.
21. Feeling the loneliness and “aloneness” are more than you can tolerate.
22. Noticing an increase in the use of alcohol, prescription drugs, or street drugs to help you cope.
23. Driving the car too fast and recklessly.
24. Desire to sell the house and move; wanting to give away all the possessions of the deceased; turning a portion of the home into a shrine (i.e., not changing anything in the room after the death, etc.).
25. Going out “looking for a fight.”
26. Screaming for no particular reason.
27. Anger that people can still laugh, that the world goes on, that holidays are not canceled, that you seem so alone in your grief.
28. Feeling a desire to be with people who did not know the deceased, thereby giving you the opportunity to share memories with unbiased listeners.