

COPING WITH GRIEF AND LOSS



Grief is a natural response to loss. A person can experience different types of loss and feel emotionally affected by it. It could be the result of losing a loved one, a family pet or something that a person feels and cares deeply about.

How a person grieves is determined by a range of factors, i.e., personality, coping styles, faith, belief system and the nature of the loss. The actual time getting over one's loss can vary.

Common Signs and Symptoms

Sadness - A person may feel immense sadness, emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness

Feeling ill health - Physical problems, i.e., fatigue, headache, nausea, lowered immunity, oversensitivity to noise, breathlessness, lack of energy, aches and pains.

Shock and disbelief - A person may feel numb, have trouble believing the loss really happened, or even deny the truth

Behavioural changes - Poor sleep patterns, avoiding reminders of the deceased, changes in appetite, absent-minded behaviour, social withdrawal.

Turn to spirituality.

If you practice a religion, utilize its symbols, activities, and community to comfort and provide a meaningful perspective on life. Spiritual activities such as praying, meditating, or going to a place of worship, can offer solace.

Talk to a counsellor or join a support group.

Sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced similar losses can help. You may also get help from counsellors or NGOs to support you through the difficult time.

Look after yourself.

Mind and body are connected. When you feel good physically, you'll also feel better emotionally. Get enough sleep, eat and exercise well. Recall strategies that have successfully helped you through difficult times in the past.

SELF-HELP STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH GRIEF AND LOSS

Express your feelings and thoughts.

Some people like to write down about their loss. If you've lost a loved one, write a letter saying the things you never got to say; make a scrapbook or photo album celebrating the person's life; or get involved in a cause or organization that was important to him or her. Talk about them and your special memories.

Face your feelings.

Acknowledge your pain. If you feel like crying, that's perfectly natural since crying is part of the healing process. You don't need to "protect" your family or friends by putting on a brave front.

Explore support network.

Try to be open with people who care about you, i.e., family members and friends. Connecting to others will help you heal. Sometimes people want to help but don't know how, so tell them what you need if you require further support.