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JAtH



Bereavement and Loss

Jath van der Westhuizen



Most people
experience
grief when
they lose
something
or someone
important to
them.

What is bereavement?



- Bereavement is the experience of losing someone important to us.
- It is characterised by grief, which is the process and the range of emotions we go through as we gradually adjust to the loss.

Bereavement affects everyone in different ways

- It's possible to experience any range of emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Feelings of grief can also happen because of other types of loss or changes in circumstances, for example:
 - the end of a relationship
 - the loss of a job
 - moving away to a new location
 - a decline in the physical or mental health of someone we care about.

- Divorce or relationship breakup
- Loss of health
- Losing a job
- Loss of financial stability
- A miscarriage
- Retirement
- Death of a pet
- Loss of a cherished dream
- A loved one's serious illness
- Loss of a friendship
- Loss of safety after a trauma
- Selling the family home
- Relocation
- Decline in the physical or mental health of someone we care about



Symptoms of bereavement, grief and loss

- Shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about "being in a daze"
- Overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- Tiredness or exhaustion
- Anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss
- Guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying



Different types of grief

Anticipatory grief

Secondary loss

Anticipatory grief

- Anticipatory grief is a sense of loss that we feel when we are expecting a death.
- It features many of the same symptoms as those experienced after a death has occurred, including depression, extreme sadness or concern for the dying person.
- It does not necessarily replace, reduce or make grief after the loss any easier or shorter,
- but for some people it can provide the opportunity to prepare for the loss and for what the future might look like.

Secondary loss

- After any loss you may also feel what is known as 'secondary loss'.
- After the initial shock of losing a loved one you may struggle when thinking of future experiences that those people will not be there to share or see,
- such as watching your children grow up, meeting partners or attending key life events like weddings.

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle

Denial

Avoidance
Confusion
Elation
Shock
Fear

Anger

Frustration
Irritation
Anxiety

Bargaining

Struggling to find meaning
Reaching out to others
Telling one's story

Depression

Overwhelmed
Helplessness
Hostility
Flight

Acceptance

Exploring options
New plan in place
Moving on

Most people display a blend of these two styles of grieving:

- **Instrumental grieving** has a focus primarily on problem-solving tasks. This style involves controlling or minimizing emotional expression.
- **Intuitive grieving** is based on a heightened emotional experience. This style involves sharing feelings, exploring the lost relationship, and considering mortality.

How long does grief tend to last?

- There is no time limit on grief and this varies hugely person to person.
- The time spent in a period of bereavement will be different for everybody and depends on factors such as the
 - type of relationship,
 - the strength of attachment or intimacy to the person who died,
 - the situation surrounding their death,
 - and the amount of time spent anticipating the death.

COMPLICATED GRIEF - 15% of people who have lost a loved one will experience “complicated grief.”

- Intense sadness and emotional pain
- Feelings of emptiness and hopelessness
- Yearning to be reunited with the deceased
- Preoccupation with the deceased or with the circumstances of the death
- Difficulty engaging in happy memories of the lost person
- Avoidance of reminders of the deceased
- A reduced sense of identity
- Detachment and isolation from surviving friends and family
- Lack of desire to pursue personal interests or plans

BROKEN HEART SYNDROME

- When a person experiences a shocking event, their body fills with stress hormones. These hormones can cause part of a person's heart to briefly swell and stop pumping. The rest of the heart continues beating, causing blood to flow unevenly. A person may feel intense chest pain, similar to a heart attack (but unlike a heart attack, the arteries are not blocked). This temporary malfunction is called "broken heart syndrome."
- Often follows news of loss, such as a divorce or death of a loved one. Yet symptoms can also appear after a good shock, such as winning the lottery. Women are more likely than men to develop the condition.
- Most recover within weeks. Deaths from the condition are rare. Since the syndrome is prompted by a shocking event, people have a low risk of experiencing it twice.

DEPRESSION AND GRIEF

- Grief is typically preceded by loss. Depression can develop at any time.
- The sadness present in grief is typically related to the loss or death. Depression is characterized by a general sense of worthlessness, despair, and lack of joy.
- Symptoms of grief may improve on their own with time. Someone with depression often needs treatment to recover.

DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF

- **Society devalues the loss.** The loss of a pet often garners less sympathy than the loss of a human relative. Others may say “it was just an animal” and accuse the person of being too emotional. Yet research shows the mourning period for a pet is about the same length as for a human family member.
- **The loss is ambiguous.** An adopted child may grieve the loss of their birth parents, even if said adults are alive. If a loved one has late-stage dementia, family members may feel as if the person they knew is gone.
- **Society stigmatizes the circumstances of the loss.** Pregnancy-related loss is often considered taboo. Women who undergo a miscarriage may feel guilt and shame. They may avoid telling others about the loss to avoid being blamed.
- **Society doesn’t recognize the person’s relationship to the deceased.** A co-worker or friend may mourn a person, but they will likely receive less support than a family member. The same is true for ex-spouses, even though they used to be family. In societies with systemic homophobia, same-sex partners may also have disenfranchised grief.
- **Others do not consider the person capable of grief.** When young children experience loss, adults may misinterpret signs of bereavement. They may believe the child is not capable of understanding the loss or have prolonged feelings about it. People who have cognitive impairments or intellectual disabilities may also have disenfranchised grief.

Four Tasks of Mourning

- To accept the reality of the loss
- To work through the pain of grief
- To adjust to life without the deceased - Adapting to a new role
- To maintain a connection to the deceased while moving on with life

How to work through the process of grief

- Talk about the deceased
- Differentiate between trauma and grief
- Deal with guilt and help them organize the grief

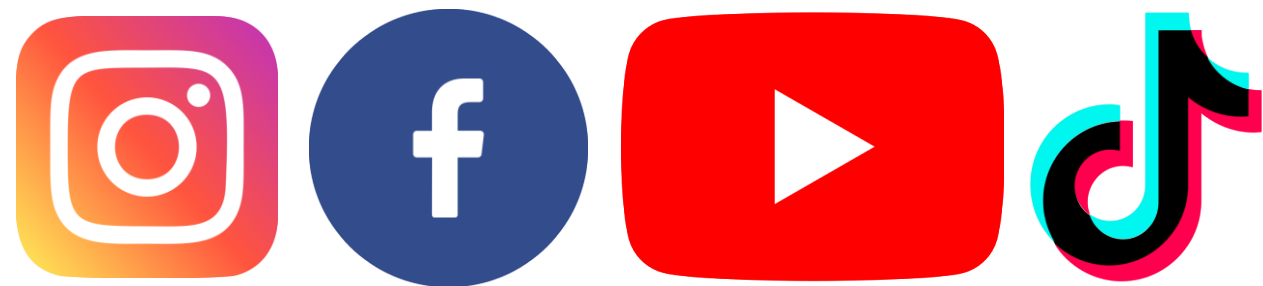


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