



What is grief?

Grief is the emotional pain and sadness that comes when you lose something or someone important to you.

It is a natural response to loss, but it can show up in many ways. You might feel sadness, anger, confusion, guilt, or even physical exhaustion.

Remember: Everyone experiences grief differently. There's no "right" way to grieve, and it doesn't look the same for everyone. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, a pet, a relationship, or even a big life change, grief is a deeply personal experience.

The grieving process

It may take weeks, months, or even years to fully process a loss, and that's OK. Give yourself the time and space you need, and trust that your grief will unfold in its own unique way.

Here are the stages of grief (as described by Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross):

- **Denial:** You may feel numb or unable to accept the reality of the loss.
- **Anger:** Feeling upset or frustrated is common. You may feel angry at the person who has gone, the situation, or even yourself.
- **Bargaining:** You might find yourself making "deals" or wishing you could change the outcome.
- **Depression:** This stage involves deep sadness. You may feel overwhelmed, empty, or disconnected.
- **Acceptance:** Over time, you may begin to come to terms with the loss and understand that it's part of life.

It's important to remember that these stages don't happen in order, and you might not experience all of them. You might feel some stages more intensely than others, and that's OK.



Tips for coping with grief

Here are some coping strategies to help you manage your grief:

1. Give yourself permission to grieve.

Grieving is a healthy response to loss. Allow yourself to feel your emotions without judgment. It's okay to cry, be angry, or feel confused. You are not weak for experiencing these feelings—they are normal and part of healing.

2. Focus on the present.

Sometimes, it can be hard to stop worrying about the future or the things you've lost. Try to bring your attention to the present moment. Small practices like savoring a cup of tea, going for a walk, or simply breathing deeply can help ground you and provide moments of relief.

3. Practice self-compassion.

Grief can be physically and emotionally exhausting. Be kind to yourself. Treat yourself the same way you would treat a friend who is grieving. This might include resting, reaching out to loved ones, or simply taking care of your body.

4. Create a ritual of remembrance.

Honoring your loved one or your loss can be a powerful way to process your grief. This isn't about forgetting them, but about finding ways to carry their memory forward. You could light a candle on special days, listen to their favorite music, or make something in their honor—anything that feels meaningful to you.

5. Set small goals.

When grief feels overwhelming, break your day into small, manageable tasks. Completing simple activities—like getting out of bed or eating—can give you a sense of accomplishment.

6. Talk about your grief.

It's normal to feel overwhelmed by grief, and it can help to talk about it with someone you trust. Whether it's a family member, friend, or therapist, expressing what you're feeling can help you process emotions and begin to heal.