


GETTING THROUGH GRIEF: *a guide for educators*



THROUGH THE **EARLY** STAGES

Grief can be disorienting and exhausting. Your most important job just after a death is to take good care of yourself.




Sleep may be difficult, but take breaks during the day to breath or just relax.

Even if you have no appetite, eat small snacks or meals 4-5 times a day to keep moods stable.



Do some stretching on your chair or take a quick walk in the hallway, just do *something*. This will help with overwhelming thoughts.



You may not be able to keep up your usual round of activities for a little while, and that's okay.

When you're grieving, you may need more help than usual, at work or home. Ask for help or support.



EMOTIONS THAT *MAY* CATCH YOU OFF GUARD

Grief causes different reactions in different people. It's important to acknowledge and accept whatever you are feeling without judgement. You might feel:

Numbness

Grief can overload our circuits, causing us to check out. Be extra careful on your commute when driving or crossing the street during the early stages of grief.

Anger


You may feel angry at the person for dying, and at your students and fellow teachers. It is natural to want to blame someone for your loss. Bringing non-judgmental awareness to your anger will help it subside.

Guilt

Perhaps you never got to say something you want to say, or you are relieved that someone died after a long illness. Talk with a trusted colleague, friend, supervisor, or counselor if you are feeling guilty to guide you through your thoughts.

THROUGH THE **LATER** STAGES

When some time has gone by, you may feel that your head is clearer and you have a bit more energy. Here are some things to keep in mind.



Feeling better doesn't mean you're through with sadness. It's likely your feelings will continue to be up and down.

Having a better day doesn't mean you've forgotten your loved one or the relationship -- just that you're integrating the loss into daily life.



Grief is personal and individual. You define for yourself when you are feeling better. Everyone's timeline is different.

5 MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF

Misinformation about the mysterious process of grieving abounds. Here are the 4 most common myths:

Myth 1

"If you're grieving, you should express every negative feeling."

THE TRUTH:

Studies show that people who did this actually felt worse later. At times, it may be more useful to sit with the feelings or distract yourself with something harmless like a fun hobby.

"Women suffer more in grief."

THE TRUTH:

Actually, studies suggest that bereaved men have a harder time after losing a spouse.

Myth 2

Myth 3

"After a certain amount of time, I should be over it."

THE TRUTH:

There's no set timeline to grief. In fact, if you lost someone you cared very much about, you will never stop grieving, but your grief will become more manageable over time.

"Grieving is an orderly process and happens in a neat series of stages."

THE TRUTH:

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' five stages of grief are widely accepted as the lockstep path everyone takes to accepting a death. But more recent research shows that our path is more likely go back-and-forth, with movement among the stages in no prescribed order.

Myth 4

Myth 5

"Talking about my loss only makes it feel worse."

THE TRUTH:

Choosing not to talk about our loss keeps us keeps the memories and the hurt trapped. Talking about the loss loosens the grip of the pain and allows us to develop new insights. Talking with a professional or someone who's been there is especially helpful.

Sourced from:

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