

COPING WITH GRIEF AFTER COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Grief Reactions to Violence

It can be a traumatic experience after witnessing community violence. There are many different ways that you and your community would express their emotions such as:

- Feeling empty and numb, or unable to feel
- Feeling intense anger or sadness
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling anxious
- Feeling hopeless

You may also experience the following during grief:

- Trembling or shakiness
- Muscle weakness
- Nausea, trouble eating
- Trouble sleeping, trouble breathing
- Dry mouth
- Nightmares
- Withdraw socially
- No desire to participate in usual activities, work, or school

How Long Do Grief Reactions Last?

Grief lasts as long as it takes you to accept and learn to live with the changes that have occurred in your community due to the violence and its aftermath. For some people, grief lasts a few months; for others, it may take more than a year. It's different for each person and yourself.

**There's no need to rush.
Take your time and breathe.**

What Should I Do?

The best way to deal with grief is to talk to those that you trust the most. You should talk to your parents or guardians about your feelings. You can also talk to your friends and other family members. As long as you never hide or hold these feelings to yourself, you will feel better.

There are also other ways to feel better:

- Sleep
- Eat healthy meals
- Exercise
- Continue daily routines
- Play with friends
- Make new friends
- Cry when overwhelmed

It is normal to feel angry or sad, or even both. Do not be afraid to show emotions. You are important and your feelings matter.



You Are Not Alone

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Anyone can experience grief. If you feel angry or sad, then it's very likely that someone else in your community also feels angry or sad.

You may have lost trust or feel unsafe with your community. This is normal. One of the first steps to rebuilding trust and safety within the community is to express frustrations and other feelings.

Intense feelings of anger or sadness are normal, but they do not last forever. Over time, these feelings will become less intense. Allow yourself to feel joy and to cry when you need to.

