

Health tip: Understanding Grief and Loss

Grief is a natural response to the loss of someone or something very important to you. Grieving is a personal experience and may differ from person to person. There is no “normal and expected” period of time for grieving.¹

5 Stages of Grief¹

It is important to note that these stages may occur in any order.

1 Denial

Denial is a very common defense mechanism that may help you lower the intensity of a situation.

2 Anger

Unlike denial, anger is a masking effect, not a coping mechanism. Anger may hide the emotions and pain you may be feeling.

3 Bargaining

Bargaining is a way to curb feelings of helplessness and vulnerability in an effort to regain control of the situation. You may internally state many “what if” and “if only” statements. Bargaining may help to postpone the sadness, confusion, or hurt that you may be feeling.

4 Depression

Depression is not easily defined because everyone deals with it differently. You may feel overwhelmed, groggy, heavy, and confused.

5 Acceptance

Acceptance is unique in that its not necessarily a happy or uplifting stage of grief. It doesn't mean that you've moved on, but rather it means that you have accepted and understand how your life may be different now.



The impact on the stress of grief:¹

Grief is an extreme stressor and may have significant impacts on various aspects of health, including cardiac health, immunity, digestion, weight, and mental health.

Strategies on working through grief:¹

- Connect with family & friends
- Create a routine
- Take care of your physical health
- Practice Relaxation techniques
- Embrace self-care
- Check in with yourself
- Practice self-compassion
- Honor your loved ones
- Seek professional help

Helping children and teens with grief^{2,3}

- Provide safety and security
- Consider the child's emotional development
- Allow your teen to question
- Give your teen time to adjust and reassure them that grieving is normal

Community Resources:

Non-Profits & Governmental Organizations

- National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI)
- Mental Health America
- National Institute of Mental Health
- In the U.S.: **Crisis Call Center** at **775-784-8090**
- **Find a GriefShare group meeting near you** – Worldwide directory of support groups for people grieving the death of a family member or friend (GriefShare)
- **Find Support** – Directory of programs and support groups in the U.S. for children experiencing grief and loss (National Alliance for Grieving Children)



Sources:

1. Help Guide. <https://www.helpguide.org/mental-health/grief/coping-with-grief-and-loss>. 2026. Accessed April 2026.
2. Child Mind Institute. <https://childmind.org/article/helping-children-deal-grief/>. 2025. Accessed April 2026.
3. University of Rochester Medical Center. <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/childrens-hospital/bereavement/helping-children-cope/grieving-teenager>. 2026. Accessed April 2026.

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