

Grieving: The First Months

How are You?

As the months pass, you may feel like other people have returned to their “normal” lives while yours has changed dramatically.

Remember: It is normal, natural and expected for grief to affect your life in many ways.

What Changes have You Noticed Physically?

Physical reactions to grief may include lack of energy, fatigue, a sense of heaviness, and changes in appetite and sleep.

It may help to:

- Check in with your doctor
- Rest when you can
- Exercise
- Eat healthy foods
- Limit caffeine intake after mid-day

How is Grief Affecting Your Thinking?

Many people describe feeling more scattered than usual or like they are in a fog. It is normal to feel distracted, have difficulty concentrating, and experience racing thoughts and forgetfulness. You may notice that you are having difficulty reading, prioritizing or making decisions.

It may help to:

- Make lists and keep them in a designated place
- Focus on taking slow, deep breaths
- Write notes to yourself
- Keep important appointments and reminders in a daily calendar

How are You Feeling Emotionally?

Loss can be an overwhelming experience. You may be experiencing a wide range of emotions.

It may help to:

- Write in a journal
- Talk to a friend who is a good listener
- Have quiet time
- Take a walk or exercise

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How is Grief Affecting Your Sense of Purpose or Meaning in Life?

Grief can prompt us to ask ourselves spiritual questions about what truly matters and what we really believe.

It may help to:

- Talk to someone whose values you respect
- Practice rituals that are comforting to you
- Acknowledge that this is a time of seeking and learning
- Explore sources of spiritual support
- Reach out to a faith community

How is Grief Affecting You Socially?

Have your feelings about being alone or taking part in social activities that you once enjoyed changed in the past months? You may have noticed that not only do you feel differently but that others act differently around you. Friends, co-workers and family members may avoid talking about the person who has died and even avoid asking how you are because they don't want to upset you. While their intentions are good, this may leave you feeling more isolated and alone.

It may help to:

- Seek out friends, neighbors, co-workers and relatives who are open to listening and being supportive
- Break the ice for others to talk by starting with, "Remember when..." or "I miss talking about him. What do you think she'd say about...?"
- Give yourself time to adjust to new roles
- Balance time alone with opportunities to be around caring people

Please call **(727) 467-7423** for more information about living with grief and loss. Consider joining a grief support group or talking with a counselor. We are here for you.