

COVID-19 has impacted numerous communities across the United States. Many people may experience the loss of a loved one during this time due to the virus. This handout includes basic information about grief and the coping process.

Symptoms of Grief

Grief can impact several aspects of our lives. The following are some common symptoms of grief.

Physical: Fatigue, gastro-intestinal upset, sleep disruption, appetite changes, headaches

Emotional: Sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, confusion, irritability, lack of motivation, sense of abandonment

Cognitive: Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, intrusive thoughts/images of the lost loved one, academic or occupational difficulties

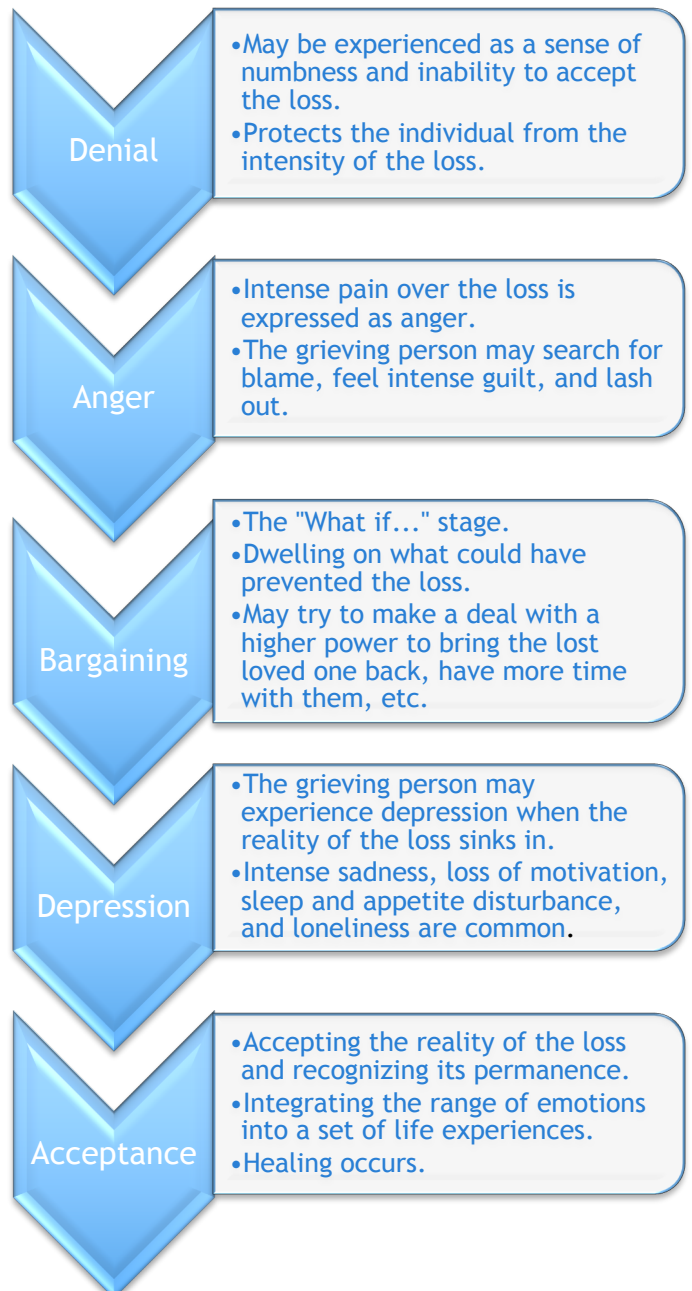
Behavioral: Crying, restlessness, lashing out at others, substance use or other risky behaviors that dull the pain

Interpersonal: Social isolation, feeling like others do not understand, noticing that others interact with you differently

Spiritual: Questioning God or one's faith, difficulty feeling hopeful, questioning one's sense of meaning and purpose

Stages of Grief

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a psychiatrist and pioneer of near death studies, proposed a 5-stage model of grief.



Ways to Cope With Grief



Supporting Another Through the Grief Process

- ❖ Listen!
- ❖ Encourage the expression of grief
- ❖ Create a safe environment where the person can talk about and process the loss
- ❖ Support acceptance of all aspects of the loss
- ❖ Be willing to ask questions about and discuss the deceased if the bereaved finds it helpful
- ❖ Share information about the grief process
- ❖ Assist the in practical and concrete ways
- ❖ Avoid expressing pity or minimizing the loss
- ❖ Share information about support groups or other resources

Resources and Support

- ❖ Actively Moving Forward (AMF) App - A grief support network for ages 18-30
- ❖ Grief Anonymous - A grief support organization that provides in-person support meetings and online support through Facebook groups
- ❖ [Onlinegriefsupport.com/groups](https://onlinegriefsupport.com/groups) - An online social support group in forum format
- ❖ [Whatsyourgrief.com](https://whatsyourgrief.com) for e-courses, podcasts, and webinars
- ❖ Talking with your minister, priest, etc.

- ❖ Connect with others who have experienced loss
- ❖ Seek out counseling services
- ❖ Write about the deceased/write a letter to the deceased
- ❖ Pursue new interests
- ❖ Spend time with friends
- ❖ Talk about grief with trusted family members and friends
- ❖ Engage in activities that provide a sense of normalcy
- ❖ Maintain a sense of community through volunteering, outreach, etc.
- ❖ Engage in spiritual/religious activities
- ❖ Create art to express grief
- ❖ Educate oneself about the grief process



This handout draws from content in *Coming to Grips with Loss: Normalizing the Grief Process* (Cummings, 2015), *Helping the Bereaved College Student* (Balk, 2011), and *African American Grief* (Rosenblatt & Wallace, 2005).

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