

GOOD GRIEF

Grief is the healing process we go through after suffering a loss. Although we normally think of loss as the death of someone close to us, life changes such as divorce or losing a job can also bring about grief. Learn about the process of grieving and tips for coping with different types of losses.

Five Stages of Grief

The first stage of grief is **denial**. It's hard for our minds to accept that such a loss has taken place.

Anger is the second stage. We probably had no control over the loss, so we react to our vulnerability with anger. We lash out at others or blame ourselves for the loss.

The third stage is **bargaining**. We want to trade something we can do for the reversal of the loss, saying things like "I'd do anything if only this hadn't happened."

Depression is the fourth stage. A feeling of hopelessness about the situation takes over.

The fifth and final stage is **acceptance**. We accept the reality of the situation and are able to move on in our lives.



Moving Along

How much time it takes to move through these stages depends on the nature of the loss, the individual who is grieving and the overall circumstances of the individual's life. The individual also may not experience the stages in this order. For example, bargaining may come before anger. The important thing to remember, however, is that grieving happens in stages. Being stuck in one stage and dwelling on the loss too long might require the intervention of a professional counselor.

Tips for Coping

Sharing grief with those close to us is important for moving through the grieving process. Bringing people together is one of the roles of funerals or memorial services for people who have died.

But sometimes it is difficult for others to relate to the depth of our pain if a death is not involved, such as when we lose a job. In cases such as this, professional counseling may help you through your grief process to move toward the final stage of acceptance.

Moving Toward Acceptance