

## COPING WITH GRIEF AND LOSS

Grieving is a healthy and natural healing process. It is not a sign of weakness. For most people, grieving follows a pattern, which proceeds through a series of stages.

The best way to confront loss is to recognize it, understand the feelings and reactions you experience, and get support during the grieving process.

### Tips for Coping With Grief

- Take your time. Don't judge or measure your reactions by those of others.
- Talk, share your feelings and the meaning this loss has for you.
- Pay attention to your body's needs. Exercise (according to your doctor's recommendations) and balanced nutrition are essential.
- Surround yourself with friends and family who love and support you. Avoid isolating.
- Tears may come unexpectedly and at times when you thought you were finished grieving. Be patient with yourself. Their intensity and frequency should diminish with time.
- Allow yourself time to grieve as well as giving yourself breaks from the grieving process.
- If you follow a religious faith, this can be a time for prayer and quiet meditation. Seek out your faith mentors.
- Avoid alcohol and other mind-altering substances.
- Learn to be sensitive and flexible with your new needs and lifestyle.
- Seek professional help if necessary.

## STAGES OF THE GRIEVING PROCESS

### Denial

- Disbelief
- Numbness
- Shock

### Anger and Guilt

- Anger, sometimes misdirected
- Guilt, sometimes misdirected

### Sadness and Despair

- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Tearfulness
- Depression
- Reminders that bring new waves of grief

### Acceptance and Hope

- Acceptance of your loss
- Adjustment to changes

### Aftermath

- Gradual lessening of feelings of grief