

Healing through Grief

Grief, however difficult, is a necessary part of the healing process. After we suffer any loss, whether the death of a close relative, friend, or pet, or major life change such as a job loss, divorce, or end of a relationship, we go through various stages of grieving to heal.



Moving toward Acceptance

There are five main stages of grief. It's necessary to go through each one to finally come to terms with our loss.

1 Stage One; Denial

Our minds find it difficult to accept that such a loss has taken place. The finality of the situation has not sunken in.

2 Stage Two: Anger

We may not have had control over the loss, so we react to our vulnerability with anger. We lash out at others or blame ourselves for the loss.

3 Stage Three: Bargaining

We want to trade something we can do to gain reversal of the loss. We say things like, I'll never hurt another person again if only my loved one comes back to me. We realize this is not possible, but engage in wishful thinking.

4 Stage Four: Depression

Once we realize the person we've lost is not coming back, a feeling of utter sadness and hopelessness takes over. It's not uncommon to have periods of extended crying and loss of interest in things we once enjoyed.

5 Stage Five: Acceptance

This is the final stage, in which we can accept our new situation and begin living in the absence of that which we once cherished.

Moving through the Stages

Some people won't go through every stage, and some will go through them in a different order than outlined above.

However, it's helpful to know that when you are grieving, you will go through various stages and that you will eventually get to the final stage of acceptance. Depending on the type of loss and the depth of the attachment, it may take just days or possibly years to complete the grieving process.

It's important to remember that not everyone will experience the stages of grief in exactly the same way.

Sharing the Pain

One way to help you through grief is to share your feelings with those who are close to you. This is one of the functions of a funeral or memorial service after someone has died. It allows those who've experienced the loss to go through the pain together and share how they are feeling. When the loss is experienced only by you, such as in a job termination, it may be difficult for others to relate to your pain. In situations where family and friends cannot provide support, or you're stuck in the depression stage of grieving, a professional counselor can help. Call Carebridge EAP for a referral to a local therapist or check with your medical doctor.

