

Let's Talk: Coping with grief and loss

Presenter – Lynn Borteck, Clinical Counselor

Hi, my name is Lynn. Let's talk about grief. Have you ever lost a loved one, a pet or a cherished dream? If so, you've experienced grief. Grief has many characteristics. One of them is not speed. Grief has no timetable. There's no schedule for grief. This can be very hard to accept in a society where we're expected to move on and get things done in a hurry.

Grief hurts

So what can you expect when you're grieving? Number one, grief hurts. Sometimes it hurts so much it can almost feel unbearable. It can hurt physically, emotionally, psychologically. It can be very, very painful. Some people try to deny the pain. They just don't wanna feel it. They try to push it away, and they may use alcohol, or other drugs or other unhealthy ways of dealing with the pain. But it's really important to know that the pain is a normal part of the process of grieving.

Grieving is personal

Number two, everyone's grief is personal. No two people grieve exactly the same way. Your way of grieving is personal. You might find that being part of a support group will help you because you can talk to others, but remember that whatever you're feeling is your feeling, and for you, that's okay.

Heal over time

Number three, grief takes time. A loss is an event, but grieving is a process. At the end of grieving your life will be changed, but you will go on.

No standard for grief

Number four, there are no rules. Some people feel like crying. Other people don't shed a tear. Some people feel like talking. Some people don't want to talk. You just really can't compare how people mourn. It's not something to be judged. You can't say that this person is mourning a certain way, why am I mourning in a different way? It's that personal. Whatever you do is your way.

Ways to help those grieving

So let's talk about some ways to help deal with grief. A lot of people are very uncomfortable because they don't know what to do or say around someone who's grieving. That's very normal. Here's a recommendation. Don't say things like, "You'll be fine," or "I know just how you feel," or, "Your loved one wouldn't want you to be so sad." Because you don't know if any of that is true, and so it's not going to ring true. When you don't know what to say, don't say anything. Instead, listen, or even just comfort the person with a touch. That can be very reassuring and very supportive at this difficult time.

No set timeframe

Second common question, I've had a loss; when should I expect to feel better? Well again there are no rules, but typically people say that the first year is the hardest, because you have to go through birthdays and holidays and so forth while you're in the process of mourning. After a while you'll notice on your own that you're having more good days than bad days, and that's when you'll know that you're beginning to move on.

Be patient with yourself

And the last common question is, how can I make my grief go away faster? Well the answer is, you can't. Your grief is going to go away at its own speed. You'll start to feel better when you inside are ready to feel better. In the meantime, take care of yourself. Do the things that make you feel good, and be patient with yourself.

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