

You may not fully understand how you, a family member, or friend, are feeling now that a loved one is gone. And as grief is a complex process, unique to everyone, we've gathered grief support resources to help you recognize the subtle distinctions within the grieving process. If you have any questions or would prefer to speak to someone directly, please contact us.

The Nature and Purpose of Grief

Someone once said, "Grief is reaching out for someone who's always been there, only to find when you need them the most, one last time, they're gone." We think there is a lot of truth in those words.

The death of a loved one is life's most painful event. People's reactions to death remain one of society's least understood and most "off-limits" topics for discussion. Oftentimes, griever's feel totally alone in dealing with their pain, loneliness, and isolation.

Grief is a natural emotion that follows death of someone dear to you; and to one degree or another, it hurts. It is like an open wound which must heal.

At times, it can seem as if this healing will never happen. But, sometimes the healing process can take much less time than we have been led to believe. Grieving is purely an individual experience.

But It Does Have a Purpose

The ultimate goal of grief and mourning is to take you beyond your initial reactions to the loss. The therapeutic purpose of grief and mourning is to get you to the place where you can live with the loss in a healthy way. To do this, you have to make some necessary changes in your life, including:

1. Changing your relationship with your loved one—recognizing he or she is now gone and developing new ways of relating to him or her. Take comfort in knowing your relationship will continue - it will just be different.
2. Developing a new sense of yourself to reflect the many changes that occurred when you lost your loved one.
3. Taking on physically and mentally healthy new ways of being in the world without your loved one.
4. Finding new people, objects or pursuits in which to put the emotional investment that you once placed in your relationship with the deceased.

The bottom line of this active work of grief and mourning is to help you recognize that your loved one is gone. Then you must make the necessary internal, psychological changes, as well as the necessary external, social changes, to accommodate this reality. And it all takes time.



The Experience of Grieving

When we experience a major loss, grief is the normal and natural way our mind and body react. Everyone grieves differently. And at the same time there are common patterns people tend to share.

For example, someone experiencing grief usually moves through a series of emotional stages, such as shock, numbness, guilt, anger and denial. And physical symptoms of grief are typical also. They can include: sleeplessness, inability to eat or concentrate, lack of energy, and lack of interest in activities previously enjoyed.

Time always plays an important role in the grieving process. As the days, weeks and months go by, the person who is experiencing loss moves through emotional and physical reactions that normally lead toward acceptance, healing and getting on with life as fully as possible.

Sometimes a person can become overwhelmed or bogged down in the grieving process. Serious losses are never easy to deal with, but someone who is having trouble beginning to actively re-engage in life after a few months should consider getting professional help.

Seeking Guidance: Grief Counseling

The 1969 publication of what was to become a landmark book, *On Death and Dying*, written by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross changed the way we looked at grief. She described five stage of grieving: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance—stages which became the foundation of our understanding of the experience of grief for decades.

But later research has shown that we cope with grief not in linear or cyclical stages, but in a back-and-forth process which moves between the experience of sadness, anger, yearning, or crying; and the experience of feeling joy or contentment. This is almost a “safety valve”, giving the bereaved a period of rest in dealing with their grief.

Grief is, you see, work. And it seems the body intuitively knows that such hard work requires periods of rest. This natural back-and-forth process helps us to achieve the four essential tasks in grieving:

1. To accept the reality of the loss
2. To work through to the pain of grief
3. To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing
4. To emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life

But what if you get stuck? Perhaps you can't accept this new reality; or maybe working through the pain of grief is wearing you down. That's when a qualified grief counselor can help.

We are pleased to provide bereavement services for the families we serve. In addition, we have many community-based resources we can recommend to you. For more information, please feel free to ask us at the funeral home, or contact us here.

If you would like additional grief support, We are here to help you through all the moments after loss, please contact us at (830) 758-1500 .



MEMORIAL
Funeral Chapels



MEMORIAL
Funeral Chapels

memorialfuneralchapels.com

© 2017 Memorial Funeral Chapels, All Rights Reserved.