Feelings and Behaviors Associated with the Grieving Process

A wide variety of feelings and behaviors associated with the death of a loved one has been identified. Not everyone experiences all of these. Any or all of those listed here should be considered natural and normal in association with the death of a loved one.

• Initially, a sense of shock and feeling “numb” that is, feeling a “lack of feelings”.
• Profound sense of sadness, often accompanied by crying.
• Crying at unexpected times.
• Need to withdraw socially from time to time.
• Sense that “Nobody really understands “.
• Guilty feelings, sense of “If only I had... “.
• Sense of relief especially if the person who died suffered before the death.
• Sense of relief if the person who died caused the bereaved or other loved ones physical and / or emotional pain.
• Guilty feelings associated with a sense of relief that the person has died. This may be especially so when the deceased and / or the family had been suffering due to physical or emotional illness or issues prior to the death.
• Guilt feelings associated with being the survivor, a sense of “ I should have been the one to die” rather than the person who did die.
• Feelings of regret regarding your behavior and / or the behavior of the deceased.
• Feelings of anger associated with a sense of helplessness and frustration in not having been able to“ do anything “.
• Feelings of anger toward the person who died for “leaving” you.
• Need to blame someone or something for this death.
• A sense of “yearning” for the person who died.
• Feelings of anxiety associated with a sense of insecurity and fears such as, “ I can’t survive without him “.
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• Feelings of anxiety and fear associated with suddenly confronting the reality of death and your own mortality.
• Feelings of loneliness and being “different”.
• Overall feelings of helplessness.
• Need to hold or be close to objects that belonged to the person who died.
• Need to visit places that were significantly related to the person who died.
• Restlessness, inability to relax or concentrate at times.
• Intense preoccupation with the deceased.
• Increased sense of fatigue, decreased level of energy.
• Difficulty sleeping.
• Changes in appetite, may increase or decrease.
• Dreams of the person who died.
• Involuntary “calling out” for the person who died.
• Sense of presence of the person who died.
• Avoidance of anything and/or anyplace associated with the person who died.
• Feeling a need to take care of others who seem uncomfortable, they seem unsure of what to say, and unsure of how to behave.