



Understanding Grief

No one ever told me grief felt so much like fear

C. S Lewis – A Grief Observed

Grief is not a disorder, or disease or a sign of weakness.

It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity; the price you pay for love.

The cure for grief is to grieve.

Earl Grollman

Realms of Grief	
Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tightness in chest • Palpitations • Weakness in muscles • Dry mouth • Lack of energy • Digestion issues • Headaches • Weight loss or gain 	Behavioural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to sleep • Waking early • Over/under eating • Withdrawal • Dreams/nightmares • Avoiding reminders/emotions • Treasuring items of loved one • Unable to make decisions • Restless • Not able to complete simple tasks • Reliving death story
Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawing from family & friends • Losing friends • Avoiding large crowds • Not sure how to fit in with social circles • Who Am I? 	Spiritual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge your religious beliefs • Review priorities • Isolation • Who am I now? • Changing relationship from one of presence to memory • How do you continue to honor your loved one?
Emotional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness • Anger • Guilt • Loneliness • Fear • Fatigue • Relief • Shock • Yearning • Numbness 	

Secondary Losses

- All the other things you lose, besides your person...
 - Self Confidence
 - Financial support
 - Future Grandchildren
 - Hopes & dreams for future
 - Intimacy
 - History
 - Decision maker
 - Cheerleader

Anxiety

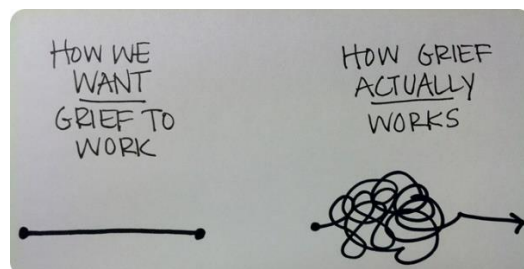
- Secondary Losses can lead to anxiety
 - What do you have control over
 - Create plan
 - Create mantra
 - Who can you call for support
 - Baby steps and acknowledge wins
 - Breathe

Support During COVID

- Define your bubble
- What makes you feel safe?
- YOU get to decide
- Baby steps
- Ask for practical support
- Maintain your social – always say Yes!

Every Day

Eat
Move
Connect
H2O
O2
Sunshine



The Mourner's Code

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling
2. You have the right to talk about your grief. Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.
3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions. Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt, and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.
4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.
5. You have the right to experience "griefbursts". Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but it is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.
6. You have the right to make use of ritual. The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More important, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.
7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality. If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs.
8. You have the right to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking, "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like, "It was God's will" or "Think of what you still have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.
9. You have the right to treasure your memories. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with who you can share them.
10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is best experienced in "doses." Be patient and tolerant with yourself. Avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.

Taken from "Understanding your Grief" Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Resources

Podcasts

Grief Out Loud
<https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/grief-out-loud-podcast/>

Whats Your Grief
<https://whatsyourgrief.com/grief-podcast/>

Books

Grief One Day at a Time by Alan Wolfelt
- this has a short passage by calendar day - some education, some inspiration

Its Ok to Not be OK, by Megan Devine (also on social media under #RefugeInGrief)

A Grief Observed by C.S. Lewis

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion

Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief by David Kessler

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping, and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One by Ellen Archer, Brook Noel, et al.

Other

Self Guided Anxiety Website
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/>

Bereaved Families of Ontario - Living With Loss Drop in group
<https://bfomidwest.org/programs/living-with-loss/virtual-living-with-loss-group/>

MyGrief.ca (a series of videos)
MyGrief.ca has been developed by a team of national and international grief experts together with people who have experienced significant loss in their own lives. It is not meant to replace professional counselling or other health care services.

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