



Schuler-Lefebvre

FUNERAL CHAPEL

Dedicated To Those We Serve

Caring Connections: Frequently Asked Questions: Grieving

What is grief?

Grief is the normal response of sorrow, emotion, and confused emotions that come from the loss of someone or something important to you. It is a natural part of life. Grief is a typical reaction to death, divorce, job loss, a move away from family and friends, or loss of good health due to illness.

How does grief feel?

Following a death or loss, you may feel empty and numb, as if you are in shock. You may notice physical changes such as trembling, nausea, trouble breathing, muscle weakness, dry mouth, or trouble sleeping and eating. You may become angry - at a situation, a particular person, or just angry in general.

Guilt is a common response which may be easier to accept and overcome by looking at the experience in terms of "regret". When we think "I regret I was not in the room when he/she died" or "I regret I was not able to speak more openly about dying" it is less critical than "I feel guilty about my behavior". People in grief may have strange or disturbing dreams, be absent-minded, withdraw socially, or lack the desire to participate in activities that used to be enjoyable. While these feelings and behaviors are normal during grief, they will pass.

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How long does grief last?

Grief lasts as long as it takes you to accept and learn to live with your loss. For some people, this is a few months. For others, it may take years. The length of time spent grieving is different for each person.

There are many reasons for the differences, including personality, health, coping style, culture, family background, other stressors and life experiences. The time spent grieving also depends on your relationship with the person lost and how prepared you were for the loss.

How will I know when I'm done grieving?

After a significant loss, you may be consumed and overwhelmed by the grief reactions you are experiencing. In time, as the reality of the loss sinks in, and all the changes as a result of the loss have been experienced, you will learn to adjust to living without the physical presence of the person who died. Eventually, even after significant loss, you will realize you are grieving less as you discover renewed energy in living. You will become consumed by the impact of the loss and begin to draw comfort rather than pain from the memories. In a sense, you are never "done grieving."

With a significant loss, there will always be moments when you will remember the loss, and perhaps you experience some of the feelings of grief. Fortunately, the time period between these surges will lengthen considerably as you learn how to cope with your loss.