

Myths about Bereavement

Myth:

"Everyone goes through the same stages in bereavement"

Fact

The way that people mourn their loss is unique and different. There is no "right" way to grieve your loss. There are also no clear "Stages of Grief" that you must pass through. While it is true that there are some phases of grief that people may have in common, it does not mean that there is a clear path of overcoming you loss. It will be a winding road with many turns and many ups and downs.

Myth

"Grief and mourning have a clear beginning and an end"

Fact

For some people the mourning process continues for the rest of their life. They may one day feel as if they are "done" grieving, only to find that something triggers in them a memory of the person who died and they are struck by feelings of sadness and loneliness. Also, it is hard to know how to judge when someone is "done" grieving. There are no standard guidelines or rules regarding the grieving process.

Myth

"Grief and mourning are purely emotional processes"

Fact

While most people identify grief as an emotional process, it can have an effect on your body as well. For example, you may find that following the death of a loved one, your appetite decreases and you have no desire for food. Or the opposite may occur – you may find yourself eating more than you typically do (this is sometimes referred to as "comfort food"). Also, you may find that it is more difficult to sleep at night or you have decreased energy during the day. You may have a "knot" in your stomach. You may find it difficult to concentrate on things following the death of a loved one.

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Myth

"I should only feel sadness about the death of my loved one. It is wrong to feel angry or betrayed"

Fact

When someone we love dies, it stirs up many emotions, not just sadness. Any emotions you experience following the loss of a loved one is OK. There are no "good emotions" and "bad emotions".

Myth

"The best way to get over this death is to just be by myself and be alone"

Fact

It is true that you owe it to yourself to have some alone time, especially following the death when you are usually surrounded by others at a funeral service or a wake or by visiting relatives, etc. However in the months following a death, if you find that you are isolating yourself from others in your life, it may be difficult for you to re-adjust to life without your loved one. Keeping a routine and keeping in contact (even if it is minimal contact) with others will help you adjust to life after the death of your loved one. Joining this group is one way to try to connect with others who have also experienced a death in their lives and it may give you the opportunity to find out that you are not alone in the things that you have felt or the thoughts that you have had.