



NATURAL AND NORMAL GRIEF RESPONSES

Grieving over the loss of a loved one is very painful and at times can seem overwhelming. Many of us wonder whether we are grieving in the "right" way and worry whether the feelings being experienced are "normal".

Here are some of the more natural feelings that you may encounter now and for the coming months. Allowing yourself to feel these feelings helps in the healing process.

- Feeling emotionally numb
- Knowing that the death has occurred, but having difficulty believing that the death has really happened
- Feeling tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest or in the pit of one's stomach
- Having a loss of appetite or a desire to eat more than usual
- Having a desire to smoke, drink, or use drugs (especially tranquilizers) in a greater amount than before
- Feeling restless and looking for activity and finding it difficult to concentrate and complete tasks
- Having difficulty sleeping, waking early, and often dreaming of your loved one
- Being overly concerned with your health and even developing symptoms similar to those of your loved one
- Feeling exhausted and lacking in energy
- Feeling low at times of birthdays, holidays and special occasions
- Spending money on things usually not purchased
- Feeling preoccupied with financial concerns

- Telling and retelling things about your loved one and the experience of his or her death
- Talking things over with the deceased person
- Feeling mood changes over the slightest things
- Feeling guilty over what was said or not said or for not having done enough for your loved one
- Being angry or irritated at the wrong person, at God, or the wrong circumstance or at the world
- Feeling intensely angry at your loved one for leaving you
- Having difficulty making decisions on your own
- Sensing your loved one's presence, believing you hear his or her voice or expecting him or her to come back
- Experiencing an intense preoccupation with the life of the deceased
- Assuming mannerisms or traits of your loved one
- Feeling as though life doesn't have any meaning; wanting to die
- Not wanting to be with people or having difficulty initiating contact with others
- Feeling self-pity and not feeling needed
- Crying at unexpected times

These are natural and normal grief responses. Crying and expressing your feelings to others can be helpful. Often it is hard to live through a grief experience and then to adjust to a new life. If you feel the need to talk, or just have questions, please feel free to call the Hospice of North Ottawa Community Bereavement Staff, at (616) 846-2015.