

Tip Sheets for Employees



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BUSINESS HEALTH SERVICESSM
Solutions for a Healthier WorkplaceSM

A confidential counseling and
referral program for employees and
their household members

1-800-765-3277



Understanding and Coping With Grief



The grieving process is an emotional, physical, and behavioral response to loss. It takes time to absorb the impact of grief. There may be an intensity and range of unexpected emotions or behaviors after a loss. You may not be prepared to handle such intense feelings. Part of the normal grieving process is experiencing an array of symptoms. Part of the healing process is learning those symptoms are a normal part of processing a loss.



Symptoms of Grief

Physical Symptoms of Grief can include sleep disturbances, stomach aches, tightness in chest, exhaustion/fatigue, crying, headaches, decreased resistance to illnesses, and muscle tension.

Emotional Symptoms of Grief can include feelings such as shock, numbness, sadness, anger, anxiety, fear, guilt, panic, loneliness and depression.

Behavioral Symptoms of Grief can include forgetfulness, denial, slowed thinking, listlessness, hypersensitivity, over-reacting, preoccupation and isolation.

The above symptoms are common reactions to grief. Grief is unique to each person in its impact and meaning. The intensity of grief changes over time.

You or a loved one may find some of the following tips helpful when working through a loss:

- **Be patient with yourself.** Your body, mind and heart need energy to mend. You may feel frustrated or overwhelmed with the intense feelings associated with grief. You may question why they won't disappear. There isn't a specific timeline for grief. Be patient with the process; ask for and accept help and support.
- **Attempt to maintain your normal routine.** Keeping a schedule will help build structure into your day to balance out the inconsistent periods.
- **Talk about the loss.** Seek support from your family and friends. This often alleviates symptoms of grief and provides insight into your feelings about the loss.
- **Eat Regular Meals, Drink Plenty of Fluids, Exercise, and Rest.** Try to keep your body nourished during this difficult time, even if you make small meals or take short walks. Listen to your body and rest accordingly. Be patient with feeling 'out of sorts'. Grief is a process. Do avoid using alcohol and drugs as a way to cope.
- **Prepare for Holidays and Anniversaries.** These are often the most challenging times to cope with grief. Be aware of your reactions as an anniversary, holiday, or special day approaches. Plan activities for yourself, create new traditions, honor the loss, and surround yourself with supportive friends and family.
- **Treat Yourself.** Give yourself permission to take time out for you! Read a book, go to a movie, or take a hot bath. Relieving stress symptoms, even if just temporarily, is important.
- **Speak with a Doctor or a Counselor.** Don't be afraid to talk about what you are experiencing. A professional can specifically address your physical and emotional needs to help you work through your grief.



Remember, You Are Not Alone!

Business Health Services (BHS), your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is here to help you through this process. The EAP is a free and confidential service offered to you and your household members. If you are interested in consultation, counseling, or additional resources, please call 1-800-765-3277. BHS is available 24 hours a day - 7 days a week.

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