

JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF COGNITIVE (THINKING), SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL SYMPTOMS TO GRIEF PART 2

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



Fatigue



Physical Weakness



Sleep Problems



Changes in appetite

It takes a lot more

courage

to let something go
than it does to hang on to it,
trying to make it better.

Letting go doesn't mean ignoring a situation.
Letting go means accepting what is,
exactly as it is, without fear,
resistance, or a struggle for control.

- Lyanla Vanzant

Symptoms of grief

One writer said this about the symptoms of grief,

"While loss affects people in different ways, many of us experience the following symptoms when we're grieving.

Just remember that almost anything that you experience in the early stages of grief is normal—including feeling like you're going crazy, feeling like you're in a bad dream, or questioning your religious or spiritual beliefs".

Physical

- No appetite or always eating
- Feeling exhausted all the time
- Can't sleep or sleeping more than usual
- Gastro-intestinal issues
- Tightness in throat, chest, other places in the body
- Headaches
- Crying

Emotional

- Sorrow
- Despair
- Anger
- Guilt
- Frustration
- Relief
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety

Social

- Desire to be left alone
- Changes in relationships
- "Normal" things/conversations seem meaningless
- Avoidance of social gatherings

Cognitive

- Confusion
- Difficulties with memory
- Decision-making is challenging and/or impaired
- Disbelief
- Nightmares and/or very vivid dreams
- Thoughts of being or going crazy
- Lack of motivation

Spiritual

- Sense that nothing matters
- Changes in religious/spiritual beliefs
- Questioning
- Anger at God
- Disillusionment

Common symptoms (feelings) of grief

Common symptoms of grief include:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Behavioural
- Cognitive (thinking)
- Spiritual
- Social

The February's Bereavement Café's Newsletter is a continuation [part 2] of last month's 'Common symptoms [reactions] of grief and will address the following:

- Cognitive (thinking)
- Spiritual, and
- Social reactions of grief.

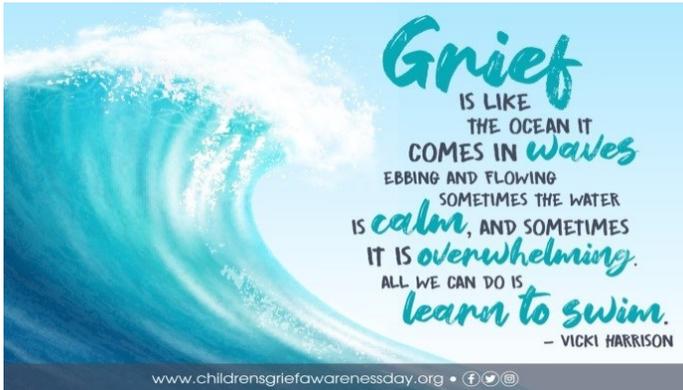


What is grief?

WHAT IS GRIEF

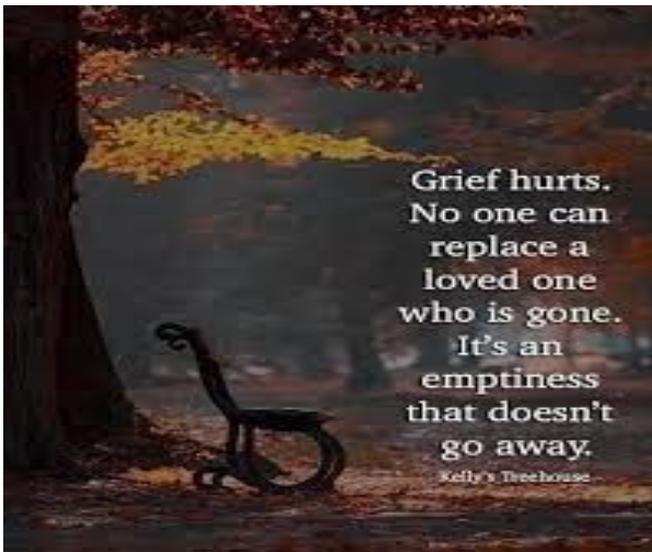


Grief is the process by which a person adjusts to the physical absence of someone with whom they continue to have a psychological or spiritual relationship.



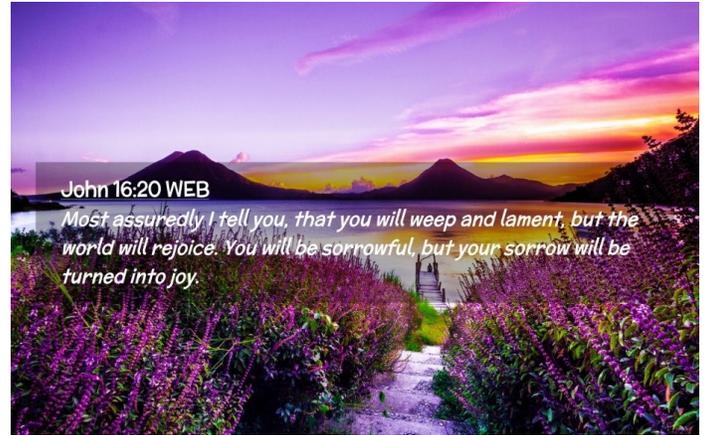
The writer, Nancy Reeves said this about grief, "it is a holistic process, involving emotional, physical, spiritual and mental dimensions; and, it can hurt in all four dimensions.

The purpose of the grieving process is to heal; and the pain- strange as it may sound, is helpful to that healing".



- Grief is mentioned often in the Bible. It is seen in the lives of many Bible personalities. The New Testament shows us that:
- Christ has changed the meaning of grieving.

- Christ has demonstrated the importance of grieving (Gary Collins).



Difference between bereavement , grief and mourning?

Bereavement

Bereavement refers to the state of loss It is the period of time during which you *feel* grief and *express* mourning. The main difference between grief and mourning is that grief is an internal process, while mourning is an external one.

What is the difference between grief and mourning?

Grief	Mourning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief is what you think and feel on the inside when someone you love dies. Its numbness, sadness, anger, guilt and sometimes relief all rolled up into one. • It's a pain in your gut and a hole in your chest. • It hurts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mourning is expressing your grief, letting it out somehow. • You mourn when you talk about the death, write about it, punch a pillow, cry. • Everybody grieves inside when someone they love dies. But only people who mourn really heal and move on to live and love fully again.

Question: things to ask yourself

"Have I been mourning this death or have I restricted myself to grieving"?
Do you have a difficult time expressing

Emotional symptoms of grief

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hyperactive or under active ▪ Physical distress such as chest pains, abdominal pains, headaches, nausea ▪ Change in appetite ▪ Weight change ▪ Fatigue ▪ Sleeping problems ▪ Restlessness ▪ Crying and sighing ▪ Feelings of emptiness ▪ Shortness of breath ▪ Tightness in the throat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numbness ▪ Feelings of unreality ▪ Sadness ▪ Anger ▪ Fear ▪ Relief ▪ Irritability ▪ Guilt ▪ Loneliness ▪ Longing ▪ Anxiety ▪ Meaninglessness ▪ Apathy ▪ Vulnerability ▪ Feelings of abandonment ▪ Overly Sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forgetfulness ▪ Searching for the deceased ▪ Slowed thinking ▪ Dreams of the deceased ▪ Sense of loved one's presence ▪ Wandering aimlessly ▪ Trying not to talk about loss in order to help others feel comfortable around them ▪ Needing to retell the story of your loved one's death ▪ Withdrawn from others ▪ Dependent ▪ Lack of initiative ▪ Lack of interest

your grief outside of yourself (i.e. mourning)? If so, why?

If you have permitted yourself to mourn, what are the ways you have done this?

Who or what has been helpful in your mourning?

Grief and Depression

Grief is different from depression. It's a natural reaction to loss. Here's how to identify and deal with grief.



Quote

According to Lianna Champ, there are no lessons on how to hurt or even how to cry,

and yet, we simply cannot avoid the traumas that happen in our lives. Grief teaches us how to be human. It takes us right down to our innermost fears; and when we think we can't take it anymore, we learn that we can fight and we are going to have to because no one can fight for us. It always has to be a journey of self-discovery and self-recovery.

SOMETIMES
 allowing yourself to cry
 is the scariest thing you'll ever do.

And the bravest.

It takes a lot of courage to face the facts,
 stare loss in the face,
 bare your heart and let it bleed.

*But it is the only way to cleanse your wounds
 and prepare them for healing.*

God will take care of the rest.

- Barbara Johnson

Walker Funeral Home
 www.HerbWalker.com

My mind knows
 you're in a better
 place.
 You are at peace.
 I understand that.

I just wish I could
 explain that to my
 heart.

**GRIEF SUPPORT &
 RECOVERY**

The Bible and grief

"LORD, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress." (Isaiah 33:2).



Isaiah 54:10 KJV
For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.



The name of the Lord is a
strong tower
 the righteous run to it and are safe.
Proverbs 18:10

KayleneYoder.com

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope?" (Romans 15:13, ESV).

Prayer

Father, thank You for taking care of Your children like a shepherd that keeps watch over His sheep.

When we wander astray, Lord, You lovingly seek us out and bring us back into Your protective care. When we have needs, You provide for us. You renew our strength when we are weary and discouraged (Isaiah 40:31).

You guide us in the right paths for Your name's sake (Psalm 23:3). Though some of those well-trodden paths are laid out in valley settings, You my God walk alongside us, lessening our fear of the unfamiliar settings and experiences of our mortal life.

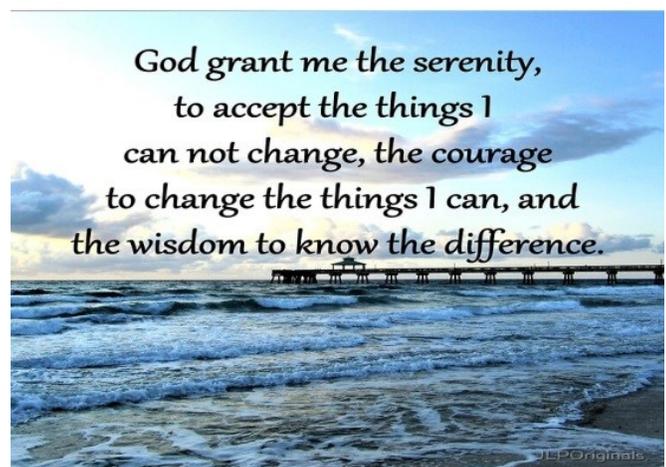
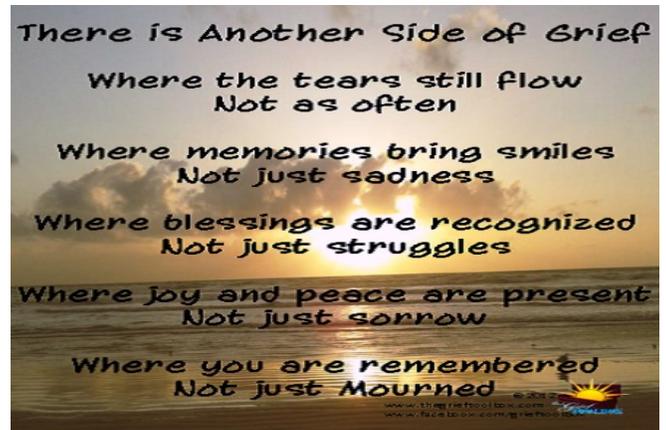
Your provision of everlasting peace is ours to receive here, and now, and forevermore. Thank You for never letting go. Through the calm and through the storm, You promise to uphold us with Your righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).



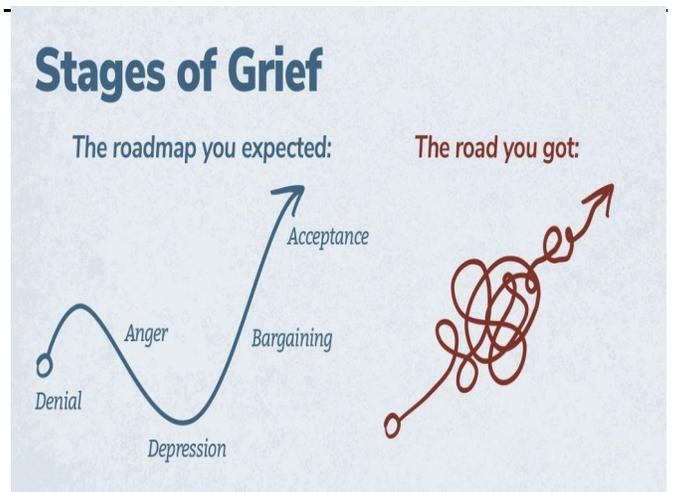
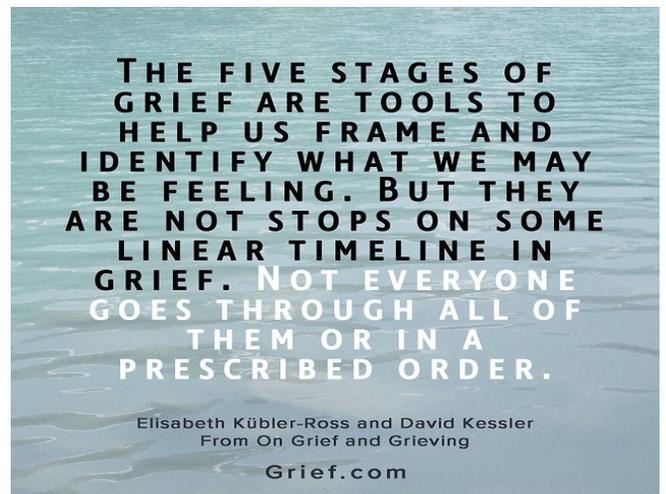
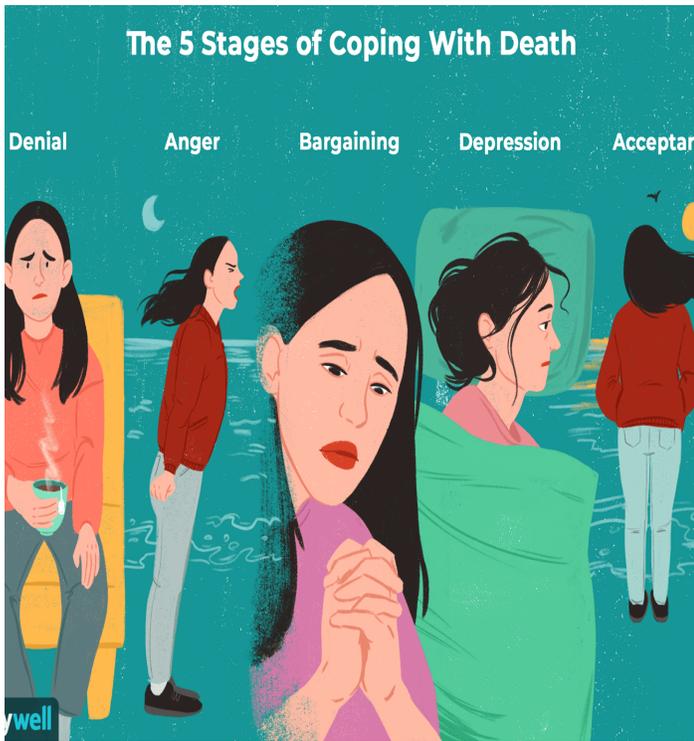
Amen

A Thought

One writer said that when we are grieving, we sometimes are afraid to laugh because others might think that our pain has passed or that our sorrow has been a sham. But just as tears give vent to the deep sorrow we feel, laughter reveals that while grief may have a grip on us, it hasn't choked the life out of us. Laughter takes some of the sting out of hurt. It gives us a perspective and relieves the pressure.



The Stages of grief



Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



Information and Communication

Emotional Support

Guidance and Direction

Common symptoms of grief

Cognitive (thinking)

- You may have heard of "baby brain," where new parents experience memory lapses and absent-mindedness during early parenthood.

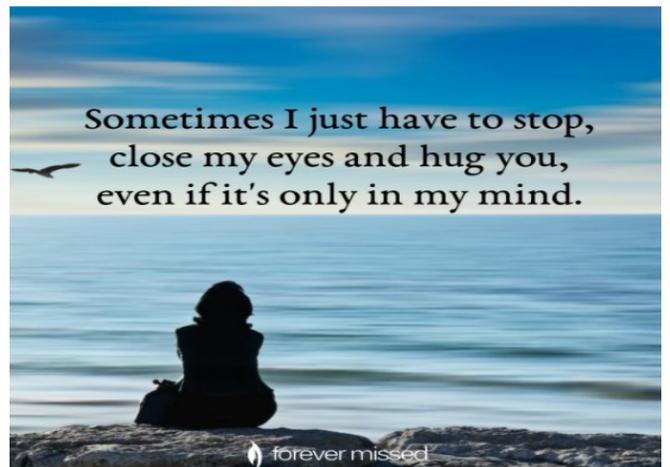
Cognitive effects of grief are sometimes referred to as "grief brain" or "grief fog." Grief can impact our ability to concentrate and make decisions. It can be difficult to think clearly and remember things. Items might be misplaced more often, names forgotten, tasks undone".

Difficulty concentrating

- You might feel a general sense of mental fogginess, and/or find it harder to focus and think things through.



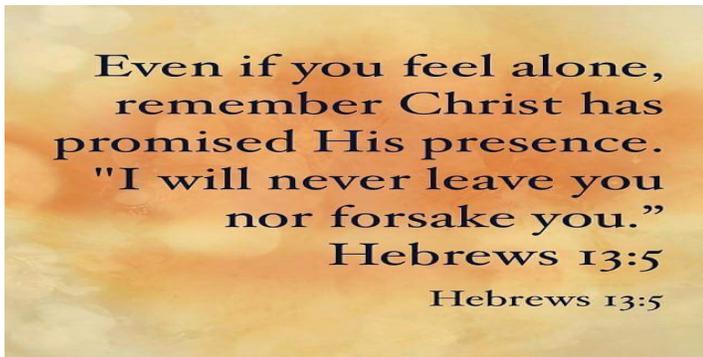
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
(Matthew 5:4 NIV)



Sometimes I just have to stop, close my eyes and hug you, even if it's only in my mind.

Disorganisation and confusion

- Perhaps the most isolating and frightening part of your grief journey is the sense of disorganisation, confusion, searching and yearning that often comes with the loss. These feelings frequently arise when you begin to be confronted with the reality of the death. As one mourner said, I felt as if I were a lonely traveller with no companion and worse yet, no destination. I couldn't find myself or anybody else." (Alan Wolfelt).



Other common cognitive symptoms include:

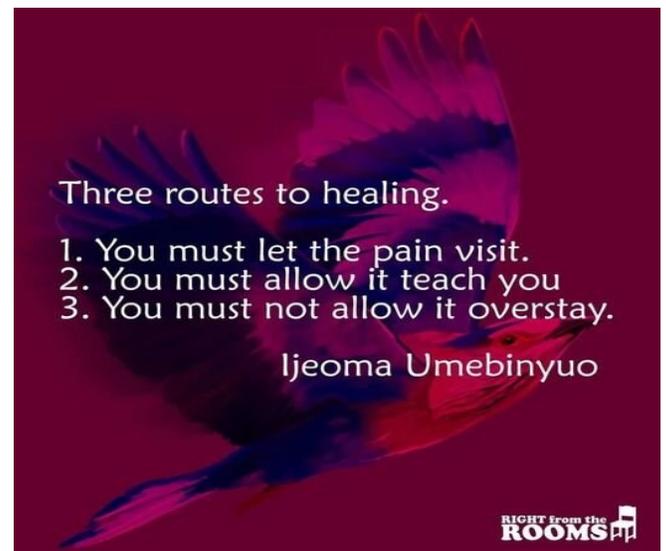
- Sense of the Deceased's Presence
- Preoccupation
- Forgetfulness
- Negative self- talk
- Grief can also trigger disbelief, or hallucinations.

How to process cognitive feelings of grief

Unfortunately, there's no magic tonic that can restore your ability to function when you're overcome with emotions. But, the following strategies may help you feel more peaceful as you find your way to a new normal (Dr Jannel Phillips- *Neuropsychologist*).

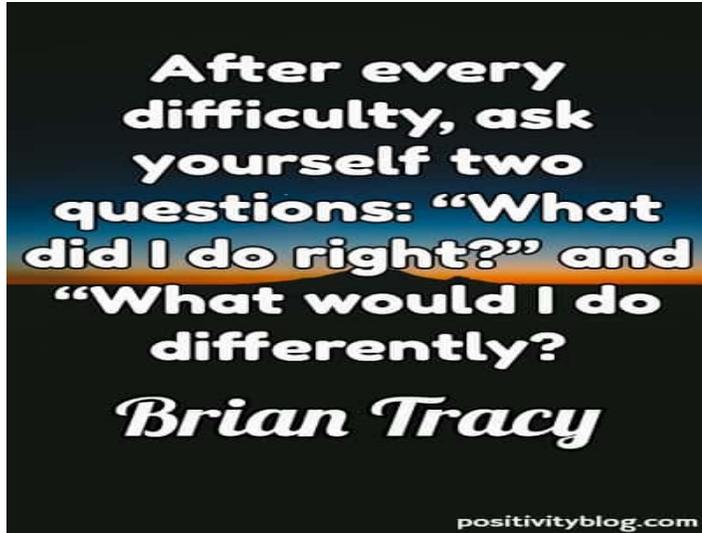
Practice self-care

- It is important to be gentle and patient with yourself. It may be unreasonable or impossible to expect to complete your normal tasks as you did before your loved one died.
- Naming your feelings and acknowledging them are the first steps to dealing with them. It's actually the process of becoming friendly with your feelings that will help you heal.

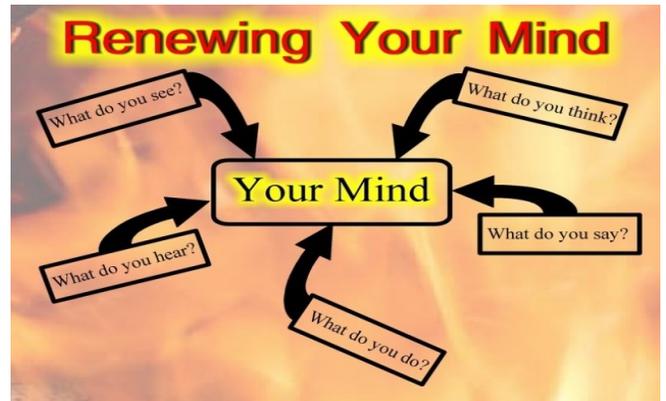


Challenge negative thought patterns

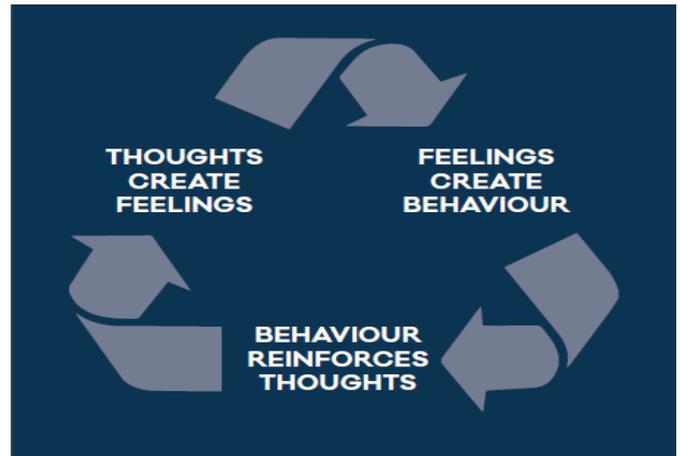
- Sharing memories is healthy but pondering on *what-ifs* can be mind-numbing. "It's not just that we're thinking about our loss, but also the situations tied to that loss."



The Bible assures us that whatever situation we are faced with, God is right there beside us, so call out to Him; allow Him to renew your mind (Roman 12:2)



Remember that our thoughts, feelings and behaviour are connected, for example, thoughts affect feelings, and feelings affect behaviour.



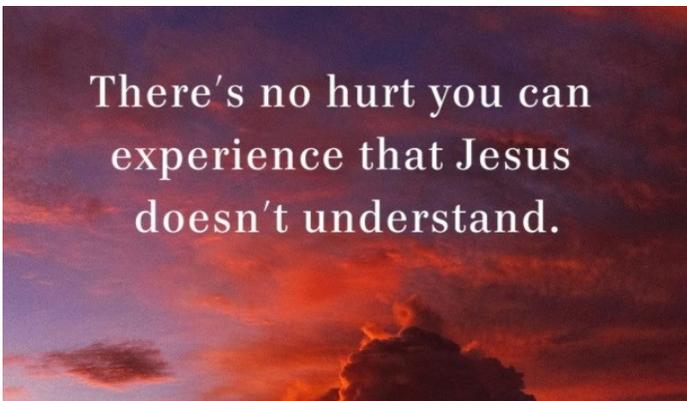
Please Note!

If you are struggling to think straight, and get back to your daily activities, please seek support to help you with this.

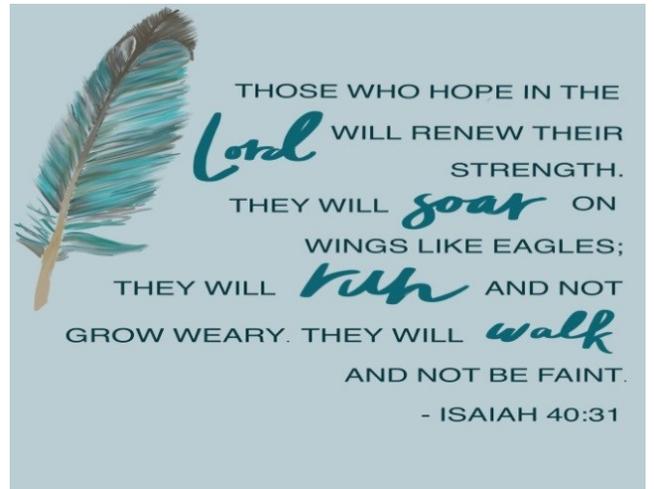
CRUSE NATIONAL HELPLINE
0808 808 1677

Cruse Bereavement Care

MONDAY	09:30 - 17:00
TUESDAY	09:30 - 20:00
WEDNESDAY	09:30 - 20:00
THURSDAY	09:30 - 20:00
FRIDAY	09:30 - 17:00



future beyond this life (Dr David Jeremiah)



One writer's experience of the Spiritual reactions of grief, "When grief and loss have touched my life,

I have discovered that my own personal source of spirituality anchors me, allowing me to put my life into perspective. For me, spirituality involves a sense of connection to all things in nature, God, and the world at large".

Feeling angry with God

One writer's experience of grief, "Grieving does not mean we have lost our connection to God or that our faith is faltering. We can be angry with God as we transition through grief. He will support and walk beside you

Common Symptoms of grief

Spiritual reactions:

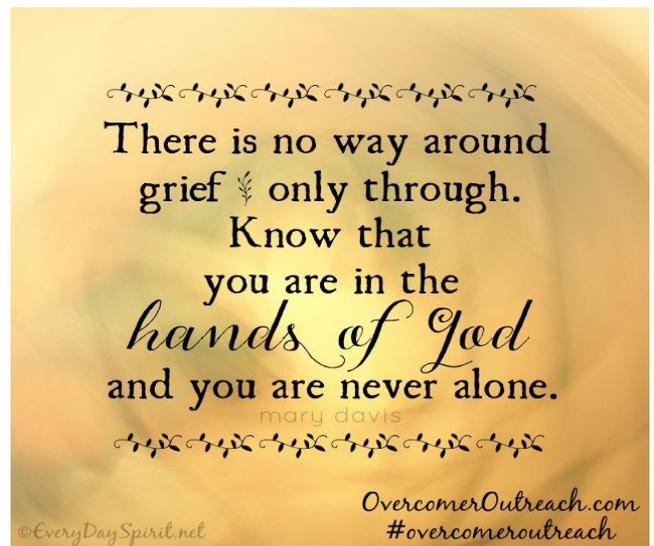
"Dealing with grief spiritually, doesn't remove the sting or crippling pain of sorrow. Grief plunges us into an unknown space and demands that we pay attention to it. But God's faithfulness partners with us and carries the weight of our sorrow".

"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint"
 Isaiah 40:31 (Dr David Jeremiah)

We will see and feel pain in this life - being a Christian doesn't change that. But the message of Scripture is that we can respond to painful experiences with hope that is rooted in a

surrounding you with a peace that passes understanding”.

- It is very natural to feel angry that the life as you had planned didn't go down as expected. People often turn their anger towards themselves, family, friends and even God.
- Questions people often asked are “How could God allow such a terrible thing to happen to me?” “Why Me”? It's OK to be angry and sad - that doesn't change the fact that God is an important part of your life.
- Psalm 23:4 remind us that” Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way”.



If you are feeling angry with God, find someone to talk with who will be able to listen to you without judgement.

Feeling abandoned or punished by God

In the midst of your struggles, you may feel like God has left you. Remember however that no matter how far away from God you feel, know that He loves you and He will never leave nor abandon you.

- No matter what you may be feeling or experiencing, God has NO intention of abandoning you.

Free, local support for you **Bereavement HELPLINE**

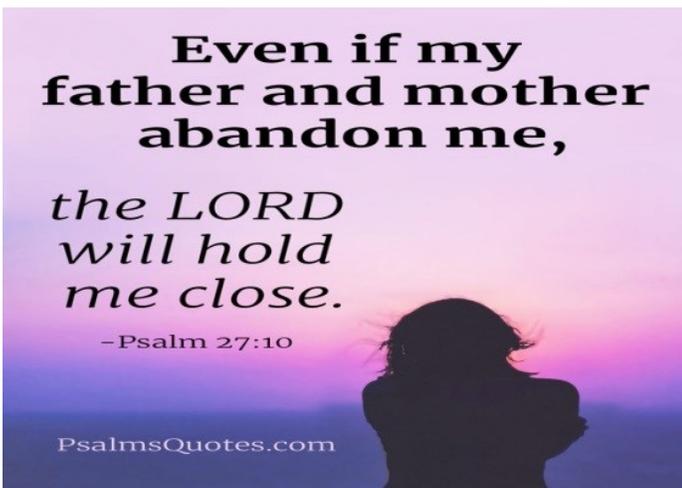
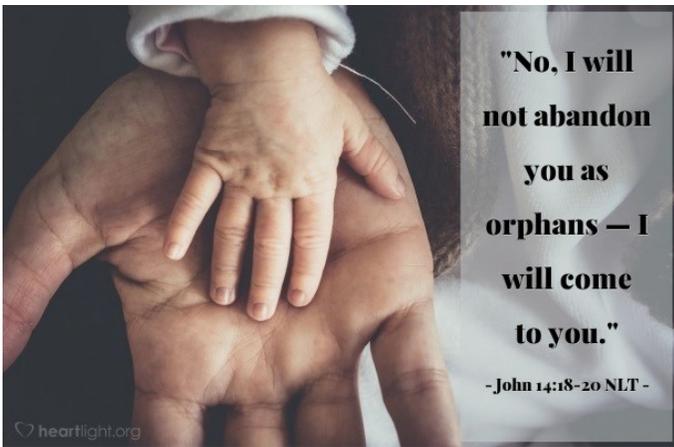
By calling our Bereavement Support Helpline, you can:

- Benefit from a listening ear and emotional support
- Find information & guidance on what to do after someone has died
- Discover free, local support in your community, tailored to you

Call our Helpline now on **01279 967670**

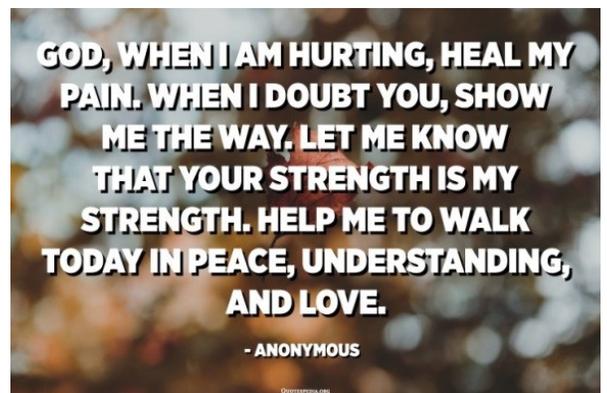
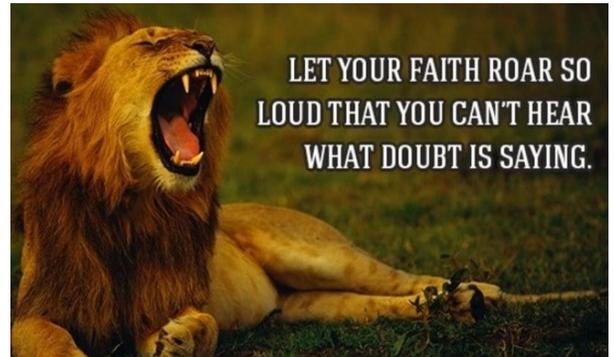


- Psalm 27:10 "For if my father and mother should abandon me, You would welcome and comfort me".
- "For the Lord loves justice and fairness; He will never abandon His people. (Psalm 37:28)



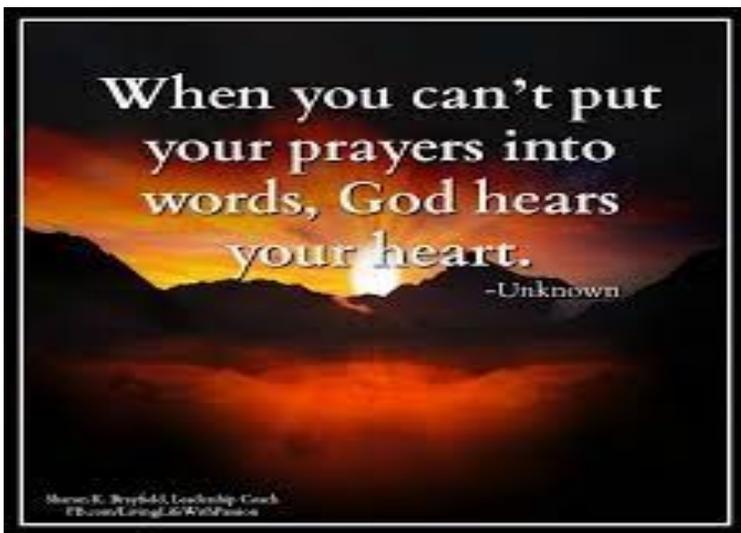
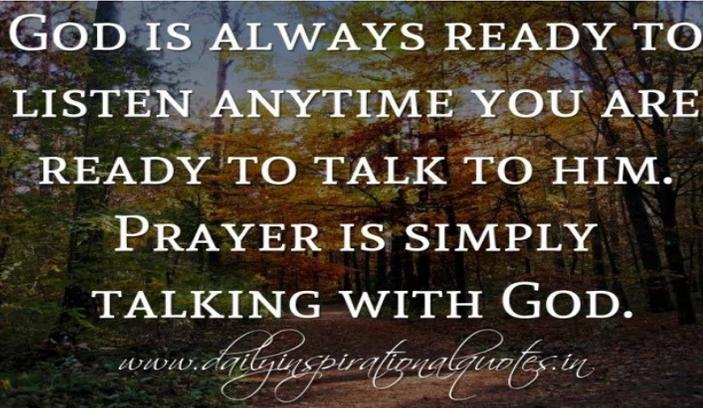
Other common spiritual reactions include:

- Struggling to find joy in worship
- Struggle with your faith or spiritual beliefs
- Questioning or doubting your faith
- Feeling spiritually connected/disconnected to God
- Feeling lost and empty



How to process spiritual feelings of grief

- Your spirit needs feeding just as much as your body does. Set aside time to feed it each day. You can care for your spirit by reading and meditating on the Word of God, praying, listening to music, connecting with fellow Christians.
- **Talk to God about your pain. Talk to Him in your own way.** Tell Him exactly how it feels and where it hurts. He wants our openness and honesty; even when there are no words, kneel/sit before Him in silence, He knows your heart and understands your sadness.



Common Symptoms of grief:

Social reactions

Social disconnection

According to research, "social disconnection after bereavement appears to be related to worries about being judged by others for grieving openly.

As a result it feels safer to spend more time alone than to be authentic about one's grief with others.

These experiences can lead to people feeling socially changed after their loss; they struggle to tolerate social situations in the way they once did and feel alienated from their social networks".

Grief and social isolation

Social isolation occurs when a person actively removes themselves from social interactions. For people suffering from social isolation, their primary goal is to spend time alone.

- The things that were once important to them now seem pretty unimportant.
- The person who died was one of your closest confidants or best friends.
- You don't want to leave the house because you're afraid something will trigger your grief and you'll become emotional in public.



I miss our conversations

I miss how we used to talk every minute of every day and

How I was able to tell you everything that was on my mind.

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Other common social reactions include:

- Feeling dependent on others
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Social withdrawal
- Preoccupation with own feelings and needs exclusively

How to process social reactions of grief

- Don't expect others to guess what you need. When you want to be touched, held, hugged, listened to or pampered, say so.
- Let others (especially children) know if and when you need to be alone, so they won't feel rejected.

According to Alan Wolfelt, One of our key needs of mourning is to receive and accept support from friends, family members, neighbours, and colleagues. The empathy of others allows us to express our natural and necessary grief outside of ourselves.

Whenever we talk about our grief and share our stories of love and loss, we are taking a step toward healing.

Please note!

- When we are going to through grief due to the loss of a loved one, we can sometimes find it difficult to cope with the changes that we are faced with, coupled with the cognitive, spiritually, and social feelings of the grieving process. If you can identify with this and need someone to talk to outside your network support, please don't

sit in silence. You can contact the Bereaved Support Café (information below), your Pastor or a member of the pastoral team, your GP or a counsellor (information provided below).

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF WHILE GRIEVING

During the grieving process, it is important to remember that everyone experiences grief differently. One way to help you during this process is to be compassionate towards yourself. Please see these ideas as suggestions only. Do what feels right to you.



1 GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

Many times we think that grief should be something we get over or move through quickly. Give yourself permission to really feel your loss. Do whatever it is that feels comforting to you, regardless what others may think. If your life is busy, set aside at least a few minutes each day to really feel your loss.

2 BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF

Treat yourself as you would treat a good friend going through the same loss. Be kind to yourself and put any self-criticism and judgments aside. You are doing the best you can.

3 AVOID HARSH ENVIRONMENTS

Now is not the time to watch TV news, horror movies or be in loud crowds. Surround yourself with your favorite books and soothing music.

4 EAT WELL & MOVE YOUR BODY

Don't numb yourself with junk food. If you don't have much of an appetite, eat healthy foods in small portions. Moving your body will also help you to clear your head and be in the present moment.

5 FIND FELLOW GRIEVERS

It may be tempting to isolate yourself from others, but tremendous healing can take place in a group of fellow grievers. Check your local churches, hospitals or even social networks to find a group where you are comfortable.

6 WRITE A LETTER

Writing can be a wonderful way to process your thoughts and emotions. Try writing a letter to your present self from your future self several years from now offering consolation and hope for the future. You can also try writing a letter to your loved one and let your emotions flow.

7 SPEND TIME IN NATURE

Spending time outside and around animals can be so grounding and can bring you fully into the present moment. Take everything in and open up your senses to the entire experience.

8 REVISIT AN OLD HOBBY OR TRY A NEW ONE

Did you play an instrument in the band? Did you always want to learn how to paint? Now may be a great time to indulge yourself a little and encourage your inner creative to come out to play.

kathrynavauken.com
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Practice Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is giving yourself the kindness and care you would give to another.

- Is about being forgiving, patient, kind, and loving to yourself as well as treating negative feelings with mindfulness instead of harsh self-criticism.



The Bereavement Café Support Group is for everyone.

The Bereavement Café

Resources on Grief

you can find most of the books below on Amazon

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/>

- Donna R. Williams & JoAnn Sturzl– Grief Ministry

- Norman Wright – Experiencing Grief
- Marty Tousley– Finding Your Way Through Grief: A Guide for the First Year
- William Worden – Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy
- Tom Zuba – Permission of Grieve : A New Way To Do Grief
- Malcolm Duncan: Good Grief –Living with Sorrow and Loss
- Norman Wright – Experiencing Grief
- Mary Williams and Steve Fraser – Someone has died suddenly
- Kathleen O’Hara – **A Grief Like No Other: Surviving the Violent Death of Someone you Love**
- Pam Vredevelt – Empty Arms: Hope and Support for Those Who Have
- Suffered a Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Tubal Pregnancy

USEFUL CONTACTS

We recognise that “enduring the pain of a loved one is one of the most difficult challenges we can face in life.

At its core, a loss creates a void, a hole in your life that must be faced”.

If you feel at any time that you are not coping with bereavement, having suicidal thoughts or any other negative emotions, please do not sit in silence. Help is available!

If you are not able to talk about your feelings with a family member or friend, you can contact:

OR

- Your Pastor or a member of the pastoral team
- Your GP
- www.wntcg.org/bereavement
- www.wntcg.org/care
- Samaritans Helpline: **08457 909090**
24 hours a day

- Cruse Bereavement Care: 0808 808 1677
- Bereavement Trust Helpline: 0800 435 455, from 6–10pm
- Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC)
- On the website– Homepage (ACC), Click on 'Find a Counsellor', then scroll down the page and enter your postcode for a list of counsellors in your area. You could Telephone 024 7644 9694 and someone will guide you through the process.

Young People–Bereavement services/Emotional support

Grief Encounter

- Provides support to children and families who have been bereaved via phone, online chat and email.
- You can also take part in group activities with likeminded families at their Fundays, Grief Groups and Remembrance Days.
- Phone open Monday–Friday 9am–9pm: 0808 802 0111

Email: griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk

Winston's Wish

- Provides support to bereaved children, families and any adults supporting a young person through bereavement.
- Open Monday–Friday 9am–5pm.
- Phone: 08088 020 021
- Email: ask@winstonswish.org

Their [online chat](#) service provides support directly to young people. Open Fridays 10am–1pm.

Cruse Bereavement Care

- Provides support to anyone affected by bereavement.

Helpline open Monday–Friday 9.30–5pm, with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings when they're open until 8pm. Phone 0808 808 1677.

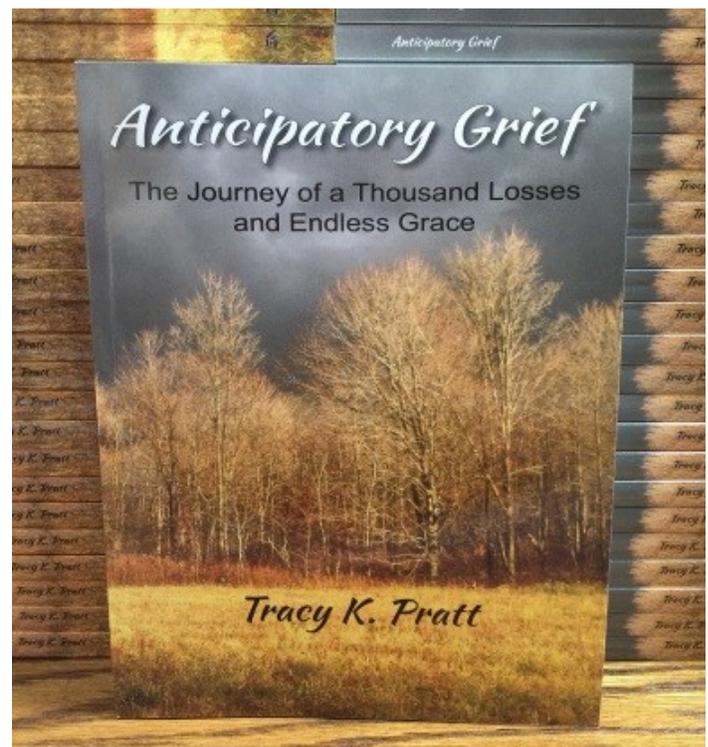
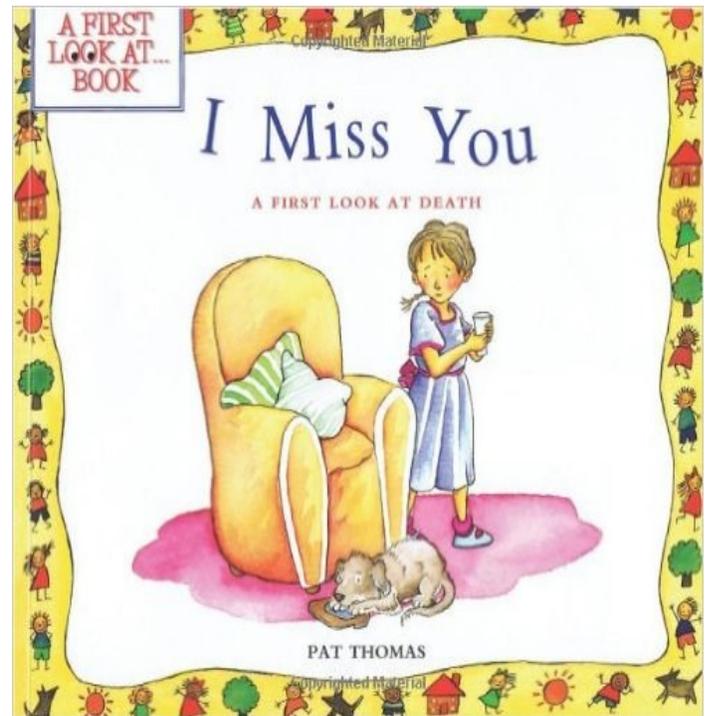
Grief Encounter:

Provides support to children and families who have been bereaved via phone, online chat and email. You can also take part in group activities with likeminded families at their Sundays, Grief Groups and Remembrance Days.

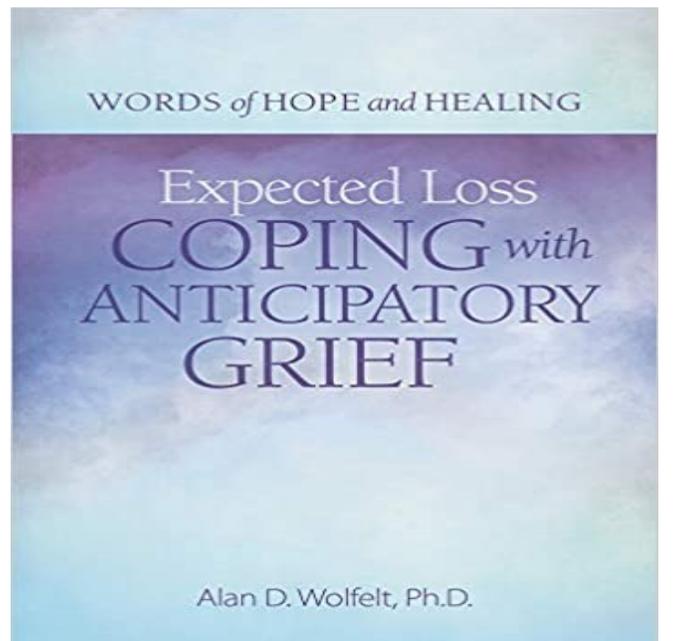
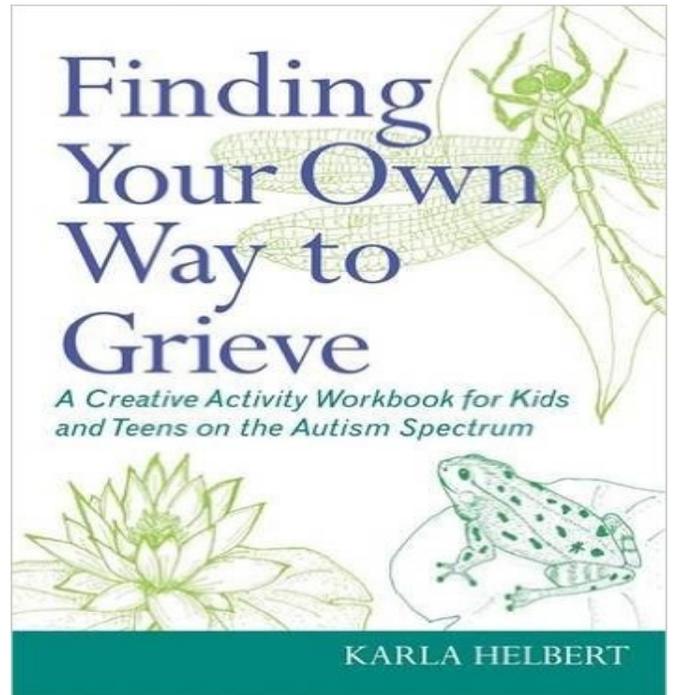
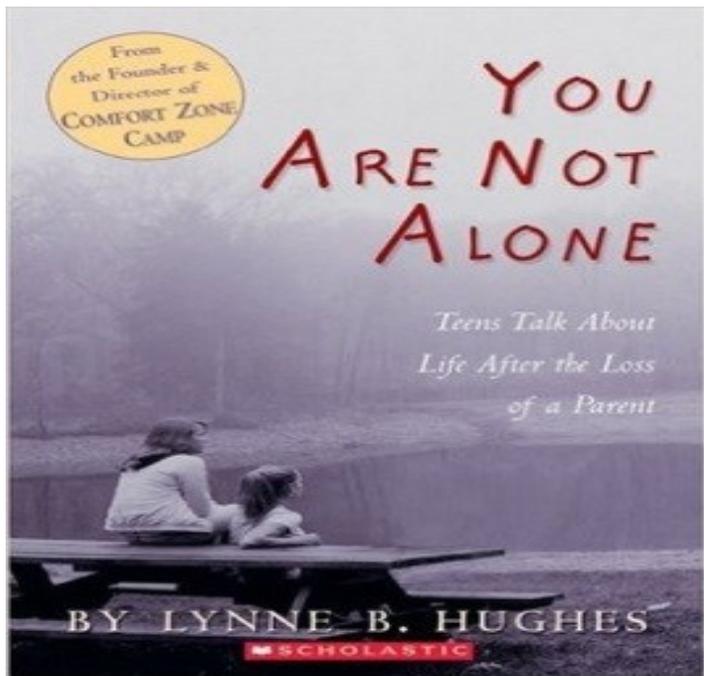
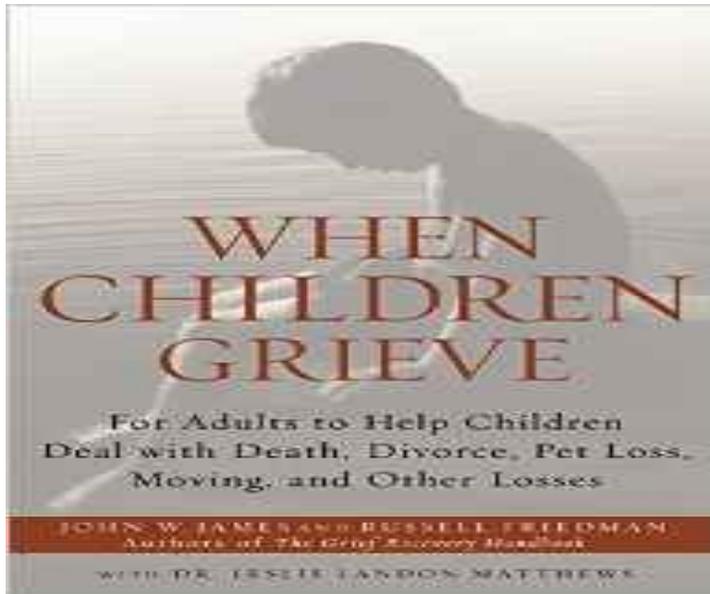
Phone open Monday-Friday 9am-9pm:
0808 802 0111

Online chat - Email: griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk

Reading Resources on Grief:



BOOKS THAT HELP YOU DEAL WITH GRIEF



Bereavement

How other people can help



Do remember that appearances can be deceptive

I may look as if I'm coping okay, but inside I may be falling apart.

Don't be unprepared for the truth

Don't ask me how I am if you only want to hear "I'm okay thank you."



Do invite me out to coffee or lunch

Just to change the scene for a while.



Don't tell me that you've been too busy to phone or get in touch

Better to say "I didn't know what to say."



Do be ready to listen

To all the jumble of emotions I may be feeling without being judgemental.



Don't try and give me answers

It is unlikely that you will have any that will satisfy me – just allow me to express all my fears, questions and doubts.



Do encourage me

To be kind to myself and not to push myself to meet other people's expectations of how I should be.

Don't measure the way I react

Or the emotions I express by your own expectations or experience. My grief is unique to me.



Do be aware that there will be times when I don't feel able to talk

But this doesn't mean I won't want to talk at another time.



Don't feel you have to do something

Just be there.



For more information on bereavement support please visit: www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/bereavement-support

