

ISSUE 15

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JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF COMMON SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF - PART 1

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



Fatigue



Physical Weakness



Sleep Problems



Changes in appetite

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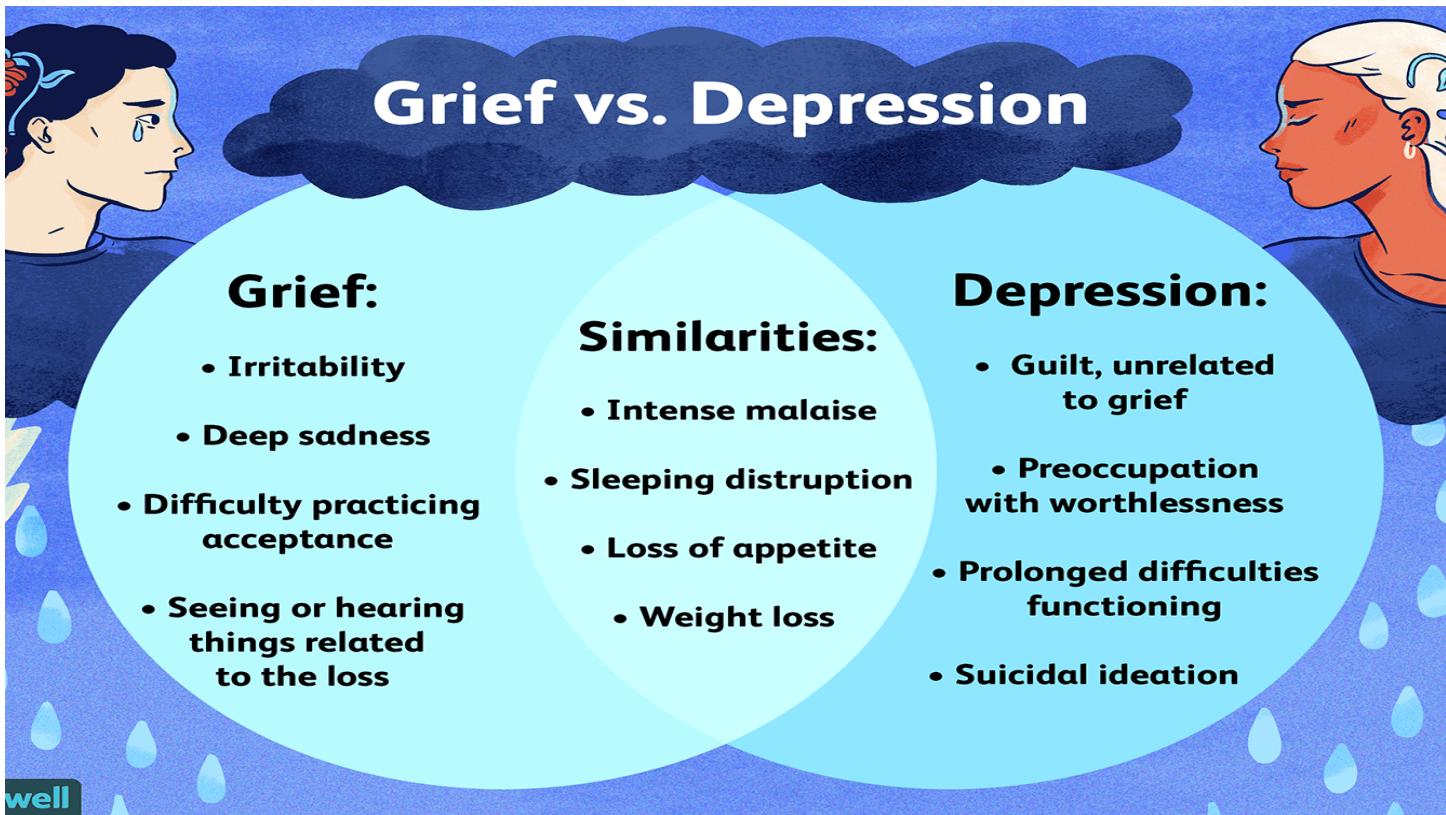
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One writer said this about the symptoms (reactions or feelings) of grief, when we stop thinking of grief as a timeline, we can look at the actual physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual reactions individuals may experience.

Simply knowing these feelings are normal can help some people in mourning. Understanding the symptoms of grief is also helpful for those around them.

What is grief?

According to one writer, "Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is to learn to swim."



well



Common symptoms (feelings) of grief

Common symptoms of grief include:

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

The symptoms of grief' will be in two parts. Part 1

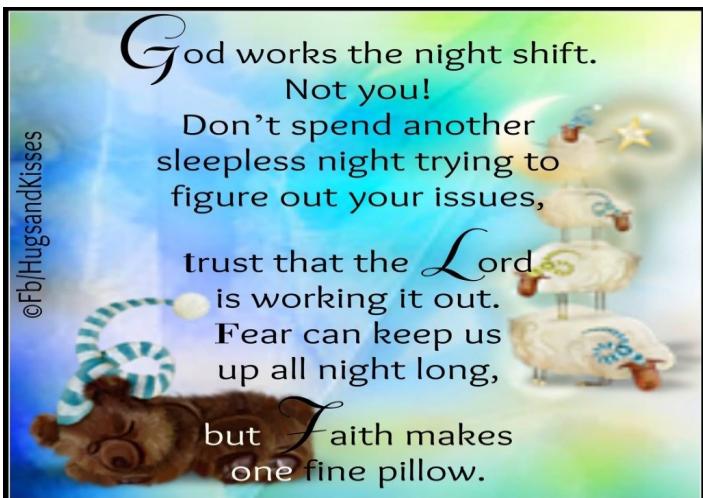
will be on the Physical, Emotional, and Behavioural symptoms. Part 2 will be in the August Bereavement Café's Newsletter and will cover Cognitive (thinking), Social, and Spiritual symptoms.

The Bible and grief

The Psalms tell us of God's presence and comfort as we "walk through the valley of death", and we learn that the Word of God encourages those who weep with grief (Gary Collins).

Quote

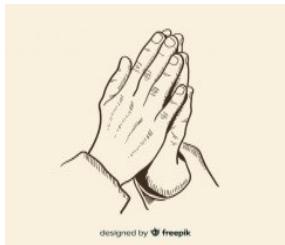
"God is aware of your wounds and scars and knows how to draw for a healing deeper than you can imagine. Yes God works the night shift; Even when nothing seems to be moving in your darkness; even when your situation seems out of control; even when you feel alone and afraid".



Prayer for healing grief

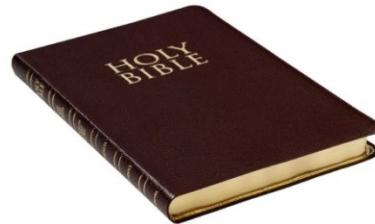
"Lord, at the moment nothing seems to help the loss I feel.

My heart is broken and my spirit mourns. All I know is that Your grace is sufficient. This day, this hour; moment by moment, I choose to lean on You. I know with all my heart that when I am at my weakest, Your strength is strongest. Right now, I pour out my grief to You and praise You that one glorious day when all suffering is extinguished and love has conquered, we shall walk together again." Lord, I thank you for hearing and answering our prayers. Amen.



Other Scriptures verses for a grieving heart

John 11:33 – "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled".



Romans 15:13 – "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".

Matthew 5:4



Physical feelings (symptoms) of grief:

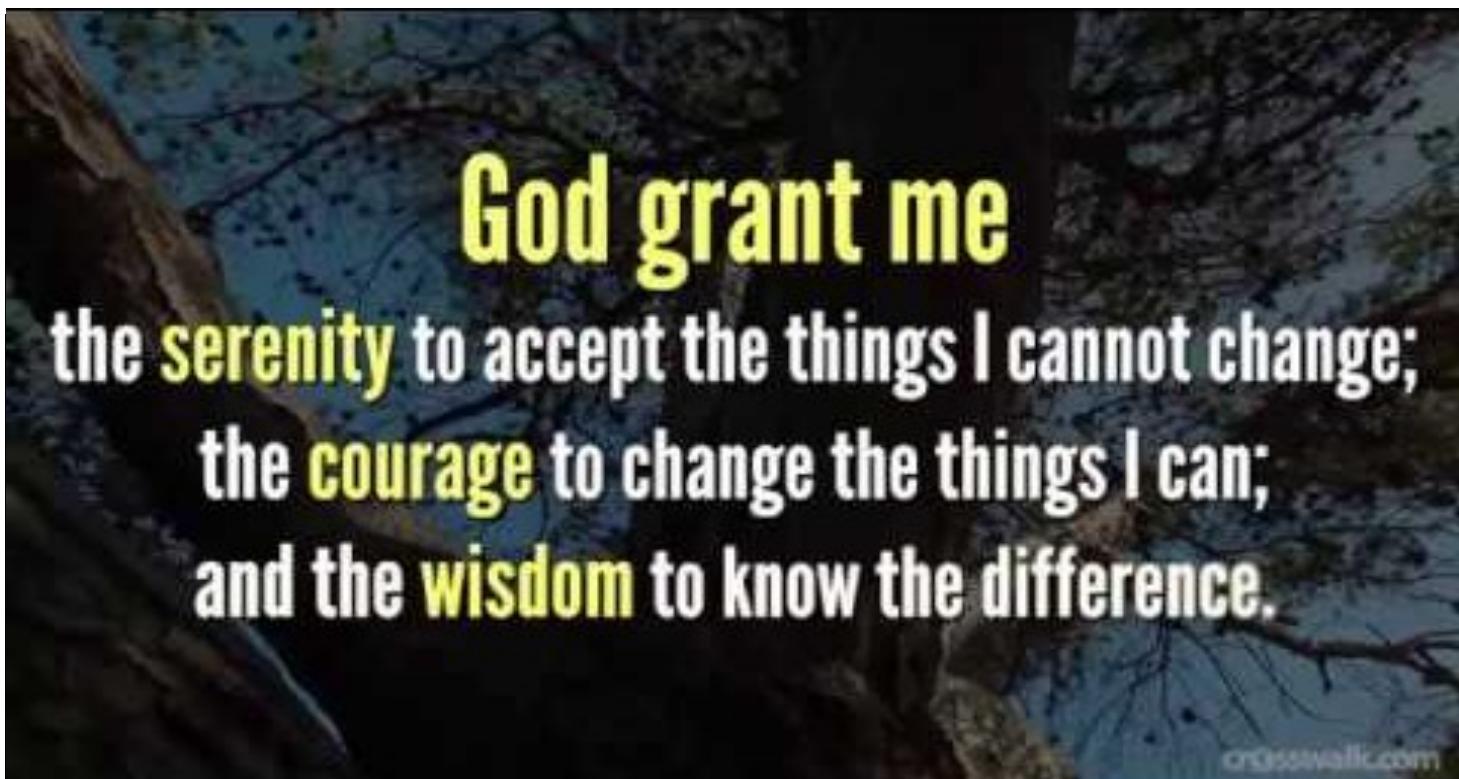
One writer said that, many people have physical symptoms after the death of a relative or friend. These can be frightening. Some people say the symptoms are so strong that they worry they are seriously ill. But in grief, physical feelings are quite common. They can include:

Headache

- This is a type of ache/pain, but it is a very specific and very common type. Stress is the most common source of headaches and, as you may know, grief is one, huge, immense, life-encompassing stressor.

Inability to focus

- It can feel impossible to focus on anything when you are under stress, distracted and forgetful, or struggling with fatigue or headaches.
- You may find yourself totally zoning out in meetings, in class, in conversations, and almost anywhere else. Sometimes you may be distracted by memories of your loved one or thinking about



life stressors that have come with the loss.

Fatigue

- You feel exhausted all the time.
- You feel run down; you are always ready for a nap.
- Ironically, when you try to sleep you may not be able to, only making your fatigue worse.



Digestive Problems

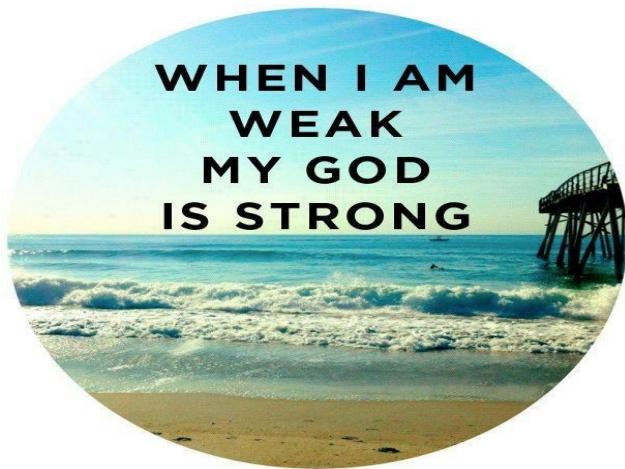
- Often connected with the disruption to our normal eating habits or routines, the bereaved often experience temporary problems with their

digestive systems, such as constipation, diarrhoea, stomach pain, a "hollow feeling" in the stomach, queasiness, or feeling nauseated.

Other physical feelings of grief:

- Physical weakness
- Frequent bouts of illness
- Muscle tension or soreness
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Please Note! If you are worried about any of these symptoms, you should talk to your GP about this.

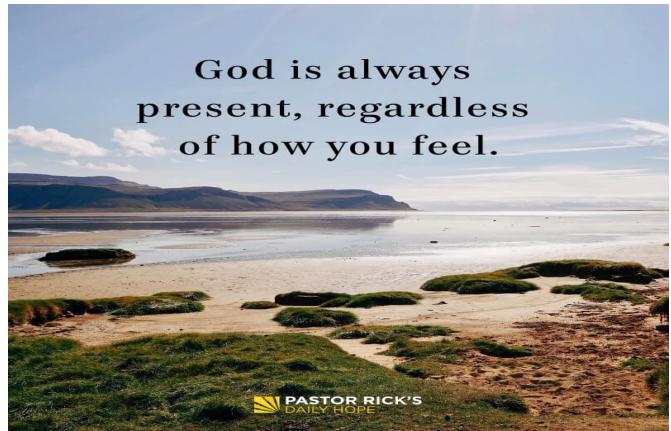
How to process physical feelings of grief

According to the Pathways Home Health and Hospice, those that are grieving should listen to their body, for example:

- If you need sleep, get it. If you feel the need to cry and let go, do it. If you need to talk to a friend about what you're going through, call them.
- Give yourself permission to experience the emotions you need to experience as you feel them, as this is integral to the grieving process. Remember to be gentle with yourself and the fact that you are going through something that has a lasting impact on your life.

Remember to keep in mind that there is no definite timeline or step-by-step process for accepting a loved one's passing.

Remember to talk about how you're feeling to a family member, friend or join a support group. Remember also that you're never alone; our God is always there beside you.

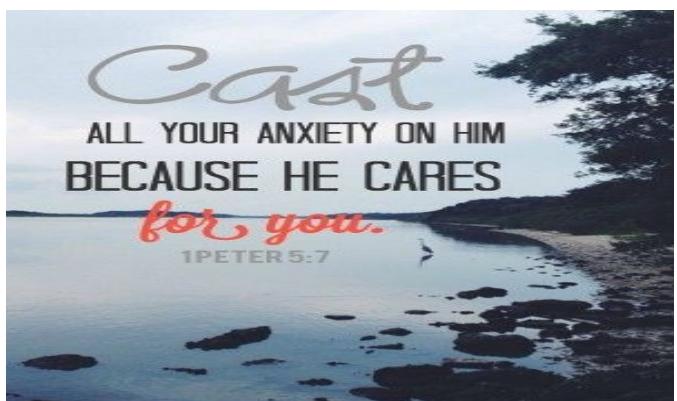


Emotional feelings of grief

"Your feelings can be chaotic after a death and this can be overwhelming and sometimes frightening. However, this is usually normal and intense feelings tend to ease over time". Emotional symptoms can include:

Anxiety

Anxiety can range from a light sense of insecurity to a strong panic attack. Anxiety usually comes from two sources: doubt about one's ability to survive without the deceased and a heightened sense of personal awareness of one's own mortality.



Guilt and Self Reproach

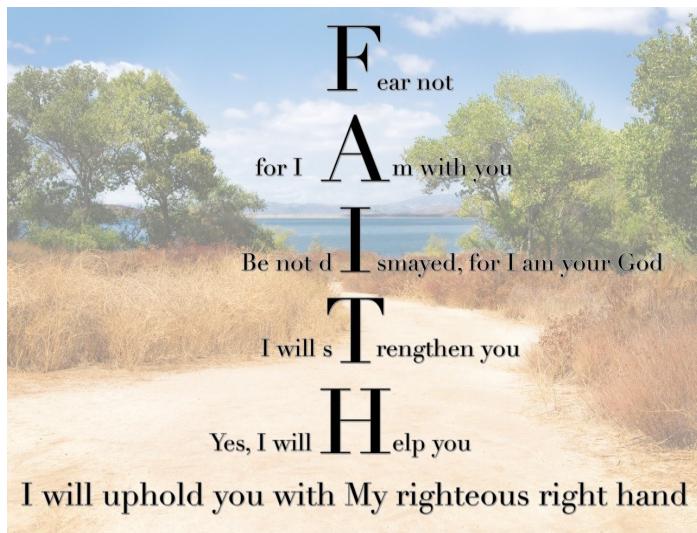
The bereaved often experience a sense of guilt and self-reproach, usually over something that happened or something that was neglected around the time of death. "Was I kind enough?" "Could I have done more?"

Sadness

- Profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.

Fear

- A significant loss can trigger a host of worries and fears. You may feel anxious, helpless, or insecure. You may even have panic attacks. The death of a loved one can trigger fears about your own mortality, of facing life without that person, or the responsibilities you now face alone.



Irritability

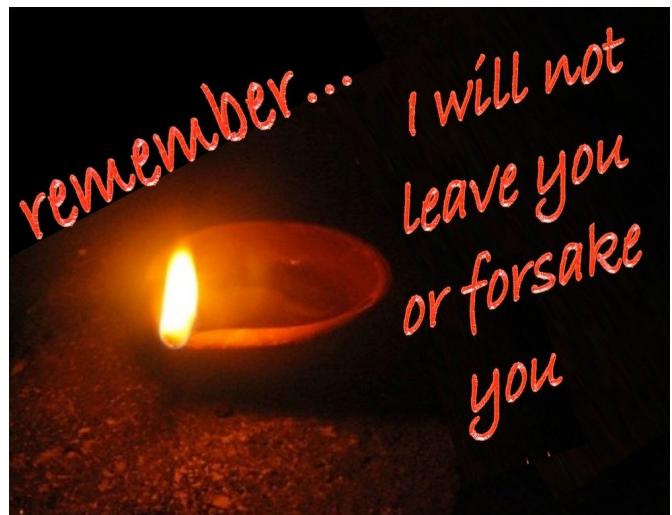
- Although family can be a source of support when you're grieving, family quarrels are not uncommon after a death.

Feelings of detachment

- These are particularly common in the period just after the death. You might feel detached from your life, but these feelings usually fade over time.

Loneliness

- This is a feeling frequently expressed by the bereaved, especially those who have lost a spouse and who were used to a close day-by-day relationship.



Other emotional feelings of grief

Mood swings and emotional outburst
Reduced sense of self and identity
Feeling of isolation

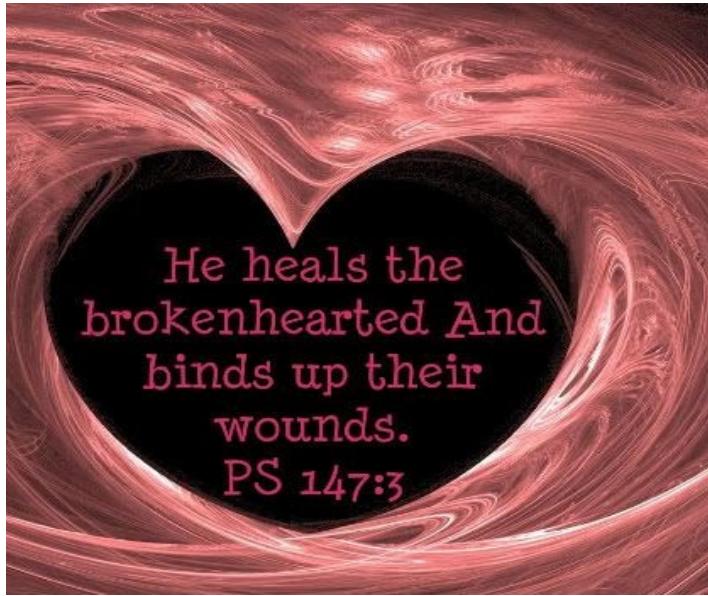
How do I process my emotions?

Processing emotions is about learning to understand, make sense of and deal with emotions in healthy productive way.

According to the Author, Rhonda O'Neil (The Reality of "The Emotions of Grief")

Do not push your emotions aside

- Let them help you to move forward and accept that your life will be different. You will be different. This is the sad and brutal truth of grief and loss.
- Your emotions are trying to help you heal your broken heart. Feel them. Listen to them.



Work through your emotions: hang onto the love and the positive memories

- Eventually it is the love you shared, and holding onto those memories, that will be the healing balm for your heart.
- Allow the negative emotions to move through you, but hang onto the positive memories and the love.

Realise that a part of your heart will always be wounded

- Keep working through your emotions and you will eventually come across that joy again.

Remember that everyone responds to grief differently.

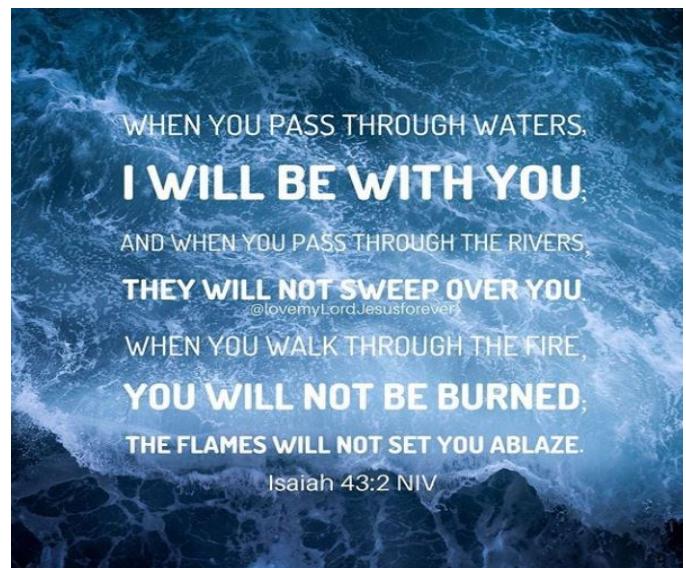
It is said that, grief is based on emotions.

Grief is based on your personal relationship to whom or what was lost.

Each person and relationship is different, which means that how we deal with each loss will be different as well.

There's no right way to grieve, and everyone has different ways of dealing with their feelings.

Remember also that in your grief journey, you're never alone. The presence of our Lord is always with us. He reassures us in Isaiah 43:2 that:



Behavioural feelings of grief

There are universal signs of grief that are manifested by people behaviourally.

It is important to know the behavioural signs and symptoms of someone who is grieving so that, even if they do not verbally acknowledge their pain, we may be more understanding and tolerant of their absent-minded behaviour or their temporary inability to handle day-to-day functions due to grief and depression. (Open to Hope Community).

Forgetfulness, absent-mindedness, lack of focus

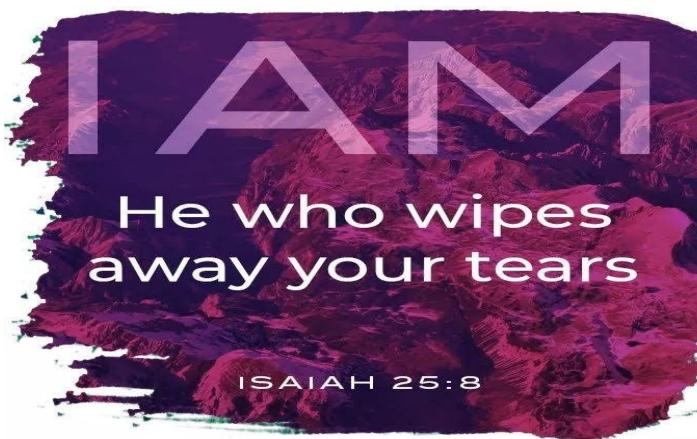
- People who are in grief are usually forgetful and absent-minded from frequently thinking about their lost loved-one.
- Sometimes, forgetfulness is also a by-product of our grief coping mechanism that tries to shut off any emotion-triggering thoughts to experience less of the pain.

Assuming mannerisms and behaviours of the deceased

- In the hope of bringing back the memory and of connecting to the deceased, some people assume behaviours of the deceased. This behaviour is usually observable with death within the family.

Frequent crying bouts

- Grief does not choose the time or the day for the bereaved to cry and express their pain.
-



Changes in sleeping patterns

- It is not unusual for people in the early stages of loss to experience sleep disturbances.
- These may include difficulty going to sleep or early morning awakening. Sometimes these require medical intervention but in normal grief they usually correct themselves.

Other behavioural feelings of grief:

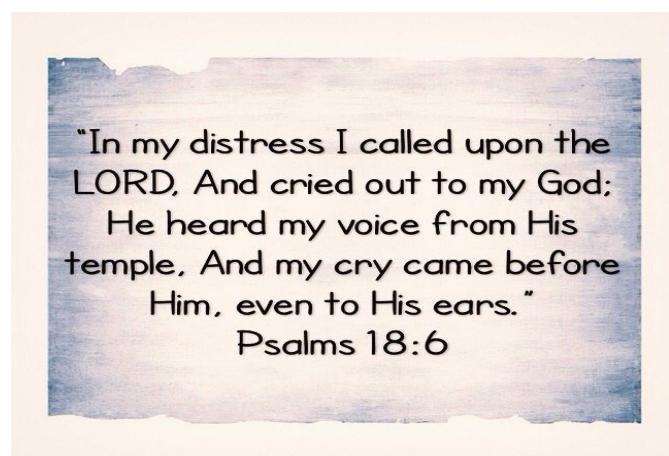
- Withdrawing from others
- Disengagement from hobbies and interests
- Seeing or hearing the voice of the deceased
- Avoiding reminders of the deceased

How to process behavioural feelings of grief

- Bouts of crying
- If you feel like crying, just get it all out of your system and cry again whenever you feel like it.



Psalms 18:6 also reminds us that:



Remember that there's no limit to how many tears a person can cry before they cease to be

"productive.

Remember also that your tears are not slowing you down or keeping you from moving forward.

Stay physically healthy

- People who are coping with grief tend to stop looking after their health
- Force yourself to eat three balanced meals a day as often as you can and to make sure you're eating foods that make you feel good and energetic.
- Do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better.

Please note!

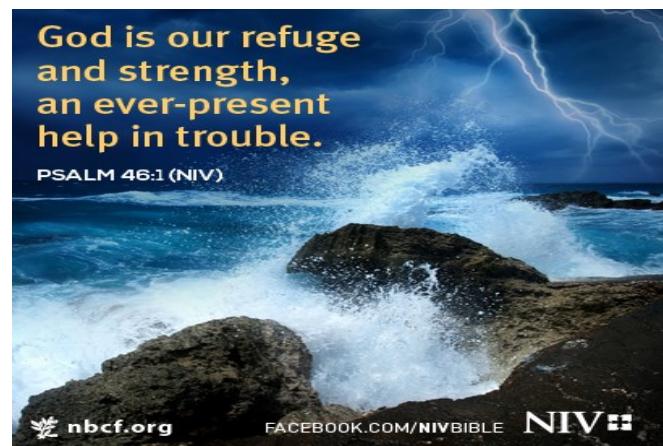
- When we are going through grief due to the loss of a loved one, we can sometimes find it difficult to cope with the changes that we are faced with, coupled with the physical, emotional and behavioural feelings of the grieving process.
- If you can identify with this, and need someone to talk to outside 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).

Remember that as you experience the different symptoms (feelings) in your journey of grief, it is important to give yourself far more space and time than you usually do. When you're grieving, normal day-to-day self-care may not be enough.

Remember to "take extra care of yourself – try to eat well, keep your body hydrated, and get some rest even if you can't sleep.

Take gentle exercise if you can. Be kind to yourself – don't try to do too much while you're grieving".

Remember also that Psalm 46:1 tells us that:



Please remember to bear in mind that lockdown has eased but COVID is still out there!



Be blessed; Stay safe

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

- 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.

- www.wntcg.org/bereavement
- www.wntcg.org/care
- bereavement@wntcg.org

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: grieftalk@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



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.



Do invite me out to coffee or lunch

Just to change the scene for a while.



Do be ready to listen

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



Do encourage me

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



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 be unprepared for the truth

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



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."



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.



Don't measure the way I react

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



Don't feel you have to do something

Just be there.

