

When Professional Help Is Indicated:

Some people get “stuck” in one or another of the stages of grief and have difficulty moving on towards healing and normal life functioning. When this happens, it is often helpful to seek professional services to deal with the symptoms that are complicating the recovery process. If you have trouble functioning for longer than a couple of weeks because of depression or anxiety, talk to your doctor. “Complicated bereavement” is a condition that responds well to treatment with medicines or counseling with a mental health provider either individually or in a group.

You should call a health provider if:



You feel hopeless and detached for more than a couple of weeks.



You cannot stop yourself from thinking about death or suicide.



You have a sudden change in your behavior that concerns you, such as drinking more alcohol than you normally do.



You have been grieving longer than you think is good for you.



Sunshine Community Health Center

HC89 Box 8190
Talkeetna, AK 99676
(Mile 4.4 Talkeetna Spur Rd.)
(907) 733-2273 or (907) 495-4100

To find information online,
scan the QR code or visit:

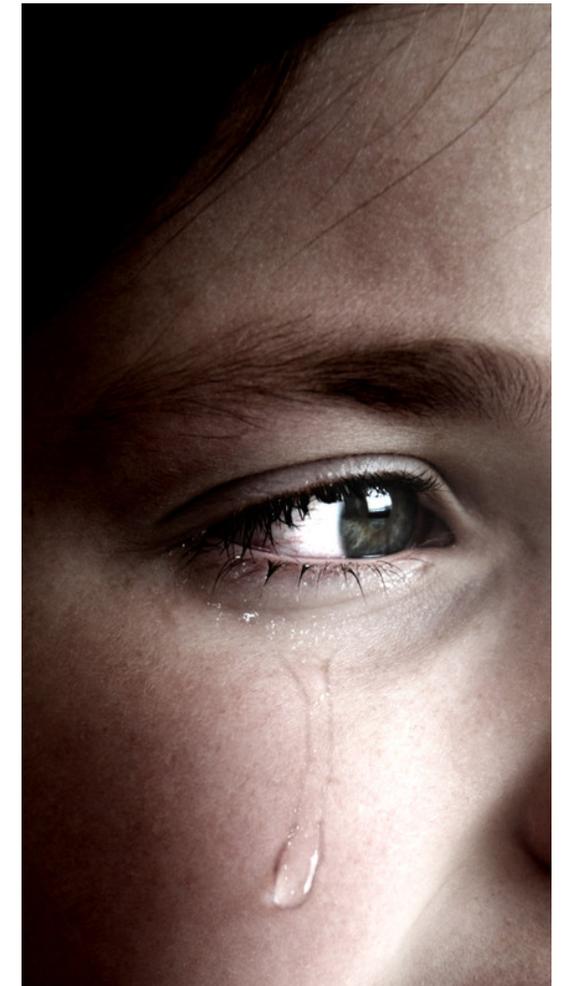
www.sunshineclinic.org/behavioral-health/grief/



Grief

Learn:

- The different types of losses
- What are the 7 stages
- Ways to cope with grief
- When you need professional help



A Normal Life Process

At some point in our lives, each of us faces the loss of someone or something dear to us. The grief that follows such a loss can seem unbearable, but grief is actually a healing process. It is important to remember that each person's experience of the grieving process is different—there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Types of Losses

- Loss of a Person or a Pet
- Health Related Losses
- Loss of Control or Safety
- Loss of Plans, Hopes & Dreams for the Future

7 Stages of Grief

- Shock and Denial
- Pain and Guilt
- Anger and Bargaining
- “Depression”, Reflection, Loneliness
- The Upward Turn
- Reconstruction and Working Through
- Acceptance and Hope

Normal Responses to Grief

When faced with a major life challenge, a person can experience a wide range of physical and emotional responses. These intense, overwhelming and unbearable responses often come in waves. Some of the more common physical responses to a loss include: fatigue, headache, dizziness, palpitations, restlessness, crying or sighing, trouble sleeping, shortness of breath, abdominal pain, back pain, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, weight change, increased appetite, decreased appetite, chest heaviness, and throat tightness.

Strong emotions such as sorrow, sadness, fear, anger, terror, aching and guilt are among the very normal, common emotional responses for a person in grief.

Other emotions can include: irritability, panic, anxiety, numbness, denial, relief, and apathy. A person may exhibit behaviors such as avoiding, self blaming, disbelief, vulnerability, emotional fluctuations, forgetfulness, slowed thinking, and difficulty concentrating. Feelings of longing, helplessness, loneliness, meaninglessness and abandonment are not uncommon.

Coping with Grief

It may help to know that each person's reaction to a loss is unique. As a result, different people may experience, react and respond very differently when faced with a loss; this can be particularly difficult if you and your spouse or family members have different coping strategies and styles. Knowing that there are different ways of coping may help you to understand someone else's response to the loss. You can then look for ways that you can cope together and ways that you can cope apart. Grieving and its stresses pass more quickly, with good self-care habits.

- Stay connected to a close circle of family or friends.
- Maintain some type of a normal routine.
- Eat a balanced diet, limit high calorie and junk food, drink fluids.
- Avoid using alcohol, medications or other drugs in excess or to mask the pain.
- Get exercise and rest.
- Talk to others, especially those who have lived through and survived similar experiences.



Books available for loan at Sunshine Community Health Center:

- The How to Survive the Loss of a Love Workbook: Surviving, Healing, & Growing
- Swallowed by a Snake: The gift of the masculine side of healing
- Helping Children Cope with Death
- How Can I Help? 12 Things To Do When Someone You Know Suffers a Loss
- Grief: Climb Toward Understanding
- Living With Grief (4 books, a series)
- Tear Soup