

# **GRIEF PROCESS/STEPS**

When grieving due to a loss or bereavement there are considered to be 5 stages

## **1. DENIAL**

In this stage we refuse to believe what has happened. We try in our minds to tell ourselves that life is as it was before our loss. We can even make believe to an extent by re enacting rituals that we used to go through with our loved one. Flashing back to times and conversations in the past as though they were here with us now. They can all be part of this stage. Other feelings or behaviors include shock, numbness, disbelieving, confused and isolated.

## **2. ANGER**

We get angry. The anger manifests itself in many ways. We can blame others for our loss. We can become easily agitated having emotional outbursts. We can even become angry with ourselves. You must try not to turn this anger inwards; to release this anger is far better way to cope with grief.

## **3. BARGAINING**

Bargaining can be with ourselves or if you are religious with your god. Often we will offer something to try to take away the reality of what has happened. We will try to make a deal, to have a loved one back as they were before to event occurred. It is only human to want things as they were before.

## **4. DEPRESSION**

Depression is a very likely outcome for all people that grieve for a loss. This is usually considered the most difficult stage of the five to deal with. There can be a feeling of listlessness and tiredness. You may find yourself bursting helplessly into tears. Feeling like there is no purpose to life anymore. Feeling guilty, like everything is your own fault. You may find you feel like you are being punished. Pleasure and joy can be difficult to achieve even from the things and activities which you have always gained delight. If at any time in this stage you feel like doing yourself any harm please seek professional help. Other feelings you may experience is feeling withdrawn, less communicative, empty, helpless sad, lonely, and physically upset.

## **5. ACCEPTANCE**

The final stage of grief. It is when you realize that life has to go on. You can here accept loss. You should now be able to regain your energy and goals for the future. It may take some time to get here but you will. These are a time that you accept the loss and are able to feel pleasure without shame or guilt.

Adapted from: [www.york-united-kingdom.co.uk/funerals/grief/](http://www.york-united-kingdom.co.uk/funerals/grief/) and Kubler-Ross, E. *On Death and Dying*, New York: MacMillan, 1969

replace or fill the shoes of the dead person. The person needs affirmation that the unique person that he or she is remains undamaged.

## **ABNORMAL GRIEF REACTIONS** (May need intervention)

When we look at abnormal grief reactions, the grieving person has turned away from grieving and has substituted an activity, which allows him or her to deny the pain. Occasionally, the person may not respond to the care and support that is offered.

Professional intervention is indicated:

*If the grieving person displays protracted periods of hyperactive behavior, and is unable to stay focused at school or work for any length of time.*

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*If the person avoids speaking of the death to you or any other teacher and has no known resource outside with whom he or she shares feelings.*

*If the grieving person is using drugs and or alcohol to cope with stress.*

*If the person has drastically changed relationships or friendships.*

*If the person has cut him or herself off from all old friends and relationships that could provide understanding and compassion.*

*If the person continues to have physical symptoms like those of the deceased, provide intervention.*