

# What's Normal in Adult Grief?

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Waking up each day and momentarily wondering if this death really happened or if it was a dream is common.

Grief takes much longer than you or your friends and family want it to take.

Although death is a part of living, because we live in a society that avoids death, we are not prepared for the intensity of the feelings, we don't know what to expect, and our friends and family often have unrealistic expectations for how quickly we "should be" moving along.

The intensity of your grief remains for months. The numbness that provides some protection at first wears off and you begin to feel more pain or a different kind of pain. Grief can be hard and ugly. You may not like how you feel or how you are behaving. Give yourself grace. Your emotions are overwhelmed. You will be able to regain control over your emotions eventually.

You won't be "over it" or "back to normal" in a few weeks. In fact, in the first month, the shock has just begun to wear off and the reality of long-term loss begins to set in. Also, you never "return to normal." You have to learn a new normal of life without your loved one.

Life moves on very quickly for everyone else, while you are still struggling with the reality that this death really happened.

Grief involves a wide range of feelings: sadness, anger, guilt, fear, anxiety, etc. They are all part of grief as your entire world has been rocked.

The following are all normal issues when one is grieving:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering what you have read
- Difficulty remembering anything-- what day it is, who you have talked to, what is on your schedule, etc.

You don't have to have all the answers. It is okay to be uncertain and confused.

Each person's grief is different because of different personalities and different relationships with the deceased. So, your path may look very different from the grief journey of someone else.

Experiencing a spiritual crisis and doubting one's faith are normal.

Struggling with "who am I" is normal. We become different people after a profound loss. Grief changes you forever in some ways, but the core of who you really are will return.

Grief is not a linear path. You may think you have gotten through a part of the process, only to return to the same feelings or struggles.

The 5-stage model from Kubler-Ross was never intended to be applied to grief. Those are the stages a person who is dying goes through, so don't feel there is something wrong with you if you don't fit the stages.

Your grief is a measure of your love. Grief changes you forever, but the core of who you are is still there.

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