

# Dealing with Grief

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services – SAMHSA



## Pre-reading

Questions: What is grief? How do people express it?

Definitions: Typical – having common characteristics  
Anxious – feeling worried, nervous or afraid

## Reading

15 Grief is the normal response to sorrow and confusion that comes from losing someone or  
34 something important to you. It is a natural part of life. Grief is a typical reaction to death, divorce,  
34 job loss, a move away from family or friends, or loss of good health due to illness.

51 Just after a death or loss, you may feel empty and numb, as if you are in shock. You may  
71 notice physical changes such as trembling, nausea, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. Those in  
85 grief often have trouble sleeping and eating.

92 You may become angry – at a situation, a person, or just angry in general. Almost  
107 everyone in grief also experiences guilt. Guilt is often expressed as “I could have, I should have,  
124 and I wish I would have” statements.

131 Grieving people may have strange dreams or nightmares. They may be absent-minded,  
143 withdraw socially, or lack the desire to return to work. While these feelings and behaviors are  
159 normal during grief, they will pass.

165 Every person who experiences a death or other loss must complete a four-step grieving  
180 process. First, accept the loss. Second, work through and feel the physical and emotional pain of  
196 grief. Third, adjust to living in a world without the person or item lost. Fourth, move on with life.  
215 The grieving process is over only when a person completes the four steps.

228 So how does grief differ from depression? Depression is more than a feeling of grief.  
243 Clinical depression is a whole body disorder. It can take over the way you think and feel.

260 Symptoms of depression include: changes in sleep patterns; feeling worthless or helpless;  
272 low energy or fatigue; thoughts of death or suicide; weight loss or weight gain; loss of interest in  
290 what you used to enjoy; and, trouble concentrating or remembering.

300 If you recently experienced a death or other loss, these feelings may be a part of a normal  
318 grief reaction. But, if these feelings **persist** with no lifting mood, ask for help. Talk with a friend,  
336 a teacher or a co-worker. Call your doctor and tell him or her how you are feeling.

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Level 5.5

## Understanding

1. How are depression and grief similar? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. How are depression and grief different? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What is grief? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. When might a person experience grief? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Is the grieving process ever over? If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. What type of behavior changes may occur in those who are grieving? (List at least three.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What does the word **persist** mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What type of grief have you experienced? How did it affect you?

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