

What are normal grief reactions?

People will have a variety of reactions to grief. Where we sometimes go wrong, is that we think grief is mostly about tears and sadness when in fact it affects the way we feel, think, act and our health and wellness.

When we understand this broad view of what grief is like, we can appreciate more fully what grieving

people are going through.



Grief is often described as 'the normal and natural' response to loss. Yet when it happens to us, we often feel like we are going crazy and there is nothing normal about our world right now.



Normal grief can look something like this:

- Shock; disbelief; numbness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Isolation
- Relief
- Bitterness
- Fear
- Resentment
- Overwhelming loss
- Confusion

FEELINGS

- Aggression; short fuse
- Can't sleep
- Can't eat; change in eating habits
- Crying
- Can't concentrate
- No interest in usual activities
- Need to keep busy; constantly active
- Withdrawal
- Panic attacks
- Change in smoking or drinking habits
- Talking constantly about what happened

BEHAVIOURS

- I will never get over this
- What will people say?
- This is a nightmare
- Nothing in my life will ever be the same
- How will I explain this to the children?
- I'm so relieved its over
- Why?
- I can't go on
- This will haunt me forever
- I can't believe it's true
- Why did God let this happen?

THOUGHTS

- Feeling sick in the stomach; nausea
- High blood pressure; heart palpitations
- More susceptible to illness than usual
- Nervous rash; skin conditions
- No energy or zest for living; fatigue
- Being 'off balance'; out of sorts
- Knot in the stomach
- Anxiety; nervousness
- Feeling stressed; overloaded
- Digestive problems
- Aches and pains

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Extract from
"33 Things to say to someone who is grieving"
Doris Zagdanski