

When Loss Hurts: Understanding Grief and Finding Ways to Cope

Grief is a natural emotional response to loss. While it is most commonly associated with the death of a loved one, grief can also result from many other significant life changes. Children, adolescents, and adults may experience grief after moving to a new city, changing schools, losing a friendship, facing academic setbacks,



parental separation, or other unexpected changes in their lives. Understanding grief is important because it affects not only emotions but also thoughts, behaviours, relationships, and overall well-being.

Grief can bring a wide range of emotions, including sadness, anger, confusion, fear, guilt, loneliness, frustration, and sometimes even relief. Individuals may experience several emotions at the same time or move between different feelings from day to day. There is no fixed timeline for grief, and each person experiences it differently. What may seem like a minor loss to one person can feel deeply significant to another.

Children and adolescents often express grief differently from adults. Younger children may struggle to understand or communicate their feelings and may instead show changes in behaviour. They might become clingier, withdrawn, irritable, or anxious. Teenagers may experience mood swings, difficulty concentrating, loss of motivation, changes in sleep patterns, or a decline in academic performance. Some may prefer to keep their feelings private, while others may seek constant support from family and friends. Recognizing these signs helps parents, teachers, and caregivers provide appropriate support during difficult times.

It is important to remember that grief is not something that needs to be “fixed” quickly. Healing from loss takes time, patience, and understanding. Resolving grief does not mean forgetting what was lost; rather, it means learning how to live with the loss while continuing to move forward in a healthy and meaningful way.

Several strategies can support the healing process. Acknowledging and accepting emotions is an important first step. Encouraging open conversations with trusted family members, friends, teachers, or counsellors can help individuals feel understood and less alone. Maintaining regular routines such as attending school, participating in hobbies, exercising, and getting adequate sleep can provide a sense of stability and comfort during challenging times.

Creative expression can also be a powerful tool for processing grief. Writing in a journal, drawing, painting, listening to music, dancing, or engaging in physical activities can help individuals express emotions that may be difficult to put into words. Practising self-care and spending time with supportive people can further promote emotional healing.

In some situations, grief may feel overwhelming or persist for a long period, affecting daily functioning. Seeking support from a school counsellor, psychologist, or mental health professional can provide valuable guidance and coping strategies.

Although grief can be a difficult journey, it is also a reminder of the importance of relationships, memories and personal growth. With time, support, and compassion, individuals can gradually find strength, resilience, and hope, learning to carry their experiences forward while embracing new possibilities in life.

With best wishes,

Health & Wellness Department

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