



MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

Grieving.

How we respond- and why.

Everyone feels and expresses emotions in their own way. The same is true with grief. It's helpful to understand the common physical, mental, and emotional responses of grief. Below are examples of these responses normally seen in adults, teens, & children. Remember that grieving is a lifelong healing process.

PHYSICAL RESPONSES TO GRIEF

SYMPTOMS

Back, Neck, or General Muscle Pain • Headaches • Dry Mouth
Stomach Pain, Diarrhea, Constipation • Inability to Eat • Weight Loss
Fatigue & Sickness • Restlessness • Chills, Sweats • Crying, Numbness
Shortness of Breath • Physical Clinging • Chest Pain

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO GRIEF

DISORIENTATION

Immediately after a loss, it may take a grieving person an hour to complete something that normally takes 15 minutes. Be patient, provide guidance, and plan - or help in planning.

FORGETFULNESS

You may notice you - or the grieving person - becoming forgetful about daily activities. You can help by discussing upcoming tasks with the person, and encourage list making. Establish new routines or return to previous routines.

ANXIETY

Panic attacks or nightmares are common while grieving. Be supportive, and make the effort to listen patiently. Try not to get frustrated.

FRUSTRATION

You -or the grieving person- may become frustrated with others when they complain about "seemingly frivolous or trivial" things. Be understanding. Help others understand, especially during the holidays and anniversaries into the 2nd year.

UNFOCUSED

A grieving person may have a hard time with concentration and motivation even if doing activities they love. Give them simple tasks. Assist if needed and prepare to be patient.

INDIFFERENCE

The first few months following a loss can be a blur for those in mourning, simply going through the motions of life. Mourning can last 3-6 months following the loss. Accept your grieving friend/child where they are. If they want to talk, listen. If not, don't force it. Let them know you are there to listen when they are ready. Moments of isolation may be needed, but watch for unhealthy patterns of disconnection.

NOTE: *If the above symptoms persist in frequency and severity to the point that it interferes with either your ability or the ability of the person you are supporting to function in daily living, it is time to get professional mental health treatment.*