

Stages of Grief

Grief is a healing process we go through after suffering a loss. Although we normally think of loss as the death of someone close to us, life situations such as divorce or losing a job can also bring about grief. Listed below are the five stages of grief and how to move along in the grief process, and tips for coping with different types of losses.

Five Stages of Grief

The first stage of grief is **denial**. It's hard for our minds to accept that such a loss has taken place.

Anger is the second stage. We probably had no control over the loss, so we react to our vulnerability with anger. We lash out at others or blame ourselves for the loss.

The third is **bargaining**. We want to trade something we can do for the reversal of the loss, saying things like "I'd do anything if only this hadn't happened."

Depression is the fourth stage. A feeling of hopelessness about the situation takes over.

The fifth and final stage is **acceptance**. We accept the reality of the situation and are able to move on in our lives.

Moving Along

How much time it takes to move through these stages depends on the nature of the loss, the individual who is grieving and the overall circumstances of the individual's life. Accepting the loss and plodding through the grief process takes time and work. The important thing to remember is that grieving happens in stages. Being stuck in one stage and dwelling on the loss too long is a good reason to call to your Employee Assistance Program for professional support.

Tips for Coping

Sharing grief with those close to us is important for moving through the grieving process. Bringing people together is one of the roles of funerals or memorial services for people who have died.

Sometimes it is difficult for others to relate to the depth of our pain if a death is not involved, such as when we lose a job or when the death is a pet. This is human nature. In cases such as this, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to help you through your grief process to move toward the final stage of acceptance.