

Grief Expectations

You can expect that:

- Your grief will take longer than most people think it should.
- Your grief will take more energy than you can imagine.
- Your grief will involve continual changes.
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life and who you are. It will affect your social relationships, your health, thoughts, feelings, and spiritual beliefs.
- Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss.
- You will grieve for many things (both symbolic and tangible), not just the death itself.
- You will grieve for what you have lost already as well as for the future – for the hopes, dreams and unfulfilled expectations you held for and with that person.
- Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions: some expected, some not.
- This loss will resurrect old losses, feelings, and unfinished business from the past.
- You may have some confusion about who you are; this is due to the intensity and unfamiliarity of the grieving experience and uncertainty about your new role in the world.
- You may have a combination of anger and depression: irritability, frustration, intolerance.
- You may feel guilt in some form.
- You may have a poor sense of self-worth.
- You may experience spasms, waves, or acute upsurges of grief that occur without warning.
- You will have trouble thinking and making decisions: poor memory and organization.
- You may feel like you are going crazy.
- You may be obsessed with the death or preoccupied with thoughts of the dead person.
- You will search for meaning in your life and question your beliefs.
- You may find yourself acting differently.
- Society has unrealistic expectations about your mourning and may respond inappropriately.
- You will have a number of physical reactions.
- Certain dates, events, seasons, and reminders will bring upsurges in your grief.
- Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense grief feelings for you.