

THIS IS A VERY NORMAL GRIEF

Sadness. Crying, time-out space, withdrawal, a non-verbal way of protecting yourself and letting others know that competition is off - you need space and time to recoup.

Anger. You may experience frustration, or you may regress to experiences and activities which are safe, experiences which connect you with who you were before the relationship which was disrupted by the loss you are grieving.

Guilt and Self-reproach. It is very common to feel that there was something else that should or could have been done to change the way things turned out. It is also common to feel that there was something that you should have said or done to complete the final good-bye.

Anxiety. You may experience passing and temporary senses of instability and unknown danger, or even strong attacks of panic and an impulse to run. This is a normal grief reaction.

Loneliness. You may feel that even in the company of your best friends, or in environments which were once familiar to you - church, club, social gatherings - you somehow feel an outsider, that you don't belong any more. This is a common reaction to bereavement. Be confident that as your new identity evolves, the loneliness will be dispelled as the environment of your new identity takes form.

Fatigue. You may feel that life takes too much energy. You may even wish to sleep-in longer than you usually did, or you may find that you can't stay awake in the middle of the day, that you are drowsy or nap a lot. j This is also a common grief reaction.

Helplessness. Often bereavement requires that we take on responsibilities which we have never experienced before. This can make us feel helpless and inadequate, even challenge our self esteem - "I can't survive without him/her ", or "I'm not capable without him/her."

Yearning. A normal response to bereavement is a longing that the loved one will return, that things will return and life will resume as normal. Pining or longing for the nightmare to end and the emptiness will be filled - the unquenchable hunger for the absent loved one - is a normal grief reaction.

Euphoria. Many times there will be a sense of a high or up-lifting feeling following the death of a loved one, especially if there had been a long illness, or if there was an unhappy relationship with the

deceased. This feeling may bring mixed and confusing feelings which will require time to sort through.

Relief. Following the anticipated death of a loved one, especially if you were the primary care giver, you may experience a sense of relief. This may be confusing and guilt laden - how can one feel relief if they loved the person who died? The mixed emotions may be confusing and disorienting, and this is a normal grief response to bereavement. It will take time to sort out the emotions.

Numbness. The sense of having been drugged, anesthetized or out of it is a normal grief reaction. The feeling of being in a fog, or mechanically plodding along, is a normal feeling following the death of someone close. Many bereaved persons feel that they had been on "auto-pilot" for weeks, even months, following the death of their loved one.

Physical Sensations. There are many normal physical reactions to grief, including: Hollowness in the stomach

Tightness in the throat Tightness in the chest

Depersonalization Oversensitivity to noise

Weakness Breathlessness

Dry mouth Lack of energy

Confusion. Often there will be periods of disorientation, as though the universe shifted on it's axis. A sense of lost time, or not being in touch with what is going on around oneself is a very normal reaction to bereavement. "Who am I, what's going on, how did I get here, how did this happen?"