

Helpful Information

Definition of Grief

The physical, emotional and mental condition brought on by a loss, such as the death of someone you love, is called grief. Grief is our body's natural ability to heal our emotional injury. Grieving can be hard. Lack of understanding makes it harder. Grief is a personal process characterized by three phases.

The first phase is **Shock** (denial). This begins with the news of the death, but the reality of the death may occur in a few minutes, a few days or even several months later. This phase "protects" the survivor from the emotional impact of the death. A need to stay busy, confusion, or inability to express emotion, inability to function and an overwhelming sense that something is wrong without grasping the reality of the loss are common characteristics of this phase.

The second phase is **The Expression of Grief** (bargaining, anger, depression) may last for several days to several years. They are mental, physical and emotional manifestations that may come and go or appear in any combination.

Mental: Preoccupation of the death: how it happened, the person that died. Inability to focus, remember or be productive. You may have paranoid or inconsistent thoughts. you may even want to make radical changes in all aspects of your life, but it is imperative that you take time to think clearly and not make impulsive decisions that you may later regret.

Physical: Fatigue, weakness, insomnia, weight gain or loss, headaches, the tendency to catch stress-related illnesses, a sense of vulnerability, discomfort with too much activity or stimulation.

Emotional: Intense sadness, fear, anxiety, anger, depression, loneliness, confusion, helplessness, isolation and guilt. The inability to feel love or give love, compulsive behavior, and thinking that you are "crazy" are often felt by those in grief.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, realize that they are quite normal and in many ways are a necessary part of the healing process of grief. If you feel, however, that you are not able to handle your grief on your own, you may want to consider professional help.

The third and final stage is **Acceptance**. You will know when you have reached this stage when you are able to recall memories of your deceased loved one fondly and pleasantly instead of painfully. Once acceptance has been reached, planning for the future becomes more realistic. A new and wiser you will have emerged.

The rate of acceptance often depends on your ability to feel and express your grief openly. Take time out from your usual standards of behavior. Surround yourself with people that you feel comfortable with, tell them how you feel and what you need from them. Feel and express your emotions. It is ok to cry, or to be silent. Write things down about your feelings, your wishes, regrets and joys. Give yourself breaks from grieving to rest, have fun and be nurtured. Try to eat well. Try to get your sleep. Above all, give yourself time.

Immediate Assistance

The day a loved one dies can be one of the most difficult days of your life, and in the days following, you will be faced with many decisions.

We have prepared a guide to assist you when making final arrangements. It's our hope that this information will help make the arrangement process easier and your burden a little lighter. If you have any questions, please call 545-3747, 542-3154 or 894-2540.

First Notify if applicable

1. If a death has occurred at home and Hospice not involved, call 911.
2. The Physician
3. Santa Rosa Mortuary, Eggen & Lance Chapel or Fred Young Funeral Home
4. If you have cemetery arrangements pre-made, Santa Rosa Memorial Park at 542-1580.
5. Relatives
6. All friends and neighbors
7. The deceased's employer
8. Insurance agents
9. Attorney

Call a family member, friend or clergy to come be with you. Do not get in your vehicle and drive. Drink liquids (avoid caffeine and alcohol)

Funeral Home Information

1. Information for death certificate
2. Social Security Number
3. VA Discharge papers (DD214)
4. Family history for obituary

5. Bring clothing/undergarments
6. Bring jewelry
7. Bring appropriate picture(s)
8. File insurance policies

Decide on Service Details

1. A budget for funeral expenses
2. Number of certified copies of death certificate that will be needed
3. Type of service
4. Type of casket
5. Type of clothing
6. Pallbearers
7. Music/organist and/or vocalist
8. Appropriate readings and/or eulogy
9. Floral arrangements
10. Collect flower cards
11. Coordinate fraternal organizations
12. Type of memorial contributions

Cemetery Decisions

1. Visit Santa Rosa Memorial Park
2. Select a burial space, lawn crypt, crypt or niche/columbarium
3. Select a burial vault or liner
4. Authorize interment
5. Select memorial marker
6. Confirm service location, date and time

Additional Items

1. If desired, arrange for organ or tissue donation
2. Appoint a host or hostess
3. Coordinate arrangements for out-of-town guests
4. Return sympathetic phone calls or messages
5. Complete VA forms
6. Complete life insurance forms

Be prepared to pay the following

1. Funeral Home
2. Cemetery
3. Clergy
4. Musicians
5. Florists