

As life goes on . . . Mending the Heart

SOCIAL

More interest in daily affairs of self/
others
Ability to reach out and meet others
Energy for social visits and events

PHYSICAL

Physical symptoms subside
Sleep pattern and appetites are more
settled
Gut-wrenching emptiness lightens

EMOTIONAL

Emotions are less intense
Feeling of coming out of the fog
More peace; less guilt

MENTAL

Increased perspective about the death
Ability to remember with less pain
Improved concentration and memory
Dreams and nightmares decrease

SPIRITUAL

Reconnection with religious/spiritual
beliefs
Life has new meaning and purpose
Acceptance of death as part of life cycle

What helps

To reflect on progress since the death
To begin envisioning a future
To engage in new activities
To establish new roles and relationships

We're here to help

Support is available. If you need to speak
with someone, please contact Palliative Care
Services which includes bereavement
support. For more information about
Palliative Care Services and bereavement
support services contact 655-5868.

Other sources of support include the
following:

Spiritual Care Support

St. Paul's Hospital (306)655-5000
Humboldt and area (306)682-8139

Social Worker Support

Royal University Hospital (306)655-2579
St. Paul's Hospital (306)655-5519
Saskatoon City Hospital (306)655-8352

Palliative Care Support (306)655-5868

In rural areas

Contact your local hospital or health centre.

Acknowledgements

Dealing with Grief
A Guide to Understanding Your Reactions
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www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/palliative-care

Dealing with Grief A Guide to Understanding Your Reactions



"Green Skies and Purple Seas Sunset"
courtesy of Gina De Gorna

Palliative Care Services



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

When someone important to you dies, you grieve. This means that you may experience a wide range of responses, often over an extended period of time. The following three sections generally coincide with early, middle and later grief, though variation and overlap of these phases is common.

When a death occurs

As you accept the fact of the death of someone important, you will feel shock, numbness and disbelief that this has happened. Panic and strong physical and emotional reactions are common.

Adjusting to loss

Later, as the numbness subsides, you will deal with what this loss means to you and the emotional pain of grieving. The intensity of feeling may surprise or frighten you, but it is natural and can be resolved as you move through it.

As life goes on

As you adjust to life without the person who died, you will begin to re-establish connections with the world around you. You have more energy for family and friends, work and other interests.

Grief may be somewhat familiar, or it may be a new, uncertain endeavour. It is not an easy journey and there may be times when you want more support than is available through your social network.



The Grief Journey . . .

When a death occurs . . . Walking the edges

SOCIAL

- Withdrawal from others
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Poor judgment about relationships

PHYSICAL

- Shortness of breath and palpitations
- Digestive upsets
- Low energy, weakness and restlessness

EMOTIONAL

- Crying, sobbing and wailing
- Indifference and emptiness
- Outrage and helplessness

MENTAL

- Confusion, forgetfulness and poor concentration
- Denial and daydreaming
- Constant thoughts about the person who died and/or the death

SPIRITUAL

- Blaming God or life
- Lack of meaning, direction or hope
- Wanting to die or join the person who died

What helps

- To pace yourself moment to moment
- To make no unnecessary changes
- To talk about the person and the death
- To use practical and emotional supports

Adjusting to loss . . . Entering the depths

SOCIAL

- Rushing into new relationships
- Wanting company but unable to ask
- Continued withdrawal and isolation
- Self-consciousness

PHYSICAL

- Changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Shortness of breath and palpitations
- Digestive upsets

EMOTIONAL

- Intense and conflicting emotions
- Magnified fear for self or others
- Anger, sadness, guilt, depression

MENTAL

- Sense of going crazy
- Memory problems
- Difficult to concentrate/understand
- Vivid dreams or nightmares

SPIRITUAL

- Trying to contact the person who died
- Sensing the presence of the person who died; visitations
- Continued lack of meaning

What helps

- To recognize and express emotions
- To acknowledge changes
- To understand grief and know others experience similar responses