

Grief affects everyone differently, but everyone will have some reaction to grief. Grief affects many aspects of a person's life. Grief is not just emotional. It affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves—even what they believe. The intensity changes over time and through personal growth. Below are some common grief reactions of adults.

## Physical reactions

- Deep sighing
- Feeling weak or faint
- Muscle tension, aches or pains
- Change in appetite (increase or decrease)
- Increased blood pressure
- Sleep disturbances (more, less or waking more)
- Fatigue or exhaustion
- Rapid heartbeat
- Weight change
- Decreased resistance to illness
- Indigestion
- Headaches
- Hypersensitivity to sights, sounds, smell, touch
- Dry mouth
- Tightness or heaviness in chest
- Hollow feeling in stomach
- Lump in throat
- Sobbing

## Cognitive reactions

- Short-term memory loss
- Difficulty concentrating
- Confusion
- Preoccupation with loss/death
- Difficulty making decisions, even simple ones
- Searching to understand
- Disbelief
- Increase/decrease in dreams
- Suicidal thoughts

## Spiritual reactions

- Asking “why” questions
- Anger at God
- Change in beliefs and values
- Loss or strengthening of faith
- Need to find meaning in the loss

## Emotional reactions

- Anger
- Sadness
- Depression
- Anxious
- Despair
- Loneliness
- Feeling “out of control”
- Mood swings
- Guilt, including survivor guilt
- Relief
- Numbness
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Fear
- Longing/yearning for loved one
- Bitter
- Calm

## Behavioral reactions

- Forgetfulness
- Blaming others
- Avoidance of people/situations
- Change in activity (increase or decrease)
- Neglecting oneself (hygiene, eating, health)
- Loss of interest in work, world events, social activities, sex
- Increase in use of alcohol/drugs/medications
- Acting out

*If you or someone you know is grieving, consider taking advantage of support offered through our bereavement department. Call (800) 237-4629 and ask for the bereavement department.*