



## GRIEVING LOSS IN YOUR LIFE

Grief is a normal experience that is your body's way of dealing with loss in your life. When loss is caused by death, grief is expected and accepted. Other losses in life can also cause a profound grieving process that sometimes is less easily understood.

Losing possessions in a fire or by theft, losing a dear and precious pet, loss of innocence and trust through rape or robbery, the end of a relationship, the loss of a job, moving, divorce—all of these things can be trigger a painful and difficult response.

Grief is normal yet unique to each person. While each of us grieves in our own way, there are certain reactions and feelings that often occur. Being aware of them may help in the difficult process of recovery from loss.

### **REMEMBER:**

- When you lose anything that you cared about or that was important in your life, it is normal to grieve.
- The same intense feelings can occur from the many different losses we experience in our life.
- Grieve your loss in your own way and own time. There is no right way to grieve and no set duration.
- Let others help you. Talk about what you're going through. Communal sorrow can reduce feelings of isolation. Don't be afraid to show what you're feeling. If you don't talk about what you're experiencing, it will be difficult for others to understand.
- "Why" or "why me" is not important—deal with what's happening right now and how to get through it.
- Grieving cannot be avoided or rushed.
- Expect setbacks...and remember it will get better.

### **FEELINGS AND REACTIONS YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:**

#### **FEAR:**

- for your own safety
- of being left alone, leaving loved ones
- of leaving safe places
- of a similar event happening again
- that you're going crazy
- just plain fear

#### **SADNESS:**

- for the death, losses, or injury

#### **GUILT:**

- for things done and said
- for things not done or not said
- for being better off than others

#### **ANGER:**

- at what happened
- at whoever caused it or allowed it to happen
- at the waste
- at the senselessness of it all
- with people who don't understand
- about why this is happening to you
- with yourself for feeling this way

#### **MEMORIES:**

- of what happened
- flashbacks
- of other traumas and losses in your life

#### **SPIRITUAL:**

- spiritual and/or religious beliefs may be questioned

CHIRON CENTER, INC.'S

### **CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM (CRT)**

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## ***GRIEVING LOSS IN YOUR LIFE (continued)***

### **MENTAL OR PHYSICAL REACTIONS:**

You may be puzzled or worried by some of the physical and mental reactions you experience. Although these reactions can be distressing and cause you discomfort, they are part of a normal stress reaction to a traumatic event.

#### **You may experience:**

- Sleep disturbance or bad dreams
- Repetitive thinking about the event
- Being irritable or “jumpy”
- Loss of concentration
- Feeling down or “flat”
- Appetite disturbance or upset stomach
- Headaches and other physical aches and pains

### **RELATIONSHIPS:**

#### **You may:**

- Become closer to some people.
- Experience strained relationships or tensions with co-workers, partners, family or friends.
- Find it difficult to talk to others about what you have been through.
- Become more sensitive to what others are doing and saying.
- Be concerned about burdening others with your experience.
- Think that others are not as understanding as you would like them to be.
- Find others worried or annoyed by your behavior.

### **REDUCING EFFECTS OF TRAUMA OR LOSS:**

- Don't be hard on yourself for what you are going through.
- Know that life isn't always fair.
- Try to make some sense of what has happened.
- Recognize that some things will never make sense.
- It's O.K. to cry—and it's O.K. not to cry. There is no right way to deal with loss.
- Take care of yourself. Exercise and remember to eat and drink, even when you don't feel like it.
- Don't make any big decisions or changes if you can avoid it.
- Spend time with others but also find time to be alone.
- Do things that make you feel good.
- Give yourself permission to “feel rotten” for a time.
- Talk to people about your experience.
- Don't expect the memories to go away or lessen too quickly.
- **DON'T TRY TO FEEL BETTER BY USING ALCOHOL OR DRUGS.** You have been through a traumatic experience, and your feelings are normal and need to be felt.

### **WHEN TO SEEK HELP:**

- If you feel you cannot handle the intensity of your feelings or reactions.
- If your normal ways of coping are not helping.
- If you do not seem to be getting “back to normal.”
- If there is no one you can talk to about how you are feeling.
- If your work performance or home life is suffering.

You need not be alone during this time. Help is available from many agencies in this city. For referrals, please call **Chiron Center, Inc.** at (855) 343-6012.

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