

Normal Grief Responses After the Death of a Loved One

Emotional Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness • Sadness • Anger/bitterness • Disbelief • Loneliness • Depression • Relief • Guilt/regret • Anxiousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emptiness • Confusion • Yearning • Hopelessness • Apathy/disinterest • Irritability • Feeling Lost • Desire to run away • Sense of unreality
Physical Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tightness/heaviness in Chest • Changes in Appetite • Dizziness • Tightness in throat • Stomach problems • Extreme fatigue • Dry Mouth • Trembling • Shortness of breath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakness • Dehydration • Sleep disturbances • Hollow feeling in chest or abdomen • Headache • Body aches • Increased sensitivity to noise • Lowered immune response • Rapid heartbeat
Behavioral/Social Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying or sobbing • Withdrawal from family/friends • Avoidance of places with strong memories • Searching and calling out • “Seeing” or feeling deceased’s presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivid dreams related to death/loss • Decreased productivity • Restlessness/over-activity • Visiting places that hold memories of deceased • Carrying objects/ wearing clothes that belonged to deceased (linking objects)
Changes in Cognitive (Mental) Functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty concentrating • Disorganization • Easily distracted • Difficulty making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble focusing/ “brain fog” • Memory difficulties • Difficulty processing information

Feelings of grief can be intense; however, if you find that they are so overwhelming that you are afraid that your life, or the life of someone you care for is in danger, you are in crisis and should seek help immediately. Signs of crisis include:

- Thinking about, planning, or attempting suicide
- Neglecting basic care (eating, hygiene, dressing)
- Abusing alcohol or drugs

If any of these warning signs apply to you, contact your physician, mental health counselor, or call 911