

Common Myths And Facts About Grief

Myth: The feelings of loss will go away faster if you ignore them.

Fact: Trying to ignore your feelings may make things difficult in the long run. Finding safe and comfortable settings for the expression of your feelings—with trusted friends or family, in a support group, with a counselor, through artistic expression—is an important part of taking care of yourself during this time. On the other hand, sometimes you will need to do or think about other things and that's OK too. Finding the balance of attending to your feelings and taking care of yourself while attending to other things is what is important.

Myth: It's important to “be strong” in the face of loss.

Fact: Feeling sad, frightened, angry or lonely are some normal reactions to loss. Crying or voicing these feelings doesn't mean you're weak—it just means that you're sad, frightened, angry or lonely. In fact, being honest about what you're feeling often requires great strength! Some of the people you typically rely on for support may not know how to respond to these parts of your experience, but that doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. Being honest about how you feel will help you and may help make it okay for someone else to do the same.

Myth: If you don't cry, it means you aren't feeling sad enough.

Fact: Crying is a normal response to loss, but it's not the only one. There is no single right way to feel, and no single right way to express what you're feeling. Depending on the circumstances of the death and your relationship with the deceased, you may feel many different feelings – sadness, fear, anger, relief, regret—and your feelings will evolve over time. Let yourself feel what you feel, and turn to those supports who can accept you as you are.

Myth: Grief should last about a year.

Fact: There's no roadmap or schedule for grief—it's different for each person, and for each loss. The loss will be part of your life from now on and your feelings about it will change over time. Grief is not a linear and orderly experience so be patient with yourself, and remember there is not a “right way” to grieve.

Myth: Moving on with your life means you're forgetting the person who died.

Fact: Many people find that successfully going on with their lives includes finding ways to stay connected to the person who died. This means different things to different people, but the point is that moving ahead in your life isn't a betrayal of the person who died.

Myth: Friends can help by not bringing up the subject.

Fact: Friends can help someone who is grieving by following the person's lead. This can be by asking open-ended questions or sharing your own memories of the person who died. This openness communicates that you're a safe person to talk to should they want to talk (and remember, they may not).



The Children's Room
caring grief support for children, teens, and families