

An adult's grief

- There are a number of conditions that can make it harder for a person to successfully make it through the grief process.
- The way in which a person died has an impact.
- Whether the death was anticipated or not can make a difference.
- The history you shared with a person and intensity of attachment you had to a person.

Additionally, the amount of support a grieving person can draw upon is critical to how successfully he or she will cope with grief. The more that friends, family, and community are present and supportive, and the more that the grieving person is able to accept offered support, the better the outcome tends to be. Isolated people tend to have a harder time.

The "fairness" of the loss is also important. Losses that challenge a grieving person's ability to believe that the world is predictable are harder to manage. The experience of grief is not something a person ever recovers from completely, but over time the feelings usually reduce in intensity.

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Grief is a normal and natural process that takes work to get through. It is not easy to cope with the loss of close relationships that have existed in our lives. Dealing with the emotions that occur in the grieving process takes much time and energy, and is usually both physically and emotionally demanding.

It is normal for people to grieve in very different ways. Some people grieve openly, while others hide their feelings of distress. Some people grieve quickly, while others take a long time.

There is no "right way" to grieve. Each individual comes up with a method of grieving that fits them and their particular loss.

What is normal?

In the aftermath of a death it is perfectly normal to move between many different emotions. Feelings of sadness, frustration, anger, denial, guilt and even relief can all be typical of those who are grieving.

Emotions are often surprising in their strength or mildness, and they can also be confusing, such as when a person misses a violent or painful relationship.

Some people find comfort in the company of others, particularly with those who may be similarly affected by the loss, and others may prefer to be alone with their feelings.

Everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time. Some people recover from grief and resume normal activities within six months, though they continue to feel moments of sadness. Others may take much longer to rebuild their lives and live with the loss.

When should I get help?

It is important to give yourself some time after a bereavement to grieve. However, there may come a time when you realise that your emotions are having a major impact on our life and it's time to seek help.

Bereavement counselling can provide a confidential safe space in which you are supported to understand your own grieving process and explore the above.

A therapist might help you to find different ways to maintain healthy connections with the deceased through memory, reflection, ritual, or dialogue about the deceased and with the deceased.

Therapy is also an effective way to learn to cope with the stressors associated with the loss and to manage symptoms with techniques such as relaxation or meditation.

