

THE PROCESS OF RECOVERING FROM GRIEF

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 feel better after about a year. Individual therapy and grief therapy support groups are often very helpful in processing grief and adjusting to a new normal in which you may again find renewed joy and engagement in life.

Sometimes people grieve for years without seeming to find even temporary relief. Grief can be complicated by other conditions, most notably depression. The person's level of dependency on the departed can also cause complications.

The grieving process often involves many difficult and complicated emotions. Yet joy, contentment, and humor do not have to be absent during this difficult time. Self-care, recreation, and social support can be vital to the recovery. Feeling occasional happiness does not mean a person is done mourning.

Grieving the loss of a loved one be a difficult process, whether the loss is due to death, a breakup, or other circumstance. One of the hardest challenges is adjusting to the new reality of living in the absence of the loved one. Adjusting may require a person to develop a new daily routine or to rethink their plans for the future. While creating a new life, a person may adopt a new sense of identity.

COMPLICATED GRIEF

The experience of grief is not something a person ever recovers from completely. However, time typically tempers its intensity. Yet an estimated 15% of people who have lost a loved one will experience "complicated grief." This term refers to a persistent form of bereavement, lasting for one year or more.

Again, the length of time it takes for a person to grieve is highly variable and dependent on context. But when symptoms persist without improvement for an extended period, they may qualify as complicated grief. In addition, the symptoms of complicated grief to be more severe. Complicated grief often dominates a person's life, interfering with their daily functioning.

Prolonged symptoms may include:

- Intense sadness and emotional pain
- Feelings of emptiness and hopelessness
- Yearning to be reunited with the deceased
- Preoccupation with the deceased or with the circumstances of the death
- Difficulty engaging in happy memories of the lost person
- Avoidance of reminders of the deceased
- A reduced sense of identity
- Detachment and isolation from surviving friends and family
- Lack of desire to pursue personal interests or plans