

What is grief?



Death is a difficult part of life. When someone we know and love dies, we use the word grief to describe what we experience. Grief is everything happening inside you since the death of someone you love. It includes the pain, emotions, and even the physical symptoms you may experience. Grief is normal, and it is unique to each person. It exists because you love that person.

It is also possible to react to the death of someone you barely knew or did not know at all. In that case, we do not usually call it grief, but your reactions are completely normal. They may be connected to your own experiences, your fears, or something you never imagined could happen.

There is no right or wrong way to experience a difficult situation; there are as many ways to react as there are people around you.

What are the reactions?

All reactions are normal because they are personal. They are influenced by who we are, what we believe, what we have experienced, our age, and many other factors.

Some of the most common reactions are sadness, confusion, anger, and feelings of abandonment, but there are many others. In fact, anything is possible—even feeling nothing at all. A tip: Try not to compare yourself to others, and do not be surprised by someone else's reaction. As we mentioned, every person's way of reacting is unique. What matters most is recognizing your reactions and finding someone you can talk to about them. Talking about what we are experiencing often helps our reactions become easier to manage.

Is Your Friend Grieving?

- Let your friend know that you are there for them.
- Pay attention to what they say and to the reactions they show.
- Ask them what they need.
- Share what you are experiencing and feeling.
- Ask for help if things start to feel overwhelming.

**No matter what you are going through, expressing yourself often helps. You can do this by writing, drawing, expressing your emotions, or talking with a counsellor or another trusted adult.*