



Grief is Normal

Grief comes to everyone at some point in their lives.

Typical grief can involve:

- Overwhelming sadness
- Appetite changes
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Mixed, confusing and painful emotions
- Difficulty doing everyday things like showering and household tasks
- Changes in concentration and memory
- Difficulty making decisions
- Pulling away from people

Your personality influences how you grieve. Introversion or extroversion, communication styles, family traditions all impact your grief process.

Allow Yourself to Grieve

Coping with loss may be one of the biggest challenges you face. Instead of denying feelings or avoiding sadness, grieving well helps you adjust to the situation and find meaning in new circumstances.

Social support and healthy habits can help you through the most difficult times. It is important to:

- Talk about your loss with friends and family.
- Accept a mixture of feelings and mood swings.
- Share stories and celebrate your loved one.
- Meditate, pray or participate in spiritual practices.
- Allow others to help in practical ways like bringing meals or doing errands.
- Eat well and get plenty of rest.

Difficult Situations

- **Depression.** When combined with depression, feelings of overwhelming sadness and hopelessness may not go away on their own. Changes in appetite, sleeping problems and difficulty functioning day-to-day could signal clinical depression disguised as grief.
- **Anxiety.** Anxiety and fear are normal feelings of grief. If they increase and intensify, or are combined with irritability, racing thoughts, muscle tension, insomnia, stomach pain and other physical symptoms, underlying anxiety may hinder your grieving process.
- **Anger.** If the relationship with the deceased was a difficult one, it may take extra time and thought to resolve your feelings.

Grief and Children

Children experience the same emotions as adults when faced with a loss, yet their grief often isn't given the attention it deserves. For a child, grief may be caused by the loss of a grandparent or a pet, a best friend moving away or parents getting divorced.

When a death impacts children, their responses will depend on their age and maturity. At every age:

- Explain death in a child's terms, using clear, direct language.
- Give children opportunities to talk about their feelings and the deceased.
- Help children understand they are not alone by allowing them to grieve with other family members.
- Ensure children feel safe by being a loving, consistent presence in their lives.

Grief is a natural reaction to loss, whether you're grieving the death of a loved one or another kind of loss—the end of a relationship, a deep disappointment or a move to a new community.

When you grieve, you'll experience a tangled web of emotions including sadness, shock, numbness, anger, frustration, denial and acceptance.

One thing is clear. Life is changed forever.



When to seek help

It's not unusual to experience difficult emotions on-and-off after a loss. Usually the intensity is reduced over time, however, and most people reach a point when day-to-day activities temporarily move grief to the sidelines. Others struggle longer. The difference between normal grief and severe (or complicated) grief is largely a matter of timing.

When deep feelings of denial, distress, anger, guilt, idealization, hostility or panic continue for months, you may benefit from seeing a psychologist or other mental health professional.

How we can assist

Pine Rest is here to help you through difficult grieving processes. Our highly trained clinicians provide professional services with compassion and understanding. And our network of outpatient clinics throughout Michigan and Iowa can help you regain your emotional, mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Contact Information

Our outpatient locations in Michigan and Iowa offer assessment, psychosocial help and individual, group and family therapy. Call to schedule your first appointment.

866.852.4001

Individual therapy is also available through an online video connection similar to Facetime or Skype. Visit our Website for more information and to schedule your first appointment.

pinerest.org/teletherapy

If you or your loved one are in crisis, please contact our contact center, which is staffed 24/7 by licensed clinicians.

616.455.9200

800.678.5500

616.281.6446 (TTY line)

UNDERSTANDING Grief



For more information about mental health topics, please visit: **pinerest.org/insights**



**Everyone grieves differently.
What's normal? When is it time
to ask for help?**

