



HOSPARUS HEALTH®

Grief Counseling Center

You are not losing it.

You are simply grieving, as you are supposed to.

It is a fact that if you love and that which you love is taken from you, you will grieve what was lost – a person, a possession, a relationship, a job, a belief, or a purpose. Grief is a reaction to immediate loss. But it is also a response to that loss.

One's reaction to loss is automatic. It just happens. And it can feel overwhelming and more painful than anything we may have previously experienced. This reaction acknowledges that someone or something loved is gone. It honors what was loved.

But, because we continue to love this person or thing, we continue to grieve. Love does not end when this person or thing is physically absent. Grief does not ask that we give up the relationship to that which is lost. It only asks that we adapt to its physical absence.

So, grief is also a response to loss. That loss happens is not a choice. That we are affected by loss is not a choice. But how we adapt to the loss and respond to it is our choice. Realizing this helps us get some of our power back.

At its heart, grief is a stress response; our brain and body kick into survival mode. Loss triggers our fight-or-flight response and mobilizes us to protect ourselves. Our body chemistry changes for a time. We remain in a heightened state of arousal – alert, on edge, vigilant, and ready to respond. This can leave us feeling anxious and fearful. It is normal soon after a loss and gradually subsides.

Grief is an emotional response wherein we can feel every imaginable feeling more deeply than we knew were possible. Not all these feelings are painful or difficult. There are also feelings of deep love, joy, and humor.



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Grief is a brain response to loss. For a time, our brains resist accepting the loss and have difficulty thinking about the new reality. Brains must disconnect and reconnect neural pathways that were once connected to the experience of a person or thing that is gone, allowing us to relate to them in a new way. This takes time.

Grief is also a social response. The loss changes us. We relate differently to others – those who have also experienced loss and those who have not. It can affect our friendships and social circles for a time, or even change them permanently.

Grief is a spiritual response. It invites us to rethink and reclaim what we believe and what we most value. This is challenging work. Unfortunately, however, this critical work often follows times of significant loss.

It is also an act of hope. Grief is the healing process we encounter to get to that better day ahead. It is the process we go through to heal from loss, and it is automatic. But, when we engage with it intentionally, we can get to that better place sooner.

Grief is evidence that we are capable of love and that we are human. It is our source for becoming empathetic and compassionate people.

Finally, grief is the ongoing expression of a relationship with the person who died or what has ended. If you have a memory of this person or thing and continue to love it, you will continue to live in a relationship with them. You are allowed to do so. You can continue to wonder about, learn about, discover new thoughts about, talk to, pray to, ask a favor of, complain to, miss, and welcome into your heart – you can live in relationship with this person because they continue to matter, always.

Take good care of yourself and your grief.