



## GeriCare

### Palliative Care: What is Grief & Bereavement (why it matters)

Have you ever felt a sense of loss, when you lose someone or something, which you hold dearly in your heart? What you are experiencing is also known as bereavement.

While it is normal for you to experience sadness, numbness or a loss of interest in usual pleasurable activities, these feelings may impact on your physical and psychological health. Symptoms such as headache, loss of appetite, social withdrawal, sleeplessness and low energy are common. The intensity and duration of grief may depend on the closeness of the relationship to the deceased, whether the loss was anticipated and how the final moments were.

People experiencing bereavement may cope by making sense of the loss, although the search for meaning varies by person and situation. Some may think of the loss as a relief for their deceased loved ones or as a relief from caregiving. Others may view the experience as a process of positive change. However, there may be individuals who may not find any meaning in the loss.

What about you? Have you ever encountered a time you could find meaning to a loss? Share with us in the comments down below.

There is a small group who goes through complicated grief, which is not a usual response to a loss. People who are very emotionally attached to the deceased, or have few family and friends to rely on are more vulnerable to complicated grief. Those who already have mental health conditions before the bereavement may find themselves more susceptible to it.

Complicated grief may feel like falling into a deep and dark space which you cannot get out of. People who experience complicated grief may have a strong yearning to be with the deceased, feelings of intense loneliness or emptiness, and that life without the deceased is meaningless. A person with complicated grief may be unable to carry out his usual activities, experience sleeplessness, have suicidal thoughts and behavior or may cope by relying on substances like alcohol and tobacco.

It is possible to help yourself or someone going through complicated grief.. Having people whom you can reach out to is important. They may be family, friends, the religious community or even healthcare professionals who can offer a listening ear or assist in practical matters such as financial assistance and provide you with the relevant information .

While grief and bereavement may seem overwhelming, you are not alone .If you find yourself having difficulty coping with a loss and would like to seek help, talk to someone from the list of helplines in our description box. We would love to hear from you on how you or your loved ones cope with bereavement. Please share with us by commenting down below.

#### References

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