



## How Can Grief Counseling Help?

This is a common question because no one can fix what has happened or change the circumstances of the loss. We often use a metaphor to explain how counseling can be helpful: Imagine someone being thrown overboard from a ship who does not know how to swim. Imagine the panic fear, and sheer terror of not knowing how to survive in this situation or even if they can survive. What we do at Lee's Place is throw them a lifesaver that they can hold onto and give them words of encouragement and guidance. We cannot jump in save them, and they have to swim to safety on their own. With some help, many more make it to safety than would otherwise. Fear and panic can shut down a person's ability to make decisions and prevent them from reaching out for the help that's around them. So the lifesaver gives them enough support to ease the panic, so they can begin to make a plan for survival.

Our services at Lee's Place offer people who have gone through a life altering experience called "loss", a forum to filter through some of the confusing feelings, a little education about what they might expect from themselves and others, to provide a time and a place to grieve and to offer some coping skills. At the root of many psychological problems is a major loss. One of the most common questions asked of us is, "Am I going crazy?" or "Is what I'm feeling normal?" Their pain is so pervasive and unrelenting that they think they will never live through it. Surely their heart will give out or they will just stop breathing at any moment.

Grief can be compared to the act of someone dumping a 1,000 pound bag of coins in your lap. It knocks you down initially and you cannot stand up under the weight of it. It is next to impossible to see, feel or interact with anything else around you because this grief (bag of coins) is all consuming. You do not know where it came from, who gave it to you or why you have been given this huge, massive weight to carry. It is impossible to put down, you cannot give it away and no one can help you carry it. It is yours to deal with. The only way to reduce the weight of that bag is to spend those coins of grief. They are spent by talking about your loss, writing it, singing it, exercising it, drawing it, crying it out...any way you can think of to spend those coins. But spend them you must or you will carry that weight always.

*Lee's Place Grief and Loss Counseling Center  
216 Lake Ella Drive  
Tallahassee, 32303  
850-841-7733*