



Losing a Close Friend

Everyone reacts to a death a little differently. Some people are able to grieve openly by crying or talking about it, sharing stories and memories. Others prefer to keep their feelings to themselves and do not show any emotion to the outside world. Both ways of coping are normal. Remember just because someone is quiet, it doesn't mean he isn't sad or grieving.

Even when you know someone has died, it can still feel unreal. It's common to say, "I just can't believe he's really gone." "It can't be true; I was just talking to him this morning." Feeling this way doesn't mean you are crazy or "in denial." It just means you need time to adjust to the reality of losing someone.

For many, having someone to talk with and share your feelings with can be very helpful. This is true especially for older kids and teens. Many kids prefer to talk to each other rather than to adults at this time, especially if all the kids knew the person who died. This is a good time to share "Remember when..." stories.

Choosing a permanent way to remember someone can be very comforting. Some people plant a tree or bush and place a plaque there with the person's name on it. Some people name a room in a special place in that person's memory. Others set up a scholarship in the person's memory so that others may be able to do something that was meaningful to the person who died. Deciding as a group how to memorialize the person who died can bring everyone together, working on the same ideas.

It's not unusual to have trouble eating or sleeping after someone dies. You might even have nightmares or bad dreams. This is a normal response and usually doesn't last. If it does last for several weeks or a month, it may be helpful to talk to a counselor.

Sometimes after someone you care about dies, you might feel a little more afraid or unsure about things. Things may feel a little scarier and you want to stick closer to friends and family. This is perfectly normal and doesn't mean there is anything wrong with you.

It is also not uncommon to have some physical symptoms when you are grieving. You might have a stomachache, headache or feel like you are coming down with a cold. This is your body reacting to your strong emotions. The physical symptoms usually go away after a few weeks.

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