

Understanding Grief

“Normal is just a setting on the dryer.”

- Barbara Johnson, author and speaker

“Grief” is a word we hear throughout our entire life, but we never really understand it until we experience it. Grief is a normal response to a loss. It is the way we feel and behave following a death. Grief can be ugly, unforgiving, confusing, and disorienting. It also may be warmed by feelings of peace, comfort or even gratitude. Whatever you feel, know that your feelings are unique to you. Others may have lost a spouse, parent, sibling, grandparent, uncle or friend, but no one can feel exactly as you do. Each relationship is one of a kind; therefore the response to the loss is equally unique.

Common responses to a loss may include:

Physical Sensations

Tightness in the chest
Muscle weakness
Lack of energy
Sleep disturbance
Weight and appetite changes
Weakness and fatigue
Lowered immune system

Behaviors

Sleep disturbance
Change in appetite
Restlessness
Loss of interest in activities
Crying
Need to be around others

Emotions

Sadness
Loneliness
Emptiness
Helplessness
Hopelessness
Regret
Anger
Guilt
Fear
Numbness

Continued on back

Thought Process

Confusion
Preoccupation
Forgetfulness
Inability to concentrate

Spiritual Reactions

Searching for meaning
Assessing your values
Anger at God, church, higher power

For more information contact your nearest Cedar Valley Hospice office or visit cvhospice.org.

Waterloo: 319.272.2002

Waverly: 319.352.1274

Independence: 319.334.6960

Grundy Center: 319.824.3868

Toll-Free: 800.617.1972

NOTE: On behalf of the Cedar Valley Hospice Grief Support Services Program, grief mailings are sent for 13 months following a death on our hospice program. These mailings offer additional support and advice to help families on their grief journey. If you would prefer to not receive these mailings, please let us know by calling Nathan Schutt at 319.272.2002.