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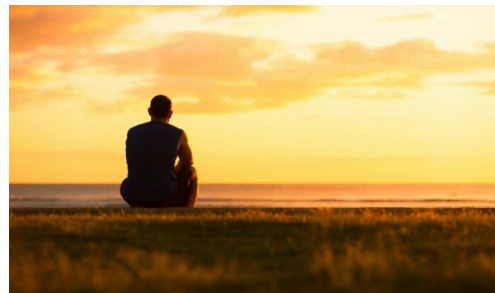
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Grief is universal. At some point, everyone will have at least one experience with grief. It may be from the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the end of a relationship, or any other change that alters life as you know it.

The stages of grief are not necessarily linear, which means people may not go through them in order.

In 1969 Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross established that there are five stages of grief:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance



More recently grief expert David Kessler has discussed additional stages of grief. Therefore, people often refer to seven stages of grief. Neither model will necessarily reflect an individual's experience, however, as emotions tend to come and go. You may miss a stage or come back to it later, and that's OK.

The 7 Stages of Grief

- Shock and denial: This is a state of disbelief and numbed feelings.
- Pain and guilt: You may feel that the loss is unbearable and that you're making other people's lives harder because of your feelings and needs.
- Anger and bargaining: You may lash out, telling God or a higher power that you'll do anything they ask if they'll only grant you relief from these feelings or this situation.
- Depression: This may be a period of isolation and loneliness during which you process and reflect on the loss.
- The upward turn: At this point, the stages of grief, like anger and pain, have died down, and you're left in a more calm and relaxed state.
- Reconstruction and working through: You can begin to put pieces of your life back together and move forward.
- Acceptance and hope: This is a very gradual acceptance of the new way of life and a feeling of possibility for the future.

How long does each stage of grief last?

Grief is different for every person. There's no exact time frame for each stage. You may remain in one of

the stages of grief for months but skip other stages entirely. This is natural. It takes time to go through the grieving process.

Is it possible to repeat the stages of grief?

Not everyone experiences the stages of grief in a linear way. You may have ups and downs, go from one stage to another, and then circle back.

Additionally, not everyone will experience all stages of grief, and you may not go through them in order. For example, you may begin coping with loss in the bargaining stage and find yourself in anger or denial next.

I didn't go through the stages of grief — how will this affect me?

Avoiding, ignoring, or denying yourself the ability to express your grief may seem to help you dissociate from the pain of the loss you're going through. But continuing to suppress unwanted thoughts and emotions can be unhelpful.

Over time, unresolved grief can turn into physical or emotional manifestations that affect your health. In order to heal from a loss and move on, you have to address it. If you're having trouble processing grief, consider seeking out counseling to help you through it.

Why is it important to understand the stages of grief?

Grief is a natural emotion to experience when going through a loss.

While everyone experiences grief differently, identifying the various stages of grief can help you anticipate and understand some of the reactions you may experience throughout the grieving process. It can also help you be aware of your needs when grieving and find ways to meet them.

Understanding the grieving process can ultimately help you work toward acceptance and healing.

How do you know what stage of grief you are in?

The stages are not a prescribed pattern; they are more like a description to help you understand what you are feeling and why you might be feeling it. They can also help you accept that your feelings are not unusual or wrong.

You may recognize feelings that a stage describes, and this will help you know which stage you are in. However, there is no fixed way of recognizing a stage. Stages can also come and go, and an earlier stage can return later.

Resources for grieving

Support groups may provide comfort, companionship, and validation. They can also serve as a source of practical information.

A person can find groups in their community through community centers, hospices, places of worship, and hospitals.

Additionally, the following national resources may help:

- [Hope for Bereaved](#): This offers services and support groups for people who are grieving.
- [AARP's Grief and Loss](#): The AARP provides articles and tools for coping with grief.
- [The Compassionate Friends](#): This is a resource with online and local support groups for those who have lost a child.
- [National Widowers Organization](#): This group supports men who have lost a loved one.
- [Doug Center](#): This is a resource for support groups and education for children and teenagers who are grieving.
- [What's Your Grief?](#): This is a resource for those who are grieving or who are supporting someone who is grieving.

The key to understanding grief is realizing that no one experiences the same thing. Grief is very personal, and you may feel something different every time. You may need several weeks, or grief may be years long. And that's OK.



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