



EMBRACING LOSS

**PRESENTED BY YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
AND WORKLIFE PROGRAMS**

February 11, 2026



Federal
Occupational
Health

OBJECTIVES

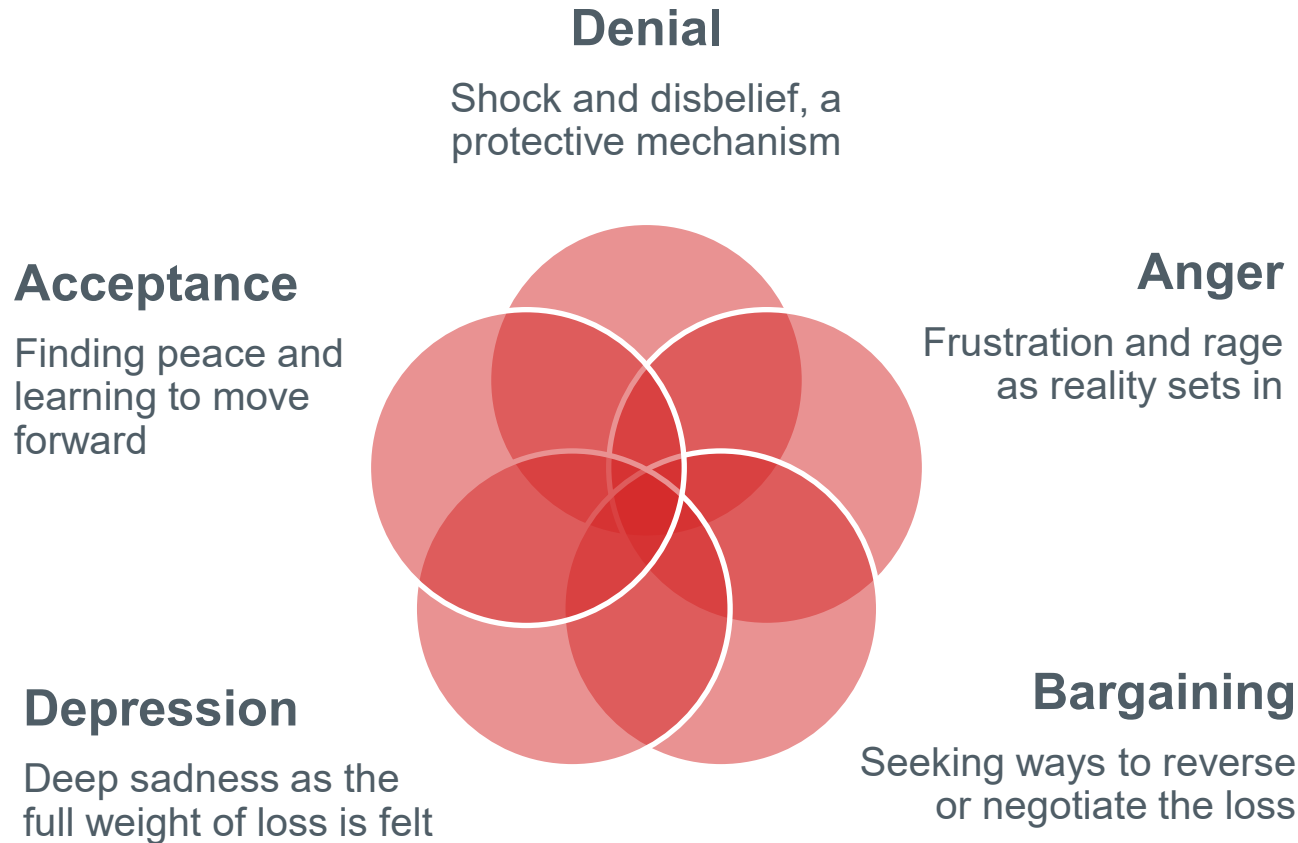
- Understand the five stages of grief
- Identify physical and emotional symptoms
- Honor individual experiences
- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Support others with compassion

SECTION 1

GRIEF

Stages and symptoms

THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF



Important: The stages aren't linear. Your grief is uniquely yours.

RECOGNIZING SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

Physical

- Persistent headaches
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Body aches and tension
- Exhaustion/fatigue
- Chest tightness

Emotional

- Uncontrollable crying
- Overwhelming worry and anxiety
- Persistent feelings of guilt
- Waves of anger or frustration
- Numbness or emptiness
- Profound sadness

Social and Spiritual

- Withdrawal from loved ones
- Isolation from social activities
- Questioning beliefs or life's purpose
- Feelings of detachment
- Difficulty connecting with others

SECTION 2

EXPERIENCING LOSS

UNDERSTANDING THE INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

Every grief journey is shaped by unique conditions and personal factors



Situational influences

- Age of the deceased
- Circumstances
- Relationship history
- Support system



Personal Beliefs

- Previous losses
- Unresolved grief
- Coping patterns
- Resilience factors



Prior experience

- Cultural background
- Spiritual beliefs
- Personal values
- Life philosophy

CONFRONTING PAINFUL EMOTIONS



Talk it out

- Share feelings with trusted friends or family
- Release emotional burden
- Share stories and memories

Get professional help

- Consult grief counselors
- Explore complex emotions safely
- Get tools for navigating loss

Join support groups

- Connect with others experiencing loss
- Validate feelings through shared experiences
- Remember that you're not alone

Journal

- Write freely about thoughts and emotions
- Process feelings in a private outlet
- Document memories and reflections

SECTION 3

COPING WITH GRIEF

Healing and support for
yourself and others

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF THROUGH GRIEF

Self-care is essential, not selfish



- Prioritize physical movement
- Protect your sleep
- Nourish your body
- Give yourself permission to feel what comes
- Honor your own pace and limits

NAVIGATE YOUR NEW REALITY

- Be patient
 - Healing takes time, so have compassion for yourself
- Postpone big decisions if possible
 - Wait to make major life changes (e.g., relocate, start a new job) until you're clearer
- Find new routines
 - Gradually build new patterns and rituals to find meaning
- Live in the present
 - Acknowledge the past, but take small steps to engage with life now



OFFERING MEANINGFUL SUPPORT TO OTHERS



- Acknowledge their feelings
- Resist the urge to fix
- Listen with your full attention
- Offer specific, practical help
- Respect their communication preferences
- Honor their choices without judgment

BEHAVIORS TO AVOID WHEN SUPPORTING THE GRIEVING

- Offering false reassurance
- Making promises you can't keep
- Overwhelming them with contact
- Failing to listen
- Judging their process
- Overly imparting your own experience



SUMMARY



- Grief has no timeline
 - Be patient with yourself and resist expectations about how quickly you should “move on”
- All feelings are valid
 - Every emotion you experience is a normal part of grief and shouldn’t be judged
- Support systems matter
 - Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness
- Self-care enables healing
 - Tending to your needs creates a foundation for recovery
- Grief is love’s other side
 - Healing doesn’t mean forgetting, and the pain you feel reflects the depth of the connection you shared

RESOURCES

Books

- ***The Grief Recovery Handbook***
 - John W. James and Russell Friedman, 2009
- ***It's OK That You're Not OK***
 - Megan Devine, 2017
- ***Modern Loss: Candid Conversation About Grief***
 - Rebecca Soffer and Gabrielle Birkner, 2018

Podcasts

- Feelings & Co.
 - Grief and Loss Episode Collection

Websites

- [The Compassionate Friends](#)
- [Good Grief](#)
- [What's Your Grief?](#)

Youtube Channel

- [What's Your Grief](#)

Apps

- [GriefBox](#)
- [Grief Refuge](#)
- [Untangle](#)

THANK YOU



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