

## **Facing Grief**

The emotions we face in a time of tragedy and pain can feel overwhelming and difficult to understand. The following information is from “The Lutheran Handbook” pages 120-122. While this information can’t fix or take away your pain and grief, it can give you some insight into normal responses to loss and tragedy and offers some ideas for how you can offer consolation to others.

### **How to Cope With Loss and Grief**

1. **Familiarize yourself with the stages of grief.**

Experts identify five: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Some add hope as a sixth stage. Grieving persons cycle back and forth through the stages, sometimes experiencing two or three in a single day. This is normal.

2. **Express your grief.**

Healthy ways may include crying, staring into space for extended periods, ruminating, shouting at the ceiling, and sudden napping. Laughing outbursts are also appropriate and should not be judged harshly.

3. **Identify someone you trust to talk to.**

Available people can include a spouse, parents, relatives, friends, a pastor, a doctor, or a trained counselor.

4. **Choose a personal way to memorialize the loss.**

Make a collage of photographs or start a scrapbook of memories to memorialize the event. This helps you to begin to heal without getting stuck in your grief.

### **Be Aware**

- The pain immediately after suffering a loss is usually deep and intense. This will lessen with the passage of times.
- Even Jesus cried when his friend Lazarus died (John 11:35).