



## Shenandoah Valley Grief Services

Serving Augusta, Rockingham, Page, and Shenandoah Counties

Housed at Grace Lutheran Church

500 South Wayne Avenue

Waynesboro, VA 22980

# GRIEF AND TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES

## SOME THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT GRIEF .....

Grief is how people respond to loss. All people encounter loss in their lives. People face loss when we experience a divorce in the family, change jobs, lose relationships, see our children move away from home, deal with a chronic illness or physical condition, experience the death of a loved one, and age. People respond to losses by grieving emotionally, physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

When a traumatic situation or a community-wide crisis takes place such as a shooting, a bombing, a suicide, a natural disaster, etc., it is normal for people to grieve. People should expect to experience a number of grief reactions when abnormal events like these take place.

*Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry, or sneezing you're nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart."*

*Don't Take my Grief Away from Me by Doug Manning*

## POSSIBLE GRIEF REACTIONS

- **Emotional Reactions**

- Separation pain, sadness, sorrow
- Despair, depression, hopelessness
- Guilt, regret
- Fear, pain, anxiety, insecurity
- Yearning and pining
- Feeling powerless & out of control
- Anger, irritability
- Loneliness, feeling abandoned
- Ambivalence
- Relief

- **Physical Reactions**

- Eating changes (eating little or lots)
- Sleep changes (too much or too little)
- Fatigue, lethargy
- Lack of strength
- Decreased sexual interest or hyper-sexuality
- Tightness in chest or heaviness of heart
- Tightness in throat, difficulty swallowing
- Shaking, twitching, trembling
- Headaches, backaches, chest pains
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness, dry mouth
- Hot flashes, cold sweats
- Nausea, diarrhea, acid reflux disorder

- **Behavioral Reactions**

- Searching behavior for the deceased
- Restless and hyperactive behavior
- Social withdrawal
- Crying frequently
- Increased amount of sighing
- Decreased effectiveness at work or with personal interests
- Avoidance of people or places that remind the bereaved of the deceased
- Acting-out behavior (sexually acting out, drugs)
- Self-destructive behaviors (driving too fast, drinking, mixing alcohol and medicine)
- Clinging behavior
- Change in life-style

- **Cognitive Reactions**

- Bewilderment, disbelief
- Confusion, disorganization
- Preoccupation with the deceased
- Impaired decision-making ability, impaired concentration
- Meaninglessness, Senselessness
- Lowered self-esteem, feeling inadequate
- Diminished self-concern
- Lack of motivation or interest in things or people
- Pessimism
- Spiritual confusion or questioning
- Increased spirituality

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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