

The Grieving Process



Grief: The natural emotional response resulting from a significant loss—especially the death of a loved one.

Everyone deals with grief differently. People cry, laugh, busy themselves with work, throw up, or even feel numb. Some recover quickly, while others take their time. Grief is a natural healing process, and there's no "right" way to do it.

For some people, grief can become too painful. It can grow into something totally different, like depression or anxiety. Other times, grief might last far too long, and take over a person's life for years on end. This is called **complicated grief**.



"Normal" grief varies greatly between cultures, people, and situations.



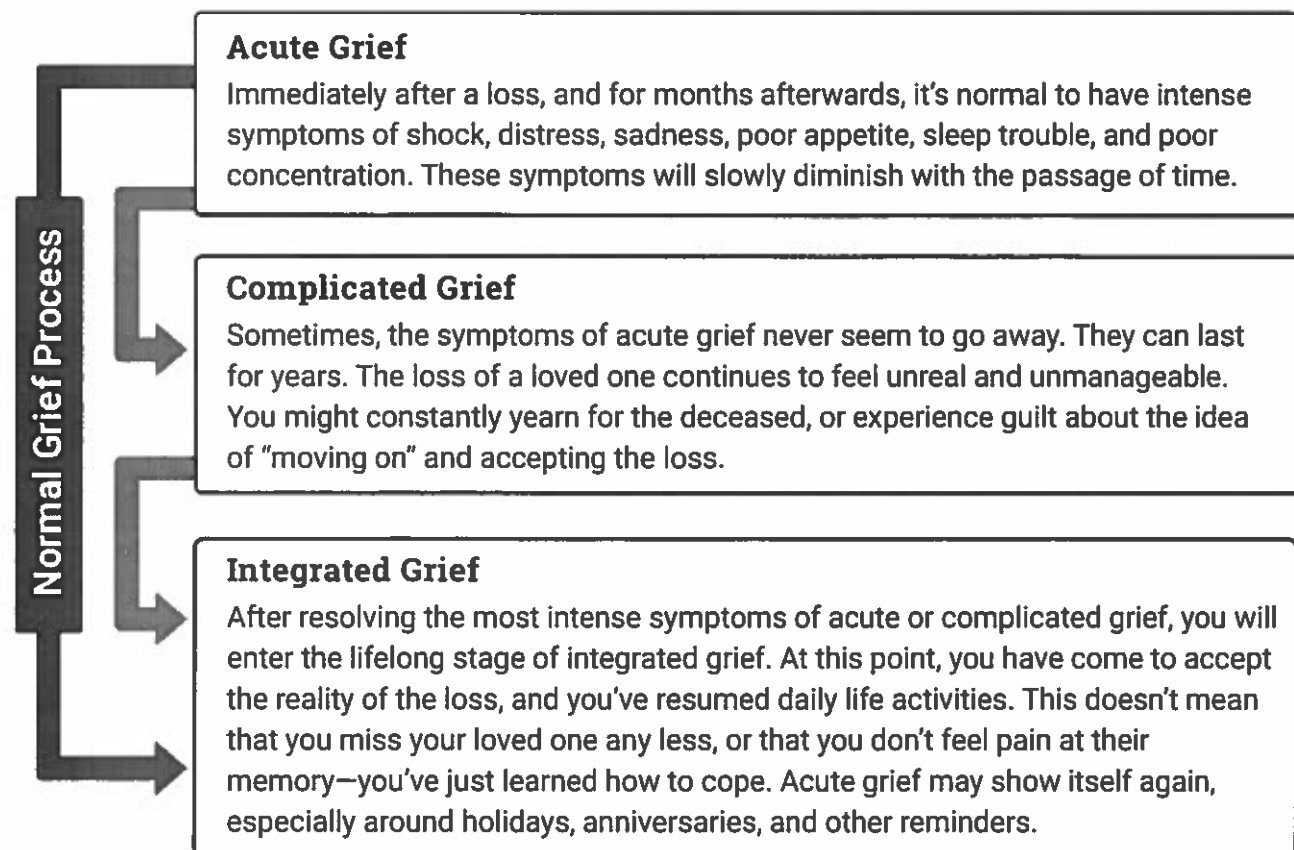
Grief is a natural process, and does not always require treatment.



About 10% of people develop complicated grief after a loss.



Complicated grief can be treated with psychotherapy.



Goodbye Letter

To: _____

I am saying goodbye because _____

Saying goodbye makes me feel _____

I remember a time when we _____

You taught me _____

Something I want you to know is _____

I will always remember _____

From: _____

The Stages of Grief

The Kübler-Ross model of grief (the five stages of grief) describes five primary responses to loss. These stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Someone who is grieving may go through these stages in any order, and they may return to previous stages.

Denial: "This can't be happening."

Individuals may refuse to accept the fact that a loss has occurred. They may minimize or outright deny the situation. It is suggested that loved ones and professionals be forward and honest about losses to not prolong the denial stage.

Anger: "Why is this happening to me?"

When an individual realizes that a loss has occurred, they may become angry at themselves or others. They may argue that the situation is unfair and try to place blame.

Bargaining: "I will do anything to change this."

In bargaining, the individual may try to change or delay their loss. For example, they may try to convince a partner to return after a breakup, or search for unlikely cures in the case of a terminal illness.

Depression: "What's the point of going on after this loss?"

At the stage of depression the individual has come to recognize that a loss has occurred or will occur. The individual may isolate themselves and spend time crying and grieving. Depression is a precursor to acceptance because the individual has come to recognize their loss.

Acceptance: "It's going to be okay."

Finally, the individual will come to accept their loss. They understand the situation logically, and they have come to terms emotionally with the situation.

My Stages of Grief

Instructions: Describe how each of the stages of grief has affected you.

Denial: "This can't be happening."

Anger: "Why is this happening to me?"

Bargaining: "I will do anything to change this."

Depression: "What's the point of going on after this loss?"

Acceptance: "I know what happened, and I can't change it. Now I need to cope."

Grief Sentence Completion

Right now, I feel... _____

I feel the saddest when... _____

The thing I miss most about the person I lost is... _____

Since the loss, things have been different because... _____

My family usually feels... _____

If I could ask the person I lost one thing, I would ask... _____

Something I liked about the person who I lost was... _____

One thing I learned from the person who I lost is... _____
