



# 5 Stages of GRIEF

If you've recently learned that someone you care about has passed away, you are probably feeling shocked and wondering how this could have happened.

It's important for you to know that there are people who understand what you are going through right now and that you do not need to go through this on your own.

The experience of bereavement following a death can be intense and overwhelming. There may be a wide range of feelings and thoughts, which are

difficult to understand and to manage. To help you understand what you may be feeling we have listed the '5 Stages of Grief', which describes the five primary responses to loss.

In bereavement, we spend different lengths of time working through each of the following and we can express each stage with different levels of intensity. The five stages do not necessarily occur in any specific order. We often move between stages before achieving a more peaceful acceptance of death.

## 1. Denial

**"This can't be happening"**

At first, we tend to deny the loss has taken place, and may withdraw from our usual social contacts. It is a normal reaction to rationalize overwhelming emotions. It is a defense mechanism that buffers the immediate shock. This is a temporary response that carries us through the first wave of pain.

## 2. Anger

**"Why is this happening to me?"**

It is normal to feel anger towards the person who inflicted the hurt, or at the world, for letting it happen. You may be angry with yourself for not seeing any warning signs, even if, realistically, nothing could have prevented it.

## 3. Bargaining

**"I will do anything to change this"**

The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability is often a need to regain control- If only we had sought medical attention sooner... If only we saw some warning signs . . .

## 4. Depression / Sadness

**"Will I ever be able to get through this?"**

At this stage of depression/sadness the individual has come to recognize that a loss has occurred. The individuals may isolate themselves and spend time crying and grieving. Depression/Sadness is a precursor to acceptance because the individual has come to recognize their loss.

## 5. Acceptance

**"it's going to be ok"**

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

**Remember, grieving is a personal process that has no time limit, nor one "right" way to do it.**