
Coping with change is difficult, no matter how old you are. Older adults face a number of transitions throughout their life, including children moving away, the loss of parents and spouses, friends, and other loved ones, the ending of a career, declining health, and sometimes the loss of independence. It's natural to feel those losses. When the sense of loss is balanced with positive approaches from the recommendations below - you have a formula for staying healthy as you age.

Grief

Grief is defined as the normal and natural emotional reaction to loss or change of any kind. Everyone reacts to a loss differently. Here are some feelings and symptoms:

- mood swings
- numbness
- loss of interest in activities
- sadness
- social isolation
- poor sleep
- anger
- guilt
- appetite changes

Recommendations for Managing Loss and Dealing with Grief

Myth: Don't Feel Bad, Sad, or Afraid

Do you feel you need to be strong and be strong for others? Allow yourself the opportunity to grieve. All emotions are normal – sadness, fear, anger, anxiety – and these feelings are commonly associated with loss. It is part of what makes us human.

Myth: Grieve on our Own

Do you feel like you wouldn't want to burden others with your feelings? It is equally as important to share good news as it is bad- our first instinct is to call our family and friends and share. Through communicating with those in our lives, we can be there for one another.

Myth: Grief Has a Time Frame

Do you feel there's a time limit for mourning? Everyone's journey of grief looks different and there is not a set amount of time for it to occur. Time heals all wounds by working through the journey of recovery as we work towards remembering and enjoying the fond memories.

“Challenges are gifts that force us to search for a new center of gravity. Don't fight them. Just find a new way to stand.”
— Oprah Winfrey

(over)

Myth: There are Five Stages of Grief that Follow a Linear Pattern

Do you feel like there is a right way to grieve? Everyone grieves differently and our thoughts and emotions can change drastically, sometimes in moments. There is no right way to grieve. We cannot compare the way we grieve to anyone else; we all have our own journey.

Myth: Grief Will Not Change Your Relationships

Do you think that everything will be fine once things get back to normal? When grieving, people often feel isolated and alone. Friends and family may avoid you due to their own difficulties coping with their grief. Finding a 'new normal' and reaching out to those we love is important in developing this and moving forward.