



## How to Support Someone Who is Grieving

- » Listen.
- » Encourage expression of thoughts and feelings (“Do you feel like talking?”).
- » Help recall good times.
- » Plan for difficult times/dates (anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, mealtimes).
- » Don’t be afraid to have a good time or to laugh.
- » Be patient. Overcoming grief takes time. Avoid saying things like “You should be getting on with your life.”
- » Encourage them to seek professional help when their need is beyond what you can support.

## MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

### Call

512.245.2208

### San Marcos location and hours

LBJ Student Center, Room 5-4.1  
8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday

### Round Rock location

Nursing Building, Room 116  
1555 University Blvd.

Check our website for current hours.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### Website

[counseling.txstate.edu](http://counseling.txstate.edu)



[facebook.com/txstCC](https://facebook.com/txstCC)



@txstCC  
[twitter.com/txstCC](https://twitter.com/txstCC)



[youtube.com/c/TxStCounselingCenter](https://youtube.com/c/TxStCounselingCenter)



@txstCC  
[instagram.com/txstCC](https://instagram.com/txstCC)



[pinterest.com/txstCC](https://pinterest.com/txstCC)

**TEXAS STATE**  
COUNSELING CENTER

601 University Drive  
5-4.1 LBJ Student Center  
San Marcos, TX 78666  
512.245.2208 | [counselingcenter@txstate.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@txstate.edu)

# Coping with Grief and Loss



**TEXAS**  
  
**STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

*The rising STAR of Texas*

**G**rief is a natural reaction to loss. Grief is both a universal and a personal experience, influenced by the nature of the loss. Whether you're dealing with the death of a loved one, the ending of a significant relationship, job loss, loss through theft or the loss of independence through disability, your reaction to grief is normal.

**The types of events that can trigger grief include:**

- » Death of a spouse, family member or friend
- » Divorce or separation
- » Friendship changes
- » Pregnancy or loss of a pregnancy
- » Personal injury or illness
- » Changes in family member's health
- » Loss of a promotion or career opportunity
- » New work conditions, hours or responsibilities
- » Graduation
- » Moving
- » Retirement
- » Loss of income or financial readjustment
- » Birth of a child or child leaving home

**Common Responses to Loss**

- » Sadness
- » Crying
- » Helplessness
- » Anger
- » Yearning
- » Shock
- » Absent-minded actions
- » Anxiety
- » Loneliness
- » Social withdrawal
- » Numbness
- » Sleep disturbances
- » Appetite changes
- » Irritability
- » Fatigue
- » Searching
- » Restlessness
- » Avoiding reminders

## The Grief Process

Grief is a process that can involve various experiences, though not in any particular order. Learning about grief can help you through and heal from the pain of loss.

### Denial

*"This can't be happening to me."*

Denial helps us to survive the loss. It is our mind's way of letting in only as much as we can handle. As the reality of the situation sets in, denial can begin to fade.

### Anger

*"Why is this happening? Who is to blame?"*

Anger is a necessary part of the healing process. Be willing to feel your anger, even though it may seem endless. The more you truly feel it, the more it will begin to dissipate and the more you will heal.

### Bargaining

*"Make this not happen, and in return I will \_\_\_\_\_."*

We want life returned to what it was. We want to remain in the past and try to negotiate our way out of the hurt.

### Depression

*"I'm too sad to do anything."*

It's important to understand that the depression you're experiencing as a reaction to loss is not a sign of mental illness. It is an appropriate response. If grief is a process of healing, then sadness is one of the many necessary steps along the way.

### Acceptance

*"I'm at peace with what happened."*

This phase is about recognizing that this new reality is permanent. We may never like this reality, but eventually we accept it. Instead of denying our feelings, we listen to our needs; we move, we change, we grow, we evolve. We begin to live again, but we cannot do so until we have given grief its time.

## Your grief is as unique as you.

You do not have to go through all the phases of the grief process in order to heal. Also, the emotions you experience may not occur in a neat, sequential order, so don't worry about what you should be feeling or where you're "supposed to be" in the healing process.

## Some Ways to Support Yourself

- » Express your feelings.
- » Seek and accept help from support systems.
- » Rethink and retell the story of the loss.
- » Get adequate rest.
- » Choose relaxing activities.
- » Join a support group.
- » Start a journal.
- » Utilize religious/spiritual connections.
- » Access self-help resources on loss and grief.
- » Understand that grief comes in waves.
- » Be patient with yourself.

While family and friends are often the best support, sometimes you need more than they can provide, and you may benefit from counseling if:

- » you feel that your mood is not improving with time
- » your thoughts and behaviors are beginning to interfere with your ability to function
- » you feel you need a place to sort through your feelings

