

COMMON GRIEF REACTIONS

This table lists symptoms commonly expected during bereavement. Each person will experience a unique blend of some or all of the symptoms listed and perhaps some that are not listed.

PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	MENTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pain ▪ Fatigue, exhaustion, low energy ▪ Sleep disruption ▪ Appetite disruption ▪ Shortness of breath ▪ Tight or heavy feeling in chest ▪ Feeling of tightness in throat ▪ Hollow feeling in stomach ▪ Stomach pain or upset ▪ Heartache, broken heart ▪ Dry mouth ▪ Tension ▪ Restlessness, irritability ▪ Increased sensitivity to stimuli ▪ “Grief Attacks” ▪ “Sympathy pains” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shock, numbness ▪ Emptiness ▪ Sadness ▪ Sorrow for the one who died ▪ Loneliness, longing, yearning ▪ Anger ▪ Guilt, regret ▪ Resentment ▪ “I should have done more” ▪ Fear, anxiety, insecurity ▪ Feeling helpless, out of control ▪ Diminished self-concern ▪ “Don’t care,” “what does it matter” ▪ Depression ▪ Desire to join the deceased ▪ Suicidal feelings ▪ Feelings of betrayal, disloyalty ▪ “Emotional roller coaster” ▪ Relief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disbelief ▪ Confusion ▪ Disorientation ▪ Absentmindedness ▪ Forgetfulness ▪ Poor concentration ▪ Distraction ▪ Difficulty focusing and attending ▪ Low motivation ▪ Expecting to see the deceased ▪ Expecting the deceased to call ▪ Preoccupation with the deceased ▪ Need to tell and retell story ▪ Dreams or images of the deceased ▪ Denial ▪ Thinking about other deaths and losses
SOCIAL	BEHAVIORS	SPIRITUAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being isolated by others ▪ Withdrawing from social activities ▪ Diminished desire for conversation ▪ Being “widowed,” “single,” etc. ▪ Hide grief to “take care of others” ▪ Lose friends, make new friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crying (sometimes unexpectedly) ▪ Searching for the deceased ▪ Carrying special objects ▪ Going to grave site ▪ Making and keeping an altar ▪ Keeping belongings intact ▪ Looking at photos or videos ▪ Listening to tapes ▪ Talking to the deceased ▪ Avoiding situations that arouse grief ▪ Changes in daily routine ▪ “Staying busy” ▪ Assuming mannerisms of the deceased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions about God ▪ Why would God allow this? ▪ Questions about the deceased ▪ “Where are they now?” ▪ “Are they ok?” ▪ “Can they see me?” ▪ “Will I see them again?” ▪ “What will happen when I die?” ▪ Sensing the deceased’s presence ▪ Hearing, smelling, or seeing the deceased ▪ Death affirms or challenges beliefs ▪ Awe, wonder, mystery