



Your Rights As You Grieve

Grief doesn't change who we are as much as it reveals who we are.

– David Neese, LCSW, Director of Grief Support Services at Alive Hospice

Although it can be important to reach out to others as you heal, it is equally important for you to be the judge of what type of support is helpful for you ... and to know that you have certain “rights” along the way.

1. You have the right to experience your unique grief. In spite of the many commonalities and the universal nature of loss and grief, every loss is unique, as well as the grief that goes with it. Accept your uniqueness while seeking comfort in understanding all that you share with others who have grieved and are grieving.
2. You have the right to tell your story. Talking and telling your story as often as you need is important and helpful to most people. Trust your judgment in choosing people you trust and with whom you feel safe sharing your grief.
3. You have the right to the gamut of emotions. Sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, guilt, confusion are only a few of the emotions you might experience as you grieve. Learn all you can about what's normal. You'll feel better just doing that.
4. You have the right to your limitations as you heal. Grief can, for a while, literally impair us in many ways: emotional, physical, mental, social, spiritual...you can add your own. To use a sports metaphor, you're probably “playing hurt” right now, except there's no DL for the bereaved. Seems we're not allowed to sit on the sidelines as we heal from loss. Respect and pay attention to what your body and mind are telling you.
5. You have the right to your own spirituality. Whatever your faith or worldview is, embrace it in ways that work for you. If it provides comfort, welcome it. If you're feeling anger or ambivalence in this realm, know that this is normal and allow yourself time to work through it. This can be an important part of healing and an area in which people often experience growth.
6. You have the right to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking, “Why did my loved one die? Why this way? Why now?” Allow yourself to ask the hard questions. We have a natural need to make sense of loss and to find meaning in it, even though clear answers are often out of grasp.
7. You have the right to a continued connection with your loved one. Death doesn't have to mean the end of a relationship. It only transforms it. Allow yourself to continue to turn to your loved one in ways that suit you.
8. You have the right to walk your own path toward healing. Reconciling your loss will not happen quickly. Grieving is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself. Allow yourself to walk through it at a pace and in doses you can tolerate, while also gently pushing yourself at times in ways that may be uncomfortable for you.

A free resource provided by Alive Hospice

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