



IN TOUCH

Bereavement Newsletter

Bereavement Department (602) 530-6970 or hov.org

MARCH / APRIL 2023

NORMAL REACTIONS TO LOSS

Grief does not occur in easily defined stages; rather it is a blend of emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses. The death of your loved one will affect the whole of you, body and soul. Your initial and later reactions will be felt and expressed physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

Physical reactions to loss

- The stress of an emotional injury may be expressed through physical symptoms such as fatigue, high blood pressure, muscle tension, headaches, shortness of breath, erratic sleeping and eating patterns, or aggravation of chronic or new medical conditions.
- Nutrition can suffer. In an effort to comfort and nurture yourself, you may eat more or less than usual. Stress can interfere with the absorption of important nutrients, while fats and sugars deplete energy.
- Rest and relaxation are essential. Because rest relieves, restores and refreshes, it is important that you make time for routine “mindless” activity, or get away for a relaxing weekend. You may sleep less or more than usual as a way to avoid or shut out the pain.
- Although grief saps your energy, exercise is good for you. Regular physical activity increases your circulation, stimulates your heart, cleanses your body, discharges negative energy and gets you out and about.
- Human contact is a basic human need. Touching, hugging, holding and having contact with another is comforting and healing.

Suggestions for coping with physical symptoms

- Inform your physician about what is happening in your life, so your health can be monitored.
- Avoid self-medicating and alcohol, which can offer only temporary escape and may have serious side effects.
- Drink lots of water.
- If your diet is not well balanced, try supplementing with vitamins and minerals. Add fruits, vegetables and grains. Eat smaller, more frequent meals rather than three big ones. Eat foods that are easy to fix and digest, and include a special treat now and then.
- Cut back on your caffeine intake, and drink a cup of warm milk or water at bedtime (plain milk is a natural sedative).
- Take a relaxing bath or warm shower before bed.
- Stick to a regular routine; retire and get up at the same time each day.
- Follow a deep relaxation routine; perform deep breathing exercises in bed.
- Listen to music that soothes your soul and decreases tension.
- Visualize being in your favorite pleasant place.

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RECOGNIZING YOUR OWN PROGRESS THROUGH GRIEF *(continued)*

- Recognize that your thinking processes, coordination and reaction time aren't up to par right now.
- Find an exercise you can do (stretching, walking, swimming, dancing, swinging or swaying to music), and set aside time to do it regularly.
- Ask someone to stay with you to help you focus and prioritize what needs to get done.
- Reach out and touch someone. Cuddle children and pets; hold hands with your friends; get a massage.
- Attend to personal grooming (hair, skin, nails, wardrobe) that will enhance your body image. There is truth in the saying that when you look good, you feel good too.
- You may have difficulty concentrating and remembering, and feel incapable of making the simplest decision.
- You may experience nightmares, dreams and phobias, and you may fear that you're going crazy.
- You may find yourself crying at the slightest provocation or at unexpected moments. Alternatively, you may fear that if you permit yourself to cry, the tears will never stop.
- You may have the pessimistic belief that things will never get any better, as if life and living are useless, and you may even want to die. While not unusual in grief, such thoughts are usually fleeting and simply reflect how desperately you want the pain of loss to end.

Emotional reactions to loss

- For weeks, months, or even years after the death occurs, the shock of loss continues in a wave of disbelieving aftershocks.
- You recognize that your loved one has died, but you're unable to grasp all the ramifications of that reality.
- Even simple tasks like getting out of bed in the morning, tending to personal grooming, fixing a meal or going somewhere with friends may seem



This is an excerpt from the book, *Finding Your Way through Grief: A Guide for the First Year*, Second Edition, by Marty Tousley, CNSBC, FT, DCC.

If you would like to purchase a copy of this book (\$12), visit <https://hov.org/news/> and click on the "Online Store" link at the bottom of the page.



The only courage that matters
is the kind that gets you from one moment to the next.

—Mignon McLaughlin

ADULT GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

In-person and virtual groups are available county-wide. Please watch for updates at hov.org or call the Bereavement Dept. at (602) 530-6970. Groups marked virtual below require a call to (602) 636-5390 to obtain the invite link on the Zoom platform.

If you are in need of crisis support, please call the **Maricopa County Crisis Response Network:** (602) 222-9444 or **Non-Crisis Warm Line:** (602) 347-1100. **Crisis Text Line:** Text 741741 or visit <https://www.crisistextline.org/text-us/>. **Mental Health and Suicide Crisis** (national 3-digit code): 988

PHOENIX

Memories of the Heart...When a Loved One Dies with Dementia
1st & 3rd Tuesday
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Virtual, Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Healing Rainbows: Phoenix
(Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)
2nd & 4th Tuesday
6–7:30 p.m.
Virtual; Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
2nd & 4th Tuesday
5:30–7p.m.
In person

Luz del Corazón for Spanish Speakers
Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
Call to register: (602) 410-5252

Phoenix Virtual
1st & 3rd Thursday
5:30–7 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

WEST VALLEY

Hospice of the Valley
9435 W. Peoria Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85345
2nd & 4th Wednesday
2–3:30 p.m.
In person

West Valley Virtual
Every other Thursday
1–2:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

EAST VALLEY

East Valley Virtual
1st & 3rd Tuesday
1–2:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Hospice of the Valley
2020 E. Woodside Ct.
Gilbert, AZ 85297
1st & 3rd Thursday
1–2:30 p.m.
In person
Lost Dutchman Room

Leisure World
908 S. Power Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85206
2nd & 4th Tuesday
1–2:30 p.m.
In person
Recreation #1 Banquet Room

Mountain View Funeral and Cemetery
7900 E. Main St.
Mesa, AZ 85207
1st Monday
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
In person

Pecos Community Center
1st & 3rd Wednesday
6–7:30 p.m.
Virtual; Call for link: (602) 636-5390

St. Matthew's
2540 W. Baseline Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85202
1st & 3rd Tuesday
6–7:30 p.m.
In person

Mountain View Funeral and Cemetery
21809 S. Ellsworth Rd.
Queen Creek, AZ 85142
2nd Monday
10–11 a.m.
In person

NORTHEAST VALLEY

Granite Reef Senior Center
1700 N. Granite Reef Rd., Room 8
Scottsdale, AZ 85257
1st & 3rd Monday
1:30–3 p.m.
In person

Northeast Valley
2nd & 4th Tuesday
3–4:30 p.m.
In person

Virginia G. Piper Center
1st & 3rd Tuesday
1:30–3 p.m.
Virtual; Call for link: (602) 636-5390

NORTHWEST VALLEY

Wickenburg Community Hospital
520 Rose Lane
Wickenburg, AZ 85390
2nd Thursday
3–4:30 p.m.
In person

PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

1st Saturday
9–11 a.m.
Virtual; Call for link: (602) 636-5390



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bereavement services

Hospice of the Valley provides bereavement support for up to 13 months following the death of your loved one. Virtual support groups and telephonic or virtual grief counseling support are available. Information can be found at hov.org/grief-support-groups, or by calling (602) 530-6970.

Special group for the newly bereaved

“Gone from our Sight, Never from Our Hearts”

If you have recently suffered the death of a loved one and would benefit from sharing with other adults who are also newly bereaved, this might be the right group for you.

For more information, call (602) 636-5390 or visit hov.org/grief-support-groups.

New Song Center for Grieving Children

New Song Center for Grieving Children, a program of Hospice of the Valley, provides grief support groups for children, youth, young adults and adults. Support groups are currently being offered for all age groups virtually and in-person in Gilbert, Scottsdale and North Phoenix, at no cost to participants.

“Enduring Ties” is an evening support group for families that have experienced the death of a minor child. There is also a support group for grandparents grieving the death of a grandchild.

“Luz del Corazón” is a support group program for families whose first language is Spanish and who have experienced any type of loss through death.

For more information, call (480) 951-8985 or (602) 776-6789 (Spanish), email info@newsongcenter.org or view newsongcenter.org.

Additional resources are available at <https://hov.org/our-care/grief-support/>.