

INFORMATION ON GRIEF

What is grief?

Grief is the natural reaction to loss and can influence the physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and spiritual aspects of our lives. Grief can be experienced in response to a variety of loss-related events, such as the death of a loved one, separation or divorce, the loss of a sense of safety or predictability, physical incapacity through disability, or the loss of one's home or community due to disaster.

People respond to loss in a variety of ways. Whilst some find it helpful to talk openly about the experience, others prefer time alone. The intensity and duration of the grieving process differs between individuals. The experience of grief will typically dominate emotions, thoughts and behaviours for many weeks or months. As time passes, most individuals adjust and continue functioning well although a sense of loss will remain. Most bereaved people will not need professional help, however a significant minority (estimated at 10 to 20 percent) require and seek professional support.

Signs and symptoms

A variety of emotions, thoughts, sensations, and behaviours can be associated with the grief experience, including:

Emotional	Cognitive	Physical & behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness, • Anger, • Guilt and remorse, • Anxiety, • Loneliness, • Helplessness, • Shock and disbelief, • Relief, and • A sense of yearning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion, • Difficulty concentrating, • Preoccupation with loss, • Loss of interest in pleasurable activities, and • Vivid dreams or nightmares. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle tightness, • Fatigue or reduced energy, • Sleep disturbance, • Social withdrawal, • Changes in appetite, • Crying, • Health concerns, • Aches and pains, • Restlessness, • Avoiding places or people that trigger memories of the loss, and • Treasuring objects associated with the loss.

There can also be significant changes in spiritual or philosophical views and beliefs.

At iflow psychology we use an integrative approach drawing on various therapeutic models and tailor treatment to individual needs. We teach a set of basic tools to enhance relaxation and quality of life as a foundation while simultaneously working on presenting issues. We promote engagement in activities that involve 'flow' states to assist in achieving an optimal life style and quality of life.

How a psychologist can help

Grief is a normal response to loss and many people learn to adjust to loss on their own. Some individuals, however, require assistance from a psychologist to help them adjust to loss and cope with grief. Through discussion and assessment of a client's wellbeing, we gain an understanding of the client's situation and develop a treatment plan.

When to seek professional help

If grief is affecting a person's work, school, home life, or relationships, psychological assistance should be considered. A GP can also organise a referral to a registered psychologist through the Better Access to Mental Health Care items. You may print a referral form from our website to assist your doctor.

iflow psychology can assist. **Just call 0431 564 257 or book an appointment online at www.iflowpsychology.com.au**

