

GRIEVING

UNDERSTANDING THE GRIEF PROCESS

Grief is a normal process of life that helps us to work through the emotions we feel in response to a loss. Everyone grieves differently and there is no set time frame for grieving a loss. Typically, people will experience stages of grief although not necessarily in a linear fashion: denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and acceptance. It is important to acknowledge the grief experience in order to get through the process. Avoiding feelings associated with grief will only postpone it.

Individuals grieve differently, but some common symptoms are: feeling drained, sleeplessness, forgetfulness, change in appetite, physical distress (eg. Headaches, nausea), busyness to avoid feeling, excessive eating or watching TV, dreaming about deceased, frequent crying, becoming withdrawn, lonely, or apathetic..

While it is common to distance oneself during this time, it is important to stay connected to a few people who you can talk with while journeying through the grief process – it will make all the difference. Finally, the loss of a loved one will likely bring about questions about God and faith to the surface. It is important to remember that no emotion or question is off limits in a conversation with God.

TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT DEATH

Children need to know as many details as they ask. Depending on the age of the child, they will ask more or less questions related to the death of their loved one. It is important to use straight forward words with children, like dead, died, buried and cremated.

Try to avoid describing the deceased as asleep, on a long trip that they won't return from, or that God was lonely for that person. These descriptions may create fears for the child regarding sleeping or the travel of another loved one, or affect how they understand God.

It is also helpful for children to see the adults grieve, too. This helps them feel they have permission to share their feelings, thoughts, and memories of a loved one when needed.

GRIEF CARE

This is a campus-based, supportive small group that addresses the stages of grief and loss from a Biblical perspective and provides an environment for emotional and spiritual growth. To find out when Grief Care meets, contact: caregroups@eastview.church

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Short books ideal for the first 6 months

- **Experiencing Grief**, by H. Norman Wright – short and basic grief knowledge
- **Through a Season of Grief**, Grief Share Devotional – readings are one page in length
- **I Wasn't Ready to Say Good-bye: Surviving, coping and healing after the sudden death of a loved one**, by Pamela Blair & Brook Noel – not a Christian resource, but gives some validation to dynamics of sudden loss that are different from those that had chances to say good-bye.

Books for later

- **Through the Eyes of a Lion**, by Levi Lusko
- **A Grace Disguised: How the soul grows through loss**, by Jerry Sittser – this is a good book for those who are helped by the story of another. Sittser is candid about his own experience with traumatic, sudden loss and his journey with God through the grief.
- **Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the loss of a spouse**, by Susan Zonnebelt-Smeenge & Robert C. De Vries – recommended by ECC members.

Books for helping children grieve

- **It's Okay to Cry: A parent's guide to helping children through the losses of life**, by H. Norman Wright – this book helps give parents an understanding of how their children may be reacting to and dealing with a loss and helpful strategies to navigate the grief process in a healthy way. The chapter titles and sections are laid out in a way that allows you to skip them if they do not apply.
- **Remembering Someone Special**, by Jane Wilke – for kids ages 6-10; this short book has reading and activities.

Talk to Staff:

- Pastor of Member Care: Sarah Thompson | 309.451.5057 | sthompson@eastview.church
- Care appointments: eastview.church/care or call Eastview's reception desk at 309-451-5000