



# Reactions to Grief

These are some normal and natural reactions to the loss of a loved one. You may have a few or more of these symptoms. As time passes, things may feel different or change.

## To Learn More

- Call the Journey Program at 206-987-2062
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

## Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers 206-987-2280 (TTY)

## Reactions having to do with your body (physical reactions)

Some reactions to grief may happen in your body. You may feel more or less active than usual, have problems sleeping, feel restless or feel tired. You might have pain or other physical problems, like headaches, stomach pain, nausea or chest pain. You might notice changes in your appetite, or that you gain or lose weight. Things might feel empty or unreal. You may notice yourself crying, sighing, having shortness of breath or tightness in your throat. You might have any one of these problems or a combination of many of them.

## Reactions having to do with your feelings (emotional reactions)

Other reactions might have more to do with your feelings. You may feel numb or lonely. It is also common to feel sad, angry, guilty or afraid. You might feel like you have been abandoned. There are a lot of feelings that happen during grief, and it is normal to have a lot of different feelings. One day, you may feel relieved, and another day guilty or anxious. It may be easy to become upset or frustrated. All of these reactions are normal.

## Reactions that may involve other people (social reactions)

It can be hard to be with other people when you are grieving. You might feel more sensitive than usual, or not feel interested in seeing people at all. You might feel like you are leaning too much on people, or that you are keeping to yourself too much. You might have trouble picking up the phone to get in touch with people, or just actively avoid people. Be patient with yourself, and remember that this will change over time.

## Reactions that have to do with the way you act (behavioral reactions)

Grief can cause you to act in ways that you would not usually act. You might find that you are forgetful, that you think more slowly than usual or that you wander around. You might have dreams about the person that died, sense their presence or find that you are looking around for them. You might try not to talk about the person who died to try to avoid making other people uncomfortable, or you might have a strong need to talk about the death.

If you are worried about any of the feelings or reactions you are having, it is a good idea to talk to a person who is close to you or a professional. The most important thing to remember is that grief is a process, and it takes time.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact the Journey Program at 206-987-2062.