

TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY CHAPLAINCY

POLICE & FIRE CHAPLAINS

ABOUT GRIEF

WHAT IS GRIEF?

It has been said that grief is just love wrestling with its oldest enemy...loss. Decades ago, groundbreaking research on grief in those who were dying was misapplied to the general public. This led to a common misunderstanding that the grieving process fits neatly into one of five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Further research has revealed that grief can be more complex and can be unique to an individual. While the common emotions or "stages" associated with grief **are** often experienced by many, a person may not experience them all and the emotions we feel may not always fit into one of these categories. Our grief may be delayed, not surfacing until long after the loss. We also will not likely experience grief in some linear fashion, progressing neatly from one stage to the next until the journey is over and we arrive at our destination, fully recovered and done with our grief. We know that this is not how grief works. Grieving is a normal and personal way of dealing with loss and we very well may feel a sense of grief for a particular loss for a lifetime.

DEALING WITH GRIEF

Grieving can be, and often is, a different experience for different people. Even among members of one family with common values, each person may grieve differently and, as long as an expression of grief is healthy, we should allow others to grieve in their own way. Don't avoid your grief. It isn't going to just go away. It will be there, waiting for you to deal with it. Unresolved or suppressed grief can lead to other significant health issues. While it may seem like an unpleasant time, there are beautiful things that can take place while a person is grieving. Relationships can be strengthened. New coping skills can be gained. Priorities might be reassessed, sometimes altering lives for the better. People learn how to empathize. Perspectives can be changed as we see and appreciate life differently. Don't miss out on the benefits of grieving by trying to rush through or suppress your emotions. It is also important to avoid trying to go through it alone. Generally speaking, humans are social beings. We need to express our feelings and be heard. We should allow those who are close to us to help us through the grieving process. While it is good to spend some time alone with your thoughts, don't let yourself fall into the trap of becoming isolated. Embrace your family, your friends, your faith, and anything else that makes you who you are. It is also advisable to avoid making major life decisions while you are grieving. If possible, save those decisions for later or surround yourself with people you trust to advise you. Grieving can take a toll on you physically. Eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of water. Make sure you talk to your doctor and continue taking any prescribed medications. Exercise can help your mood and your ability to think clearly. Avoid alcohol and caffeine & make sure you get an appropriate amount of sleep. As you allow yourself to grieve, you are making your way towards acceptance. Acceptance does not mean that you no longer miss your loved one. After all, the goal should never be to "get over" the loss of someone you cared deeply about. The goal should be to learn to live **with** that loss as you adjust to a "new normal" & enjoy living a healthy, productive life.

CONTACT US

Please know that if you have questions, concerns or just need someone to talk to, we are here for you. We also welcome your feedback on our service. Contact us any time using the information below or this QR code.

