



DIFFERENT KINDS OF GRIEF

MASKED GRIEF

When Grief Shows Up in Ways You Do Not Immediately Recognize



WHEN GRIEF WEARS A DIFFERENT FACE

Sometimes grief is present without feeling like obvious sadness. The term masked grief is often used to describe grief that appears indirectly through physical complaints, irritability, overactivity, avoidance, changes in behavior, or other difficulties that the grieving person may not initially connect with the loss.

GRIEF MAY NOT LOOK LIKE TEARS Some people rarely cry yet experience grief through tension, anger, numbness, restlessness, exhaustion, or difficulty slowing down.	THE BODY MAY SPEAK Headaches, stomach discomfort, muscle tension, sleep changes, fatigue, or other physical symptoms can occur during grief. New or concerning symptoms still deserve medical evaluation.	STAYING CONSTANTLY BUSY Work, projects, cleaning, travel, caregiving, or constant activity can sometimes become a way to avoid quiet moments when grief surfaces.	IRRITABILITY MAY INCREASE A shorter temper, impatience, frustration, or feeling easily overwhelmed may reflect the emotional strain of loss.
BEHAVIOR CAN CHANGE Withdrawal, risk-taking, increased substance use, overspending, or other changes may signal distress and deserve compassionate attention.	THE CONNECTION MAY BE MISSED You may focus on the symptom or behavior without realizing that it began or intensified after the death.	CURIOSITY CAN HELP Instead of judging yourself, ask: "What changed after the loss?" and "Could grief be part of what I am experiencing?"	SUPPORT CAN UNCOVER THE GRIEF A grief-informed professional can help explore whether grief, another condition, or several factors are contributing to what you feel.

Remember This

Grief does not always look like sadness.	The body can carry emotional stress.	Behavior changes deserve curiosity, not shame.	Not every symptom is caused by grief.
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GENTLE WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

Notice patterns rather than assuming. Write down when symptoms or behaviors began, what seems to intensify them, and what brings relief. Seek appropriate medical or mental health care for persistent, concerning, or disruptive symptoms.

Masked grief is a descriptive idea, not a diagnosis you need to give yourself. The goal is to notice whether grief may be asking for attention in an unexpected way.

"Sometimes grief speaks quietly through the body and behavior before we recognize what the heart is carrying."

— *Mourning Discoveries*

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