



DIFFERENT KINDS OF GRIEF

COMPLICATED GRIEF

When Grief Remains Intense and Daily Life Feels Difficult



WHEN GRIEF FEELS STUCK, RELENTLESS, OR OVERWHELMING

Most grief changes over time, but sometimes intense yearning, emotional pain, preoccupation with the person who died, or difficulty re-engaging with life remains persistent and deeply disruptive. People sometimes use the term “complicated grief” for this experience. Today, clinicians may also evaluate for Prolonged Grief Disorder when specific symptoms, duration, and impairment criteria are present.

GRIEF HAS NO SIMPLE TIMELINE There is no single deadline for grief. Intense grief early after a death can be a natural response and does not automatically mean something is wrong.	WHEN DISTRESS STAYS INTENSE Concern may grow when grief remains persistently overwhelming and continues to interfere substantially with everyday functioning over time.	YEARNING CAN DOMINATE A powerful longing for the person who died or persistent preoccupation with them may make it difficult to attend to other parts of life.	LIFE MAY FEEL FROZEN Work, relationships, self-care, interests, responsibilities, or a sense of purpose may feel extremely difficult to resume.
AVOIDANCE CAN GROW Some people avoid reminders because they are too painful; others feel unable to leave places, belongings, or routines connected to the person.	IDENTITY MAY FEEL DISRUPTED You may struggle to understand who you are without the person or feel that an important part of yourself died too.	SUPPORT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE A grief-informed mental health professional can help assess what you are experiencing and discuss approaches designed for persistent, impairing grief.	SEEK URGENT HELP WHEN NEEDED If you are thinking about harming yourself, feel unable to stay safe, or are in immediate danger, seek emergency or crisis support right away.

Remember This

Intense early grief is not automatically complicated.	Persistent impairment deserves attention.	You do not have to diagnose yourself.	Specialized grief support is available.
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GENTLE WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

Notice how grief is affecting sleep, eating, relationships, responsibilities, and your ability to participate in daily life. If the intensity remains persistent and significantly disruptive, consider talking with a qualified mental health professional who understands bereavement and prolonged grief.

Needing additional support is not a failure to grieve correctly. Grief can become especially difficult for many reasons, and compassionate, evidence-informed help can support adaptation without asking you to forget the person you love.

“Getting help with grief does not mean letting go of love. It means making room for both love and life.”

— *Mourning Discoveries*

MOURNING DISCOVERIES
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