

What is grief?

Grief is a normal physical and emotional response to a loss, like the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, or the loss of a job. It is a process that can involve intense feelings like sadness, anger, disbelief, and confusion, all of which can be overwhelming.

What may cause grief?

- ✓ Death of a family member, friend, or coworker
- ✓ Not being able to say goodbye or pay your respects to a family member, friend, or coworker that has died
- ✓ Being separated or far away from family and friends
- ✓ Loss of the family farm and/or the legacy of the land
- ✓ Personal injury, illness, or other health concerns
- ✓ Loss of relationships (e.g., divorce, break-up, or friendship)
- ✓ Financial instability
- ✓ Loss of livestock
- ✓ Retirement or career changes
- ✓ Loss of identity, dreams, or goals
- ✓ Natural disasters
- ✓ Lack of closure or resolution in relationships or situations
- ✓ Living in an unfamiliar culture with different traditions
- ✓ Living in a place where you feel unprotected, undervalued, and under threat

What does grief look like?

Everyone grieves differently, and there is no single “right” way to feel grief. You may see changes or signs in your body or in how you think, feel, or act.



BODY:

- » Tiredness
- » Sleep problems
- » Difficulty with daily life activities
- » Headache
- » Pain in the neck, back, or muscles
- » Tightness in the chest or throat
- » Upset stomach or other digestive problems
- » Changes in appetite or body weight
- » Poor hygiene



MIND & EMOTIONS:






- » Feeling sad, anxious, or angry
- » Feeling numb or detached
- » Shock, disbelief, or denial
- » Confusion, brain fog, or trouble making decisions
- » Loss of interest in things you normally enjoy
- » Hopelessness
- » Withdrawing from people and activities
- » Increased drinking, smoking, or use of other drugs
- » Thoughts about suicide

What can you do to manage grief?

FOR YOURSELF:

-  Give yourself time. Know that grieving is a process. Allow yourself time to recognize and accept your feelings. Be kind to yourself as you grieve.
-  Find support. Instead of isolating yourself, seek out family or friends who can give you the support you need. Having people you can talk to is helpful.
-  Take care of yourself. Make sure you eat healthy and try not to skip meals. Engaging in physical activity can help you feel more energized, even if it is just for a few minutes a day. Make sure to also rest and get enough sleep.
-  Make time to do things you enjoy. Practice your hobbies. Engage in your faith if that is part of your life. Do things that are meaningful to you.
-  Join a support group. Speaking with others who are also grieving can help you feel more understood, connected, and build a sense of community.
-  Reach out for help. Mental health professionals are there to help you in case you need it, and together you can come up with a plan to help manage your grief.

FOR SOMEONE YOU KNOW:

-  Grief is an individual experience. No two people grieve the same way. Allow the person grieving to be the expert of their own experience. Try to avoid giving advice and drawing comparisons (e.g., "When I lost my...").
-  Listen more, talk less. Listen with empathy and an open heart. Let the person who is grieving guide the conversation. Allow them to share their feelings without judgment. Remember, silence is also okay.
-  Be present. Dedicate time to be with a person who is grieving. Focus on their needs over your own.
-  Offer practical support. Ask the person grieving about specific ways you can help, such as with farm chores, cooking meals, or other tasks.
-  Check in regularly. Grief does not have a specific timeline. A simple text or phone call can remind the person grieving that you are there for them.
-  Connect with resources. Encourage professional help if needed but know that sometimes people may prefer to seek support from a religious leader, their place of worship, or other community organizations.

Resources

NATIONAL SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Provides free and confidential support for people in distress and prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

- Call 988
- Text "HELLO" to 988
- <https://988lifeline.org>

RURAL RESPONSE HOTLINE

Offers access to legal and financial assistance, disaster relief, and emotional support including no-cost vouchers for confidential mental health services.

- Call 1-800-464-0258
- www.farmhotline.com

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FARMWORKER HEALTH

Provides information, education, and referrals to health care and supportive services and may assist with financial resources and/or interpretation.

- Call 1-800-377-9968
- WhatsApp 1-737-414-5121

FIND RESOURCES IN YOUR STATE

- Call 211
- www.farmstress.org

5 Stages of Grief

Grief is not a linear process. The stages might come at different times, in different orders, and you may be stuck going back and forth between stages. There is not a right way or universal way to experience grief.



DENIAL

- "This can't be happening."
- Initial shock but with time comes to terms with the reality



ANGER

- "Why did this happen? What did I do to deserve this?"
- Anger directed at oneself, others, or the situation



BARGAINING

- "If only I had..."
- Trying to find ways to reverse or lessen the loss



DEPRESSION

- "What's the point of going on?"
- Deep sadness and understanding of what has been lost



ACCEPTANCE

- "I'm at peace with what happened."
- Coming to terms with the loss and finding a way to move forward



AgHealth
Central States
Center for Agricultural
Safety and Health

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Medical Center

This work is supported by the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center through funding from the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network under agreement #2023-70028-4128 and #2024-70028-43552.