



Understanding Grief

As much as grief is inevitable and universal in our lives, many people are uncomfortable talking about it. This is because:

- grief is often a very intense and personal experience
- you may be afraid of being judged or misunderstood by people
- you are expected to be strong and to get over it as soon as possible.

Because people are hesitant to talk about grief, many **myths** about grieving have arisen due to a lack of understanding. Some of them are as follows:

Myth 1: "Everyone grieves in the same way"

Your grief is unique. You and members of our family may lose the same person but each will grieve differently - for example, you may want to talk about the death but a sibling may choose to keep silent and express their grief through work or activities. You may cry most of the time but your spouse may hardly shed a tear but become angry. How you grieve depends on:

- your relationship with your loved one
- your personality
- your values and beliefs regarding death
- your culture
- your spirituality/religion
- your family upbringing

It is important to express your grief your own way rather than what others expect of you.

Myth 2: "Time will heal your grief"

Time will only heal your grief when you have decided to **do** something about your grief. There are 4 important grieving tasks to do as part of the grieving process.

- Acknowledge that your loved one has died and will never return in a physical form.

- Find constructive ways to express your emotional pain.
- Make adjustments to an environment where your loved one is missing and learn to live without your loved one.
- Begin to establish new relationships.

Myth 3: "You will get over your grief in 3 months or a year"

No one can really put a **definite timeline** as to when you will get over or finish your grief. It all depends on:

- how close you were with your loved one
- how he/she died
- how you actively engaged in the grieving tasks
- what support networks and resources you have
- your personality type
- how you perceive and interpret the meaning of the death.

Myth 4: "You only need to grieve once"

Your grieving does not happen in a straight line or stages. You do not go through a steady, step-by-step process in your grief. Grief can be **messy**. The reality is you may go back and forth in stages of grief. It is an emotional roller-coaster. Your grieving journey is a **life long process**, not a one time event. But it does not mean you will be sad forever. It simply means you will always remember your loved one, and when you remember your loved one, sometimes you will cry, sometimes you will laugh, and sometimes you will intensely wish that they were still here with you. When these "sometimes" moments hit you recognize them as normal part of life.

Excerpt from the article "Grieving Journey" (University of South Australia, Learning Connection)

CLM offers grief counselling to all bereaved individuals, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Please feel free to contact us for an appointment with our counsellor.



"Grief is a healthy emotion, and it's healthy to embrace it. By accepting loss, we clarify our values and the meaning of our lives."

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**DEAN KOO
NTZ,
Forever Odd**

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