

Counseling News for Faculty: An e-newsletter to keep you informed! Issue #4

How to Help a Friend... with grief and loss

Thursday November 5th, 1 to 2 pm

Wellness Center, CL 178

This informal discussion group provides students with information and support so that they can help friends or loved ones.

Come to one meeting or come to them all!

Grief and Loss

Grief is a natural emotional response to loss.

Loss can be sudden, unanticipated and traumatic—but it can also be related to normal seemingly positive life events. Some events that may trigger loss include:

- Death of a loved one or friend
- Being diagnosed with chronic or terminal illness
- Disability or lack of independence after severe accident or illness
- Divorce
- Job loss
- Act of violence or natural disaster
- Starting school (loss of familiar surroundings or schedule)
- Gaining independence in teen years (loss of dependence on parents)
- Marriage (loss of independent decision making)

Grieving is the process of emotional and life adjustment you go through after a loss. Because it is a personal experience the process of grief will be different for everyone. There is no “normal and expected” period of time for grieving.

Symptoms

Grief can be expressed emotionally, physically, socially or spiritually.

- Emotional symptoms common during grieving include shock, numbness, sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety or fear. Additionally, old feelings of grief from a past loss may be triggered by current experiences or anniversaries of that loss.
- Physical expressions of grief often include crying and sighing, headaches, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, weakness, fatigue, feelings of heaviness, aches, pains, and other stress related symptoms.
- Social symptoms may include feeling detached from others, isolating yourself from social contact, and behaving in ways that are not typical for you.

- Spiritual expressions of grief can include questioning the reason for the loss, the purpose of pain and suffering, the purpose of life, and meaning of death.

Teen and young adult response to death

Although teens and college students perceive death much like adults do, they may also express their feelings in dramatic or unexpected ways. For example, you might notice that students engage in dangerous activities such as ***reckless driving, smoking cigarettes, using and abusing alcohol and drugs, and/or having unprotected sex.***

When symptoms persist

Sometimes grief symptoms will linger or intensify---and make everyday functioning difficult. Grief can cause prolonged and serious symptoms including depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts/actions, and physical illness.

If someone finds it difficult to function for more than a week or two, support may be indicated. Please refer that person to Counseling and Career Services for an assessment.

If there is a mental health emergency & Counseling & Career Services is closed (office hours are listed below), contact Security (x 4882) or 911, and follow up with Counseling (x 4840) the next day.

For additional information, please refer to the
STUDENT INTERVENTION PROCEDURES Icon on your desktop

Counseling and Career Services, RCF 302
(410) 772-4840

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Additional resources:

(410) 531-6677: Grassroots Crisis Hotline
1-800-422-0009: Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255): National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433): National Suicide Hotline

To learn more about any information presented in this email,
please contact Suzie Friedman at (410) 772-4840.