

Grief Counseling

- Grief literally means deep sorrow, painful, very serious. Grief as normally understood means an emotional response to loss of a loved one. The emotional responses may vary from person to person but what is most commonly seen is:
- Feeling stunned
- Resistant to stimuli
- Array of emotional responses such as crying, anger, laugh ,joking
- **Functions are impeded :**
- such as energy decreases
- decisions making is difficult
- Shock and feeling of numbness in first 2 weeks are most intense

A-typical Responses/ Physical symptoms

- Denial
- Despair
- Anger/ Hostility
- Guilt
- Loss of control
- Optimism and despair
- Social isolation / social desirability
- Loss of Appetite
- Death Anxiety
- Loss of Vigor
- De personalization
- Somnolent
- Rumination
- Moody

Psychosomatic symptoms may include:

- Headaches
- Lower backaches
- Frequent cold and flu symptoms
- Excessive fatigue
- Impotence/ lack of sexual desire

- Significant sleep disturbance

Five stages of Grieving

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Five Factors of Healthy Grieving

- Maintain nurturing and supportive social network
- Adequate daily nutrition avoid junk food
- Fluid intake avoid coffee, cola
- Engage in daily range of exercise and motion
- Keep busy

In Islam as stated earlier the belief that Life begins not ends at death is a strong deterrent from allowing grief to consume us. The perspective and relevance of this life is so clear that mourning seems meaningless as one sees the passing away of a loved one as a temporary separation. Prophet Muhammad sw. stated that life of this world is but a drop in the Ocean compared to life in the hereafter. When facing the loss of a loved one the desire to do something for them is so intense that if we were not advised by the Prophet of the 3 things that can continue to benefit of the loved ones such as giving charity in their name, righteous children making supplication for them and their own deeds. We would feel helpless and thus hopeless

Knowing that life and death are determined by Allah relieves us of guilt of not being able to save our loved ones from dying through better treatment etc.

“After Hard ship cometh ease surely After Hard ship cometh ease”(Quran).

Islam recognizes grieving as a natural response to loss and does not discourage crying and feeling of sadness. However it does discourage wailing, inflicting pain on one self or others or of tearing of clothes

‘ From Allah we come and to Allah is our return’ is the prayer Muslims say at the time of sorrow and loss. In this simple verse is the entire philosophy of life in this world its origin and its end. Thus death and life is given a continuum and a purpose. It is important to note that in the Quran life is always mentioned after death further emphasizing that this life is temporary and that our eternal life comes after death

What can be a higher reward for patience, perseverance, self-restraint and constancy than that Allah should be with us, for this promise opens the door to all kinds of spiritual well-being. The prayer here is to actively strive in the way of truth and justice and this is the way to salvation.

- belief in Life after death and the hereafter keeps things in perspective.
- Our grief compels us to action, empathy and compassion. The only way we will find relief from our present predicament is to take a holistic approach to life and an inclusive approach to humanity

- Islam discourages us to dwell on our misfortunes, tragedies and calamities. We are advised not to be consumed with anger or fear.

People who are grieving:

- Feel restless and find it hard to concentrate
- Have an empty feeling in their stomach and lose their appetite
- Have trouble sleeping and dream often of their loved ones
- Sense their loved one's presence and sometimes think they have seen or heard them
- Feel their mood change frequently or quickly,
- Feel lonely even though surrounded by people

Working through grief:

- Grief takes energy:
- Be gentle with yourself.
- Take time for simple things that you find comforting
- It is OK to ask for help
- Don't have to set impossible goals
- Plan daily activities

Grief involves:

- Wide variety of feelings and reactions
- Tears and sadness are normal
- Let yourself cry
- Know that you be happy again without dishonouring the loved one who died
- You may be bothered by feelings or problems from the past
- It may help to share your feelings with someone you trust
- There are no time limits on grief
- Does not matter that people want you "to get over it"
- You will heal it takes time be constant in prayer
- Take one day at a time and remember Allah's blessings