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**Living With Loss**

# Living With Loss

The death of someone close to us is one of life's most stressful events. Coping with the changes it brings to our lives is vital to our mental health.

**There are no stages of grief. Don't let anyone establish stages or time lines for you. Normal emotions you may experience:**

- Shock – numbness, disbelief
- Sadness – feelings of being overwhelmed
- Panic – fear of the future, uncertainty
- Loneliness – emptiness, feeling displaced
- Anger – due to lack of support, inadequate medical care, with the deceased for leaving you
- Confusion – memory loss, inability to concentrate
- Guilt – things you wished you had said or done
- Loss – dreams, finality
- Relief – death after an illness
- Thankfulness – gratitude for having that person in your life

**Coping Mechanisms:**

- Give yourself permission to grieve and accept the reality of your loss. In other words, allow yourself to cry, get angry, sleep, eat, or whatever you need to do without going to the extreme.
- Be patient with the process – there is no '*normal*' time line for feeling better.
- Get plenty of rest – your body needs this to recover from the stress.
- Reach out for help – don't be afraid to ask for support through your other family members, friends, your doctor, clergy, funeral director, and counsellor (group support).
- Let your beliefs sustain you at this time.
- Remember the love and allow it to comfort you for the rest of your life.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> J. Kennedy Saynor for OFSA (2006). Living Through Grief. Etobicoke, ON, Canada.



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