

REACTING TO LOSS

Not all people respond the same way to death of a loved one. The emotional impact depends on a number of factors including inner resilience, personality, adverse childhood experiences, and availability of support through family, friends, and coworkers. Some have more severe, longer lasting reactions.

Further, grief is not just an emotional response. Though the nature and scope of grief differs, common reactions occur in 6 distinct categories.

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral
- Physical
- Social
- spiritual

NORMAL COGNITIVE REACTIONS

- Forgetfulness
- Poor concentration
- Low productivity
- Negative Attitude
- Confusion
- Guilt
- Preoccupation with loss event

NORMAL BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS

- 1000-yard stare
- Sleep disturbance
- Crying spells
- Lashing out
- Resentment
- Hyper-startle
- Increased risk taking

NORMAL EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

- Disbelief
- Shock
- Anxiety
- Frustration and/or irritability
- Mood swings
- Temper outbursts
- Nightmares
- Crying spells

NORMAL PHYSICAL REACTIONS

- Appetite change
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Restlessness
- Upset stomach/nausea
- Weight change

NORMAL SPIRITUAL REACTIONS

- Anger at God
- Emptiness
- Doubt
- Loss of direction
- Cynicism
- Cessation from practice of faith

NORMAL SOCIAL REACTIONS

- Change in friendships
- Change in career or workplace
- Altered status (going from married to single)
- Loss of motivation
- Withdrawal from family and friends

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Which cognitive reaction has been hardest for you to manage?

ANSWER: _____

Which behavioral reaction has been hardest for you to manage?

ANSWER: _____

Which emotional reaction has been hardest for you to manage?

ANSWER: _____

Which physical reaction has hit you hardest?

ANSWER: _____

Which spiritual reaction has been hardest for you to manage?

ANSWER: _____

Which social reaction has been hardest for you to manage?

ANSWER: _____
