

Alexian Brothers Hospice

Common Grief Reactions

The following table lists just some of the common reactions that people experience after the death of a loved one. Some people experience more than others...this is not necessarily a sign of disturbance or “illness”. Grief reactions are determined by many factors including, but not limited to: relationship with the deceased, support available/accepted, beliefs about death and grief, cultural factors, other life stressors.

Physical reactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleep disturbances/dreams• Appetite changes• Lack of energy• Deep sighing• Restlessness/impatience• Increased blood pressure• Tightness in chest• Dry mouth• Heart palpitations• Shortness of breath	Mental and Emotional reactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shock• Disbelief• Numbness• Confusion• Sadness• Guilt• Yearning/loneliness• Fears/anxiety• Hopelessness• Anger• Decision-making impaired• Concentration difficulties• Forgetfulness
Behavioral reactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crying• Preoccupation with the deceased• Apathy regarding activities• Decreased activity• Detachment from surroundings• Disorientation to time and place• Withdrawal from friends• Seeking solitude• Increased or new use of alcohol or drugs	Spiritual reactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-evaluation of beliefs• Anger at God• Distance/closeness with God• Avoidance of worship

It is important to acknowledge the changes that occur after a death, and seek guidance and support, as needed, to continue the “path” or journey through grief. There are many ways to find this support, including our hospice programs, community offerings, and internet options via chat rooms and blog pages. Call our office during normal business hours if you need assistance in finding a source of support.