



# FOR ALL WHO GRIEVE

Everyone, at some point in their life, experiences a loss and grieves it. Losses may be tangible or intangible, sometimes they are about the death of a loved one, but sometimes they are not. Additionally, each loss brings memories of others. Losses can include a pet, a home, a job, a career, a relationship. This literature is intended to offer information about the different ways in which people grieve, to gain a better understanding of your own process, but also those of others in your family or circle of friends.

## **VERY OFTEN, THE EXPRESSION OF GRIEF**

is identified with traditionally “feminine” characteristics. Crying, sharing feelings, and emphasis on relationships are generally identified as “healthy” ways to grieve. Social withdrawal, lack of emotional display, and an emphasis on activity are generally associated with traditionally “masculine” characteristics, and are often identified as “unhealthy” ways of grieving. Among the community working with bereaved persons, this model has begun to shift in the last several years. People engage with their grief in different ways, and there is no one “right way” to grieve.

## **INTUITIVE GRIEVERS**

Intuitive grievers tend to naturally fall towards the traditional model of grief. They will usually experience grief on an emotional level. Intuitive grievers exhibit strong sentiments that reflect how they are feeling inside. Often they will openly display how they feel in ways such as talking, crying, and laughing. Additionally, intuitive grievers tend to express their emotions by actively engaging their relationships with the people around them to process their feelings and experiences. Often these grievers will talk to friends and family repeatedly about the loss, changing feelings, and how it has affected relationships or plans for the future.

## **INSTRUMENTAL GRIEVERS**

Instrumental grievers will more often experience grief in their body or rational mind. Outward behavior may not reflect internal feelings. Grief is often

expressed in addressing practical matters such as logistics or paperwork, or focusing on tasks to be accomplished. Physical responses may include everything from going hiking to focusing on projects of personal interest such as building a deck or making a quilt. Instrumental grievers are more likely to engage in activities rather than relationships. More often, instrumental grievers will process their experience internally, coming to some conclusion of their own. Instrumental grievers may discuss their loss or grief experience, but will not likely use “feeling” words. Instrumental grievers are more likely talk about how they responded to the loss and what is different about their life as a result.





**SIGNATURE** healthcare  
at home

care where you are

## FOR ALL WHO GRIEVE (CONTINUED)

If you have any questions about the information presented here, or are interested in other resources, please don't hesitate to contact Signature Hospice. Please remember that the care team is as much for you as for your loved one, and we are available to support you.

### DESPITE POPULAR BELIEF, GRIEVING STYLES

are not defined by gender. Different grieving styles may exist in one person and there are advantages and disadvantages to both. It is not uncommon for a bereaved person to go through a period of emotional upheaval, followed by periods of intense activity or "busyness" where emotions are put on the back burner. The important thing about understanding grieving styles is that differences in grieving styles do not mean that there is any less love on the part of the bereaved. Just because you haven't seen someone cry, do not assume they aren't grieving. It is important to allow each other the permission to grieve in your own way. By honoring another person's grieving styles, you show respect, acceptance, and love. Additionally, this leaves the doors of communication open for sharing in areas where you do agree.

### A WORD FOR THOSE WHO'VE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Grief is cumulative. Each loss will inevitably bring forth the memory of other losses, which can compound your grief. If you have had a traumatic experience, do not be surprised if that experience weighs on your mind more often or in a more intense way as you are going through grief now. Very often veterans, abuse or assault survivors, and those who've survived severe injury will find themselves revisiting their experiences, even if they haven't done so for many years. For many people who have already worked through a trauma, this is an uncomfortable but temporary inconvenience. If you have never come to grips with a trauma, it's possible you will find that memories of your experience are more difficult to cope with or put aside during this time. If you find yourself struggling with memories

or images that disrupt your well being, do consider seeking support. This may be as informal as a fishing trip or a cup of coffee with an old friend, or as formal as a counselor or a support group.

### FACTORS INFLUENCING GRIEVING STYLES

Bear in mind that there are many different aspects of life that affect grieving styles including (but not limited to) culture, temperament, age, gender, life experience. For example: One culture may believe that keeping emotions under control in public shows respect for the dead. Another may believe that public displays of emotion are important to show love for the deceased. While it is true people often grieve in a similar way throughout their life, this can change. It is possible for you to grieve in your own way and still give others permission and support to grieve in a way that is best for them.

This resource was created using information from Northwest ADEC's conference on "Men and Grief", 2008.

#### Portland/Salem and Surrounding Areas:

P 800.936.4756 (Toll Free)

#### Eugene:

P 866.306.4279 (Toll Free)

[info@4signatureservice.com](mailto:info@4signatureservice.com)

Patient services are provided without regard to race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability (mental or physical), communicable disease, place of national origin or military status. For more information, please contact Signature at 800.936.4756