

**Grief Q & A – True or False**

**1) Over time, we will all simply “get over it” or “move on”.**

**False.**

Too often in our society we place the expectation on ourselves and others to “get over it” or “move on” – if only we had a magic wand to do so. This expectation, and avoidance of our natural feelings of sadness, can complicate grief and well-being further. As David Kessler puts it, “there’s no bypass around the pain”.

**2) I do not need connections with anyone to grieve effectively.**

**False.**

Having a variety of kinds of connection - practical, deeper, and superficial - allows us to grieve more effectively. We need to know there is support for practical issues, or activities of daily living that have changed since losing a loved one - such as repairs in our living environment, cooking/obtaining quality food, navigating financial or legal processes,

We need someone with whom we can go deeper, where we have adequate emotional safety to share feelings without being judged.

We need superficial connections, someone to engage in activity with, encourage fun and enjoyment, and allow us a break from the grief even if it is short.

It is unlikely only one person will provide every kind of connection – we need some sense of community. It can be beneficial to identify who or where we go for diverse types of support, so we do not expect a superficial or practical support to also provide deeper emotional support, or vice versa.

**3) Self-compassion is an important part of an effective grief process.**

**True.**

One of the elements that supports a healthy grief process is to treat ourselves as our best friend – self-compassion and kindness allow us to be with our feelings and grieve with grace.

**4) Early grief is the first couple weeks after the loss of a loved one.**

**False.**

Early grief can be the first 1 or 2 years (at least a full cycle of seasons). Time in itself does not necessarily heal - healing depends on how we use our time and what we allow for supporting our grief process.

**5) I should compare my grief process with the grief of others.**

**False.**

As David Kessler says, “when you compare, even if you win you lose”. Grief is very personal and unique for everyone, and can vary for type of loss, losses at various times in our life, or the same loss for different family members. If we notice ourselves comparing, this can indicate a need to increase our support system where we are able to share on a deeper level without judgment.

**6) Grief is only in the mind; it does not affect my body.**

**False.**

“Grief is an automatic, cellular, organic, natural process that occurs in the human mind and body in response to loss”. – Cindy Westcott

Stress can impact our body in a variety of ways; it is not uncommon to experience changes in sleep, appetite, immune system resiliency, or pain when under stress.

Keeping in touch with your doctor can be important in supporting physical well-being along with our mental well-being during grief.

**7) My grief, no matter how intense, does not define me.**

**True.**

As intense as it can be, our grief is not our sole identity. Notice the other aspects of yourself, other relationships, or other roles in your life that contribute to who you are and what you value. Being able to be with our grief feelings in a compassionate way, as well as make space for our other feelings and activities allows for healthier balanced grieving.

**8) There are commonalities to helping support our grief & healing but there is no one “correct” way to grieve.**

**True.**

There are foundational, universal elements that we all need to support a healthy grief process overall, but there is no specific formula for what exactly to do or when to do it during grief – each person’s process is individual and unique.

**9) Crying is a sign of weakness.**

**False.**

We are given tears for a reason. The chemical composition of tears we cry in sadness is different than those we cry when peeling an onion or laughing hysterically. Avoiding our sadness, or bottling it up, can complicate a healthy grief process.

**10) Grief only pertains to the death of a loved one.**

**False.**

Grief not only pertains to death of a loved one, but to many aspects of our lives – transitions in relationships, family, ability, traumas, changes in self, and losses of any kind. These can be big or small. Making space to be with our feelings related to the variety of grief experiences we have in life allows for improved well-being overall.