

# Identifying Your Feelings

*Circle any emotional states that best describe how you are generally feeling at this point in your bereavement:*

## **Afraid**

You're scared of what life will be like now. You may be fearful about your ability to cope emotionally, or you may be uncertain about practical concerns like money, raising the children, or where you'll live. You may just feel afraid, without really knowing why.

## **Angry**

Anger often feels like a physical thing. Your muscles tense up, and you may feel like yelling at someone or hitting something. Your rage may be aimed at yourself or your lost loved one, or you may find getting angry at other people, society, or your spiritual beliefs.

## **Anxious**

Anxiety is distinct from fear, and is often a generalized feeling. If you're afraid, at least you know what scares you. If you're anxious, on the other hand, you're likely to feel agitated without knowing exactly why. You may experience cold sweats, hyperactivity, or edginess.

## **Ashamed**

You may feel that you should be getting over your feelings, or may be ashamed to show them in front of family, friends, and others. You may also harbor feelings about the death, or the fact that you are still alive, that feel shameful to you and are difficult to share with others.

## **Bitter**

Life may feel very unjust, and you may feel cheated and disappointed. You may feel jealous and resentful towards others who still have what has been taken from you, and you may feel victimized by fate.

## **Confused**

You may be unsure of what you're feeling, or your feelings may change quickly. Your thoughts may be unfocused, and it may be difficult to concentrate or you may have a hard time knowing what to do and how best to make decisions.

## **Depressed**

Depression can be a general mood of melancholy, or a full-blown experience that is all-encompassing and seems to have no end. In a major depression, your mood, appetite, sleep, memory, and ability to concentrate are seriously impaired. You may feel the impulse to do self-destructive things to find relief.

## **Despairing**

Here you feel a sense of futility. It appears things will never get better, and the distress caused by the death may feel unbearable. Although you want to, you may not be able to get your feelings out by crying, or you may be unable to stop crying.

## **Detached**

You feel disconnected from the death and detached from life in general. The experience seems unreal, as if it were happening to someone else. You simply pass through life each day, your actions detached from your thoughts and feelings.

**Guilty**

You may feel that you could have done more to help your loved one or to prevent the death. You may feel intense regret about the way you behaved towards your love one, or promises you never kept. You may also feel guilty about negative feelings you harbor toward your loved one, or mixed feelings about the death itself. It is also common for the bereaved to feel guilty when they begin to laugh and find pleasure in life once again, or begin new relationships. Or you may experience survival guilt – a sense of remorse that you remain alive while your loved one has died.

**Helpless**

Things seem out of control. You may think that if you were powerless to prevent the death, then you can't handle anything. You can't come with the practicalities of everyday life, and feel unable to control or manage your feelings.

**Hopeless**

Life has no meaning. It seems there is no point to do anything, and things will never get better. Your feelings and tasks you face seem insurmountable, and you feel unable to ever overcome your loss.

**Lonely**

There is no one that can understand your pain. There seems to be no one to share things with or seek comfort from. These feelings may make you feel like withdrawing even further from those around you, or from the world at large.



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