



PATHWAY CLINIC

comprehensive treatment for mental health

Grief and Loss

We encounter many traumatic and painful losses throughout our lifetime – the death of a family member or friend, illness and injury, the loss of a job or a dream. We may move and never see our childhood home again; friendships fade; finances dwindle; we marry and divorce. Every change – desired or not, large or small – involves loss. Losses shape our lives. The loss for which most of us are least prepared is the death of someone we love.

The most common response to loss is grief, a complex, evolutionary, and frightening experience. Grief is a natural reaction to any significant change. Oftentimes, when ignored or denied, grief can harm us in dozens of ways. Scientific research indicates that grief can make people more susceptible to illness and increase blood pressure and heart rate. Grief can also cause flashbacks, fatigue, and insomnia.

The Phases of Grief

Reactions to loss vary widely from person to person and may cover a confusing range of emotions. The stages of grief are often unpredictable. Reactions depend on our personalities, the type of loss, the existence of previous losses, and the social support we receive. The time it takes for an emotional wound to heal varies from person to person. Grief cannot be reduced to a formula, but the pattern is often:

1. Shock and Denial
2. Anger
3. Guilt
4. Depression
5. Anxiety
6. Acceptance
7. Healing

Help is Available

There are many sources of help available for someone who has suffered a loss. Many people find comfort in joining a support group, such as Divorce Anonymous, Compassionate Friends, Job Seekers, etc. These self-help groups offer guidance, support, and a place to express feelings with others who have had similar experiences.

Although support groups can be beneficial, in some cases professional help may be needed. Many grieving persons suffer from anxiety, depression, or thoughts of suicide. Trained professionals can help people to understand these feelings, create new goals and adjust to their loss.

We all need to come to terms with painful losses in our lives. Fortunately, there is relief. The more you understand your thoughts, feelings and the grieving process, the better you will be able to regain the joy and fulfillment you once knew. Reaching out for information and assistance can make the difference. If you would like more information or would like to make an appointment, Pathway Clinic can help. Please call 608-643-3663 or visit www.PathwayClinic.com.