

Anticipatory Grief

Much has been written and shared about the predictable stages of grief we experience after suffering a significant loss. The feelings and reactions that we have before an anticipated loss are also quite common and universal. Whether there has been a diagnosis of a terminal illness, an announcement of layoffs, a notice about eviction or foreclosure, a partner filing for divorce, or perhaps even the knowledge that our children will be going away to school, or moving out on their own, it is normal for us to have a number of reactions. Often, having time to think about a projected loss is more difficult. The “not knowing” exactly what may happen often leads to a state of limbo that is very challenging.

What to expect:

You will most likely experience the feelings of grief in this the same order: shock, denial, depression, bargaining, guilt, and maybe acceptance.

A sense of denial may be strong, especially because the event hasn't happened yet, and we often try to be optimistic and hope something changes.

Avoidance is common. It is natural for us to put off or delay facing painful emotions.

Communication with friends and loved ones may be strained, especially if you are in various stages of grieving. Some may want to talk and cope with their feelings, while others may be in denial or avoid communicating.

The roller-coaster of emotions can be quite extreme, ranging from hope to depression.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO recognize that the projected loss is real and give yourself grace—be kind to yourself.

DO know that what you and others feel is normal, and that there is no “right or wrong.”

DO seek support and comfort from your friends/family/community.

DO allow yourself the opportunity to bring closure to situations or relationships while you can.

DO live each day to the fullest and take the time to appreciate what you have.

DO let yourself “let it out” – express your feelings to those you can trust.

DO seek comfort from your faith, religion, and beliefs.

More on Page 2

DON'T judge yourself or others if you are struggling with your anticipated grief.

DON'T isolate too much or shut others out.

DON'T seek escape in dangerous or addictive behaviors (eating, drinking, gambling, etc.).

DON'T deprive yourself of the things that make you happy.

Other tips:

Schedule mini “grief sessions” with yourself. Allow yourself specific times to cry or be mad.

Take charge of the things that you can control. Try to let go of what you can't.

Be honest with yourself as to how you are feeling.

Treat yourself with kindness, like you would your best friend.

Seek professional counseling for guidance or support. You don't have to go through it alone.

#GrowThroughGrief #GriefSupport

If you or someone you know is struggling with a loss and needs support, you can find more resources at [Good Grief](#).

