



When to Seek Professional Help with Grief

Individual bereavement counseling provides one-on-one support, education, and professional help with coping mechanisms. Group counseling offers the benefit of support from others going through similar grief processes.

What do bereavement counselors do?

- Provide education about normal grief
- Listen to you and witness your journey in grief
- Share suggestions from others on what has been helpful in their grief
- Discuss ways to help you get through the day and the night
- Help you plan for difficult days such as birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries
- Discuss ways that you might choose to honor and remember your loved one
- Help you change your negative thoughts and images into positive ones
- Teach you ways to ease the anxiety you feel in your grief
- Encourage self-care and assist in re-establishing healthy patterns of eating, sleeping, working, and relaxing
- Provide acceptance of your individual grief experience
- Help you sort through any mixed feelings you may have about the deceased
- Support you in letting go of the pain of loss without letting go of the person
- Assist you finding meaning and purpose as you go forward in your life

For children, some indications that professional counseling might be helpful may include: changes in sleeping and/or eating patterns, behavior issues, decline in grades, isolation, panic attacks and/or a reluctance to attend school.

For adults, some indications that professional counseling might be helpful may include: prolonged difficulties with sleeping and/or eating, lack of self-care, social isolation, excessive use of alcohol and/or drugs, a complicated relationship with the deceased, multiple losses, a traumatic death, or a history of depression, anxiety, and/or other mental health issues.

Individual bereavement counseling and bereavement groups are available to hospice families and are listed on the HPCI website. Bereavement counselors are assigned to every hospice family and typically initiate contact with the primary bereaved a month after the death. HPCI bereavement groups are available to the community as well as to hospice families. Referrals for individual bereavement counseling for non-hospice families can be accessed by contacting HPCI bereavement counselors at (315)735-6487 ext. 1214.