

Coping with grief and loss

Grieving is a healthy and natural healing process. It is not a sign of weakness. For most people, grieving follows a pattern, which proceeds through a series of stages that can last days or even weeks.

The best way to confront loss is to recognize it, understand the feelings and reactions you experience and get support during the grieving process.

Stages of the Grieving Process

Everyone grieves differently. And everyone has a unique way of coping with stress, grief and loss. So while no two people will respond to loss the same, we may experience some of the following emotional responses. The key is to recognize the feelings and respond in a healthy way. If the emotional reaction becomes severe or lasts for weeks consider seeking professional support.

Common stages of Grief

- **Denial:** Disbelief, numbness, shock.
- **Anger and Guilt:** Strong emotions, sometimes misdirected at the deceased or those around you.
- **Guilt:** Feeling you've failed to act, or done something wrong even if just by surviving.
- **Sadness and Despair:** feeling down, blue or depressed. Loneliness and tearfulness. Reminders of the loss can worsen the sadness.
- **Acceptance and Hope:** we often never feel "OK" with the loss. But eventually the sadness turns to acceptance of the loss and adjustment to the changes.

Tips for Coping With Grief

- Take your time. Don't judge or measure your reactions by those of others.
- Stay focused on the present. But don't "put it out of your mind" or avoid the emotions.
- Talk, share your feelings and the meaning this loss has for you.
- Pay attention to your body's needs.
- Exercise (according to your doctor's recommendations) and balanced nutrition are essential.
- Avoid isolating yourself. Surround yourself with friends and family who love and support you.
- Tears may come unexpectedly and at times when you thought you were finished grieving. Be patient with yourself. Their intensity and frequency should diminish with time.
- Allow yourself time to grieve as well as giving yourself breaks from the grieving process.
- If you follow a religious faith, this can be a time for prayer and quiet meditation.
- Seek out your faith mentors.
- Avoid alcohol and other mind-altering substances.
- Learn to be sensitive and flexible with your new needs and lifestyle.
- Seek professional help if necessary.



For confidential support, free of charge, contact Caterpillar's **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**:

 **1-866-228-0565**

 **CaterpillarEAP.com**

For global access numbers by country