

## How Long Will My Grief Last?

The grief process is a highly individual experience and is largely influenced by one's culture, religious beliefs, personality, the circumstances of the loss, and the amount of support one receives. There is no single timeline that applies to everyone. Depending on circumstances, it may last from months to years. Rather than concentrating on a specific timeline, it may be more helpful to focus on how the intensity and duration of the grieving process usually proceed.



Initially, grief may feel overwhelming and one can feel out of control. With time, people find they are more able to choose when they relive memories and experience emotions, which allows the person to feel more in control again. The intensity of grief one experiences is difficult to quantify or compare. It is dependant on many things - the degree of attachment to the person or thing, one's relationship to the deceased or lost item, one's level of understanding and social support from others, one's own personality and the nature of the bereavement (e.g., was it a 92 year old grandmother who had a good life, or a young child?). However, no matter the intensity level, with the passing of time, most people find that they are better able to cope and resume their lives. The loss remains, and one may always experience a sense of sadness when reminded of the loss, but the intensity is no longer disabling.

## When Does Grief End?

Grief is not just a series of events, or stages or timelines. Our Society places enormous pressure on us to get over loss, to get through the grief. But how long do you grieve for a husband of fifty years? A teenager killed in a car accident? A four-year-old child? A year? Five years? Forever? The loss happens in time, in fact in a moment, but its aftermath lasts a lifetime.