

# UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND LOSS!

*There is no pain so great as the memory of joy in present grief...Aeschylus*

## WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Grief is a natural response to loss and is the emotional suffering that accompanies the taking away of someone or something that is loved
- ❖ Grief can occur as a result of the loss of a relationship, sense of safety, health, job, pet, friendship, home, dreams, and finances
- ❖ The more significant the loss, the more intense the grief
- ❖ Since grieving is personal, how you grieve depends on who you are, your faith, your coping skills, your support system, and the nature of the loss
- ❖ There is no time frame for grieving; it takes as long as it takes
- ❖ Emotional ups and downs are normal and must be felt rather than avoided
- ❖ Anniversary reactions are feelings of grief that occur on the anniversary of the deceased death, birthday, holiday, or special day and remind us of their loss
- ❖ The 5 Stages of Grief introduced by Dr. Kubler-Ross include:
  - ❖ **Denial:** People do not believe it is happening at first
  - ❖ **Anger:** People have very strong feelings and look for someone to blame
  - ❖ **Bargaining:** People pledge to do something in return if the loss is stopped
  - ❖ **Depression:** People have intense sadness when the loss is realized
  - ❖ **Acceptance:** People recognize the loss and adjust their lives
- ❖ Common symptoms of grief and loss include shock, numbness, disbelief, profound sadness, emptiness, guilt, anger, worry, fatigue, weight change, insomnia
- ❖ The grieving process is natural but when a person gets stuck in any one of the steps, it can become destructive and unhealthy
- ❖ Complicated grief or Prolonged Grief Disorder is when the pain of loss is so intense that it prevents you from resuming life and includes intense longing for the deceased, denial of the death, looking for the person, having intrusive thoughts or images, etc.

## WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Get support by turning to friends and family
- ❖ Embrace your religion and turn to any spiritual activities that are important to you such as praying, meditating, going to your house of worship
- ❖ Join a bereavement support group
- ❖ Accept your feelings and express them in tangible or creative ways
- ❖ Take care of yourself by eating, sleeping and exercising appropriately
- ❖ Do not turn to drugs or alcohol to numb the pain
- ❖ Do not tell yourself and do not let others tell you how you should feel and be
- ❖ Anticipate anniversary reaction and be prepared for them
- ❖ Stay connected to friends and support meaningful relationships
- ❖ Use cognitive strategies to cope with stress
- ❖ Accept that things can be good enough and that they don't have to be perfect
- ❖ Think about what is right in life not what is wrong
- ❖ Let go of the old way of doing things and try a new way of doing things
- ❖ Be creative and dare to be adventurous
- ❖ Do what makes you laugh and what you enjoy
- ❖ Seek professional help if you feel like life isn't worth living, feel numb and disconnected, or can't seem to get over the loss

## WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [\*\*DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com\*\*](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

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