GRIEF TOOLKIT

BACK ONSIDE

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DEALING WITH GRIEF

Grief is a natural experience that helps a person process the pain of loss and move toward healing. The 7 stages of grief are not necessarily linear, they consist of the following:

1. **SHOCK**
   This stage may involve numbed disbelief in response to news of a loss. It may serve as an emotional buffer to prevent someone from feeling overwhelmed.

2. **DENIAL**
   Denial may entail refuting the reality of the loss or any associated feelings. Once an individual accepts reality, they can move forward through the healing process. Shock and denial help people manage the immediate aftermath of a loss.

3. **ANGER**
   During this stage, an individual may direct their anger toward the person who died, doctors, family members, or even religious entities.
   This replaces the numbness of shock and denial. It is important to address the anger.

4. **BARGAINING**
   Bargaining involves thoughts such as "I will do anything if you take away the pain."
   This stage may come at any point within the grieving process. Guilt frequently accompanies it.

5. **DEPRESSION**
   At this stage, a person may experience feelings of emptiness and intense sadness. They may also withdraw from daily activities and things they once enjoyed.
   While this stage is difficult, it is a necessary step toward healing.

6. **TESTING**
   Testing is the process of trying to find solutions that offer a means of dealing with loss. Someone may drift in and out of other grieving stages during this time.

7. **ACCEPTANCE**
   This is the final stage of the grieving process. Acceptance does not mean people feel OK about a loss. Rather, it means they realise the loss is their new reality. They understand that while life will not continue as it did before, it will go on.
   This stage may involve reorganising roles and forming new relationships.

key strategies to

MANAGING GRIEF

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Acknowledge your feelings, don't try to suppress emotions. Let yourself cry, feel anger or experience whatever comes up.

SPEAK UP

Talk about your loss, share your feelings with trusted friends, family members or a mental health professional.

JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Connecting with others who have experienced loss can provide validation and understanding.

BE REALISTIC

Set realistic goals, don't pressure yourself to 'get over it' quickly. Small steps forward are still steps forward.

GET HELP

Seek professional help if your grief is significantly impacting your daily life. Consider therapy to help navoigate the grief process.