

Your body releases 132 chemicals into your system when it is under stress. Your adrenal gland and thyroid regulate these chemicals.

What can happen	How to help
<b>Eating Patterns Change:</b> Eating LESS or Eating MORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat Healthy – Plenty of Protein, Vegetables &amp; Fruit</li> <li>• Drink a lot of Water</li> </ul>
<b>Sleeping Patterns Change:</b> Sleep is DISRUPTED Hard time falling asleep Nightmares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid Naps</li> <li>• Avoid Caffeine, Alcohol, and illicit drugs – these all interrupt sleep.</li> </ul>
<b>“Tapes” keeping playing themselves over and over in your head.</b>  <i>Your brain is trying to find a way to sort it out and fit it in ... in a way it can survive.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let the thoughts run.</li> <li>• If you can't handle it, tell yourself you will think about it later on a certain day and time.</li> </ul>
<b>Heart Racing / Feeling Scared</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow / Deep Breathing</li> <li>• 2 breath counts in &amp; 3 breath counts out</li> </ul>

**Stages of Grief**

- Shock / Disbelief
- Sad / Depressed
- Angry
- Bargaining
- Acceptance

All of these stages and feelings are normal.  
 They don't necessarily go in order.  
 You may even feel all of them at the same time.  
 Everyone reaches “acceptance” at his/her own pace.

- ❖ Let others help you. Talk about your thoughts and feelings as often as you feel the need. Contact friends, family, teachers, counselors or other adults who are willing to listen to you. Repeatedly talking about the event and your reactions is part of the healing process.
- ❖ Some teens find that journaling or drawing is helpful. Consider writing a note or letter to family of the person who died.
- ❖ As much as possible, spend time with people who have a positive influence on you. Avoid involving yourself in activities that could add to your problems.
- ❖ Recognize that stress and grief often trigger a wide range of feelings. Even though your feelings and reactions may seem very different from those of your peers, feelings are all common reactions to an uncommon event.
- ❖ There is a temptation when the stress level is high to try to numb the feelings with alcohol and drugs. Substance abuse complicates the problems, rather than relieving them.
- ❖ Make a special effort to take care of yourself during this stressful time. Attempt to get some extra sleep, eat nutritious foods and get some exercise -- even if it is just walking the dog.
- ❖ Getting into a “normal” school/family/work routine may be reassuring and helpful.
- ❖ Provide some balance to the negative things that have gone on by doing something special or fun for yourself. Think about something that makes you feel good and make it happen – like go to a movie, shoot some hoops, listen to music, call an old friend, work on a hobby, etc.
- ❖ Laughter is good medicine. Watch a funny movie or play a silly game with younger children to lighten your spirits.
- ❖ Do something special or fun with your family. They may be concerned about you and want to spend more time with you.
- ❖ Don't make unreasonable demands on yourself. Allow yourself time to feel better. Give yourself permission to slow down. Give yourself permission to be distracted and make mistakes.

**Above all, realize that what you are experiencing is normal for a traumatic situation.  
Be understanding of yourself and others.**

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Grieving is a healthy and natural healing process. It is not a sign of weakness. For most people, grieving follows a pattern that proceeds through a series of stages, whether the loss results from death, divorce, job loss, or even moving away from friends and family. Since each of us is different, not everyone will experience every stage, or proceed at the same pace, or with the same intensity of feelings. The best way to confront loss is to recognize it, understand the feeling and reactions you experience, and get support during the grieving process. The following are the basic stages of the grieving process.

### **Denial**

A period of numbness and shock usually follows a major loss of death. This stage allows a person time to absorb what has happened and begin slowly adjust to the reality.

### **Anger and Guilt**

As shock wears off, grief gives rise to a variety of feelings, including anger. You may feel angry at the person you lost for disappointing you or leaving you, angry with a company for laying you off, or even with God for letting a bad thing happen. You may feel unreasonably responsible for your loss or guilty about what you imagine you could have done to prevent it. You may even feel guilty about some of your other feelings.

### **Sadness and Despair**

Losses can bring varying degrees of sadness, loneliness, and yearning. Your feelings may be so overwhelming that you try to avoid them. But tears, sadness, thinking about your loss, or other expressions of grief is not “breaking down”, they are essential for healing. Reaching out to others is a key way to lessen loneliness and overcome depression.

### **Acceptance and Hope**

Gradually accepting your loss and adjusting to the changes it brings can give you hope for the future again. These changes take time, and may be painful, but they’re also a chance for personal growth. During the most painful moments, it’s hard to believe that your life will be better. No doubt your life will change in some way. But you will come out on the other side, perhaps stronger, perhaps wiser.

### **Aftermath**

Just when you think you “should” be “over” your loss, reminders can plunge you into another wave of grief. Although this may continue for months or years, the waves usually become smaller, less frequent, and easier to deal with over time.