

Grief Notes

Am I Going Crazy? by George McLaughlin, Bereavement Coordinator

Well, here we are entering a new year. For most of us, 2020 was a difficult year not only because of the effects of Covid on our lives, but especially due to experiencing the death of a loved one. The changes in our lives have made life so different that at times we hardly recognize it. We've just navigated through the holidays, which has been bittersweet and now face the unknown of 2021.

Unfortunately, our culture is one in which grief and the deep impact it has on every aspect of our lives is rarely talked about. Many of us had little idea as to what effect grief would have on us, and we may have begun to wonder, "Have I lost my mind?" No one told us what we would feel or the places our minds would go. It's more than the usual things like forgetting where you put your car keys or what to pick up at the grocery store on your way home from work. You may now feel at times like your mind has stopped functioning completely. We had no idea it would be like this. You might also feel a bit unhinged, confused or in a deep fog. Many of us knew losing a loved one would not be easy, but the deep pain and emotional stress continues to remain at a level quite unexpected. Few ever shared with us about such feelings or gave us a list of things to anticipate as we stumbled into the grieving process. We seem to be just drifting along, finding it hard to focus and experiencing mixed feelings and emotions never known before.

If this describes you at this time, here are a few things to consider:

- Please know that you are not alone. You're not the only one to feel like you are going crazy. The loss of a loved one hits hard and stuns us. We often feel lost because what was once the norm or routine, is now only seen in the rearview mirror. There is no resource or check list available that says what is normal. Grief, especially early grief, is not a normal time. It is quite common and okay to feel a little disoriented: so much in your world has changed.
- Memory loss, confusion, and an inability to concentrate or focus at all often accompany grief. They are temporary, but can last much longer than you may anticipate. You have experienced a great loss that has had a deep impact on your brain and you're trying hard to make sense of it all. Please hold on to hope. Reach out to family, friends, or a professional who you feel could be of help and support.
- Find ways to give your mind a rest. Find relief in things that calm your spirit. Read a book, watch a movie, go for a walk, pray, meditate, exercise, cook or bake for someone else, or just take a nap. Explore various activities, hobbies or pastimes to discover what helps you relax and gain comfort from the stress of grief.
- Admit to yourself that you're not at your best right now. Take one day at a time. Grieving is a process, not an event, so be patient with yourself as you journey through it.

We are here for you. As bereavement coordinators, it is our desire to help provide answers to your questions and support you in any way we can. Please reach out to us if you need to talk or to request additional resources that will assist you as you head into this new year.