



# NATIONAL GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

DEIB NEWSLETTER  
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## GRIEF IS UNIVERSAL...

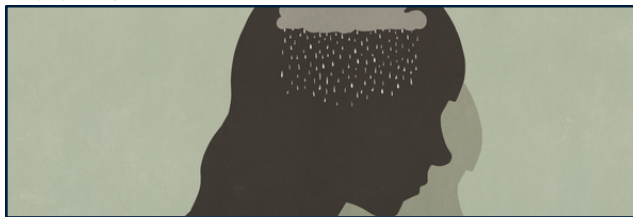
But so is compassion. On August 30, we recognize National Grief Awareness Day. On this day we honor the silent weight many carry after loss. For veterans, grief can take many forms: the loss of fellow service members, the loss of identity after transition to civilian life, or memories that never fade away. Grief doesn't follow a schedule, and it doesn't look the same for everyone. National Grief Awareness Day is about making space for those emotions, honoring each person's journey, and encouraging open, compassionate conversations around something we all face, yet often struggle to talk about.

## WHAT IS GRIEF?

Most people associate grief with the feelings that come with losing a family member or loved one, in reality, grief is a much broader complex that can encompass many things. To distill it down, it's the feeling of **loss**. Grief can come from the realization that a person is getting older and no longer capable of doing the things they used to do. Grief can come with the dissolution of marriage. Grief can come from the career path you picked out turning out to not be suited for you. Grief can come from moving and being in a place alien to where you once were and felt safe. Grief is universal because throughout life every individual will at a point experience it. Grief, as we know it, doesn't just effect the mental landscape but also **physical health**. Beyond the appetite changes and inconsistent sleep that come along with emotional trauma, the effects may run deeper. Loss can have your immune system respond just as severely to emotional harm as it does physical harm, which can lead to systemic inflammation. This can have a feedback loop effect where it exacerbates the pre-existing psychological stressors.

## THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF GRIEVING

There is no right or wrong way for a person to grieve. We all experience the shock off loss differently due to circumstance or identity factors. Just as no two people are the same, neither will it be the same in the way we process loss. That being said, there are some archetypal formats many grief patterns fall into.



### ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

This grief begins before the actual loss, frequently when facing a terminal diagnosis or other impending change. It allows you to emotionally prepare, but it's important not to lose sight of the present.

### ABBREVIATED GRIEF

Often following anticipatory grief, here much of the emotional processing has already begun, resulting in a shorter, quicker grieving process. It's important to remember that a brief grief period doesn't mean the loss was unimportant.

### DELAYED GRIEF

In this example, emotional responses to loss are postponed, appearing days, weeks, or even months later. This can happen when shock, busyness, or practical tasks delay emotional processing.

### INHIBITED GRIEF

Feelings are suppressed rather than expressed. Unprocessed grief often surfaces as physical symptoms like stomach issues, insomnia, anxiety, or panic.

### CUMULATIVE GRIEF

This may occur when multiple losses accumulate, intensifying the grieving process. For instance, mourning a personal loss while also facing a relationship breakdown creates layers of emotional complexity.

### COLLECTIVE GRIEF

This is a shared grief experienced by communities after large-scale losses, such as disasters, traumatic events, or war. Occurrences that redefine what "normal" looks like for many.

## GRIEF COMES IN STAGES

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004) established the five stages of grief in her breakthrough book *On Death and Dying* (1969). These five points of commonality are often found between everyone going through grief.

### DENIAL

A sense of disbelief or shock that helps cushion the immediate impact of the loss.

### ANGER

Frustration or resentment that often masks deeper pain or helplessness.

### BARGAINING

A mental negotiation filled with "what if" or "if only" thoughts, as we seek to regain control.

### DEPRESSION

Deep sadness and withdrawal, often signaling the full weight of the loss settling in.

### ACCEPTANCE

Reaching a point where you begin to acknowledge the loss and find ways to move forward.

## RESOURCES

Grief reminds us of the depth of our connections and the complexity of being human. Whether your loss is fresh or long past, visible or silent, your experience is valid. While there may be no quick fix, there is comfort in knowing you're not alone. Support can take many forms, whether it is conversation, community, or simply giving yourself the grace to feel. As we honor National Grief Awareness Day, let it also be a reminder, healing doesn't mean forgetting, and moving forward doesn't mean moving on.

**IF YOU ARE A VETERAN  
STRUGGLING WITH GRIEF, PLEASE  
DIAL THE 24/7 VETERANS CRISIS  
LINE AT:**

**988 ( then PRESS 1)**

The Federal Veterans Affairs  
REACH portal also offers many  
services for those who have served  
regarding grief and trauma. You  
can visit their portal by clicking  
here or visiting  
[www.va.gov/REACH/](http://www.va.gov/REACH/)

To find out if you are eligible for  
bereavement counseling please  
visit:  
[https://www.va.gov/burials-  
memorials/bereavement-  
counseling/](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/bereavement-counseling/)