

Anticipatory Grief

Anticipatory Grief is also called expected grief. It is grieving a loss before it has happened. Oftentimes the emotions felt during anticipatory grief are just as intense as those felt after death. A person imagines how life will change with a terminal diagnosis. Anticipatory grief slowly allows a person to face and accept reality. It can also help people take care of unfinished business and begin to make plans for the future. The most important thing to remember is that anticipatory grief is a normal process.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

- An awareness that life is going to change
- An increased concern for yourself/family/friends
- Thinking about and rehearsing the medical journey
- An attempt to imagine and prepare for the changes

FEELINGS DURING ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

- Helplessness/Numbness
- Anger/Hostility/Guilt
- Blame
- Acceptance
- Denial
- Fear
- Depression
- Hope

WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

- Sleep when you are able
- Listen to your favorite music
- Pace yourself by slowing down
- Write in a journal
- Read a book
- Go outside and breathe some fresh air
- Watch a funny movie and laugh
- Identify and talk about your feelings
- Simplify and delegate by creating "to do" lists and asking for help

For many people, this period of time can feel very up and down – almost like a yoyo – as they process thoughts of the past, present, and future. In the face of difficult news, there is a natural sense of unreality.

If you are experiencing these feelings or need to talk about self-care, please contact Unity and request to speak with a Social Worker.

*"Caregiving often
calls us to lean into
love we didn't know
possible"*

—Tia Walker

*"Grief is like the ocean—
it comes in waves, ebbing and
flowing. Sometimes the water
is calm and sometimes it is
overwhelming. All we can do is
learn to swim."*

—Vicki Harrison

Call Unity 24/7 at **920.338.1111** or **800.990.9249**

If there is no answer and the phone continues to ring, call **920-490-7418**.