



MANAGING FEELINGS OF SADNESS

What is Sadness?

Sadness and grief are natural feelings for patients and families facing the end of life. Sadness is a normal response to difficult life experiences and often is accompanied by tears, anger and/or disappointment. Grief occurs for people who have experienced or are experiencing a loss. Grief often occurs before a loved one dies as friends and family begin to experience changes in activities, relationships, and routines due to the person's health issues. Feelings of sadness and grief may come and go and can be interspersed with joy and laughter. Sadness and grief often look different from one person to the next depending on each person's background and culture. However, these feelings can become all-consuming and can interfere with the ability to experience joy and happiness during meaningful times. When sadness becomes overwhelming, it is important to reach out and talk to someone.

Sadness vs. Depression

Identifying the difference between grief or sadness and depression can be difficult. Your hospice Care Team, particularly your counselor, can help you sort it out. Depression differs from sadness and is a serious illness that should be taken seriously. While sadness can be intermittent, depression usually lingers and can be profoundly difficult to deal with. Depression can include:

- feelings of persistent helplessness or hopelessness
- feelings of worthlessness, guilt or shame
- long lasting, unending sadness, gloom, numbness
- physical symptoms like fatigue, weight changes, changes in sleep patterns
- difficulty focusing and thinking
- sometimes persistent thoughts of death and suicide.

If you or your loved one is suffering from these symptoms or has a known history of depression, please tell your care team so that they can help you identify treatment options to help reduce the suffering of depression.

Getting Help with Sadness and Depression

Your Care Team is here to help you cope with the emotions related to a loved one's dying process so talk to your Care Team about symptoms of sadness or depression. The counselor on the team can help sort out the differences between sadness and depression. Some people prefer to talk about their emotions with a close and trusted friend or family member, and others prefer a trained, neutral expert like those on your Care Team. Whatever you prefer, remember that you do not have to be alone as you experience these emotions.



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How You Can Help:

- Get enough rest and good nutrition.
- Set small, realistic, goals that can be fulfilled.
- Learn and use relaxation techniques.
- Try using Integrative Therapies such as aromatherapy and music therapy.
- Keep the patient and his/her environment safe.
- Allow the patient to control as many care decisions and activities as possible.
- Acknowledge and express your own feelings and allow others to express theirs.

Need more information or help? Call 633-3400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get live help. Thank you for letting us help care for you and your loved ones.