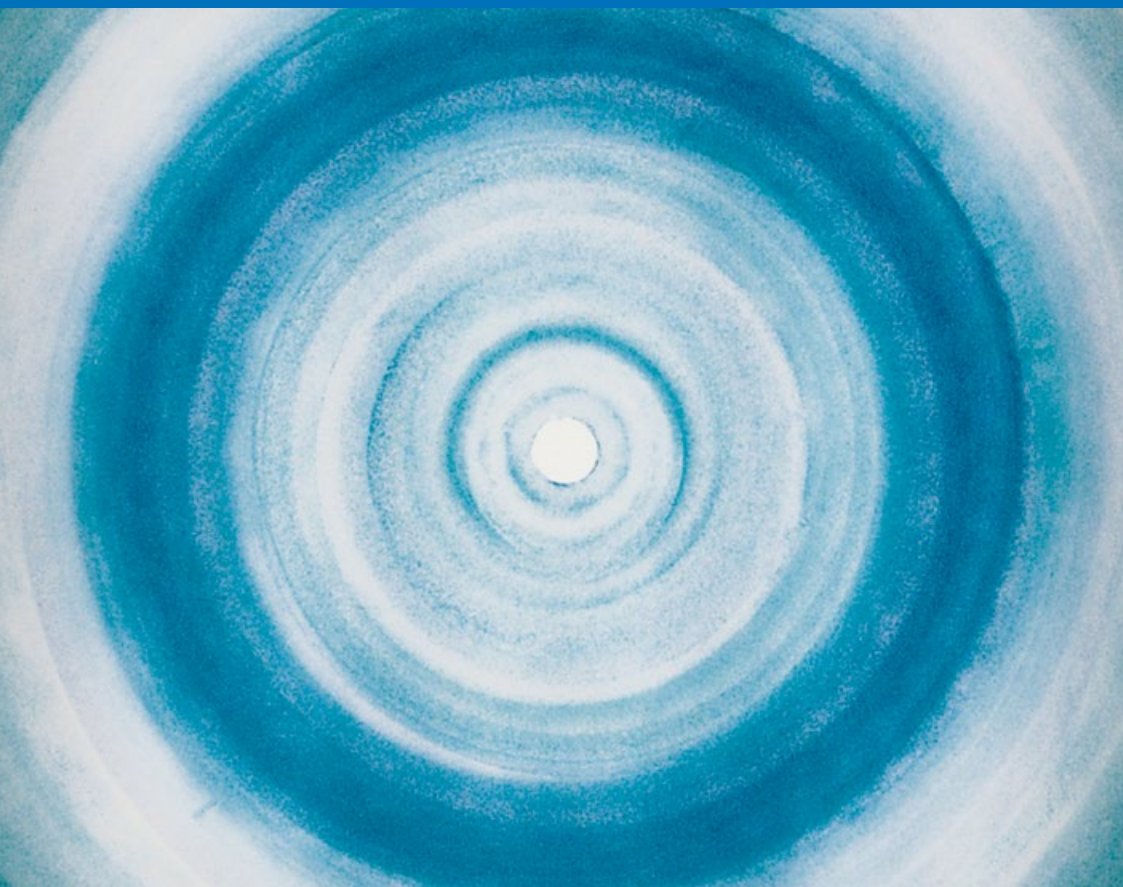


MOURNING AND YOU

Markers for the best way to keep going



Introduction

You have just lost a loved one and perhaps you will enter a difficult period, a time of separation, of adjustment. A time of mourning.

In the past, those in mourning were dressed in black or white, wore a black armband, a button on the lapel and everybody knew they were going through a painful time and recognized it.

Today there are fewer external signs, but the inner reality remains.

This brochure is intended primarily for those most affected. We want to give them some points of reference when they enter this period of mourning.

You will recognize for yourself some of the feelings, some of the situations described, others will mean nothing to you. Each individual is different and reactions to the loss of a loved one vary greatly.

You will discover that these emotions experienced will help you reconnect with life and carry on.

Carry on... it's easier to say than do. But you have to carry on bearing on your own the load that you spent so many years bearing together. People tell you: life goes on. It's true: at the beginning, it's life that drives us.

Demain l'Au-Delà
written by Maurice Ray and Alain Burnand

Living your mourning

+ INFO

Mourning is a difficult period to cope with. Your doctor is listening if you feel the need to confide in someone.

Physical Aspects

You might tend at a time of mourning to neglect your health because of the little attention you pay to yourself. But you are still working hard: working at mourning, which will demand a lot of your energy.

Be careful to eat reasonably, even if it brings you no pleasure.

Your sleep time may decrease, as may its quality. Compensate for the loss of sleep by resting during the day.

To relieve your inner tensions, you can regularly take some deep breaths, walk, garden, or engage in any other activity that suits you.

Psychological aspects

Listening to people in mourning has helped to identify the stages they go through. These phases are not necessarily chronological and not everyone experiences all these stages.

Shock: "No it's not possible... I can't believe it." "But I had prepared myself, I knew she was going to die and yet now it has happened, I can't believe it."

The anger and rejection "This is not right, we could have experienced so many more good things..." "He had just retired..." "She, who was so good, so generous ... while there are people who are in good health and who think only about themselves".

Sadness: «It's so hard to be alone...» "I feel I can sense his presence but he's no longer there." "I can't talk about it any more, it bothers people to whom I tell my stories"

Acceptance: "I'll never forget her, but now I go out, I have even made some new friends..." "I remember all the good things we did together."

We all experience these emotions in our daily life when we have large and small bereavements to go through. But the loss of a loved one naturally imbues all these emotions with an intensity that is sometimes hard to bear.

This is a time of great external and internal turmoil during which it is good to be able to ask for help. Everyone wants to be brave, but it is also important to make your needs known by expressing your feelings to someone you trust.

It is often a time of great fatigue that expresses itself in many ways, when you can feel more vulnerable, cry easily, exhibit mood swings, or be invaded by the image of the departed.

The first year is recognized as being the most difficult, because every season, every party, every birthday brings back its memories.

With time, after a period that varies depending on people and circumstances, grief will give way to a more or less peaceful acceptance. Often unsuspected resources appear and make it possible to "open up," to make choices and engage in new ways.

+ INFO

A chaplain can bring you a sympathetic ear and support. Do not hesitate to call him.

Social aspect

Bereavement is not resolved in solitude. Even though you need those moments, it is important to remain in touch with your surroundings, to continue to interact.

Often these people - more available early in bereavement - will be less so subsequently. Know how to let them know when you want to see them.

It is recommended to avoid making major decisions in haste. Unless it is absolutely necessary, it is best to wait at least a year before making major changes (moving house, changing jobs, selling the house, etc.).

Do not hesitate to seek the opinion of several people, or even that of an expert, before taking an important decision on financial matters.

Spiritual Aspect

Spirituality lies well beyond language, a ritual, or a religion ... It is the space within oneself where everyone questions the meaning of their life, their presence in the world, the possibility of transcendence. These issues arise more sharply in times of crisis, and especially when those close to us pass away.

Many people feel that their personal faith, their belonging to a parish or community are an important source of comfort during bereavement. However, faith does not protect from moments of sadness, pain, or even rejection.

For others, however, it can be difficult to refer to God during this period; too many questions, doubts, feelings of abandonment beset them.

These reactions may occur and are consistent with a person's spiritual evolution. This route is part of the life history of each of us.

Traumatic bereavement

Certain circumstances may complicate the mourning process and require specialized help.

Here are some signs that should encourage you to seek help:

- ▶ Distress is a special form of moral pain that isolates by giving the impression that it is no longer possible to share one's feelings.
- ▶ The image of the deceased that becomes overpowering and which wells up quite uncontrollably at any time.
- ▶ Incessant thoughts in the form of reproaches.
- ▶ A feeling of strangeness and hostility towards oneself and towards those around us.
- ▶ The appearance of symptoms similar to those that caused the loss of the deceased.

These manifestations are present in many people facing the loss of a loved one. More than their intensity, it is their persistence over time that should encourage you to seek assistance.

In this context, the consumption of "tranquillizers," alcohol and/or narcotics could greatly exacerbate your difficulties. If you feel the need for help, that you "can't manage any more," talk to your doctor, who is a partner of choice in dialogue.

To talk about it

You can call reception at the psychiatric liaison and crisis intervention service at 📞 022 372 38 65.

You can contact a chaplain at 📞 022 372 85 90 by contacting the HUG chaplaincies assistant.

Bereavement experienced by children

The whole family is in mourning. For children, questions and anxieties may resurface much later because perception of the reality of death varies greatly depending on age.

Up to the age of 3, death has no meaning for a child. It is still in a magical world, death is not final, it is reversible.

Between 4 and 6, the states of life and death are not antagonistic. They are two different states. Death is always present. He is in heaven, but he sees and hears what is happening on earth. A child does not fear death as do adults, it feels immortal but it suffers from separation.

From 7 to 9, there follows a realistic phase with understanding of the irreversibility of the phenomenon. It is reflected in concrete representations (corpse, graveyard, awareness of the cycle of life from birth to death).

Between 9 and 13 comes the phase of existential angst. Death is a misfortune, it is irreversible, it is the final disappearance of the person from everyday life.

Regardless of age, it is important to talk with the child about death and about the deceased by evoking memories.

A child sometimes acts as if the loss of a loved one has not affected it, as a form of protection. That is why it is important - as with adults - to recognize the sadness phase that is characterized by crying. If this phase does not appear, take care that the child's grief is not blocked and that it does not retreat into solitude.

+ INFO

It makes sense to suggest that the child attends the funeral service, and goes to the cemetery...

Bibliographie

Books that may help you

Le deuil à vivre, M. F. Bacqué, pub. Odile Jacob, 2000.

La mort intime, M. De Hennezel, pub. Laffont, 1995.

L'amour ultime, M. De Hennezel et Y. Montigny, pub. Hatier, 1991.

Apprivoiser l'absence, adieu mon enfant, A. Ernoult-Delcourt, pub. Seuil, 1992.

Vivre le deuil au jour le jour, Ch. Faure, pub. Albin Michel, 1995.

Mourir... comment le vivre ? De la mort escamotée au deuil assumé, V. Genoud et coll., pub. Ouverture, 1992.

Le dernier voyage, pub. Ecole des loisirs, 1994.

Grandir : aimer, perdre et grandir, J. Monbourquette, pub. Bayard, 2006.

Vivre son deuil et croître, R. Poletti et B. Dobbs, pub. Jouvence, 2003.

Vivre le deuil en famille, R. Poletti et B. Dobbs, pub. Saint-Augustin, 2001.

L'accompagnant : ultime message de vie, J.Y. Revault, pub. Jouvence, 2000.

Vivre avec..., pub. Ouvertures, 1995.

La consolation, J. Attali et S. Bonvicini, pub. Naïve, Paris, 2012.

Mort, deuil et soins palliatifs, pub. centre de documentation en santé (bibliothèque de l'université de Genève).

For children

Apprivoiser l'absence, adieu mon enfant, A. Ernoult-Delcourt, pub. Seuil, 1992.

Faustine et le souvenir, M. A. Pernusch, pub. La Farandole, 1993.

Au revoir Blaireau, S. Varley, pub. Gallimard Jeunesse, 1985-1991.

Si on parlait de la mort, C. Dolto, C. Faure-Poirée et F. Mansot, pub. Gallimard Jeunesse, 2006 (children 3-5 years).

Falifou, C. Loëdec, pub. Le buveur d'encre, 2006.

Pour toujours à jamais, A. Duran et D. Gliori, pub. Gautier-Languereau, 2004.

We close the eyes of the dead gently.

It is also gently that we must open the eyes of the living.

Jean Cocteau

Useful addresses

You have lost your usual landmarks, you need to talk in a confidential and friendly place, there are several groups in Geneva that offer such support.

La Main Tendue

24h/24

 143

Aimer, perdre et grandir

Speaking group

Véronique Monnier  0033 450 42 10 78

lmvero@orange.fr

 www.associationressources.com

Arc en ciel

Support group

Support for parents who have lost a child

Patricia Manasseh  022 700 17 20

patsymana@gmail.com

Participation free


Association Entrelacs

Speaking group

Lydia Muller  022 740 04 77

info@entrelacs.ch

Association Cœurs de papas, du sombre au clair

 079 446 08 43

 www.coeursdepapas.ch

Association Kaly


 079 532 29 44

 www.association-kaly.org

Association Resiliam

Support for children with a relative who is ill

or has a disability and children in mourning

Marie-Christine Rey  077 411 31 63

Marie-Dominique King  079 543 96 06

info@resiliam.ch

 www.resiliam.ch

Caritas

Support for parents who have lost a child during pregnancy or at birth

Speaking group for the bereaved or individual meeting

📞 022 708 04 47

accompagnement@caritas-ge.ch

Groupe Sida Genève

Barbara Prolong-Seck 📞 022 700 15 00

Ligue genevoise contre le cancer

Individual support and groups for children in mourning

Philippe Glemarec 📞 022 322 13 33

Participation free

AS'TRAME Genève

Support Group for children, individual support and work with the family

Alexandra Spiess 📞 022 340 17 37

genève@astrame.ch

➦ www.astrame.ch

Fondation Eve la Vie

Support for families in mourning

📞 079 108 57 78

➦ www.evelavie.ch

Websites

➦ www.vivresondeuil.asso.fr

➦ www.palliativegeneve.ch/particulier-soin-palliatif/enfants-face-a-la-maladie-grave-dun-proche

Selective bibliography of literature for young people

➦ www.sdequebec.ca/publications.asp

➦ www.dialogueetsolidarite.asso.fr/Aimer-Perdre-et-Grandir-Assumer.html

➦ www.hommages.ch/rubrique/1/associations

Practical information

To find out more

Huguette Guisado
Hôpital de Bellerive
Chemin de la Savonnière 11
1245 Collonge-Bellerive
huguette.guisado@hcuge.ch

If you feel the need, please contact your doctor, a therapist, a chaplain, or the professionals of the establishment that supported the deceased

Various brochures about the mourning process are available, ask the healthcare team for them:

- ▶ For you who just lost a child (2010)
- ▶ For you who just lost your baby
- ▶ Practical information in the event of death, ref. 97204

Or download them from the site:

➤ www.hug-ge.ch/informations-sante-par-theme/24

You can also order the Directory of resources to live with your bereavement better: Association Vivre son Deuil / Suisse, Case postale 98, 1350 Orbe, ☎ 024 534 08 74.

This brochure was produced thanks to the involvement of Gilles Hourton, unit nurse manager, Sophie Scalici, Chaplaincy secretary, Catherine Bollondi Pauly and Jocelyne Bonnet, clinical specialist nurses, and with the collaboration of the Division of Publications.