

☪ **CONTINUUM CARE, INC.**  
*Hospice of St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John*

**“Tears are a sign of Weakness” and other myths about Grief**

The death of a loved one can be the most intense loss you may ever encounter. While loss and grief are emotionally painful, you can cope with them more realistically when you separate the facts from fiction about bereavement.

Grief is the feeling and emotions of loss. It's the pain inflicted on your mind and spirit when someone you love dies. One of the most common myths about grief is that being “brave” and “strong” prevents deep emotional suffering.

**Myth:** It is better to be “brave” and “strong” to avoid having so much emotional pain. **Fact:** Avoidance simply postpones emotional pain.

Myths about grief abound, stifling your ability to grieve in healthy ways. Simply knowing the facts can make a great difference in the way you mourn and the way you support others in their bereavement.

**Common Myths about Grief**

**Myth:** Grief paralyzes you indefinitely. **Fact:** When you take time to feel grief, it eventually goes away. The only way out of it is through it.

**Myth:** Tears are a sign of weakness. **Fact:** Tears help wash away intense feelings. They are a healthy way to move through grief. Of course, some people can't cry because tears are unnatural for them. But that doesn't mean they don't deeply feel the loss.

**Myth:** You never really finish grieving if you truly loved someone. **Fact:** True love is supported by the love itself, not the grief. You will always have the memories of your relationship, and you can keep the loved one's memory alive in healthy ways.

**Myth:** Grief is never finished. **Fact:** It's finished when you grieve in a healthy way. Unfinished grief that surfaces years later is crying out for completion.

**Myth:** Self neglect is a part of grief. **Fact:** Self-neglect could be a sign of clinical depression. Your loved one would want you to take good care of yourself.

**Myth:** Grief ends in three months (or some other time frame). **Fact:** Grief is a process, not an event. It cannot be avoided or rushed. The grief process takes as long as you need it to take. So, be patient and tolerant with yourself, and avoid those who are impatient or intolerant with you.

**Myth:** Only the sick have physical problems in grief. **Fact:** rushing through or trying to avoid grief can lead to chronic headaches, gastrointestinal ailments, sleep disorders, and other physical problems.

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**Myth:** All bereaved people grieve the same way. **Fact:** No one else will grieve exactly the same way you do. Cultures, values, beliefs, personalities, and relationships all determine how you grieve.

**Myth:** You will be the same after the death as you were before your loved one died. **Fact:** the death of someone you love changes your life forever. The transformation often results in tremendous emotional and spiritual growth.

**Myth:** Your relationship with loved ones ends after their death. **Fact:** Death ends a life, not a relationship. Memories are one of the vest legacies that exist after the death of someone you loved. Find creative ways to embrace them.

**Myth:** Grief always steadily declines over time. **Fact:** Initially, grief may seesaw between an emotionally sharp intensity and a dull aching. Over time and with the completion of grief work, the emotional distress subsides.

**Myth:** Time alone will heal your emotional pain. **Fact:** Time helps, but healing also involves “grief work.” This work requires expressing your feelings and emotions, talking about your loss accepting the death, and learning to live again.

**Myth:** When grief is resolved, it never comes up again. **Fact:** You may be sadly reminded again of the loss on birthdays, anniversaries, holidays or other significant dates. Take extra special care of yourself during these times.

**Myth:** You shouldn't think of your loved one on holidays or anniversaries because it will make you feel sad. **Fact:** It's okay to feel sad and it's okay to feel good. Allow the memories of your loved one to be with you in a gentle, tender way. Buy a living plant or a special candle to burn as a memorial to the love you once shared. Or, in their memory, donate to a charity the amount of money you would have spent on gifts.

**Myth:** Expressing intense feelings is a sign of losing control. **Fact:** Tears, confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt, and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. There is no such thing as a “wrong” feeling or emotion. Accept them all, and find others who will do the same.

*We are here to help. For more information, please call us.*

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