



## FaithWorks Counseling

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## Kübler-Ross Stages of Grief

### Understanding the Grieving Process

Grief is a natural response to loss. Everyone experiences it differently, and there is no “right” way or timeline to grieve. The stages of grief, described by Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, help us understand common feelings and reactions people may go through when faced with loss.

#### It is important to know:

- You may not experience all stages.
- Stages may happen in a different order.
- You may move back and forth between stages.
- Grieving is a personal journey.

#### 1. Denial

- **What it feels like:** Shock, numbness, or disbelief.
- **Examples:** “This can’t be happening.” “I feel like I’m in a dream.”
- **Purpose:** Protects you from being overwhelmed all at once.

#### 2. Anger

- **What it feels like:** Frustration, helplessness, or resentment.
- **Examples:** “Why did this happen?” “It’s not fair.”
- **Purpose:** Anger is a natural way to express pain and can provide energy to begin healing.

#### 3. Bargaining

- **What it feels like:** Guilt, “what if” thoughts, or attempts to make deals.
- **Examples:** “If only I had done this...” “Maybe if I try harder, things will change.”
- **Purpose:** A way to try to regain control during a time of helplessness.

#### 4. Depression

- **What it feels like:** Sadness, emptiness, or feeling withdrawn.
- **Examples:** “I don’t have the energy to do anything.” “Life feels overwhelming.”
- **Purpose:** A natural part of processing loss and beginning to let go of what has been lost.

#### 5. Acceptance

- **What it feels like:** A sense of peace, understanding, or readiness to move forward.
- **Examples:** “I am learning to live with this loss.” “I still miss them, but I’m finding new ways to live.”
- **Purpose:** Allows you to integrate the loss into your life and adjust to a new reality.

#### Important Reminders

- Grief is not a straight line. You may revisit stages.
- Everyone grieves at their own pace.
- Support from friends, family, community, and counseling can help.
- It’s okay to ask for help if grief feels overwhelming.