

Probably the most widely accepted formulation of the stages of grief was developed by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, and first introduced in her 1969 book, On Death and Dying. Her 5 Stages of Grief are now widely used as a means of describing the grief journey.

Please note not everyone will experience all of these stages, but will usually experience 2 of the stages; and the stages won't necessarily occur in any particular order.

“The 5 Stages of Grief”

Denial: In the 1st stage of the grief journey people are unable or unwilling to accept the loss has taken place. It can feel as though they are experiencing a bad dream.

Anger: In the 2nd stage of the grief journey people begin to feel anger at the loss of their loved one and the unfairness of it. They may become angry at their lost loved one; or angry with God for taking their loved one.

Bargaining: In the 3rd stage of the grief journey people beg to God to undo the loss, saying things like, “I’ll change if you bring them back to me.” This usually involves promises of better behavior or life changes which will be made in exchange for the reversal of the loss.

Depression: In the 4th stage of the grief journey people confront the reality of their loss and their own helplessness to change it. During this stage people may cry, experience sleep or eating habit changes, or withdraw from other relationships and activities while they process their loss. They may also blame themselves for having caused or contributed to their loss, whether or not this is justified.

Acceptance: In the 5th stage of the grief journey people enter a stage where they have processed their initial grief emotions, are able to accept the loss has occurred and cannot be undone and are once again able to plan for their futures and reengage in daily life.

I hope this gives you comfort in knowing that others have experienced the stages you have and continue to experience.

Sincerely,

Bereavement Coordinator