

Grief and Self Esteem

As many who have experienced loss know, grief and bereavement can be a complicated process and no two people seem to share the same path. A common experience that some people share though is a loss of self esteem. Many of the recognized causes of low self esteem are related to the loss of a loved one. We often have no control over the death of our loved one which can bring on a sense of powerlessness and an inability to change our own life.

When we lose a spouse or child, we cease to be a wife or husband or parent to that person in our daily roles and routines. The same is true for the loss of our role as a brother, friend or daughter. WE may also have feelings of being insignificant when we feel no longer needed.

We may set unrealistic goals for ourselves and others when it comes to grief. Ones' self esteem may be affected because we feel we are not 'getting over it' in a reasonable amount of time or that we are not moving on quickly enough.

When someone close to you has died it can generate a sense of fear – for the future, of disease, or even death. They may be a feeling of insecurity because of life changing so drastically after a loss. Uncertainty for the future may cause you to feel vulnerable and a victim.

Low self esteem prior to a loss can complicate grief issues even more. It may cause of to use their loss and grief as a way to keep others at a distance emotionally such as refusing to become involved in another relationship even years after the loss.

Low self esteem can manifest itself in many ways such as self-destructive behaviour (excessive drinking or taking unnecessary risks); negative comments or thoughts about self; fear of new situations; pulling away from family, friends or community.

When you are feeling down on yourself, here are some things that you can do to help feel better. Notice small acts of love and kindness and tell yourself that you deserve this attention. Find a nurturing support group where are accepted for who you are in an honest and positive setting. Do something good for someone else in need. This is not only good for your self esteem but is also goof got the person you have helped. Learn a relaxation technique. When we are stressed, it is difficult to find time or motivation to take care of ourselves. Becoming aware of our negative thoughts is the first step in changing them. Think of one good thing that has happened today. Think of things you are grateful for. Establish a habit of thinking positive thoughts. They really do raise our spirits.