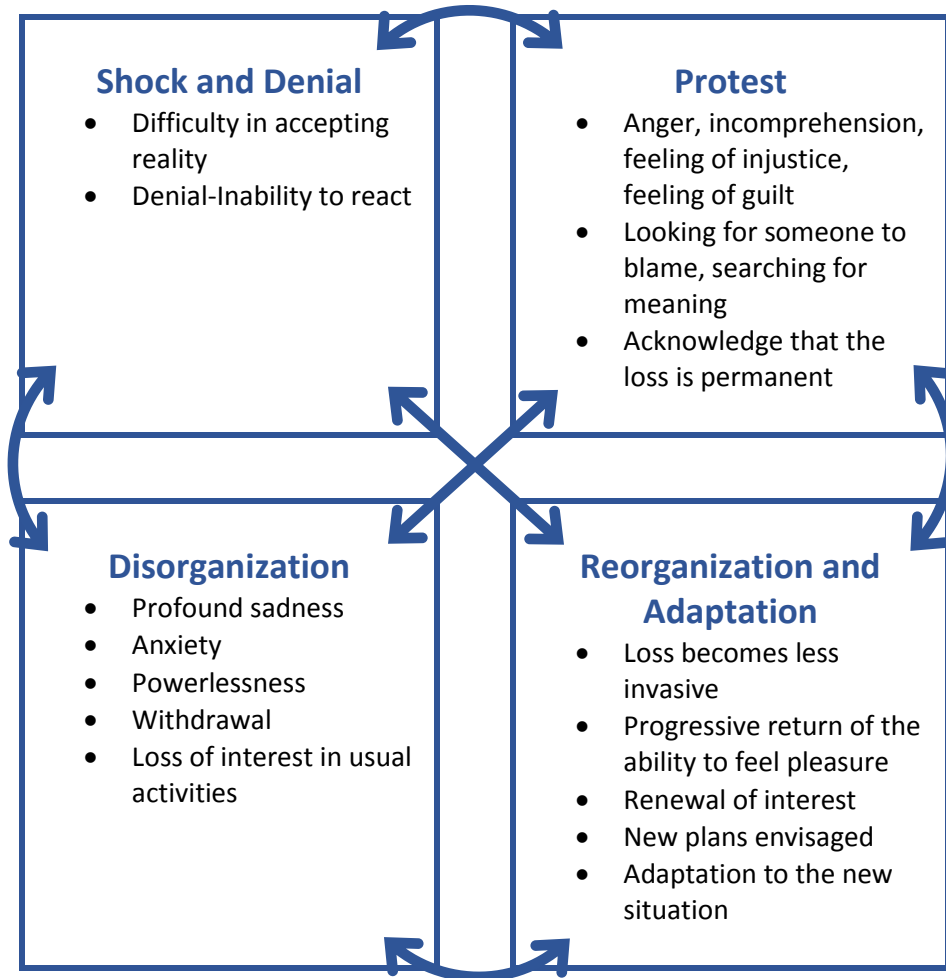


Grief



Shock and denial

The person has difficulty accepting reality or denies it, and may feel numb - incapable of reacting.

Protest

The person may experience anger, incomprehension, a feeling of injustice, a more or less important feeling of guilt, and may look for someone to blame and for a meaning of the loss. The person begins to acknowledge that the loss is permanent.

Disorganization

The person may feel great sadness, anxiety and powerlessness. The person may also become withdrawn, losing interest in usual activities.

Reorganization and adaptation

The grief becomes less invasive and the ability to feel pleasure gradually returns. The person feels a renewal of interest and can start to make new plans. The person adapts to the new situation.

Certain circumstances may make the grieving process more difficult, for example:

- the death was violent
- there is uncertainty about the circumstances of the death
- the body cannot be retrieved and viewed
- grieving rituals in line with one's beliefs cannot be carried out
- several loved ones are lost at the same time or within a short space of time

In these circumstances, you must be vigilant to your reactions, and ask for help whenever needed.

What are my strengths and my resources? What can I do?

You are the person best placed to know your own strengths, resources, and needs.

Here are some questions that might help you pinpoint them:

- If I have experienced bereavement before, how did I overcome the loss? What proved helpful to me at that time? What can I put into practice in the current situation?
- What do those around me see as my strengths? What strengths can I use in the grieving process?
- Is it possible to talk about the situation with someone, and share my feelings with this person?
- Who can I call on for practical help (meals, support with formalities, looking after children, etc.)?
- What support groups and professional services are there in my community that could come to my aid? How can I access these services?

Some examples of strengths and resources

- My beliefs, values and convictions
- My ability to adapt to difficult situations
- Presence and access to a supportive social network
- My personal qualities (ability to express my emotions, etc.)
- Access to a support group for bereaved persons and the availability of professional help when needed.

Ways to help myself

- Share my emotions with loved ones and accept their help.
- Get together with people going through a similar situation.
- Allow myself relaxation time.
- Perform symbolic acts in line with my values and beliefs.

Despite using ways such as these to cope with the situation, you may need professional help.

Here are the possible warning signs:

- I experience major and persistent disturbances to my appetite and sleep.
- I have difficulty functioning in my various roles (family, work, leisure).
- I feel a marked drop in interest for things that I used to like.
- I constantly isolate myself from those around me.
- My consumption of alcohol, drugs or medications has increased considerably.
- I cannot concentrate or make decisions.
- I feel intense suffering that is not fading with time - or, on the contrary, I act as though nothing had happened and register no emotion.
- I feel so overwhelmed by the event that I have suicidal thoughts, or feel like attacking somebody.

You are not alone in experiencing this situation; do not hesitate to ask for help.