



Coping with Loss and Understanding Grief

What is Loss?

We all experience loss throughout our lives. Loss can take many forms and can often be sudden, unexpected, and painful. The death of a loved one, a friend, or a fellow shipmate or Marine is a type of loss many of us may have experienced. Death is not the only type of loss we experience. Loss can come in the form of the ending of a close relationship (a divorce or a break-up); a transition such as a career change or a PCS; sustaining a wound or an injury or learning that one has developed an illness (loss of health) can also be a loss. Loss might be realizing that the goals you set for yourself prior to your wound, illness, or injury will have to be modified or that your way of life and perhaps family roles will be changed in many ways. It is normal to mourn and respond to loss in our lives.

Grief and Coping with Loss

The process of coping with loss, or the grieving process, is different for everyone. Each person experiences grief in their own way and own time. If you have experienced a loss, you may find that the emotions and the way you feel and the intensity of these feelings changes over the course of time. You may find yourself experiencing grief in none, one, a few, or all of the stages described below.

- Denial/Isolation: No, this isn't what's happening to me.
- Anger: This isn't fair. I don't deserve for this to happen.
- Bargaining: If "you" make this problem or situation go away, I promise that I will do the following
- Depression: Feeling intense sadness or fatigue
- Acceptance: Coming to terms or adjusting to the situation at hand; being at peace with the situation; adapting

Social Support: Reaching Out and Accepting Help

Reaching out to your support network of family and friends and accepting support when you are grieving is an important part of coping with your loss. While you may find yourself wanting quiet time or time alone, it is important not to isolate yourself. You may find that joining a peer support group with individuals who have experienced a loss similar to yours is helpful.



Professional Support and Local Resources

It may be that you feel overwhelmed by your grief or that additional support is needed to help you cope with your loss. There are many helping resources available to you and your family, and it is good to reach out for help when you need it. Your local MTF, branch health clinic, and Fleet and Family Support Center can help connect you with professional support. Your local Fleet and Family Support Center can assist you during times of transition including career and other life changes, and provide individual and family counseling resources. Contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center for assistance or additional resources.

Additional Resources

Navy Leader's Guide for Managing Sailors in Distress

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/LGuide/index.aspx>

Limb Loss, Grief, and Coping: http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/wounded-ill-and-injured/Amputation/WII_Amputation_LimbLossGriefCoping.pdf

Military OneSource: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/casualty/understanding-grief-and-loss>

Vets4Warriors: <http://www.vets4warriors.com/>

inTransition: <http://intransition.dcoe.mil/>

Real Warriors Campaign: <http://www.realwarriors.net/>

Resources for Military Families: <https://www.familiesnearandfar.org/resources/>

Family members, friends, and fellow shipmates and Marines know each other best and are in a position to notice changes of behavior that indicate a peer may be in crisis. Medical team members and any other individuals in contact with a Sailor or Marine are also in a position to identify someone who may be in crisis and in need of help. You should seek professional help if you notice an individual exhibiting any of the following signs:

- Threatens to hurt or kill him/ herself or talks about wanting to hurt or kill him/herself
- Looks for ways to kill him/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talks or writes about death, dying or suicide

Do not leave the person alone. Call 911, seek immediate assistance from a healthcare professional and/or call the Military Crisis Line.

**Military
Crisis Line**



**1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1**