



Death by Overdose

Grief is a normal process of mourning after a death. Please refer to our help sheet on Loss and Grief for the emotions you may be experiencing and some suggestions on how to cope and work through them.

When we experience a death from overdose, we still experience the emotions of grief, but there are usually additional emotions when grieving an overdose death.

Be assured that whatever emotions you are feeling or experiencing are normal. Feelings are not right or wrong. They are just part of who we are. You may experience some or all of the following.

Sadness

You never got a chance to say goodbye

Helplessness, Frustration, Guilt

You could not protect or save your loved one

Socially Isolated, Judged

Anger and Blame

Toward your loved one for their addiction

Toward the suppliers of the drugs or alcohol

Shame

Over the loss or the addicted person's behavior

Relief

You don't have to face the upsetting addiction behaviors anymore

How do I recover from this?

Print "Gone Too Soon: Navigating Grief and Loss as a Result of Substance Abuse"

This is an excellent resource (25 page guide) describing Grief, Physical and Emotional Reactions, Coping skills, Self-Care, Practical Considerations, Social Considerations, Support resources, Testimonies, How to do death announcements and plan a service, etc.

Accept and acknowledge the circumstance of the death

Let yourself feel your emotions and share talk about them or journal about them

Don't define your loved one by their addiction

Write a letter to your loved one

Learn about and understand addiction



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Stand up for yourself-Let others know when their well-intentioned comments and actions are not helpful-tell them what would be more helpful

Limit contact with those that don't support you

Remember and honor your loved one in a way meaningful to you

Seek counseling and/or a support group

Resources:

GRASP (Grief Recovery After Substance Abuse) - Local support groups

www.grasphelp.org

Survivor's Resources - Support groups, Grief counseling, and other resources

www.survivorresources.org

Broken No More - Support and Guidance to survivors of overdose

www.broken-no-more.org

Books:

When A Child Dies From Drugs by Pat and Russ Wittberger

Losing Jonathan by Robert and Linda Waxler

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping, and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One by Brook Noel and Pamela Blair, PhD

Devastating Losses: How Parents Cope with the Death of Child to Suicide or Drugs by William Feigelman et al

Dark Wine Waters: My Husband of a Thousand Joys and Sorrows by Frances Simone

The Grief Chronicles: A Survivors Manual for Death by Overdose by Marie Minnich

For complicated grief – Grief after a violent loss and/or lasting more than a year see General Grief page.

For more resources, support groups, and Catholic therapists, contact Rich @hello@thechurchofstluke.org