

## Anticipatory Grief

A common experience is when one is awaiting an impending loss. This grief can occur when a loved one gradually slips away due to Alzheimer's, dementia, cancer, or any life-limiting illness. You may also experience anticipatory grief if you have received a diagnosis.

It's natural to worry about the decline of our loved ones' energy, health, and abilities. The thought of a future without them can be overwhelming, and the prospect of becoming a full-time caregiver can be daunting. It's normal to grieve for the life we once had and the changes that may come. We grieve the loss of future hopes and dreams for your loved one and yourself.

### Anticipatory grief can be experienced on other occasions:

Anticipatory grief can occur in various situations, such as relocating, ending a relationship, losing a job, or coping with a sick pet, to name a very few examples.

It is possible to experience feelings of sorrow and sadness, due to natural aging and its limitation.

It's natural to experience feelings of grief when our loved ones are dealing with mental health challenges or addiction.

### Supporting yourself while grieving

Although every relationship and circumstance has a unique experience of grief, there are common physical and emotional reactions:

- exhaustion
- brain fog and difficulty concentrating
- trouble with memory
- irritability and impatience
- feeling very low and hopeless
- feeling overwhelmed
- body aches and pains
- loneliness

Take the time to care for yourself while supporting others by:

- recognizing your feelings of grief, knowing they are normal and natural
- try to have breaks where you replenish yourself through walks, fresh air, rest, visiting with friends
- concentrating while driving and walking as you are preoccupied
- find a safe and trusted person to talk with about your feelings and circumstances.
- making sure you are hydrated and eating
- being compassionate and kind to yourself during this difficult process

