# The Catholic University of America – Grief & Loss

## What is Grief?

Loss is an inevitable aspect of life and grief is a natural part of the healing process. Individuals might experience shock, anger, disbelief, guilt, and profound sadness in response to loss, which can be disruptive to one’s physical health and wellbeing. Coping with loss can be one of the most difficult times in one’s life.

## Types of Loss:

* Loss of a close friend
* Death of a partner
* Death of a classmate or colleague
* Serious illness of a loved one
* Relationship breakup or divorce
* Death of a family member
* Leaving a home or moving to a new home
* Illness/loss of health
* Death of a pet
* Graduation from school
* Loss of financial security
* Loss of safety after a trauma

## Sudden versus predictable of loss:

·   **Sudden loss** can be due to events such as crimes, accidents, or suicide. Experiencing a sudden loss might challenge one’s sense of security and confidence in the predictability of life. Symptoms such as sleep disturbance, nightmares, depressed mood, significant anxiety, and distressing thoughts might occur due to sudden loss.

·   **Predictable loss** might be due to terminal illness and sometimes allows for increased time to prepare for the loss. However, predictable losses are associated with two types of grief:

1. Grief related to anticipation and 2. grief due to the loss itself

## Common responses to Grief:

·   Sadness and depression

·   Difficulty concentrating

·   Irritability or anger

·   Frustration and feeling misunderstood

·   Ambivalence

·   Feeling numb

·   Lacking motivation and energy

·   Guilt or remorse

·   Wanting to escape

·   Fearfulness

·   Not being able to talk about the person or death

·   Worrying about who might die next

·   Wanting to be with the person who died

·   Feeling distressed that the pain, sadness, and grief will not go away

## The grieving process:

There is no right or wrong way to grieve and there is no “normal” timetable for grieving. It is important to be patient with yourself and allow the process to take its natural course.

## Wendt Center for Loss and Grieving

* Community resources:<https://www.wendtcenter.org/resources/community-resources/>
* Online resources:<https://www.wendtcenter.org/resources/on-the-web/>