
Grieving is a natural process

The pain of a parent's or a child's death can be overwhelming. When that happens, our family, friends and community allow us to grieve. Similarly when a family loses their farm, their home and their lifestyle, they too should be allowed to grieve. Losing something that is important to you can affect your entire life.

Most people move through a series of overlapping stages when they are grieving. This is a natural and predictable process that helps a person deal with the past and move on to the future at an individual rate.

The first stage is shock and denial. This is an emotional inability to accept reality. "It can't be happening to me" is a common reaction. These people need to be physically comforted and to be listened to.

As a person becomes aware of the loss, emotions will erupt. There is a need to cry and to talk. When the loss of the farm really sinks in, the whole family may experience strong feelings of helplessness, hurt, frustration and anger. Anger may be directed at bankers, government, advisors, neighbors, family and God. "How could they do this to us?" is a common feeling. Physical illness may result from being run down and emotionally stressed.

Guilt is another stage. "If only I had done this", "if only I hadn't bought that tractor", "if I wasn't around things would be better" seem

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to be a last chance to wipe out this problem. This is the time to watch for suicide attempts. Acceptance and listening is needed rather than criticism and judgements.

Feelings of isolation, self-pity and depression are part of the most difficult stage which is recognition. The task of getting one's life together again may seem overwhelming. Eventually some feelings of hope and relief

sneak through and indicate the beginning of recovery.

Recovery may be a long slow process. Support from family, friends, community and sometimes professionals is essential.

Grieving is not easy but is a solution to accepting a loss. A loss changes a person, but allows them to reconstruct their life using new strengths.

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