

Stages of Grief for a Suicide

1. Dissonance phase--This is the initial period after the loss when nothing literally "fits" or makes sense. It's been called a "personal holocaust" because of the devastation and the extent of anguish and emotion that sweeps over a person. It can be a time of panic, blame and incrimination.
2. Debilitation phase--This is when the person is breaking down emotionally and psychologically. The acute pain they feel along with the stress and depression brings this about. People feel disaffection from others who don't share the loss. People often start to feel a loss of control over their life and a sense of powerlessness.
3. Desensitization phase-- People may be in the first 2 phases for months, a year or even longer. Gradually they start to rebound emotionally. The acute nature of their grief lessens. The emotional pain stops getting worse and worse and seems to level at a place where the person can bear it. This is a kind of pre-recovery stage. People are still really vulnerable to relapses here and can easily fall back on painful feelings.
4. Differentiation phase--they call the last step the "Differentiation" because by the time people get here they are truly different people. They have a changed sense of who they are as a result of their loss. They're not "better" or "stronger" --just "different." They create a "new normal" for themselves and can function better.

Five Stages of Grief

1. Denial and Isolation.
At first, we tend to deny the loss has taken place, and may withdraw from our usual social contacts. This stage may last a few moments, or longer.
2. Anger.
The grieving person may then be furious at the person who inflicted the hurt (even if she's dead), or at the world, for letting it happen. He may be angry with himself for letting the event take place, even if, realistically, nothing could have stopped it.
3. Bargaining.
Now the grieving person may make bargains with God, asking, "If I do this, will you take away the loss?"
4. Depression.
The person feels numb, although anger and sadness may remain underneath.

5. Acceptance.

This is when the anger, sadness and mourning have tapered off. The person simply accepts the reality of the loss.