

# Timetable for Grief

## Zusman Hospice Bereavement Support



After a loss, one of the most frequently asked questions is, “How long will these feelings last?” If your loved one was ill, you have already grieved over each change in his or her health and abilities. You probably grieved because you knew your time together was limited. This is called anticipatory grief. Even if you have done a great deal of grieving before your loved one’s death, you will find that you still have some grieving left to do. How long grief lasts varies widely from individual to individual, so the following timetable is very general.

### **The First Months**

---

In the first months you may be so busy with funeral arrangements, visitors, paperwork and other immediate tasks that you have little time to begin the grieving process. You also may be numb and feel the loss is unreal. This shock can last beyond the first month, especially if the death was sudden, violent or particularly untimely.

### **Months 3 to 5**

---

The three-month point is particularly challenging for many grieving people. Visitors have gone home, cards and calls have slowed or stopped and most of the numbness has worn off. Well-meaning family and friends, who don’t understand the grief process, may pressure you to “get back to normal.” You are just beginning the very painful task of understanding what this loss really means.

### **Months 6 Through 12**

---

You will continue to work through many tasks associated with learning to live with loss, and you will begin to have more good days. Even late into the last half of the first year, difficult periods sometimes occur with no obvious trigger. Understand that these difficult periods are normal. They are not a setback or a lack of progress.

### **Significant Anniversaries**

---

Personal and public holidays present additional challenges. Birthdays of the deceased and other family members, weddings, anniversaries and family and school reunions can be difficult. Medical anniversaries, such as the date of diagnosis, the day the person came home from the hospital and the date of death, can bring up memories. Don’t be afraid to ask for additional support when these dates occur. Planning a special activity for the day may be comforting.

Made possible by the Alice & Robert Estrich Fund of The Columbus Foundation.



Address  
1151 College Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio  
43209

Phone  
614-559-0350  
Email  
zh@whv.org

Web  
whv.org

