

Vision Loss and Grief

Experiencing vision loss is life-changing, and grief is a normal reaction to any type of loss in life. You have a right to mourn the loss of vision, and other losses that happen when vision is impaired. Acknowledging and grieving our losses makes healing possible.

❖ *Grief is...*

- ✚ The normal response of sorrow and emotions, thoughts and behaviors that can follow the loss or limitations of normal vision. One can also grieve in advance of an anticipated loss.
- ✚ A natural part of life
- ✚ Very personal – it is different for everyone – there is no right or wrong way to grieve

❖ *Grief reactions may include...*

- ✚ Physical responses such as crying, confusion, lack of energy, or changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- ✚ Anger – at a situation, a person, or in general
- ✚ Helplessness or doubt in your ability to cope with the loss and changes you will have to face
- ✚ Withdrawal from family, friends and common activities
- ✚ Difficulty focusing, working or making decisions
- ✚ Questions about faith or spirituality; challenges to the meaning, value and purpose you find in life

There is no right way to grieve. It is an individual process. Life won't be the same after vision loss, but experiencing your grief will allow you to adjust to life after vision loss.

❖ *Experiencing Grief*

It is important to experience all of the thoughts and emotions that come up, as painful as they may be, and to treat yourself with patience and kindness. Some people find it helpful to explore feelings and thoughts with someone outside the family who is not directly involved and who will listen (a minister, counselor or support group).

- + **Talk about your loss** – take the time to talk to family, friends or a counselor. You are not alone!
- + **Support groups** – are a safe place where people coping with loss can share their experiences and support each other.
- + **Religious / Spiritual community** – people who can help identify spiritual resources that may be comforting to you.
- + **Local mental health association** – to get more information and referrals.
- + www.visionconnection.org – **Vision Connection**
Vision information and accessible community for people who are partially sighted or blind.
Searchable database of resources, articles and links.

❖ *Healing begins when you:*

- Express your feelings
- Learn more about grief and its effects
 - Are patient with yourself
 - Ask for help when you need it
 - Stay alert to your physical needs