

Coping with grief on Father's Day

June 17 2016, by Dipali Pathak

Father's Day can be a painful day of mourning for those who have lost a father or a child. An expert at Baylor College of Medicine offers his advice on dealing with the grief that may come with Father's Day.

"Father's Day is typically a time to celebrate all over the country. Unfortunately, for a person who has lost a child or a father, this day can serve as a reminder of their absence. The holiday can trigger painful emotions that may cause [emotional distress](#), depression, anxiety and, in some cases, nervous breakdowns," said Dr. Asim Shah, assistant professor in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Baylor.

It is difficult for the holiday to go unnoticed when there are advertisements, commercials, and signs everywhere you go, he added. "It can be a day full of sorrow, loneliness and grief but you should focus on the day because no matter what you do you cannot escape it."

Shah's suggestions to cope with the grief include:

- Plan ahead for the day – acknowledge your loss and the difficulty this day brings. The worst thing you can do is be unprepared to deal with your emotions.
- Donate your time – volunteering your time at a shelter, hospital or church can be a rewarding experience.
- Join a support group – there are many support groups that can help you get through the day and provide you with the comfort you need.

- Do something in their honor – honor your loved one's memory by donating to charity, lighting a candle or writing a letter.
- Giving can feel better than receiving – If you have someone you look up to as a father make them feel special, take them out to eat or give them a token of appreciation.
- Work on getting rid of your guilt – guilt can make it difficult for people to cope. It is common for people to feel like they did not do enough for their loved ones. Start by seek professional help.
- Do not ignore your feelings – It is of great importance that you acknowledge your state of mind. The consequences of ignoring your feelings can lead to building up stress and tension resulting in serious consequences over time.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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