



Delayed Grief

The very simplest definition of delayed grief is grief that has been postponed.

People experience delayed grief for differing reasons.

A parent may put off grieving because they are so busy caring for their children.

A person in an accident in which others were killed must usually work on healing their body before they can cope with the work of grieving.

Consider someone who experiences a violent death. The events surrounding such a death can be so horrible and their emotions so strong that they can't face the level of pain they are experiencing, so they stuff it down.

So why is this a problem?

Can't we just put it off and it will go away?

Unfortunately it won't just go away.

Grief can begin to manifest itself physically as in unexplained headaches, ulcers, etc. or mentally such as depression or unreasonable anger.

Grief finally will work itself to the surface.

Something might trigger it – like the death of the family dog and Mom's grief about Dad comes pouring out. She doesn't understand why she is so upset about the dog when the dog's death is just the opening of the carefully constructed dam and every emotion just starts pouring out.

Sometimes grief can be delayed long enough that when we do start to experience it, we can't think back far enough to figure out where it's coming from. This makes it difficult to work through the bereavement process.

So if you are finding yourself or a loved one in the situation of experiencing delayed grief, what can you do to help yourself or them through this time?

1) Talk or journal about the death, your experience and how you are feeling.

2) Take a trip to the cemetery to make the death feel real/final. Many of the same grief work that you would do during "healthy bereavement" you can implement now.

If you find that you are still having difficulty working through the grief journey on your own – then by all means, seek the help of a [counselor](#) who specializes in grief work!

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength....
It takes bravery to be vulnerable with another person.

