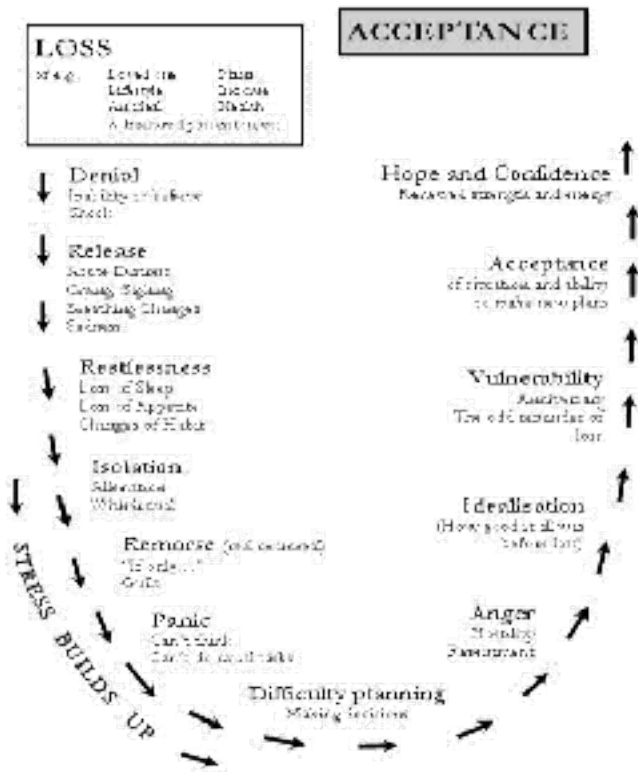


Stages in response to loss

People vary greatly in their response to LOSS, but most come to terms with it by working through a number of stages that occur as part of the healing process, but not necessarily in this exact order.



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Drought

Coping with loss, grief, stress and change in rural crisis

Much attention is given to the drought's impact on the environment - global warming, soil erosion, the risk of bush fires and to the increased price of food. But what about the psychological costs of drought?

The drought brings with it many losses. Loss of income, loss of family farm, lifestyle, loss of relationships and loss of control.

Drought, fires and floods are an inevitable part of the ongoing cycle of farming. However, the associated stress on farmers, their families and their local communities is enormous and result in a great sense of loss.

Ongoing psychological stress can lead to mental health problems such as depression, stress and anxiety. Symptoms of stress often remain untreated as farmers struggle to cope with the day to day tasks of drought management.

In any crisis it is normal to have a variety of feelings which may change from time to time. These feelings are NORMAL. They usually last for only a limited period and give way to other feelings.

Normal Feelings and Emotions in a Crisis

Anger

- At what has happened, at whoever or whatever caused it or allowed it to happen, at those trying to help, at those not affected

or not as badly affected.

- At the shame and indignities
- At the lack of proper understanding by others

Helplessness

- It's too big...it's too hard feeling very alone
- FEAR - of future, of 'breaking down', of 'losing control', of being left alone, of loved ones having to leave, of having to leave loved ones, of losing the business or farm lifestyle, of the uncertainty.

Disappointment

- Life is turning out like this, after so many years of hardwork.

Failure

- Blaming yourself for the ways things are turning out, when it's really beyond your control.

Guilt

- For being better off than others
- For being worse off than others
- Regrets for things not done
- About decisions made
- For letting others down

Sadness

- For losses of every kind.
- Longing for all that has gone.

Shame

- For having been exposed as helpless, 'emotional' and needing others
- For not acting as one would wish.

Isolation

- Wanting to be alone
- Irritated or cannot bear the demands of being with others.

Numbness

- Feeling empty inside
- Loss of feelings
- Can't connect with things you should feel strongly about.

Let down

- A sudden loss of energy, enthusiasm which alternates with....

Hope

- For the future, for better times.