

GRIEF AND LOSS

The loss of a loved one or important relationships are some of the most painful challenges we face in life. If you are grieving a recent loss, you've likely been given advice on how to handle your pain. Although it was well-intentioned, a lot of it was probably unsolicited and maybe unhelpful. Here are some suggestions that you can read on your own, when you're ready.

The experience of loss is universal. It is important to remember that while others may be able to relate to your pain, your grief is your own. It is personal and unique. This is a time to treat yourself with kindness and compassion. A big part of that is allowing yourself to grieve in your own way. There is no established timeline for how long your grief should last. There are no rules about how you should feel and what you should do.

You may have heard of the stages of grief. You will likely go through these five stages. However, it is important to understand that the stages do not necessarily go in a particular order, one after another. Your grief may include sadness, anger, and anxiety in no particular order and maybe all at the same time. You may also experience joy as you reflect on happy memories, or contentment as you continue to move forward and engage in activities that give your life meaning. Often people will have feelings of guilt when they find relief from their grief. It is okay to feel the pain of grief, and it is also okay to enjoy moments when your grief can be put aside.

When you are ready, there are some activities listed below that you may find to be helpful.

- Look through pictures that help you to retrieve memories.
- Being kind to yourself also means taking care of your mind and body through prioritizing consistent sleep and nutrition.
- Engage in intentional movement and spend time outside.
- Spend time with friends and family.
- Avoid using unhelpful behaviors to push your feelings away, like substance use, excessive eating, and "retail therapy."
- Look for people who can be with you when you're hurting without trying to find a cure or give unsolicited advice.
- Pets are great comfort during this time.
- Writing, visual art, music, and other creative activities can provide outlets for expressing thoughts and emotions.
- You might also consider contacting a local bereavement support group or therapist.

Handouts/Websites

The 5 Stages of Grief & Loss

Grief: Coping with the loss of your loved one

The 5 Stages of Grieving the End of a Relationship

Coping with Grief (PDF)

Podcasts/Videos

TED Talk: Nora McNerny, “We don't ‘move on’ from grief. We move forward with it”

TED Talk: Gary Lewandowski, “Break-ups Don’t Have to Leave You Broken”

TED Talk: Jesse Brisendine, “Grief is Not a Life Sentence”

Podcast: Griefcast: Funny People Talking about Death

Podcast: Terrible, Thanks for Asking

Podcast: Coming Back: Conversations on Life After Loss

Books

It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine

How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies by Therese A. Rando, Ph.D.

Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief by David Kessler

On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief through the Five Stages of Loss by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Learning How to Heal a Broken Heart: Transforming Breakdowns into Breakthroughs by Marvin Scholz

Applications

