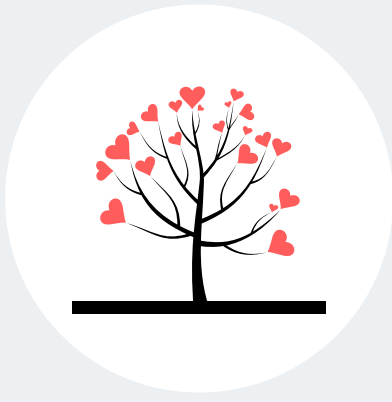


# coping with grief

Each one of us has our own way of coping with painful experiences and there is no one right way to heal the wound of losing someone you care about. The list below may help you generate ideas about how to cope with your feelings of grief:



## acknowledge the loss

It's better to give yourself and others permission to talk about what has happened and its impact than to go on as if nothing had happened. Trying to avoid feelings of sadness and loss only prolongs the grieving process. Unresolved grief can also lead to depression, anxiety, substance abuse and other mental health problems.

## accept your feelings

Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions. Some may experience grief immediately; others may have delayed reactions. Don't let anyone tell you how to feel, and don't tell yourself how to feel either. Your grief is your own and no one else can tell you when it's time to "move on" or "get over it".



## express your feelings in a tangible or creative way

If you struggle to talk about your loss with others, it can help to journal your thoughts and feelings, drawing or making art to channel your feelings, or volunteering for a cause related to your loss.

## connecting with people you care about

While you might not feel like being around anyone, the resulting sense of loneliness typically makes people feel worse. Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen to your concerns.



## take good care of yourself

Eat on a regular schedule, get enough sleep, engage in movement, avoid excessive use of drugs or alcohol. You can support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically. Try to maintain your hobbies and interests as there's comfort in routine and reconnecting with activities that bring you joy.

## appreciate a sense of humor in yourself and others

Humor relieves stress, produces body chemicals that improve mood, and helps us gain a more balanced perspective. Do not postpone joy and laughter should they come your way. It's okay to laugh and to find moments of joy even as you're grieving.



## seek professional help

If your grief doesn't seem to get any better over the course of several months or more and/or is so consuming that it is making it hard for you to enjoy your life or manage your responsibilities, consider seeking professional help.



text MIND to 741741



call 9-8-8

# supporting others with grief & loss



## ✓ be a good listener

Simply giving people the opportunity to vent is tremendously helpful and healing to them. Saying the “right thing” isn’t nearly as important as feeling connected to and supportive of others.

## ✓ be patient and present

Grievers have to talk to heal and often, it is easy to get impatient. Be available - allow them to talk without being judgmental. Avoid telling them what to do or how to feel.

## ✓ remember that people deal with grief and loss differently

There is no formula for healing these kinds of emotional wounds. Refrain from judging others’ responses and demanding that everyone think, feel, or act the same way. It is important to provide support at a level and in the manner that they ask for.

## ✓ encourage self-care

Grief can be emotionally and physically exhausting. Gently remind grievers of basic self-care to nourish and replenish themselves - rest, relaxation, exercise, diversions. Offer to do it with them.

## ✓ take some kind of action

A check-in phone call, a card, a hug, attend the funeral - offer specific help, but check with them first in terms of what they may need rather than making your own assumptions.

## ✓ accept your own limitations

You can’t take away their pain, nor should it be your responsibility. If you think they could benefit from professional help, connect them to a counselor or therapist. And always remember to take care of yourself as well.