

7 Sound Suggestions for Grief

Everyone grieves in his or her own way. Grief is the natural, normal human response to loss. Don't let others tell you what you *should* be doing. We don't "get over," "get past," or finish grieving, but the pain will subside. We don't "heal" from grief, but rather we want to cope in healthy ways. Our goal is to mourn well so that we can go on to live well and love well.

Journal about your feelings. Writing down thoughts and feelings gets them out of your body/head. Research has shown again and again that journaling helps.

Talk with a safe person. Having someone to talk to about what you're going through can be enormously helpful. Find someone who is non-judgmental, trustworthy and doesn't give advice or try to fix you. If you don't have someone in your personal life, contact a local hospice organization for someone like this.

Exercise. Grief inclines people toward depression. Research has shown that exercise staves off depression, or helps depressed people feel less depressed. Taking care of your body is part of living well. Your physical health influences your mental health much more than mostly people acknowledge. The benefits of exercise for grieving people are far too many to list here. It will help you. Walking, yoga, weightlifting—just do something.

Eat healthy foods. Similar to exercise, the foods you eat directly affect your mood. Fat, sugar and salt are the three most addictive foods, and too much of any of these will lower your energy levels and negatively affect your mood. Use alcohol in moderation. When others offer to bring you food, request a salad instead of lasagna.

Sleep. Humans need sleep. Acute grief can affect your sleep—you may sleep too much or too little. If you're having trouble with appropriate sleep, consult a professional—it will help. (Strenuous exercise and a healthy diet also help with sleep.)

Accept support. People you know may offer help. Accept it. Make a list of little things people can do (mow the lawn, buy groceries, vacuum, meal prep, change your oil), and have it ready when help is offered. Don't feel guilty, you're not being a burden. People want to help, but usually don't know how—tell them.

Pray. Meditate. Breathe. Whatever your centering practice, use it. When grieving, your mind can be held hostage by thoughts of the past or worries about the future. Centering practices can lower blood pressure and will return you to the present.