

Caring for Yourself in Grief

Sleep. Regular rest is very important. If you have trouble sleeping, try drinking a glass of milk or listening to soothing music. Sometimes journaling can help to transfer racing thoughts from the head to paper. Find what works for you.

Eat Well. Be sure to eat well-balanced meals. Seek out people with whom you will be comfortable to share mealtimes as often as possible. Eat meals intentionally; do not rely on snacks or simply eating in front of the television. Gradually your appetite will return.

Drink Well. Drink plenty of water and herbal teas; avoid caffeinated drinks or alcohol

Exercise. Get some exercise, whether walking, T'ai chi, swimming, or any physical activity. Exercise helps you release some of your tension. It will help you feel stronger.

Breathe. Take “time-outs” and breathe deeply and fully two to three times in the midst of your activities.

See your Physician. If you are not feeling well, see your primary care physician. Grief takes a toll on your body, and you may be susceptible to illness. Do not hesitate to check it out.

Find Friends. Find people who are comfortable with your grief and will let you experience your feelings, whether that is crying, telling your story again and again, or sitting with you in silence.

Be Patient. Try to be patient with people who do not understand your pain. Be patient with yourself as well. Grief takes time.

Do Something with your Feelings. Find an outlet for your feelings. You may want to try journaling, which is a good way to externalize all that is going on inside of you. Some people find creative outlets, such as painting, sculpting, or writing and playing music. Others may just find talking to be the best outlet. Find what works for you.

Allow Yourself Time to Grieve. Allow yourself grieving times. Try to declare other times non-grieving times. This way you may find at least short times of peace.

Pamper Yourself. Set aside times each day to do at least one activity that brings you comfort and feels like you are pampering yourself. Even if it does not bring the pleasure it used to bring, it will help you relax and begin to heal.

Physical Contact. Ask for hugs, get a massage or take a hot bubble bath to get some physical comfort.

Look to Nature or Animals. Nature and pets can be healing. Tune into the cycles of nature. Absorb the beauty and wonder of the natural world.

Find Your Coping Skills. Draw on your memory of past experiences that were difficult. What you learned then can help you now. Learn what you can do when the pain overwhelms you. Try not to let helplessness take over.

Be Gentle with Yourself. Above all, be gentle with yourself. Pretend you're a friend who needs your help and support. What would you do for them?

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