



Caring for Yourself While Grieving

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Grief is an individual process and looks different for each person. At times, coping with grief can be complicated; what is helpful for one person may not be for another. It is important to seek support and take care of yourself during the grieving process.

Caring for Yourself

Acknowledge your basic needs

Eat regular meals, drink water, maintain as normal a sleep schedule as possible, and stay connected to your support system. Consider reducing use of alcohol or other substances to cope, including sugar, energy drinks or coffee.

Express your emotions

Talk with friends and family, write in a journal, create art, reflect, dance, exercise, sing, play music, read, spend time in nature or use guided meditations to express your emotions in a healthy way.

Accept support from those around you

It's OK to ask for help. There are many kinds of support, including: emotional support, help with childcare, help with daily tasks, workplace support and more. If you're not sure what kind of support you need, ask a trusted friend or family member to help you make a list.

Use self-compassion

Grief can leave people feeling sad, angry, hopeless, relieved, guilty, shameful, numb, happy, in shock or denial, hopeful, in pain, and more. Some days will be better than others; show yourself extra kindness. You are doing the best you can.

Finding Support

It is normal to need support beyond friends or family. You may find it helpful to see a licensed therapist who specializes in grief, participate in a grief group led by professionals or peers, or find a community of people who have been through similar experiences.

Seek recommendations

Ask friends, family members and people in your community if they have recommendations for a therapist or support group.

Find support in your area

Search using the internet for grief therapists, grief counselors, or grief groups in your local area. Websites such as goodtherapy.org and psychologytoday.com can be useful directories to local grief professionals.

Contact your insurance company

Many insurance companies can offer help finding a local therapist in your network who specializes in grief, and if you have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), they can help connect you to an EAP provider from your plan.

While Grieving

Contact your primary care physician

It's important to stay healthy. Your doctor may also be able to offer you additional grief resources.

Contact your local hospital or hospice

Even if your loved one is not a patient, many hospitals and hospices offer grief groups and counseling services.

Contact your spiritual or religious organization

For many people, churches, synagogues or other religious communities are of great comfort during times of grief. They may also be able to provide one-on-one support and other services.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm not sure if I need additional support; should I still contact a therapist or support group?

It never hurts to reach out and get in touch. Ask questions to find out if the therapist or group is a good fit for you. You can even attend a few sessions to see what you think. There are no long-term commitments or requirements; you can stop and start at any time or try a different approach.

What are some signs that it may be time to seek additional support?

Grief can be an intense process. Signs you may want to seek additional support include:

- Difficulty sleeping or eating
- Feeling hopeless or depressed
- Have difficulty completing daily tasks
- Have flashbacks or nightmares
- Notice an increase in alcohol or drug use
- Have anxiety or fear that is difficult to manage

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts or are concerned for your safety (or the safety of a loved one), go to the hospital, call 911, or call the national suicide prevention hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

It has been months or years since my loved one died. Is it too late to seek support?

It's never too late. Grief is a process that is different for everyone. It can be unpredictable, with triggers, setbacks, breakthroughs and a variety of feelings occurring in the months, years and decades after the loss of a loved one.

Continued on back.



Frequently Asked Questions Continued

When is the right time to reach out for support?

Whenever you feel ready. Grief therapists and professionals can provide you with extra support, give you a safe space to talk about and process your grief, and help you engage in new ways of coping. Grief can be a lifelong process, so there may be different situations or stages of life where you need additional support, regardless of when your loved one died.

I'm trying to find a therapist or support group, but not having any luck. What should I do?

Keep searching! It can take time to find the right therapist or group for you. Ask friends and family if they have any recommendations.

How do I pay for therapy, a support group, etc.?

Many insurance providers cover some or all of the cost of therapy sessions. You can also pay out of pocket. If you schedule an appointment with a therapist, ask about the cost per session and which insurance providers they accept. Some EAPs will cover a certain number of sessions at no cost to you.

Many grief groups are free or low cost; your insurance company may also cover some of these costs. If you have difficulty finding an affordable therapist or group, ask about low-cost options or free referrals.

I started seeing a therapist or attending a support group, but I don't think it's helpful. What should I do?

This is completely normal. It's important to find the right fit for you, and it may take some time to do that. If you're speaking with a therapist, ask if they have suggestions to make it a better fit for you or help you find a better fit.

If you just joined a group or started seeing a therapist, try giving it a few more sessions to see if it becomes a better fit or more helpful over time. Also, try different kinds of support to figure out what works best for you.

For more information about tissue donation, visit [versiti.org/organissuedonation](https://www.versiti.org/organissuedonation).

Register to become an organ and tissue donor at [donatelifewisconsin.org](https://www.donatelifewisconsin.org).

