



9 WAYS to cope with GRIEF AND LOSS

BY LORI O'MARA | COPE BETTER THERAPY SERVICES

No matter the source of your feelings of grief and loss, these feelings can be very difficult to deal with. Simply stewing in them will only make you feel worse. If you want to cope with grief, here are nine ways to do just that and improve your life:

1. REACH OUT AND ASK FOR SUPPORT.

The worst thing you can do is try to deal with your grief on your own. Now is the time to seek out the support of people who have been through a similar loss or who are in the exact same situation. For example, if you are grieving the loss of a loved one, offering support to and asking support from the other family members or

friends that are feeling that same loss can help you to not only feel normal, but also start to cope with those negative feelings. If you do not tell other people how you are feeling, you might start to spiral downwards. Others can help lift you up.

2. TALK TO A GRIEF COUNSELOR.

Counselors have been trained to help people that are struggling with loss and are a great resource if you are looking to cope with grief. They can help you to put your feelings into words and help you find ways of dealing with the intense feelings you are experiencing. Grieving often comes with a number of obstacles, the biggest of which being a feeling that no one else has ever experienced what

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Nancy Boyle
Village EAP Trainer

Q: What can I say to a friend whose loved one just died?

A: One of the most important things you can do for a friend who has lost a loved one is to be empathetic. We do not always know the right things to say, and that's OK. What is important is the ability to allow a space to connect with an individual, letting them know you are here for them when they need someone to talk to.

Grief and loss is not something we invite into our lives; it comes when it is ready. Our job is to listen to it, sit in it, and respect it. It will leave when it is ready.

What we say to our friend after their loss is not going to take away the pain, but it can provide connection.

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you have experienced. A counselor can show you that this is not true and can help you cope.

3. PRACTICE SELF-CARE.

It can be very tempting to just let your grief consume you. You might find yourself letting personal grooming, eating, hobbies, and relationships fall by the wayside, because maintaining them in this time of grief simply feels like too much. It is important to continue to take care of yourself. Not only does this help you restore a sense of normalcy to your life, but it also can actually help you deal with the grief you are feeling.

4. ACTUALLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS.

You might be tempted to try to distract yourself from your feelings or you might actively be suppressing the grief and sadness you are feeling. Both of these are dangerous. In order to cope with grief, you first have to acknowledge that you are feeling it. You cannot move beyond these feelings if you are avoiding them. It prolongs the process and will probably lead to much more difficult feelings in the future. Not resolving your grief can lead to anxiety issues, problems with depression, and even substance abuse.

5. DON'T LET OTHER PEOPLE TELL YOU HOW YOU FEEL.

You know how you feel and you have every right to feel that way. Don't let other people, including yourself, tell you when it is time for you to get over your grief. Other people might try to push you to move on before you are ready to do so. This only piles more stress and more negative feelings on top of the ones that you are already experiencing. Feeling as though you should be over something that you just are not ready to move past can be as damaging as the grief itself.



IF YOU DON'T FEEL YOUR BEST TODAY, ALLOW YOURSELF THAT SPACE. THIS IS HARD. YOU DON'T HAVE TO PROCESS THIS ALL AT ONCE.

6. UNDERSTAND THAT GRIEF IS COMPLICATED.

Grief is an extremely complicated emotion and it is often felt in conjunction with other feelings. You might be angry at a loved one for dying and leaving you. You might long for that person to come back. You might start to feel a sense of emptiness. All these feelings are normal. Your grief is not going to be exactly like anyone else's grief, even for those people who are grieving the same loss.

7. PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT COMPASSIONATE.

Nothing can be more damaging to your grieving process than being around people that are just not compassionate. Whether they try to tell you that you are being too sensitive or they tell you that you should be over something by now, these people are toxic to you right now. Even your best friends and family members might not understand what you are going through. Some might even think that telling you to chin up is a good way to help. If necessary, remove yourself from these people during your grieving process.

8. HOLD ON TO THINGS THAT REMIND YOU OF THE PERSON YOU LOST.

Some people will immediately go through their house and life and dispense of everything that reminds them of the person they've lost. While this might work for some, keeping something around

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED CONT.

HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY TO SOMEONE IN GRIEF INCLUDE:

- I am so sorry for your loss.
- I wish I had the right words; just know I care.
- I don't know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.
- You and your loved one will be in my thoughts and prayers.
- My favorite memory of your loved one is ...
- I am always just a phone call away.
- We all need help at times like this, I am here for you.
- I am usually up early (or late) if you need anything.

AVOID SAYING THINGS THAT COULD BE HURTFUL TO SOMEONE IN GRIEF, SUCH AS:

- At least she lived a long life, many people die young.
- He is in a better place.
- There is a reason for everything.
- She was such a good person. God wanted her to be with him.
- I know how you feel.
- She did what she came here to do, and it was her time to go.
- Be strong.

Sometimes the best thing you can do is say nothing and just be with your friend. A hug can be a very comforting gesture as well.

to remind you of the happy times you spent with that person can help you to cope with grief. You might want to box these things up for a few months until you are ready to look through them. You will be even sadder in the future if you throw all these things away before really thinking about the possible repercussions of dispensing such precious items.

9. GIVE YOURSELF TIME.

It's important to remind yourself that you are not always going to feel this way and there will be a time when you will feel like yourself again. You just need to give yourself time to get there. Don't be so focused on trying to not feel sad that you actually repress the feelings that you need time to feel.

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