

Grief Coping Strategies

Grieving is a long and difficult process. Below are some strategies that those grieving can use to help maintain some healthy momentum as they proceed through their grief.

- Remember that the greater the hurt, the more time it can take to heal
- Make sure to continue to eat and rest, even if you don't feel like it. This is not only about emotional survival, but physical survival as well. If you maintain your health you will be better able to tackle your intense emotional needs.
- Let others help you – take advantage of the outpouring of support and have others do the things you don't feel capable of.
- Postpone major decisions until the more intense feelings subside.
- Recognize that all the feelings you are having are normal and healthy (even the rage, panic and deep despair) and you must feel all your pain to be able to heal. Allow yourself to cry and express your emotions.
- Consider journaling to vent your strong feelings when there seems like no other appropriate outlet (especially with the anger).
- Be assertive with those around you and tell them exactly what you do and do not need. Expect that people may often do things out of their own sense of discomfort rather than what is best for you.
- Ask someone to be “on call” for you—someone who is willing and able to be there for you when you need someone to talk to.
- Consider linking with others who have also suffered losses. These are people who really know how you feel and can provide a great support system.
- Time alone can be scary and lonely, but recognize that this is precious time to allow yourself to go within and move through your grief. Don't avoid this time. If this time is very frightening for you, structure it to allow yourself some time to grieve, but also keep busy with other things that can help distract you.
- Move through your grief at your own pace. Other people may tell you how and when you should proceed – follow your instincts and do what you can, when you can. If you feel unable to function and feel “stuck” in some aspect of your grief, seek the help of a grief professional. Many times people find that they are not “stuck” at all and that it is a normal part of the grieving process.
- It is perfectly healthy and reasonable for you to maintain some sense of “contact” with your loved one. Talking to them, writing them a letter, creating a memory space, lighting candles, carrying a linking object, etc. These will give you peace for as long as you need it. There will come a time in the process when you are less reliant on these.

Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for free, confidential counseling.