

Grief First Aid Kit



Grief hurts, but it can be useful. Grieving often involves sadness, anger, loneliness, and other painful emotions. In contrast, grieving can help us come to terms with our loss and move forward in life, while still cherishing memories of our loved ones.

Everyone grieves differently. Though many people have opinions about how to grieve correctly, don't forget, your grief is yours and yours alone. Some need to express their grief, while others prefer to process in silence. Some feel anger, while others feel sadness, numbness, or relief. Everyone has different responses to loss, and different needs in the journey of grieving. "Trauma echoes" unpredictably emerge at variable patterns and intervals yet CAN be managed with proper supports and exercising a deliberate-awareness.

The conditions surrounding your loss have a major impact on your grief. Deaths that are unexpected, traumatic can complicate the grieving process. Personal factors, such as a history of mental illness, or a strained relationship with the person who died or is dying, can also contribute to current conditions. Allow yourself room to grow.

Grief does not have a set time frame. Grief can last for weeks, months, or years. Grief may come and go around holidays, anniversaries, and major life events, or it might reveal itself in the most inopportune times. The good news is, grief is likely to lessen in intensity over time.

Be mindful, grief may contribute to other problems. Grief increases the risk of developing other health problems, mental illness, and relationship difficulties. This is especially true if the death was traumatic, if you are feeling guilt related to the person or about their death, or if grief is prolonged. Be watchful, be kind to yourself.

It's okay to seek help. Support from family and friends can prevent grief from growing out of control. Although grief will improve over time for most, this isn't always the case. When grief is especially debilitating or long-lasting, support groups, therapy and other resources may be helpful.

Not everyone experiences major distress. About 1 in 3 people respond to a loss with resilience or relief. Feeling neutral does not mean that you don't care, or that you love the person any less. Nor does it mean that your grief is unfinished, or that you have a problem.

Moving on doesn't mean forgetting. You can continue to live your life, have new experiences, and form new relationships, while continuing to love the person you lost. The goal of grieving isn't to forget, but rather to figure out how you would like to remember, while moving forward.

Sincerely, *Carlo Griseta*
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Consider visiting www.griefshare.org (under the "find a group" tab, enter zip code or city to discover GREAT support groups).

