



A JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF TO HEALING  
Beginning Your Journey

*“Grief isn’t something you get over. It’s something you go through.” -  
Alan Pedenen*

Everyone’s journey through grief is unique. The initial days, weeks and even months after someone’s death can be challenging mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. When someone you care about dies it affects all areas of your life.

It is important to know grief is normal, healthy and essential for your well-being. Grief is the tool your mind and body need to heal and recover from sadness and loss.

#### **Things to Know About Your Grief**

- Grief is a normal, natural and individualized process. It is healthy to realize addressing your grief will enable you to move forward with your daily life activities.
- Grief is not an illness, but a normal and emotional reaction to loss.
- You have the ability to heal from your loss at your own pace.
- The process of healing is often greatly enhanced and impacted by your environment. Having a support system can help you to grieve in a healthy manner.
- When someone you love dies, your world changes forever. You go on living, but learn to adjust to a world without the physical presence of your loved one.
- Treat yourself with patience and kindness as you go through the grieving process.

When someone you love dies, it may seem like your life is overcome with grief. It may seem like grief has total control of you. The road to true healing can sometimes be challenging. There are no rules to follow when it comes to healing. Some days you may wonder if you will ever experience joy again. For some, early in the morning and late in the evening are often the most challenging times of the day.

The good news is that you can get to a place of peace, healing and happiness after your loved one has died. Your healing journey is what will lead you there, but healing takes time. It is important to know it is not something that happens immediately. Allow yourself time to develop emotional acceptance of your loss and time to find what you need most to heal while finding closure.

It is important to remember that life will get better. You will never forget your loved one and they will always be missed. Little things will often remind you of them. While on your grief journey, be reassured that your pain and sadness will become less intense. You will smile and laugh about the good times again. This will happen through memories of your loved one as they continue to brighten your day and impact your life today and in your future.

Grief workshops, counseling and resources are available to support you during your journey through grief. To request additional information, please email [adultbereavement@shands.ufl.edu](mailto:adultbereavement@shands.ufl.edu) or call 352.246.8855.

  
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#### Ways to Care for Yourself at This Difficult Time

- **Remember that your way of grieving is yours alone.** There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Everyone affected by your loved one's death will grieve in his or her own way. Other members of your family may have ways of grieving that differ from yours. Many factors affect how you grieve, such as your relationship with the person who has died, your family responsibilities and how your loved one's death affects your plans for the future.
- **Honor your feelings.** You can expect to have many emotional ups and downs as you grieve. Grief is often described as an emotional roller coaster. As you think about your loved one, and as your life goes on without him or her, many reactions may emerge. Rest assured that this is normal. Allow yourself to feel what you feel without judging your emotions.
- **Give yourself special time to think about your loved one.** Grief can appear when you least expect it and can be overwhelming. One strategy that may help is to set aside special times to think about your loved one. By doing this, you may find that your feelings of grief are less likely to disrupt your daily routines.
- **Take care of your health.** Grief can leave you feeling tired and weak. Focusing on your own needs is an important part of grief. It is important to get plenty of rest, eat regularly and stay active. Consider seeing your family doctor for a check-up. He or she may be able to help you understand and cope with the physical effects of grief.
- **Tell others how to help you.** Friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers and others who know you want to find ways to help. Let them assist with practical tasks that you may find hard to manage on your own. For example, ask for help with making phone calls, preparing meals, picking up your children from school and so on.
- **Become informed.** Many books and web sites offer information about coping with grief and recovering from the loss of a loved one. You may find it helpful to read what others have written about these experiences.
- **Wait to make major life-changing decisions.** While you are grieving, it is hard to bring clear judgment to major life decisions. If you can, wait to make these kinds of decisions until your feelings of grief are less intense.
- **Plan ahead for how to cope on special days.** Think about how you would like to honor your loved one on a birthday, anniversary or holiday. Give yourself permission to try something new. Be aware that the dread you may feel while thinking about upcoming special days may be harder to cope with than the days themselves.
- **Seek support.** Talk with a therapist or counselor who understands the special needs of people who are grieving. This may help you find new ways of coping with your grief. Attending a support group with others who have lost a loved one can help you feel less alone. It can also give you a safe place to talk with people who understand what you are going through.  
([www.cancerca.org/publications/69-living\\_with\\_grief\\_how\\_can\\_you\\_help\\_yourself](http://www.cancerca.org/publications/69-living_with_grief_how_can_you_help_yourself))

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#### Questions to Ask Yourself

- Who can I call or talk with when I'm feeling alone?
- Am I caring for my health by eating balanced meals, taking prescribed medications, getting plenty of rest or exercising?
- What hobbies or interests have brought me joy in the past?

#### What You Can Do for Yourself

- Be kind to yourself.
- Get plenty of rest. Your mind and body deserve recovery time.
- Begin to journal. It's a healthy way to express what you are thinking and feeling.
- Take a walk. Light exercise can be helpful in releasing stress and sadness.
- Spend time with the people you find most supportive.

#### Helpful resources for coping with grief and loss can be found at the websites listed below:

- [www.momentsoflife.org/find-hospice](http://www.momentsoflife.org/find-hospice)
- [www.nhpco.org/find-hospice](http://www.nhpco.org/find-hospice)
- [UFHealth.org/bereavement](http://UFHealth.org/bereavement)

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