



*Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry or sneezing when your nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart." -
Doug Manning*

You have been on your journey through grief for some time now. You may sometimes wonder "How am I doing?" Do you wonder if you are making progress recovering from grief? It is healthy to reflect over your journey from time to time. Do you sometimes think about your ultimate goal in your grief journey?

Everyone has slightly different goals throughout their journey. Often one's ultimate goal is to find a way to move forward and live a fulfilled life, a life filled with happiness and purpose in each day. Chances are your loved one would want you to live the rest of your life happy and fulfilled. Happiness and fulfillment will be found by taking small steps forward each day.

It is important to understand your grief journey has become a problem when your self-care, family or work responsibilities become disabling. This is when it is time to seek help and guidance from others, whether it is through friends, a spiritual community or a professional counselor.

The healing process involves work, time and energy. Here are some tools available to assist you in healing.

Grief Workshops and Support Groups

Attending a workshop can help you achieve the reassurance that you are not alone in your journey. Grief workshops and support groups provide a safe atmosphere where grieving people can lean on one another as they work together to recover a sense of hope. Often, grievers find their road toward closure and even a sense of happiness, and accomplishment, as they tackle their journey through grief.

Things to Know About Grief Workshops

- It provides you the opportunity to meet new people who have similar experiences, thoughts and feelings.
- It can help you to avoid the sense of isolation which many grievers experience.
- It provides emotional, physical and spiritual support in a safe, nonjudgmental environment.
- It allows you to explore your thoughts and feelings about grief in a way that helps you be compassionate and patient with yourself.
- It helps you learn new ways to approach problems with grief.
- It provides a supportive environment while your zest for life reawakens.

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 or call 352.246.8855.


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The environment of a grief workshop, or support group, can foster a safe and compassionate environment. Remember to consider the grief support services from your local hospice providers. You can locate the hospice providers in your area by going online to www.nhpc.org and click on the *Choosing a Hospice* tab.

Healthy Coping Strategies

- **Journaling** is powerful and can take your thoughts and feelings to a different level of understanding. Try to write about how you feel and what you have discovered in your grief journey. A journal is a safe place to express your innermost feelings and thoughts. Write quickly and don't worry about editing. Allow your thoughts and ideas to flow freely from your head to your hand.

Tap into your creativity, and remember, you do not have to be an artist. Expressing difficult emotions through art releases them and clears the way for healing. Try to paint, draw or maybe begin a new craft.

- **Music** can be soothing. Music can be a useful coping tool to express emotions related to sadness and grief. Sing or play an instrument. Remember to listen to music you enjoyed hearing with your loved one or maybe write lyrics for a song or poem.

No matter what creative expression you find comforts you, you may be surprised at the emotions that it touches. Allow yourself time to experience the feelings this evokes. Cry or laugh if you need to.

Always remember to take small steps and reflect on how far you have come in your grief journey. It is always important to remember your accomplishments. Wherever you are, continue to commit yourself to moving forward – whatever that means to you. Focus on continuing toward healing. By accomplishing this goal, the intensity and frequency of your grief will continue to lessen over time.

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A JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF TO HEALING
Self-Care is Not Selfish

Questions to Ask Yourself

- How am I doing in my grief journey?
- What new task do I want to accomplish this month? Maybe it is one I have been avoiding since my loved one died.
- Am I remembering to take care of my health needs?

What You Can Do for Yourself

- Exercise or find other physical activities you enjoy doing.
- Invite a friend over for a visit, dinner or to watch a feel good movie.
- Send a handwritten “Thinking of You” note to someone.
- Consider visiting a friend or family member who makes you feel good after spending time with them.

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

- www.momentsoflife.org/find-hospice
- www.nhpco.org/find-hospice
- UFHealth.org/bereavement

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