

5 Strategies for Navigating Life After Loss

Grief can impact how we think and feel, often making everyday life feel more difficult. These strategies offer gentle, practical ways to support yourself through grief, by practicing self-compassion, staying connected, and finding meaningful ways to express your grief.

1. Treat yourself like you would a good friend

Grief can be exhausting and may reduce your capacity to manage everyday life. Many people experience brain fog, forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep, or struggle to take care of themselves while grieving.

It can help to adjust your expectations of yourself during this time. For many people, there is a period where they are simply unable to function in the same way they could before their loss. Grief is already difficult enough, try not to make it harder by expecting too much of yourself.

If you notice yourself speaking to yourself harshly or critically, pause and imagine what you might say to a good friend who was grieving. Try offering that same kindness, patience, and compassion to yourself.

2. Give yourself permission to pause or step away when you need to

There may be moments when you are at work, doing the shopping, or simply going about your day when your grief suddenly feels overwhelming. Some people describe these moments as “grief waves” or “grief bombs” – grief that arrives seemingly out of nowhere and knocks us off balance.

During these moments, try to give yourself permission to do what you need to do. That might mean stepping outside for a moment, calling someone you trust, taking a few deep breaths, or allowing yourself space to feel what you are feeling.

3. Nurture your connections

Grief can feel incredibly lonely, and many people find themselves withdrawing from others while they are grieving. While alone time can be important, staying connected is also important for your physical and mental well-being, and can help you move through your grieving process.

Try to spend time with people who help you feel supported, safe, and seen. Different people may be able to offer different kinds of support. You do not always need to talk about your grief, sometimes connection can look like sharing a meal, going for a walk, sitting quietly together, or simply doing familiar things with people you care about.

4. Find ways to express your grief

Everyone experiences and expresses grief differently. It can be helpful to explore ways of expressing your grief that feel right for you, and to remember there is no “right” way to grieve. Expressing your grief allows you to move through the grieving process and begin to integrate your grief into your life.

You could try:

Creative practices

Painting, playing music, writing, gardening, cooking, or other creative outlets can offer a way to express your grief.

Rituals or cultural practices

Lighting a candle, visiting a special place, cooking their favourite meal, or engaging in your cultural or spiritual practices can provide comfort and help you to express your grief.

Speaking to the person you have lost

You might speak to them out loud, in your mind, or by writing them letters. This is often called continuing bonds, and many people find it a meaningful way to stay connected to their person.

Joining a group or online forum

Connecting with others who have had similar experiences can help reduce isolation and offer a sense of understanding and shared language for grief. The SANE forum has dedication grief and loss discussion spaces which you can access.

5. Don't be afraid to communicate your needs

There will be people in your life who want to support you but may not always know how. It can be helpful to communicate what you need so they have a clearer sense of how to be there for you.

For example:

- “I’d really like it if you could keep using their name when we talk about them.”
- “If I don’t respond, it’s because I need some space. It’s not about you.”
- “I’d love to spend time together doing normal things, without needing to talk about everything.”
- “I don’t need any more food, but I would love some company in the mornings as I find them the hardest.”

When grief doesn't ease

If you find that your grief remains persistent, overwhelming, and debilitating and is preventing you from living your life in the way you would like, it can be helpful to seek specialist grief support. You can start by speaking to your GP or exploring the supports listed below.

5 Strategies for Navigating Life After Loss

Grief can impact how we think and feel, often making everyday life feel more difficult. These strategies offer gentle, practical ways to support yourself through grief, by practicing self-compassion, staying connected, and finding meaningful ways to express your grief.

SUPPORT

- Grief and loss support can be accessed through SANE's RecoveryClub. To join RecoveryClub, register through the [SANE website](#).
- The grief and loss [space on the SANE forums](#) gives another safe opportunity to share, remember and find support with others navigating loss.
- Speak to your GP about accessing your local grief or bereavement service.

[National Association for Loss and Grief](#)

Access up to 12 free grief support sessions with a trained volunteer.

1300 474 33

[Red Nose](#)

Free support for anyone grieving the sudden loss of a child or young person.

1300 308 307

Suicide Bereavement

[StandBy](#)

Free grief support for those bereaved by suicide.

1300 727 247

[Thirrili](#)

Free grief support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders bereaved by suicide.

1800 805 801

SANE resources:

- How to Support Someone Who is Grieving
- How to Support a Grieving Child or Young Person

Other resources:

- [‘This Is Grief’](#) – a gentle guide for individuals & families.
- Megan Devine’s [‘Tips for Navigating Early Grief’](#).