

Healing After Losing a Loved One

From the moment someone we love becomes seriously ill or passes away, our life is never the same. Yet it can be happy, healthy and fulfilling again. Enjoying or exploring new activities after a loss is important.

Grieving Your Loss

Expressing your grief will help you to heal. Take time to reflect on your loved one's life and remember the positive experiences that you shared together. Remember, grief is a process that takes time. Be patient.

Talking with family and friends, hospice professionals, bereavement experts and spiritual advisors can help you process feelings of grief and begin to focus on the reality of your "new normal."

Finding Your New Normal

Consider these suggestions to ease yourself back into your new reality of living without your loved one:

Reconnect

- Join a support group
Talk with others who have experienced a similar situation to help you understand your feelings
- Do something new
Enroll in an adult education or fitness class, join a book club or volunteer. Acquiring new skills, interacting with others and staying physically active can promote healing.

Learn from your loss

- Establish a tribute to your loved one
Consider setting up an online memorial site, scholarship or charitable contributions to honor their memory.

- Share your knowledge
Contact a hospice provider or support group and ask how you may help others who are experiencing a loved one's End-of-Life.

Gain perspective

- Talk to a grief counselor
Talk through your feelings and experiences with an objective, dedicated listener to help you process your grief and set new goals for happiness.
- Express yourself creatively
Write a story or poem, make a music or video recording, or keep a journal. Expressing thoughts and feelings can help release your emotions.
- Resume favorite activities
Take a break from focusing on your grief. Have fun when you can. Read a good book, watch a movie, play a game, or resume other activities you enjoyed before your loss.

Plan ahead for meaningful days

- Introduce new traditions
Anniversaries and holidays can be challenging when you've lost someone you love, especially during the first year. Talk with your loved ones about introducing new traditions to mark special occasions.
- Get away
Consider taking a short trip or doing something that you've always wanted to do. Bring someone who'll understand your need for distraction and enjoyment.

Your acts of care and connection helped sustain your loved one through their passing. Appreciating yourself, sharing what you have learned, cultivating happiness and finding perspective can help you recover and embrace life.