

Bereavement news for people living with grief



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Editor:
Erica Gilbert, MSW

henryford.com

How can I learn to manage the loss?

Promote the “grief work”

Face the crisis actively so you may realize the full reality of what has happened. Although it is painful, it is this pain which activates the healing process.

Surround yourself with friends and family

Accept the sympathy of people. You need their warmth and support at the critical moments as well as throughout the grief stages. Do not be afraid to cry with them.

Maintain hope

Paint a realistic picture of what pain you may face. The “grief work” will help you to overcome the intensified pressures of grief.

Establish goals for yourself

Concentrate on serving others and developing new interests. This will relieve your loneliness and give new purpose to your life.

Avoid relying totally on your friends for advice

Often wellmeaning friends may be unfamiliar with the stages of grief or unaware of your true needs. Realize their intentions are certainly for your well-being but sometimes their advice can be misdirected.

Refrain from making hasty decisions

Immediately taking a trip or changing your residence is not the answer. You must cope with the loss first, knowing that “running away” may not help.

Avoid medications such as sedatives

Although drugs may provide some needed relief, they must not be taken for the purpose of avoiding grief entirely. Remember, the “grief work” must be done in order to make the adjustment to your new normal.



September again

by Darcie Sims, who is a bereaved mother, a Blue Springs, Missouri based psychotherapist, and a well traveled speaker whose sense of humor has been an inspiration to many. From Bereavement Magazine

I've never understood why the calendar makers don't realize that September, not January, marks the beginning of every new year. Everyone remembers the smell of new crayons, the stiffness of new shoes, and the pride of the new LUNCHBOX.

Each September, we started over, inspired by our father's lecture on the hardships of when he was a boy, and how far he had to walk to school through blinding blizzards and gale-force winds. Then came the lecture from Mom about how precious and wonderful and necessary an education is so you can grow up and become something ("better than your father," which was always said under her breath). We knew what they were really trying to say was, "Grow up, leave home, and send money home to your beloved and aging parents!"

Each September, we received new pencils, a plastic ruler and advice. Most of that advice has long faded from memory, but perhaps now, as we mark the passing of another year's beginning, a few survival tactics wouldn't hurt. September - new beginnings marked by painful passages from the light summer to the finality of fall. It isn't the beginning of the end of anything - only the beginning of a new beginning. Begin to become the person you already are! Look both ways before crossing the street, and hold hands. Carry an umbrella, wear clean underwear and hang on tight...Forever is just beginning.

Tips for surviving past the first year of forever - and beyond (whatever your forever may be):

1. Be yourself. It's too hard to be somebody else and you probably can't remember who you said you were anyway.
2. Find enough compassionate listeners. You can talk more than one person can listen.
3. Pick your worries. Give up worrying about worrying.
4. Wear a sign. Don't assume others know what is going on. "I'm Bereaved" is a good excuse for just about everything, and it will get you excused to use the bathroom without question!
5. Exercise. Walk, jog, jump rope, fly a kite or a paper airplane. Watch someone else exercise. At least...jog your memory.
6. Buy something. Treat yourself.
7. DO NOT eat anything that could be labeled "mystery meat" in the cafeteria line (ice cream, chocolate and OREOS are always safe - they cannot be disguised into something healthy).
8. Always follow the person in front of the line - if he gets lost, it's HIS fault. And a group of lost people gathered together aren't lost - they are where they are.
9. Follow the rules or you get your name on the board and everyone knows you aren't doing IT right, or you are taking too long to get over IT, and who knows how long IT should take, any way? Grief takes far longer than anyone imagines.
10. Insist on JOY every day. Create your own magic, your own sandwich, your own rules and survival tactics. Walk in your own shoes and carry your own pencil box and never, never loan your lunchbox, or your grief, to anyone else...they won't take care of it as well as you can.

Humor and healing for your families

Humor helps us cope. For families dealing with loss, it's that little laugh that can help them go a long way to healing.

It's important to remember that humor isn't the answer for everybody because grief will be a different experience for everyone.

1. Share your funniest stories about a loved one with others. It's a way to relive memories and celebrate the life of a person.
2. Keep a box of funny memories. Write down a list of your funniest memories on cards or in a journal as they come to you. On days when you're feeling down, take a look at the memories you've written—especially around important anniversaries and holidays.
3. Join a Laughter Yoga class. Apparently, it's a real thing, and it works. Those who have signed up for classes have expressed an overall improved mood, positive attitude, decreased stress, and feelings of sadness.
4. Rewatch favorite movies. Have a movie night when you're feeling blue and rewatch old comedies that you and your loved one enjoyed. It's a simple way to spark memories and smiles.

Being Brave

Megan Devine, It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand.

“Being brave is about waking to face each day when you would rather just stop waking up. Being brave is staying present to your own heart when that heart is shattered into a million different pieces and can never be made right. Being brave is standing at the edge of the abyss that just opened in someone's life and not turning away from it, not covering your discomfort with a pithy “think positive” emoticon. Being brave is letting pain unfurl and take up all the space it needs. Being brave is telling that story. It's terrifying. And it's beautiful.”

Understanding grief & anxiety

by Kathleen Barletta, LMSW, ACSW

As it has been said many times; the path to grieving and healing is a very personal journey. There are no set rules to follow. When speaking about grief and loss the five stages of grief and loss by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross are often mentioned: Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The wide range of emotions one feels after a loss are normal and to be expected. I would also like to talk about what I believe to be the sixth stage of grief is, which is anxiety. Anxiety is often not talked about as it relates to grief. But let's think about that for a moment. When someone is grieving the loss of a loved one their world has been turned inside out; nothing makes sense. No matter how much one feels they are prepared to lose a loved one, there is no preparation for losing someone we love. Adjusting to a loss can be a difficult process. The grieving process can be scary and overwhelming. It is not uncommon to have increased anxiety or even have a panic attack. Anxiety, is simply an expression of painful thoughts and feelings. Anxiety does not define you, it is not who you are. If you are experiencing an anxiety/panic attack, here are some tips to keep in mind to foster self-care:

- Recognize it and accept it.
- Remind yourself you are healthy and there is nothing wrong with you.
- Begin breathing calmly to regulate your blood pressure and dioxide levels.
- Get grounded in the present moment. Do something that engages your senses: Eat a piece of chocolate, pet an animal, or take a shower.
- Call someone and tell them what is going on. Just saying it out loud can lessen one's anxiety.
- Create your support system.
- Change your environment. If you are outside, go in find a comfortable place to rest. If you are inside, go outside get some fresh air.
- Visualize something calming to stop the cycle of anxious thoughts.
- Allow for all the emotions to surface. Try to view them with curiosity rather than fear.
- Externalize the panic attack - Give the anxiety a name. Recognize that this is not who you are.
- Tell yourself the attack will end, you are not stuck in the attack, you are not alone.
- This moment will pass.

These suggestions were taken for the book: Anxiety: The Missing Stage of Grief By - Claire Bidwell Smith

Keep calm and breathe, you are going to be okay. Be kind to yourself.

2024 Bereavement support groups

September - December

2nd Wednesday of the month

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location:

Henry Ford Macomb Hospital
Medical Pavilion – 4th Floor Meeting Room #5
16151 19 Mile Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Monthly: 7/10, 8/14, 9/11, 10/9, 11/13, 12/11

3rd Tuesday of the month

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location:

Virtual via WebEx

Monthly: 7/16, 8/20, 9/17, 10/15, 11/19, 12/17

4th Friday of the month

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location:

17333 Federal Drive, Suite 260
Allen Park, MI 48101

Monthly: 7/26, 8/23, 9/27, 10/25, 11/15, 12/20

SandCastles Children's Grief Support Program

SandCastles offers services in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties, as well as virtually. Call **313.771.7005** or email sandcastles@hfhs.org for more information.



Henry Ford Hospice Bereavement Services

Offers bereavement support to hospice family members, caregivers and anyone in the community 18 years or older who has experienced the loss of a loved one.

Program offerings include:

- Periodic phone calls
- Monthly newsletters
- Support groups
- Grief education
- One/one support is determined on an individual basis.
- Memorial services
- Community resources/referrals

In general, services last for 13 months, but support can be extended or discontinued. These services are free, with no cost to you.

To learn more about these services please call **586.276.9570** or go to www.henryford.com/services/at-home/hospice/support.

Henry Ford provides qualified interpreters and other aids and services for the deaf and hard of hearing at no cost. To request assistance, call Henry Ford Bereavement Services at **586.276.9570**.

If possible, please notify us three days in advance of the event.