

Our Top Strategies to Cope with Grief

REALISE GRIEF IS NORMAL

'It is okay to be sad and to cry but it is also okay to be happy and laugh. Just because you are not sad does not mean you are not still grieving!'

1. WRITING A JOURNAL

This can be a really positive way to express your emotions, thought and feelings. Make sure you use it on the good days as well as the bad. It can be helpful to look back to see the progress you have made. It's also a great tool to be able to share snippets with others when you struggle to find the right words in conversations.

2. EXPRESSING YOUR EMOTIONS CREATIVELY

You do not have to be an artist to do this!! It's more about the process of releasing your emotions rather than the finished product. Find the colour that reflects the emotions you are feeling and let your inner Jackson Pollock loose!! Flick paint at canvas, throw paint bombs at sheets, scribble with felt tips on paper or just doodle and see what appears in front of you.

3. LISTENING TO MUSIC

Find some music which reflects your mood, acknowledge your feelings, listen to the lyrics and remember you are not on your own, others have had and are having similar grief battles and journeys as you.

4. WRITING A STORY, SONG OR POEM

Exploring and venting your feelings by working them out through a character in a story can be really helpful as you can take that step back and be in control of how the plot develops.

Poems and the lyrics to songs are often raw untapped emotions direct from the heart. Have a go at writing your own. Remember you do not need to share it if you do not want to.

5. PHYSICALLY

Physical exercise, visiting the gym, boxing, running, cycling..., can all help release those pent up emotions and the endorphins released (feel good chemicals) can help lift your mood. Alternatively a gentle stroll in the park or country side where you notice the little things around you can help relax your mind and body.

6. REMEMBERING

A big worry we often have when we are bereaved is that we are going to start forgetting that person. Spend some time, alone or with your friends and family, building up a box of memories - fill it with objects, photos, mementos and stories which are important to you. This is something you can continue to add to. You might want to store it on a shelf, your bedside table or buried at the back of your wardrobe, wherever you feel comfortable putting it.

7. WRITING A LETTER

Try writing a letter to the person that died - maybe you want to say all those things you did not get a chance to, maybe you want to let them know how angry you are or share your success stories with them. Give it a go, you will probably surprise yourself!

8. DISTRACTION

Don't always feel like you have to 'go there'. Sometimes we are not ready to, do not have the energy to or just can't face confronting our grief, and guess what, that is ok!! (Obviously not ALL the time). Work out what your go to is to lift your mood, it might be watching a funny tv series, film, baking...

9. CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Grief can leave you feeling very isolated and alone, especially as other peoples lives begin to return to life as before. You might have a friend you can reach out to or you might want to spend time with your family. You might want to reach out to others who have been bereaved. Whatever is right for you.

"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard"

Winnie The Pooh