



Grief Supports and Practices

Seek therapy or someone you trust to hold space for your grief experience, this should be someone that you would be comfortable enough to ask to not give you advice, for them to simply be a space holder for your to feel your feelings, talk and process.

Find community and connection, look for local or online groups that have a program in place to support griever, sometimes it is helpful to simply be with others who are experiencing the same thing. Some places to look would be local churches, community leagues, continuing education centers, yoga studios. We personally recommend the Grief Recovery Program. Some online programs are also great such as Paul Dennison's Yoga for Grief Program.

Allow yourself to be with your feelings rather than pushing them aside. Allow tears, anger, sadness to come and notice them in the body. If you sit with them and accept the feelings often they will dissipate. Try not to feel wrong or guilty in moments of joy or happiness, there is no need to feel guilty, you have done nothing wrong.

Honor your losses in your own unique way, you need space to heal. Do not worry about what others are doing, do what feels right for you.

Engage in embodiment practices like meditation or yoga to bring you into your body and heart and out of the mind. Much of our grief comes from rumination in the mind. We think the same things over and over again, wishing things were different or better and it is what causes the much of our pain. Come into the present and notice what is happening right now rather than travelling to the past or looking at hopes for the future that can no longer exist.

Moving your body in an intentional way or walking is a great way to process emotions

Read a book about grief. Some books I found helpful are Grief Recovery Method Handbook, The Wild Edge of Sorrow, How to Live When a Loved One Dies

Journal, this helps to get thoughts out of the mind and body

Know that you are not alone, 100% of people on this planet are grieving something

Many breathwork practices are an excellent way to hold space for grief. Here are some practices that you can try.

Coherence Breath

Inhale for a same count as you exhale. Inhale to a count of 4/5/6, exhale to the same count. If you are trying to down regulate the nervous system for sleep, extend the exhale longer than the inhale.

Used for calming and to induce sleep.

Cannon Breath

Take 3 inhales through the nose with your hands in fists at your belly, exhale and make a HA sound. Repeat as many times as feels right.

Used to release frustration and anger.

Flowing Breath

While thinking of your struggles, offer them to the sky by extending the arms out in front of you palms facing up slowly raising them upwards while inhaling. On the exhale turn palms down, keeping arms extended and slowly lower them to draw healing down into your energy field.

Release Pain Breath

Bring your pain or grief or any other difficult emotion of experience to mind. Hold both hands in fists at the chest. Inhale through the nose, then extend one arm out opening the palm and exhaling powerfully through an “O” shaped mouth. Envision the pain you have brought to mind moving out of the heart, down the arm and out of the open palm. Continue with alternating arms until you feel complete. Finish the breathwork by taking 3 deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth.

Compassion Break

Compassion is a key component to the grieving process, especially self compassion. It is important to recognize that what we are going through is a difficult but very human thing. Do not be hard on yourself, speak to yourself like you would a good friend going through the same thing. Below are the basic steps for a compassion break. This is a term coined by Dr. Kristin Neff, I highly recommend her website www.self-compassion.org

1. Close your eyes if appropriate. Notice that you are experiencing a moment of suffering. You could also say something like, this hurts, or I am feeling pain, or this is painful.
2. Remember that suffering is a part of being a human and that no one is immune to suffering. This is not to discount your suffering, it is to remind you that other people feel this way and that you are not alone in your feelings of grief and pain.
3. Now, put your hands over your heart, or somewhere else on the body that is soothing, feel the warmth of your hands and offer yourself words and tenderness and kindness. Say to yourself what you would say to your very best friend who is going through the same thing. Speak words of love, acceptance and kindness to yourself. You are doing just fine, this is a very difficult thing.

This practice can be used any time of day or night, and will help you remember to evoke the three aspects of self-compassion when you need it most. Notice, Remember, Be Kind.