



Survival Guide for Early Grief

*There are many reactions to loss in early grief.
This is expected.*

Attend to Your Physical Health

We encourage establishing healthy coping strategies early on.

Drink plenty of fluids. They flush out toxins that result from stress. Limit intake of caffeine and alcohol, they tend to dehydrate.

Eat 5 or 6 small meals a day. Or eat one item every 2-3 hours. Keeping blood sugar even curbs emotional swings.

Engage in physical exercise. Even a 10-minute brisk walk can do wonders for your body and spirit, helping you focus better.

Rest during the day. Take breaks to nap or just rest. Listen to calm music. Picture yourself in a serene setting. Breathe deeply—count to 5 as you inhale and again as you exhale.

Create bedtime routines. Go to bed at the same time each night. Going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day, will help make it easier to fall asleep. Regular sleep helps regulate mood.

Seek Support from Family and Friends

- **Ask for help** with everyday tasks or simply to spend time with you.
- **Express your feelings** through talking and writing.
- **Allow for private time** when you need it.
- **Overlook statements** that seem insensitive, or gently correct others when they offend.

Seek Spiritual Support

Whatever your form of spirituality, your practices and beliefs can be a healing force. The warmth, love, and belonging that you gain from your belief can help you find peace, comfort, and meaning. Seek your spiritual community.

- Engage in practices that are consistent with your beliefs.
- Allow for personal healing through inspirational quotes and books, journaling, and reflecting in nature.

Examples of Common Reactions

- Many experience a wide range of thoughts and feelings. These can include a sense of disbelief.
- Difficulty focusing and making decisions or feeling like you are going crazy.
- Thinking more about the person's illness or death than their life.
- A resurgence of grief from prior losses.
- Physical symptoms:
 - Shakiness
 - A tight throat
 - Queasy stomach
 - Body aches
 - Inability to sleep
 - Lack of appetite
 - Fatigue and exhaustion

