



Tips on Navigating your Grief

1. **Acknowledge the loss you are feeling:** Numbness is common after a death. It will lift at some point.
2. **Allow yourself to feel your pain:** This is not something that is easily done. Your pain is normal and expected.
3. **Give yourself the time you need to heal:** Everyone does grief differently. Be kind and gentle with yourself as you begin the healing process. There is no time frame to grief. There is no closure.
4. **Be aware of triggers:** Triggers or “SUG” (sudden unexpected grief) moments are often associated with our senses. Things that we hear, taste, see, touch and smell. Early on in your grief you will experience many triggers or SUGS. It is a connection with the person who died and it is hard at times.
5. **Keep decision making at a minimum:** Expect that you will have clouded judgement for a period of time. If you need to make some BIG decisions consult some trusted people/family in your life to help you think through what needs to happen.
6. **Take good care of yourself:** Self- care is essential. Grief is hard work and so making sure that you take care of yourself the best possible way is helpful and essential.
7. **Be mindful of addictive activities:** Alcohol, drugs, food and other distractions can temporarily help you escape from the pain but it is not a long term solution.
8. **Remember that you are vulnerable:** Be aware that you may not be making the best choices or judgement. Seek counsel from people you trust.

9. **Anger is NORMAL:** Find ways to channel your anger where you don't hurt yourself, others or things. Try a sport where you can kick a ball or hit a ball, throw ice at a tree, do an angry dance, or play the piano loudly. Your anger needs a way to be expressed.
10. **Tears are NORMAL:** Give yourself the gift of tears and crying. Tears can be cleansing. Your heart is broken. It needs a place to be expressed.
11. **Ask people to support you.** People often do not know what to say or do for someone that has experienced a death. Be willing to ask people to help with various tasks like grocery shopping, picking up the kids from school, and bringing a meal to your home.
12. **Allow for silence.** Sometimes sitting with someone and not talking can be very healing. By being in the silence there is space for healing.
13. **You may experience suicidal thoughts.** These thoughts may arise. They are a symptom of your pain. Seek help immediately. The National Suicide Hotline is 1-800-273-8255. This number is available 24/7.
14. **Say their name:** Continue to reference your loved one by name as you share stories and memories. Educate and encourage your family and friends to say their name. Many people fear that their loved one will be forgotten after their death.
15. **Weekends and Holidays are often difficult:** Make a plan for your holidays as well as your weekends. This will help with the loneliness and sense of isolation. For holidays, include your children in making plans as they often have some wonderful thoughts and ideas.
16. **Know that everyone in your family will do the death differently.** No 2 people grieve the same. This is often difficult trying to figure out how to care for the various family members.
17. **Relationships change:** You may experience relationships changing with a death. People that you thought would be there for you are not and unexpected people that you didn't expect, are providing you care and comfort.
18. **Confusion and poor concentration are expected:** One of the most common reactions to grief is poor concentration.

19. **Grief is HARD.** Be kind and supportive of yourself. Give yourself an abundance of grace as you try to figure out what your next step is going to be. Anticipate that you will have many difficult times and moments. AND, anticipate that you will have times when it is not as hard.

20. **Find places and people where you can receive support.** There will be individuals that will support you and listen to you as you process the death. Professionals are available as well. You may consider joining a grief support group.