

PROVIDED BY

YOUR LOGO  
HERE

# GRIEF *Matters*

*Compassionate support through the first year of grief*

INITIAL LOSS

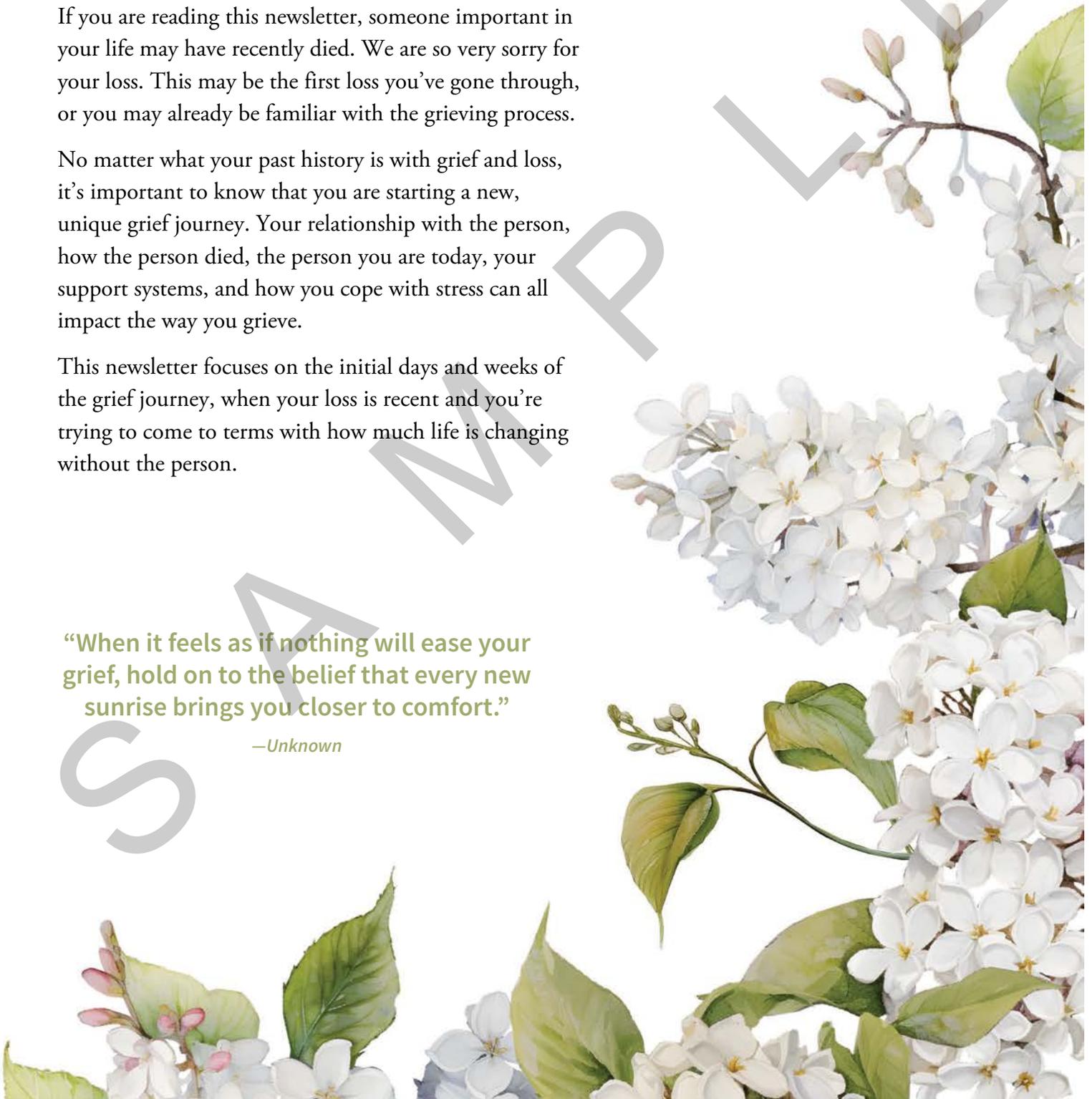
If you are reading this newsletter, someone important in your life may have recently died. We are so very sorry for your loss. This may be the first loss you've gone through, or you may already be familiar with the grieving process.

No matter what your past history is with grief and loss, it's important to know that you are starting a new, unique grief journey. Your relationship with the person, how the person died, the person you are today, your support systems, and how you cope with stress can all impact the way you grieve.

This newsletter focuses on the initial days and weeks of the grief journey, when your loss is recent and you're trying to come to terms with how much life is changing without the person.

**“When it feels as if nothing will ease your grief, hold on to the belief that every new sunrise brings you closer to comfort.”**

—Unknown



## What is grief?

Grief is a deep emotional response to loss, especially of someone or something important to you. There is a well-known—and mistaken—belief that grief happens in stages (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). This idea can leave you feeling confused and frustrated if your experience is different.

While some people might move through grief in those stages, most people actually experience grief in a much more fluid way. Some have described their grief as:

- **Moving two steps forward and one step back**
- **Feelings that ebb and flow like waves on a shore**
- **A slow spiral, where you circle back to the same feelings again and again**

You might believe you aren't grieving "the right way" if you don't feel the same way other people do. **But there is no wrong or right way to grieve.** Your grief process will be unique and may not be anything like

what you—or others—expect. Even if you've grieved before, this loss might be totally different.

It might help to think of grief as a process, not an event. It will take time to heal and to find a new normal. Trust that you will get through this, one moment and one day at a time.

## Initial shock

In these early days after the loss, you might feel more shocked and numb than anything else. Shock is a very common emotion after a loss, even if the death was expected. In some cases, it can actually be useful.

Just like shock protects the body after a serious injury, feelings of shock after loss can help shield you emotionally in the first days. This can be helpful if you are responsible for time-sensitive tasks, such as planning funeral services, contacting family members, and getting other affairs in order.

## EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS OF EARLY GRIEF

The emotions of grief vary widely. Some common emotions during early grief are listed below. You may feel some, all, none, or other emotions entirely. Remember, there's no one right way to grieve, and all your feelings are valid.

### Sadness

Sadness can feel like a quiet ache at times, or other times like a crushing weight. It can leave you feeling physically and emotionally drained.

### Overwhelmed

It is completely normal to feel overwhelmed by your emotions and everyday tasks. Take a deep breath and reach out for help when you need it.

### Distracted

You may struggle with memory, focus, organization, decision-making, or completing daily tasks at work, home, or school.

### Empty

You may feel nothing at all right now. Like shock, this may be your brain's way of protecting you. Work toward feeling your feelings at your own pace.

### Disbelief

You may feel like the death isn't real, even if you know logically it is. This new reality can take time to process, especially if the death was unexpected.

### Restless

You may feel as though you're in a dreamlike state and lose track of time. It can be difficult for you to fall or stay asleep, even if you are exhausted.

### Relieved

In some cases, especially after a prolonged illness or difficult relationship, you may feel a sense of relief. This can lead to complex emotions, including guilt.

### Anxious

You might feel anxiety over the future or how to cope without the person. There may be an increased sense of helplessness or fear of losing others.

**Note your symptoms in a journal, grief assessment, or simply reflect on them.** Acknowledging your emotions can help you process grief. Consider talking to a trusted care team member, friend, family member, or counselor.

## Beginning your grief journey

Grief can be hard for anyone to process because it can also cause many physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches, stomachaches, chest pain, and changes in sleeping and appetite. These symptoms of grief are not a sign of weakness or that something is wrong with you. They are very normal, natural signs that your mind and body are processing a loss.

**There is no quick fix for grief.** You will not just “snap out of it” and get over your loss, and no one should expect you to. This is the start of a journey

that can take many months or many years. Some people say you never really stop grieving. But it’s important to know that as you move through the grieving process, it will get easier over time.

One day, you’ll learn to live alongside grief. But for now, just focus on getting through the day. Below are tips that can help make the start of your grief journey a bit easier. **If your emotional or physical symptoms are too hard for you to handle, contact your doctor or our team for support.** Consider completing a grief assessment and sharing it with your care team so they can better understand your needs.

## TIPS FOR FRESH GRIEF

### Take one day at a time.

In the early days of grief, just getting through the day can feel overwhelming. It’s not just okay to take it one day at a time—it’s essential. Be easy on yourself if you are forgetful or unfocused. Set alarms for meals, medications, and appointments, or ask someone to check in on you. Each day you get through is an accomplishment.

### Accept that the loss is real.

Grief experts say the first “task” of grief is to accept the reality that the person is no longer physically here. Acknowledging your loss doesn’t mean you’re over it. It is recognizing the loss’s impact on your life. Let us know if you are struggling to acknowledge your loss.

### FEEL all of your feelings.

The best way to cope with grief is to name your emotions and allow yourself to *feel* them. Cry, scream, work out, or hit a pillow to help release intense feelings. Reach out for support if you are numbing your pain with alcohol, drugs, or risky behavior, which can delay healing.

### Rely on support networks.

In early grief, leaning on friends, family, or support groups can make a big difference. While it may feel easier to withdraw, staying connected helps you process your loss. Support networks can offer both emotional and practical help, which is crucial during this time.

**Simplify routines.** Give yourself permission to do less. If a task feels too stressful (like cooking, cleaning, etc.), it is okay to do the bare minimum. Order out, get groceries online for pickup or delivery, use disposable plates and cups for easier cleanup, have someone help with heavier chores, or reach out to your support network for help with daily tasks and meals.

**Notify your employer.** If you are working, review company policies, then ask your supervisor or HR if there are options like bereavement leave, remote work, or an adjusted schedule while you grieve.

**Be aware of depression.** You may feel like you don’t want to eat, sleep, work, or function. You may no

longer enjoy things you once did. **If you have thoughts of self-harm or feel like it would be better if you were dead, too, reach out to your doctor, counselor, or our care team immediately. Depression after loss is common and treatable. There is no shame in seeking help.**

**Get support for traumatic or disenfranchised grief.** If the person’s death was sudden, violent, or unexpected in any way, or if your loss isn’t widely acknowledged by others (e.g., pet loss, miscarriage, stigmatized loss), you may feel more intense grief symptoms. If you believe your loss was traumatic or disenfranchised, contact us so we can provide extra support.

**Practice self-care.** Grief is often all-consuming, so it’s easy to forget to take care of yourself. Self-care is not a luxury—it’s a necessity that helps ease difficult physical and emotional symptoms. Self-care in these early days of grief could be simplifying your daily routines, staying hydrated, resting whenever you can, or just letting yourself cry.



## We're here for you.

We provide grief support services to families up to 13 months after a loss, but you don't have to receive hospice services to receive grief support. Our programs are available to *all* members of our community. Contact us for more information.

1-800-123-4567 | [info@domain.com](mailto:info@domain.com)

### Your custom content here.

Add a message from administration or the bereavement team, upcoming events, support group schedules, photos, and more. Or submit artwork for the full back page ad: 8" x 10.5" print area. Graphic design services are available for \$60/hour.

YOUR LOGO  
HERE

Street Address, City, ST ZIP | [www.website.com](http://www.website.com)