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GRIEF *Matters*

Compassionate support through the first year of grief

1 MONTH AFTER LOSS

About a month or so after your loss, your grief symptoms might feel even more intense. This can be really confusing and very discouraging. Shouldn't grief be *harder* right after the loss, then get *easier* with time?

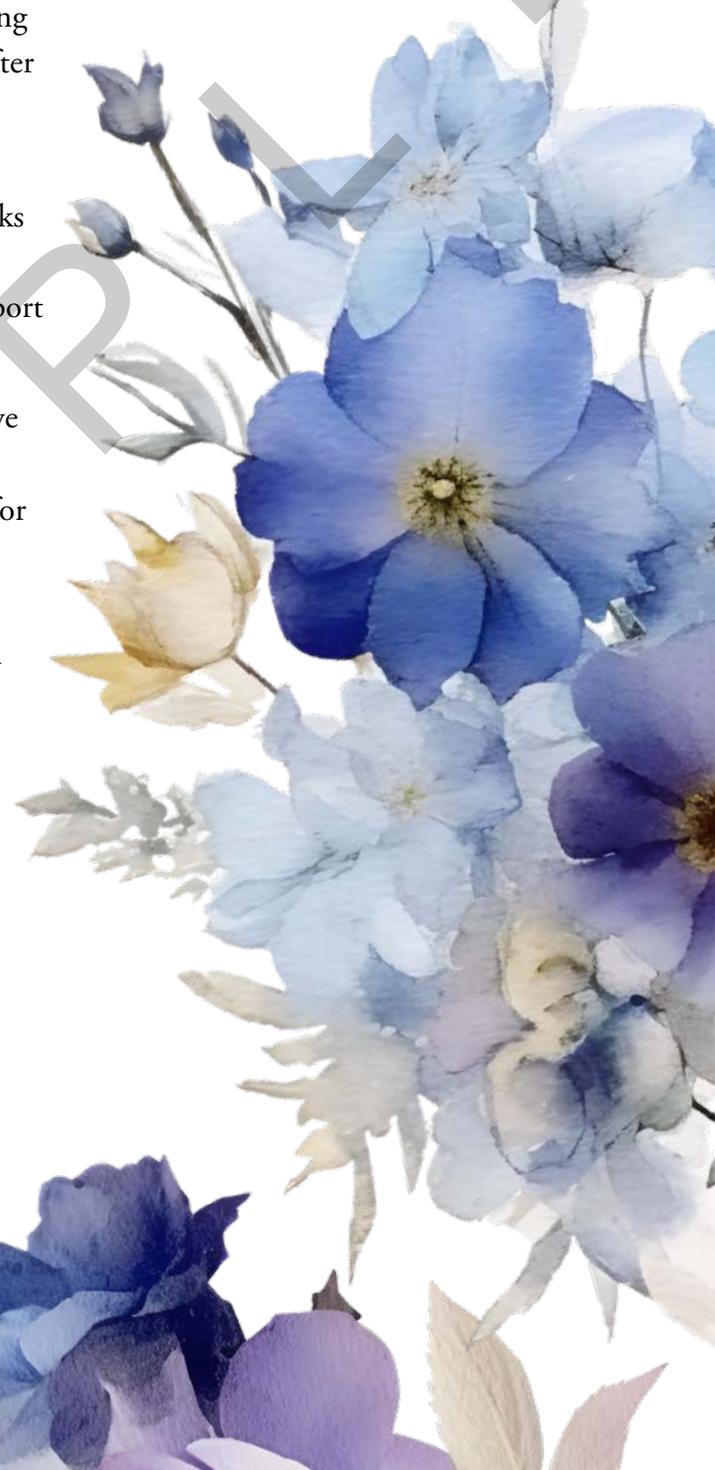
You might have felt an initial shock after your loss that helped numb you from the pain. The first days and weeks may have been filled with a whirlwind of activity and planning. There might have been an outpouring of support and attention from friends, family, and the community.

Once all that activity is over, other feelings that may have been numbed or set aside might come rushing in. Now, there are fewer visits and calls. It's normal at this point for feelings of longing, sadness, or depression to increase.

This newsletter addresses the next several weeks of the grieving process, which may be the first time you deeply feel the reality of your loss.

**“Grief, when it comes,
is nothing like we expect it to be.”**

—Joan Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking*



EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS AFTER ONE MONTH

As shock wears off, a lot of other emotions can flood in. Existing emotions might also feel more intense. More symptoms of grief are listed below. You may feel some, all, none, or other emotions—all your feelings are valid. **Note your symptoms in a journal, grief assessment, or simply reflect on them.** Acknowledging your feelings can help you process grief. Consider talking to a trusted care team member, friend, family member, or counselor.

Guilt

You might feel guilt over things said or unsaid, done or not done. Try to release guilt; you did your best with the knowledge you had at the time.

Anger

You may be angry at the person for being gone, other people involved in the death, or at fate or God. Acknowledge anger so you can process it.

Loneliness

As the reality of the loss sets in more deeply, waves of sorrow can bring a sense of isolation, especially as friends and family return to their lives.

Longing

You may yearn for the person so much that you hear their voice calling you, see them when you walk into a room, or feel their presence with you.

Heightened emotions

While feeling empty is common right after a loss, now you may start feeling emotions more intensely. You may cry more now than you did right after the loss. You might feel fine one moment, then something will trigger a sudden breakdown. It may be hard to regulate sadness, anger, and other emotions. This is all part of processing your grief.

Suicidal thoughts

The heavy emotions of grief may lead to thoughts of suicide. It's not abnormal or shameful to have thoughts about ending your own life after a loss. But they are a sign that you need to speak with a mental health professional. **Please contact us right away if you have suicidal thoughts so we can help you find extra support.**

Your new normal

As outside support lessens, you may notice the person's absence leaves big gaps in daily life. You may need to take on more tasks or learn new roles.

Doing these tasks might make your sense of loss more intense. Over time, these tasks will become easier. For now, simplifying tasks and routines and celebrating small wins can bring stability and comfort.

- **Waking and sleeping:** Set an earlier alarm to give yourself extra time in the mornings. If falling asleep or sleeping alone is difficult, use a comfort item like a blanket, pillow, stuffed animal, or an item that belonged to the person.
- **Meals:** You may need to learn how to reduce portion sizes or cook on your own more often. Consider meal prepping, finding simple recipes online, using a meal service, or having someone over to share food or help with cooking.
- **Household tasks:** Spread chores throughout the week—doing a little bit every day will help you stay occupied and avoid feeling overwhelmed. Get help from friends, family, or a cleaning service, if at all possible.
- **Returning to work:** Prepare a message for your team to avoid repeated questions. Ask if you can adjust your schedule or workload, take short breaks during the day, or split tasks into smaller steps. If your job isn't flexible, focus on making things easier for yourself outside of work.
- **Shared activities and rituals:** Switch shared activities for new ones. For example, if you had coffee together in the mornings, try reading during that time. If you watched TV together at night, use that time to call a friend. Listen to music or a podcast to fill quiet moments.
- **Social connection:** Staying connected to family and friends can help you begin to process your grief, but it's also normal to want time alone right now. If you're not ready for visits or outings, start small—like texting a trusted support person to check in.

Tasks of grief

Grief experts have found shared patterns throughout many people's grief journeys and developed a list of "tasks" to follow, based on those patterns. They suggest breaking your grief journey into tasks, rather than in set stages, so that you can move through grief in a more flexible and personal way. Using these tasks as a guideline can help you feel like you're taking action and regaining a sense of control, rather than feeling like grief controls you.

The tasks of grief include:

- **Accepting the reality of the loss**
- **Processing the pain of grief**
- **Adjusting to the world without the person**
- **Finding ways to honor the person and maintain an enduring connection**
- **Seeking out new activities and relationships and planning for the future**

Some tasks may take longer to address than others. Some tasks will be ongoing. You might work on more than one task at a time. You may have to go back to a task you thought you had "finished." Again, it's best to view grief as a fluid process that is unique to each person and each loss.

At this point, you may have accepted the reality of the loss and are currently processing the pain of grief (if you are still having trouble accepting your loss, look online for resources or contact us for extra support). What may be much harder, as feelings of grief get more intense, is adjusting to a new world without the person who died.

For most people at this point, it may seem nearly impossible to even think about finding a way to move forward in that new world. You will get to each task in your own time and in your own way. For most people, it is *more* than enough work right now to focus on the first two tasks of grief.

COMMON MYTHS OF GRIEF

Misconceptions about grief can lead to guilt, confusion, or a sense of failure if your grief experience doesn't match up. Understanding common myths—and the truth—about grief can help you grieve with more self-compassion.

- **MYTH: Grief comes in stages and has a set timeline.** Grief doesn't follow one path. All timelines are unique and can vary widely by person and loss.
- **MYTH: Grief and mourning are the same.** Grief is what we feel after loss; mourning is how we express those feelings. Healing comes from mourning.
- **MYTH: You need to "get over it."** Society expects us to recover from loss quickly, but grief can last many years and change form over time.
- **MYTH: Grief happens only right after a loss.** Grief can resurface months or years later, not just during these initial weeks and months.
- **MYTH: There's a right way to grieve.** Grief looks different for everyone. As long as you are not harming yourself or others, there is no wrong or right way to grieve.
- **MYTH: Grieving means being sad all the time.** You may have a wide range of feelings, even moments of joy and laughter, all of which are normal.
- **MYTH: Time heals all wounds.** Time can help ease the pain, but actively processing grief feelings and seeking support are what move healing forward.
- **MYTH: Crying shows weakness.** Tears are a sign of strength. Crying helps relieve stress, lower blood pressure, and promote healing.
- **MYTH: Ignoring grief is the best way to get past it.** Avoiding emotions can lead to unresolved grief, which is much harder to cope with later.

We know how challenging grief can be. We are experts in providing compassionate emotional and spiritual care for you and your loved ones throughout your grief journey. Please contact us for more information and support.



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

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.

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