

PRACTICAL SELF-CARE FOR THE GRIEVER

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The acronym used below stems from the word “GRIEF.” Use this list as a reminder of how you can help, inspire, and encourage yourself through this difficult season of grieving.

G: Groups. The need for a healthy support system is essential. Loved ones in your support systems can be comprised of family members, church friends, work peers, and neighborhood friends. If you find few in your support system, reach out and attend a support group or call a friend who is understanding, non-judgmental, and supportive.

R: Rest. Grief is exhausting and a major stressor in one’s life. Grief also attacks the immune system and interrupts one’s sleeping habits. Getting enough rest helps to ward off sickness and reset one’s mental, physical, and spiritual components, which allows for healing. Sleep longer, take naps, meditate, watch movies, read books—anything that will help you get adequate rest.

I: Inspiration. In grief, our souls, minds, and bodies become pummeled by the effects of loss. We need inspiration and messages of hope to feed our ravaged souls and create restoration. Perhaps sharing your story and listening to another griever’s story will provide ideas of coping and hope for you. Inspiration comes in a vast array of unique choices: if you are creative or artistic, perhaps painting or making something to honor your loved one or your feelings of grief will inspire you. If you are a gardener, maybe you would find meaning in planting a tree in honor of your loved one. Maybe you’re an organizer or a worker bee and you would enjoy contributing your time, talent, and energy to a cause in your loved one’s memory. The opportunities are endless.

E: Exercise. The need for exercise cannot be underscored enough. Exercise provides an antidote for depression and anxiety. Furthermore, it boosts up the serotonin levels in one’s brain, which is the brain’s feel-good chemical. Serotonin quickly becomes depleted during grief and needs constant boosting. Of course, exercise not only helps keep our hearts and bodies healthy, but also wards off against common colds and illnesses.

F: Fun. We often undermine the **need** for fun in our busy, work-oriented lives. Joining in fun activities can provide a great diversion from the burden of grief and help to counteract against the effects of depression. Even if you do not feel inclined to have fun, take a baby step toward a fun activity. Listen to your gut instincts and try what you think you would bring some fun or comic relief to your life—attend a concert or play, watch a funny movie, create something special for someone or yourself, walk and enjoy nature, bowling, making ice cream with friends, eating ice cream, visiting the beach, or building or fixing things, singing in a choir, etc.



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