

# LIFT

*Grief is a process, not a state. –Anne Grant*

October 2022

Bereavement Newsletter

Living Is For Today

West Texas Rehab's Hospice of San Angelo

Grief Education Support Group

Tuesday, October 4, 5:30 pm

WTRC/HOSA Bates Bereavement Center  
1933 University Avenue

Monthly Luncheon

Tuesday, October 18, 11 am

WTRC/HOSA IDT Room  
1933 University Avenue

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Navigating the Holidays

Monday, Nov 1, 5:30 pm  
WTRC/HOSA IDT Room  
1933 University Avenue

Candlelight Service

Thursday, Nov 10, 6:00 pm  
Christian Fellowship  
Baptist Church  
211 W. 17<sup>th</sup> Street

Light Up a Life Tree Lighting

Thursday, Dec 1, 6:00 pm  
Cactus Hotel Lobby  
36 E. Twohig

*For more information about any of HOSA's bereavement offerings, including individual counseling, support groups, and/or memorial services, please call the Bereavement Department at 325-658-6524 or email Karen at [kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com](mailto:kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com).*

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**7 WAYS TO TREAT YOURSELF WITH COMPASSION WHILE GRIEVING**

Accessed at [whatsyourgrief.com](http://whatsyourgrief.com)

**1. Don't compare.**

First, try not to compare yourself to your expectations. In fact, it can be helpful to let go of your expectations about grief entirely. Throw things like grief stages, tasks, and timelines out the window because individual grief is unique and unpredictable. It can be scary to look at grief as a complete unknown, but in doing so, you allow for a more flexible and accepting understanding of your experiences.

*Second, learn what you can from grief experiences of others, but don't compare.* Don't compare your methods of coping because everyone copes with grief differently. And don't compare your overall healing to your perception of how others are healing. Grief is a story without a true end and everyone's ups and downs happen at different times and in different places.

Finally, don't compare yourself to yourself. Sometimes when people try to assess how they're doing in grief, they make the mistake of comparing themselves to the person they were before the loss or some idealized version of who they will be "when they feel better." These comparisons aren't fair because they discount all the progress you've made in your grief. If you still insist on comparing yourself to yourself in grief, you might compare yourself to how you felt on Day 1 of your grief.

**2. Accept that a wide range of emotional, physical, and cognitive experiences are normal in grief.** The reality is that most people don't know how complex grief is until they've experienced it themselves. Having a narrow conceptualization of what is normal in grief often causes people to feel like they're not doing as well as they ought to be, or worse, that they're completely "losing it." It can be helpful for people to learn about the long list of emotional, physical, cognitive, and behavioral responses that are considered "normal" in grief. Though it won't necessarily make digressing experiences any easier, you at least have the reassurance of knowing there's nothing wrong with you.

**3. Give distressing emotions and experiences the time and attention they need.**

This one might sound counterintuitive to many. Focusing on disturbing emotions, memories, and grief triggers may seem like self-torture, not self-kindness — and sometimes it

is. When a person perseverates on such experiences in chronic self-blaming and self-shaming ways, it isn't helpful. On the other hand, it isn't helpful to run away from these thoughts and emotions either.

Think about it in the same way you would think about coping with a serious physical illness or injury. It wouldn't help you to ignore the malady. But it also wouldn't help you to stare at yourself in the mirror saying you're weak, stupid, or to blame. The only thing that would help is to acknowledge the pain and find ways to take care of yourself and heal. The pain of grief is just as worthy of your self-care, and so your goals should be the same — to find constructive ways to heal where you can and to manage the pain where you can.

4. Ask for help/Accept help. As simple as this may sound, we know asking for help is a tall order. Everything about it can be challenging: identifying what you need, reaching out and asking for assistance, and then actually allowing the person to do whatever it is you are asking for without feeling guilty, apologetic, weak, selfish, burdensome, or as though you have to send multiple texts saying "Thanks again!"

5. Focus on basic needs like breathing, sleeping, eating, connecting, and caring. The importance of meeting your basic needs is often overlooked when your entire world has been shattered to pieces. If you are able to meet some of your most basic needs, you'll be in a better position — physically and emotionally — to deal with your other more complex and nuanced stressors. Plus, in a world that seems to lack rhyme or reason, taking care of your basic needs is often one of the few things and/or first things you can manage.

6. Give yourself a break. Whenever we talk about finding ways to cope with grief, we also advocate for finding ways to take a break. In our article [posted on website] "A Balanced Approach for Coping with Life After Loss," we wrote, "While many people think coping with life after loss is only about confronting and coping with difficult grief emotions, we believe that coping encapsulates anything that helps you feel better and gives you a boost of positive emotion." Sometimes you just need to give your brain, body, and frayed emotions a rest!

7. Unapologetically love the person who died. More often than not, grieving people maintain a continued relationship with the person who died. But, for varying reasons, they may feel they need to keep their ongoing bond private. Let's face it, society, which can be extremely rude, has been known to give griever the side eye when they share the ways they stay connected with their deceased loved ones. What we know about grief is that an ongoing love and attachment is totally normal. So go ahead and talk about your loved ones as much as you want, do all the little things that keep you close, and by all means, love them unapologetically.

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