

Navigating Your Journey With Grief



*"A journey without a map, where the path makes no sense,
yet every step matters."*

Benjamin Jensen MA, CMHC
Martina Jensen BS, HHP

Disclaimer

This grief recovery program is designed as a self-help guide to support individuals navigating the loss of a loved one. While it offers practical tools and suggestions, it is not a substitute for professional medical, psychological, or therapeutic advice.

If you are experiencing severe or prolonged symptoms of grief, such as persistent feelings of hopelessness, difficulty functioning in daily life, or thoughts of self-harm, it is essential to seek professional help from a licensed mental health provider or counselor.

By engaging with this program, you acknowledge and accept the following:

- **Personal Responsibility:** You are responsible for your own choices, actions, and outcomes while participating in this program.
- **No Guarantees:** Healing is a deeply personal journey, and the program's effectiveness depends on individual commitment and circumstances.
- **Seek Help When Needed:** If at any point the exercises or reflections feel overwhelming or triggering, please pause and consult a professional or trusted support system.
- **Emergency Situations:** This program is not intended for crisis situations. If you are in immediate distress or danger, please contact emergency services or a crisis hotline in your area.
-

Nationwide Emergency Services and Crisis Hotlines:

- Emergency Services (United States): Dial 911 for immediate assistance.
- National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (United States): Dial 988 or visit 988lifeline.org for confidential support 24/7.
- Crisis Text Line (United States): Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained counselor.
- SAMHSA National Helpline (United States): Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for free, confidential support and resources for mental health and substance use issues.

For international resources, consult local emergency services or visit befrienders.org to find crisis hotlines worldwide.

Your well-being is the priority, and this program is meant to complement—not replace—professional care when needed. Proceed with self-compassion and seek support when necessary.

Part 1: Grief Recovery



This program is designed to help individuals process and recover from the loss of a friend or loved one.

It provides practical, step-by-step guidance to work through grief while emphasizing self-compassion and connection.

A Note to the Reader

Grief is a deeply personal and complex journey.

While many of us are familiar with the stages of grief or have heard about the process of healing, experiencing it firsthand can feel entirely different. In the midst of loss, emotions can be overwhelming, and it's easy to lose sight of what might help or how to move forward.

This guide is designed to serve as a gentle reminder and a supportive resource. It's not here to tell you how to grieve or suggest there's a "right" way to do it—it's here to offer tools and insights that can help you navigate this difficult time.

Whether you need practical steps, emotional validation, or simply a place to start, this guide is meant to meet you where you are.

You are not alone, and it's okay to revisit the basics when everything feels uncertain.

Healing takes time, and having a guide like this can help light the way, even on the hardest days.



The 5 Stages Of Grief

1. Denial

Definition: A stage where the individual has difficulty accepting the reality of the loss. It's a defense mechanism to help cope with the initial shock and pain.

What It Might Look Like:

- Refusing to believe the loss has occurred.
- Avoiding discussions about the loved one.
- Feeling numb or disconnected from emotions.
- Saying things like, "This can't be happening" or "They'll walk through the door any moment."

2. Anger

Definition: A stage where the individual feels intense frustration, resentment, or blame. This emotion may be directed at oneself, others, or even the person who has died.

- **What It Might Look Like:**
- Feeling irritable or short-tempered with loved ones.
- Blaming others for the loss, such as doctors or circumstances.
- Expressing anger toward oneself for not doing "enough."
- Saying things like, "Why did this happen to me?" or "It's so unfair."

3. Bargaining

Definition: A stage where the individual attempts to regain control or prevent further pain by making deals or thinking about "what if" scenarios.

What It Might Look Like:

- Ruminating over past events and wondering what could have been done differently.
- Making promises to a higher power, e.g., "If you bring them back, I'll change my ways."
- Obsessively replaying conversations or moments, seeking a sense of closure.
- Saying things like, "If only I had gotten them to the doctor sooner."

4. Depression

Definition: A stage marked by deep sadness and withdrawal as the individual begins to acknowledge the loss fully.

What It Might Look Like:

- Experiencing feelings of hopelessness or despair.
- Losing interest in activities once enjoyed.
- Struggling to get out of bed or maintain daily routines.
- Crying frequently or feeling emotionally numb.
- Saying things like, “What’s the point of anything now?”

5. Acceptance

Definition: A stage where the individual makes peace with the reality of the loss and begins to adjust to life without their loved one. Acceptance doesn’t mean “moving on” but finding a way to live with the loss.

What It Might Look Like:

- Finding ways to honor the loved one’s memory (e.g., creating a memorial or volunteering).
- Re-engaging in daily life and forming new routines.
- Feeling moments of joy and recognizing it’s okay to move forward.
- Saying things like, “I’ll always miss them, but I’m learning to live with this.”

Step 1: Acknowledge & Accept the Loss

Objective: Face the reality of the loss to begin the healing process.

Activities:

- Write a letter to the loved one expressing your emotions and memories.
- Create a timeline of significant moments shared with them.
- Share your story with someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or counselor.
- Reflection: Recognizing the loss is an essential first step. Avoiding or suppressing it can prolong emotional pain.



Step 2: Learn About the Grief Process

Objective: Understand that grief is a journey, not a fixed timeline.

Activities:

- Read about the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
- Identify which stage resonates with your current emotions and journal about it.
- Watch or listen to resources (podcasts, videos) that discuss grief experiences.
- Reflection: Grief is not linear, and it's normal to revisit stages or experience multiple emotions simultaneously.



Step 3: Create Space for Emotions

Objective: Allow yourself to feel and express your emotions without judgment.

Activities:

- Engage in creative outlets such as painting, writing, or playing music to channel your emotions.
- Practice mindfulness meditation to connect with your feelings.
- Use physical activities like running, yoga, or hiking to process emotions somatically.
- Reflection: All emotions, whether sadness, anger, or guilt, are valid and deserve acknowledgment.



Step 4: Build a Support Network

Objective: Seek comfort and understanding from others.

Activities:

- Join a grief support group locally or online.
- Schedule regular check-ins with friends or family members who offer genuine support.
- Consider therapy with a counselor who specializes in grief and loss.
- Reflection: Grieving in community can remind you that you're not alone and offer a space to share your journey.



Step 5: Honor & Remember Your Loved One

Objective: Celebrate the life of your loved one in meaningful ways.

Activities:

- Create a memory book or photo album that captures their essence.
- Hold a small ceremony or personal ritual on special dates, like their birthday.
- Volunteer for a cause they cared about or dedicate a project to their memory.
- Reflection: Honoring their legacy keeps their presence alive in your heart and helps transform grief into love.



Step 6: Prioritize Self-Care

Objective: Focus on your physical and emotional well-being.

Activities:

- Set up a daily routine that includes exercise, balanced meals, and sufficient sleep.
- Practice grounding techniques, such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.
- Give yourself permission to take breaks from grief by engaging in joyful activities.
- Reflection: Self-care strengthens your resilience and provides the energy needed for healing.



Step 7: Reconnect with Purpose

Objective: Gradually find meaning and direction in life after loss.

Activities:

- Explore hobbies or interests that bring fulfillment.
- Reflect on personal growth and lessons learned from your loved one's life.
- Consider helping others, whether through mentorship, volunteering, or acts of kindness.
- Reflection: Moving forward doesn't mean forgetting; it means honoring their impact by living with purpose.



Step 8: Embrace Acceptance & Growth

Objective: Reach a place of peace and resilience.

Activities:

- Write about how your loved one would want you to live moving forward.
- Continue rituals or traditions that keep their memory alive.
- Share your story with others to inspire healing and hope.
- Reflection: Acceptance is not about moving on but moving forward with their love as part of your journey.





Part 2: How to Support a Grieving Person

Grieving is a deeply personal process, and what helps one person might not help another. However, there are universal principles for showing empathy and offering effective support.



1: Be Present

What to Do: Show up physically or emotionally, and let them know you're there. Sometimes your quiet presence speaks louder than words.

Examples:

- Sit with them in silence if they don't want to talk.
- Offer a hug or a comforting gesture if appropriate.
- Say, "I'm here for you whenever you need me."



2: Acknowledge Their Pain

What to Do: Validate their feelings without judgment.
Recognize that their emotions, no matter how intense, are a natural part of grief.

Examples:

- “This must be so hard for you.”
- “It’s okay to feel angry/sad/lost. There’s no right or wrong way to grieve.”



3: Offer Specific Help

What to Do: Rather than asking vague questions like “How can I help?” Suggest specific actions that you can take off their plate.

Examples:

- “Can I bring you dinner on Thursday?”
- “Would it help if I walked your dog or ran errands for you?”
- “I’m headed to the store. What can I pick up for you?”



4: Share Positive Memories

What to Do: Share meaningful stories or cherished memories about the person who passed away, if the grieving person seems open to it.

Examples:

- “I remember the time they made everyone laugh at the family picnic.
- They had such a great sense of humor.”
- “Your mom always had the best advice—I’m so grateful I got to know her.”



5: Respect Their Timeline

What to Do: Understand that grief doesn't have a fixed schedule. Be patient and allow them to grieve in their own way and time.

Examples:

- "Take as long as you need. I'm here whenever you're ready to talk."
- Avoid pressuring them to "move on" or "get over it."



6: Don't Try to “Fix” It

What Not to Say:

- “At least they’re in a better place.”
- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “You’ll be fine soon.”

Why: These statements can feel dismissive and minimize their pain. Grief isn’t something that needs to be “fixed.”



7: Avoid Comparisons

What Not to Say:

- “I know exactly how you feel.”
- “When I lost my [loved one], I felt the same way.”

Why: Grief is unique to each person. Comparing experiences can unintentionally shift focus away from their feelings.



8: Don't Disappear

What Not to Do:

- Fade away after the initial condolences.
- Grief often intensifies in the weeks or months after the loss,
- when others have moved on.

What to Do Instead:

- Continue checking in periodically, even if it's just to say,
- "I'm thinking of you today."



9: Avoid Unhelpful Platitudes

What Not to Say:

- "Time heals all wounds."
- "They wouldn't want you to be sad."
- "Be strong for your [family/children]."

Why: These phrases can feel dismissive and pressure the grieving person to suppress their emotions.



10: Don't Force Cheerfulness

What Not to Do:

Push them to feel happy or distract them from their grief too soon.

Why: Grieving individuals need space to process their emotions, not feel pressured to "snap out of it."

Additional Tips

Check-in Frequently

A simple “I’m thinking of you” text can mean a lot, especially in the weeks or months after the loss.

Be Patient with Their Emotions

Grief can bring unpredictable mood swings. Don't take anger, irritability, or withdrawal personally.

Respect Their Boundaries

If they need time alone, honor that, but let them know you're available when they're ready.

Educate Yourself on Grief

Learn about the stages of grief and the unique challenges it presents. This shows empathy and effort.

Your goal is not to take away their pain but to walk beside them as they navigate it. By offering thoughtful, compassionate, and consistent support, you can make a meaningful difference in their healing journey.

Final Thoughts

Grieving is deeply personal, and there is no right or wrong way to navigate it. This program provides a framework, but your path to healing is unique. Be patient with yourself, seek support, and know that brighter days are ahead.



Your Next Steps




Take The Personal Health Assessment Quiz Your Health Roadmap Starts Here!

Your body is always communicating with you—but are you listening?

Take this quick 9-question Personal Health Assessment Quiz to uncover where you truly stand on your health journey. In just 5 minutes, you'll gain clarity on your current health level and receive personalized recommendations to help you optimize, restore, or transform your well-being.

- Are you in optimal health and just need to maintain balance?
- Do you have moderate imbalances that need attention before they escalate?
- Are you dealing with chronic health challenges that require deeper healing?

No matter where you are, this quiz will guide you toward the next best step—whether that's simple lifestyle tweaks, a structured healing program, or professional guidance.

 Scan the code to start your health transformation today!

About The Authors



Ben is a licensed clinical mental health counselor with diverse experience spanning crisis intervention, neurofeedback, and counseling across multiple states. His background includes roles in military, law enforcement, and various other fields, shaping his empathetic and holistic approach to therapy. He customizes counseling to meet individual needs, addressing a wide range of mental health and family issues, believing in the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotions, and spirituality for optimal client outcomes.



With a background in Health Science and Nanotechnology, Martina struggled for years with undiagnosed health issues until a suicide attempt in 2021 prompted her to seek outside help. With her partner Ben, a mental health therapist, she underwent a transformative month-long program focusing on mental, physical, and spiritual healing. This experience ignited her passion to help others overcome similar health challenges.