

Tools2Thrive — Grief

What can I do to manage grief?

1 Say good bye and share your feelings

Following your cultural traditions is an important part of grieving. These may include ceremonies and rituals related to the place and the person you have lost. Each person, family and cultural group also has a different way of working out what to do with the physical memories of the person. All of these things can be a healthy part of grieving.

Grief is not an illness. It cannot be cured or hurried along. No two people grieve and start healing in the same way. It changes depending upon who or what we have lost, our past history, our cultural and spiritual beliefs, and our personality. There is no right or wrong way to experience grief.

3 Let yourself heal

Healing does not just mean 'letting go' or 'saying goodbye'. Sometimes we feel guilty for forgetting the person for a short time or beginning to move on with our life. This is a normal part of healing. It does not mean the loss does not matter.

It can be helpful to enjoy happy memories by talking, smiling and laughing about the person. We might want to set aside some time alone each day to let the feelings out, look after ourselves, or just remember. We can spend time with friends and family telling stories and sharing our grief. Some people find a support group useful because the members of the group are all grieving too. Other people who are grieving may have more of an understanding of what we are going through.

2 Let people know how they can help

We need to tell others if there are practical things they can do to help us. It is okay to say that we are not ready to talk about our loss, and that we will let them know when we are. It helps to be around people who are supportive, understanding and willing to help. Friends, family and elders can be the best help. Sometimes, though, family and friends may not be able to give us the kind of emotional support we need. Other people or services that can help are:

- Traditional healers
- Counsellors who specialise in Stolen Generation issues
- Healing Circles or other similar cultural healing groups
- Bereavement support groups
- Counsellors or psychologists
- Doctors, nurses, health workers, mental health or social and emotional wellbeing services
- Priests or ministers or other religious or spiritual leaders

4 Know that you can come through this

We will never completely be the same person again, but we can survive big losses. Sometimes this is hard to believe. Sometimes old beliefs and ideas and ways of doing things seem empty and useless because of what has happened. We may need to change how we do things. This takes time.

We need to just take one moment, one step, and one day at a time. Set our own limits and learn to say no. Expect some set backs, but know we will get through this part of our life. This may be the hardest thing we ever do. We need to be patient with ourselves.

Credit: [Lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au)