

Self Care After a Loss

You may never “get over” the loss you’ve experienced, but you can “get through” it. You have been changed by this loss, but you can learn how to survive, even grow, from this challenge. The following are suggestions for healing in healthy ways:



1. SEEK SUPPORT

It's very important to find people in your life who are good listeners, so you can turn to someone when you need extra support. You may find it helpful to talk to a friend, family member, mental health professional or spiritual advisor. Some find joining a support group helpful since each person will be able to relate in different ways to your experience. Whatever support looks like for you, it's important to reach out for help when you feel like you need it.

2. BE PATIENT

Just as you may be feeling a range of emotions, people around you may also be sorting through their feelings. Be patient with yourself and others — those who are supportive of you as well as those who do not seem to understand. Limit contact with those who tell you how to feel and what to think. Take time to heal. Set limits, and give yourself permission to say “no” to things that may come your way. It's difficult to make decisions when you're feeling overwhelmed; you may decide it's best to put off important decisions until you feel ready to make them.



3. STAY PRESENT

Take each moment as it comes. That way, you can better accept whatever you're feeling and respond in the way that is most helpful to you. Maybe you would benefit from calling your best friend. Maybe journaling would help you let go of your thoughts for now. Mindfulness or relaxation techniques like deep breathing can help you stay present and experience emotions without feeling overwhelmed.

4. EXPRESS YOURSELF

You can choose to tell others how you're feeling or acknowledge your feelings privately. If you don't feel like talking, you can set aside time each day to grieve. Just make sure you leave enough time to do something pleasantly distracting before bed. Either way, acknowledging your experiences helps.



5. ALLOW YOURSELF TO HAVE FUN

Social events or pleasant activities can provide relaxation and distraction. Laughter heals, and it's also OK if you cry.

6. ESTABLISH ROUTINE

Even getting dressed may seem challenging, but it's important to reestablish routine as soon as you can. Building in some structure can help you manage your grief and provide a sense of normalcy and hope.

7. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Eat as well as you can, exercise when you can, and avoid alcohol and other drugs that will make it harder for you to work through your feelings.

Explore suicide awareness and prevention resources for employees and students at uab.edu/bethe1to and uab.edu/uabcare.

