

Survival Tips for Grief

Loss is an inevitable part of living. Hospice Mid Canterbury deals with the grief of loss on a daily basis, from diagnosis of a life-limiting illness to the loss of a loved one. This is one of a series of articles on how to manage grief.

It can be difficult to see how to go on when you are struggling with grief. The journey may seem like a mountain that is too difficult to climb. Here are some steps you can take that may help ease that journey.

Allow your grief

Appreciate, accept, and allow your grief as a natural response to loss. Suppressed grief doesn't go away. Grief is a mix of many uncomfortable feelings. You may feel sad, angry or filled with regret or longing. All these feelings are natural.

Express your grief

Cry when you need to cry. Be angry when you feel angry. Don't suppress your feelings or pretend to be stoic. The more you express your pain, the more you free yourself from it. If this is difficult for you, writing in a diary or journal can be useful.

Be patient with yourself

Grief is a process that takes time. Moving forward is not necessarily quick and easy, but it is possible. Trust that you can and will cope with your loss. Just try to manage, moment to moment, day to day. Things will change.

Keep busy

Initially, you may struggle to manage your feelings of grief. However, keeping busy with regular routines and activities, and often with the help of friends and family, makes this easier.

Exercise daily

Move your body. Walking, gardening, swimming, dancing or whatever activity pleases you, can help you feel better. Through exercise, you build your physical strength, release tension, enliven yourself, and keep yourself well. Exercise releases endorphins that will lift your mood.

Be willing to change things

It is natural to wish things could stay the way they were. However, being flexible and making small changes can help us accept our loss. What interested us before may not interest us now. We may make different choices of activities and people. We need to notice what supports us and what doesn't. Change is inevitable and we need to remember that we can go on with our lives.

Connect with others

If we become isolated in our grief, we accentuate it. We need support from others. Share

time with friends and family and talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling. Hospice Mid Canterbury has trained counsellors who can also help if you are dealing with a loved one with a palliative illness.

Appreciate what you have

When times are tough, recognising what is good in our lives can change our perspective. In these moments of feeling grateful, we realise there is more than loss in our life.