

8 Things to try when the grief gets intense

1. Breathe. When we get tense we tend to hold our breath or have short, shallow breaths. First, just notice that you are breathing and then try slowing it down, breathing more into your belly, and exhaling a little longer than you inhale.

2. Move your body. This doesn't have to be a sport (but it can be) — take a walk, do a push-up, dance, or try cleaning. It's strange, but it can help!

3. Express yourself. Write, draw, organize, listen to/play music, or anything else that lets you express yourself without having to talk to someone.

4. Make room for whatever feelings are coming up. If you try to push them away, they will probably just push back harder. Feelings change and they won't last forever. Grief has no timeline, but it really does change over time.

5. Be kind to yourself. Grievers tend to give themselves a really hard time for not doing grief right — whatever that “right” might be. Remind yourself you're doing the best you can in the moment and that it's okay you're having a hard time.

6. Be a good friend — to yourself. Experiment with telling yourself you can do this, even if you don't know what you're doing. You might be feeling emotions you've never had before or doing things in life for the first time and all of it is happening without the person who died. Take a moment to acknowledge how new and different this is and tell yourself, “Even if I'm overwhelmed right now, I will figure this out.” And then...

7. Ask for help. We know, this one can be really hard and scary to do. Keep it simple and remember that people usually want to help, they are just waiting to be asked.

8. Take time to celebrate whatever is going well. When you're grieving it can be hard to make space for feeling good. You might feel guilty if you find yourself laughing or having a good time. Taking a break from grief doesn't mean you love or miss the person any less.