

SUPPORTING YOURSELF IN GRIEF: CONCRETE STRATEGIES

There's no one 'best way' to navigate your grief, and you may find that certain strategies may be more effective at different times in your grief journey. These are just a few strategies that other families have found helpful.

Caring for Your Physical Self

- Nourish yourself with foods of all colors of the rainbow (fruits, vegetables, etc.).
- Drink water and stay hydrated.
- Find ways to integrate gentle exercise into your routine (even short walks or seated yoga help).
- Listen to what your body is telling you (headaches, nausea, exhaustion, other physical symptoms).
- Schedule a visit with your primary care doctor, as grief affects the body's ability to function in various ways.
- Attend to your sleep routine (try to avoid oversleeping, sleeping too little or staying in bed too long).
- Avoid using substances like alcohol or drugs to cope with pain (SAMHSA's National Helpline is (800) 662-4357 for support around substance use).

Caring for Your Heart and Emotional Self

- Grant yourself gentleness to grieve on your individual timeline.
- Give yourself permission to experience moments of joy or laughter alongside tears and sorrow.
- Allow yourself opportunities to fully express your grief (scream at the top of your lungs, sob or cry when you need to).
- Acknowledge that it's OK to talk about your child as often as you want. It's also OK to not want to talk all the time.
- Consider speaking with your primary care doctor about referrals to a counselor or exploring our various bereavement program offerings.

Socializing While Grieving

- Recognize that your desire for socializing with friends/family/community may be different. Consider small doses of social time at first.
- Always have an 'escape route' or a way to leave a social engagement as needed.
- People may offer unsolicited advice or pleasantries that may be hurtful (for example, 'They are in a better place...'). Remember it's OK to share when these phrases are not helpful to you in your grief.
- Share with your loved ones what you need to feel supported, like help around the house, financial support, space from others, etc.
- Know you aren't responsible for carrying the weight of everyone's grief.