

COPING WITH LOSS OF A FRIEND



When a friend or relative dies, there are no words that can fill the void in your life. If you are like most people, your mind may be searching for an answer to the unanswerable question, "why?" But as you know, death is inevitable and it can visit at anytime.

Even though you are intellectually aware that you and your friends are not invincible, it doesn't make it any easier when someone you love dies. You may ask yourself "How am I going to get through this?" or "Will my life ever return to normal?" The answer to both questions is "yes." *Yes, but...* You will be forever changed by your friend's presence in your life - and that's not a bad thing. Anytime that you suffer a loss, you are changed forever. Though it may not seem like it now, there will come a time that you will be grateful to have had this person in your life.

Coping with Loss

1. Surround yourself with a circle of support.

You need loved ones to help you get through these tough times. You may rely on friends, family, teachers, and other people that you know and trust. The people you go to for help are your circle of support. They will pick you up when you're feeling down and remind you that you are a strong person.

2. Accept not having an answer.

It's natural to ask the question "why?" over and over again. Unfortunately, there isn't an answer to the "why?" question. In life, bad things happen to good people, and this is especially true when someone so young has passed away. Part of the healing process is learning to find ways to deal with the unknown and accepting there will never be an answer.

3. Take care of yourself

Taking good care of yourself may be a challenge when you have lost someone so special to you. When your world has been turned upside down, things that were once easy may now seem difficult and complicated. Even though you may not feel like eating and sleeping, both are essential to your physical and emotional well-being. Taking care of your body is the first step to taking care of your mental and emotional health.

4. Take one day at a time.

Slow down and take deep breaths. Deep breathing can help you relax, let go of stress, and help you focus on the present. Try to stay grounded in the present. Cycling through the past won't change anything and worrying about the future won't change the past. Learning to slow down and take one moment at a time will help you when your mind takes you places that you don't want to go. Give yourself gentle reminders to focus on one minute, one hour and one day at a time.

5. Comfort yourself in your sorrow.

Comforting yourself is doing something nurturing and kind that helps you feel better. It's the little things that can really help calm, ease, and settle your discomfort. Life's small comforts can even make hard times more manageable. Comforting can come from baking homemade cookies or snuggling with a favorite blanket. As small as these things may seem, they will help you feel better.

6. Do something.

Sometimes when you feel helpless the best thing you can do is get busy and do something. Think of a way that you can honor your friend's memory. Perhaps you can orchestrate an event at your school or find a cause that your friend was passionate about and volunteer.

As you probably already know, there isn't a quick fix to making the pain go away, nor does healing happen overnight. You may feel as though the pain will never go away, and in a sense, that's true. But there will be a time when the memories will bring more smiles than tears, and good memories will outnumber the bad. There will come a time when you will be able to look back and be grateful for having your friend in your life. There will come a time you will realize that it's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. *Psychology Today*