

# Restoring Hope

S U I C I D E   L O S S   G R I E F   S U P P O R T   G R O U P  
N E W S L E T T E R

## T H E   E M O T I O N S   O F   G R I E F

### SHARE YOUR HEALING JOURNEY

Please share your story with us for future editions. What are your favorite memories, tips, books, resources, or inspirational quotes?

Submit your contributions to [ellen@iforhope.com](mailto:ellen@iforhope.com).

Be aware that we will edit for space, clarity, and appropriateness.

From despair and rage, to loneliness and resentment, the grieving process is packed with an array of emotions.

Yet, as every griever knows, not everyone suffers from the same emotions at the same time, nor do they navigate the process on the same timeline. In a single day, we can go from experiencing denial to debilitating sadness, only later to

be overcome by resentment and later, a sense of shame.

The rollercoaster of emotions experienced in grief can often feel overwhelming and exhausting. That's why it's best to show ourselves as much compassion as possible during this time.

The grieving process is just that – a process. Give yourself time to feel. To feel your emotions is to stay

connected to yourself, and although it may be tempting to try to distract yourself from these emotions, only by feeling can we move forward in a healthy way.

And deep down we know that moving forward is exactly what our loved one would want for us. Not to “get over it,” but to rebuild. By doing right by ourselves, we are able to honor them.

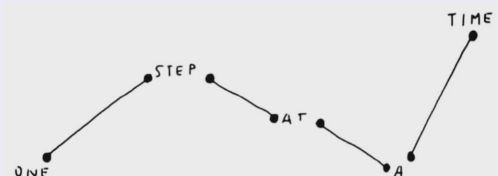
## E V E R Y O N E ' S   G R I E V I N G   P R O C E S S I S   U N I Q U E

Why do we feel anger or hurt when a loved one is feeling differently about a shared loss than we do? Why does he/she/they seem to be navigating the

grieving process “better” or “worse” than we are?

There is no correct way to grieve. Try practicing patience and compassion for

yourself and your loved ones, alike, as you navigate your healing journeys.



## TIPS FOR WORKING WITH YOUR EMOTIONS

### IT'S OK TO FEEL:

- NOT QUITE OK
- CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE
- OVERWHELMED
- A DESIRE TO BE ALONE
- UNINSPIRED
- UNFILTERED
- ANGRY
- WEIRDED OUT
- UNCOMFORTABLE
- FATIGUED
- NEGATIVE

“The pain itself is not wrong; it’s only the messenger. When we refuse to wallow in our emotional pain, we’re not avoiding trouble, we’re shooting the messenger who’s bringing news of trouble. And if we shoot the messenger, it’s not going to keep delivering clear messages.”

- Tina Gilbertson,  
*“Constructive Wallowing:  
 How to Beat Bad Feelings  
 By Letting Yourself Have*

- Tell yourself the situation — Stick to the facts, without judging them.
- Realize what you’re feeling — Focus on what you’re feeling right now, in this moment. Whatever you’re feeling is perfectly OK.
- Uncover self-criticism — Self-criticism sabotages our healing and encourages us to hide the truth from ourselves. It also leads to depression and anxiety
- and is an ineffective motivator.
- Try to understand yourself— instead of evaluating your feelings as good or bad, consider why you may be feeling the way you are. Try to understand yourself.
- Have the feeling — Sit with your feelings. As you experience them, talk to yourself using kind words. And remember that whatever you’re feeling is OK.

## THINGS TO DO WHEN WE FEEL LIKE WE’RE DROWNING

*“Grief is like the ocean; it comes in waves, ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim.”*  
 - Vicki Harrison

Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, when the lows may be deeper and longer. As time progresses, the difficult periods should become less intense and shorter, but it takes time to work through a loss. In the times of deep lows, it often helps to:

- Acknowledge your

feelings and be gentle with yourself

- Express your feelings in a tangible or creative way
- Try to maintain your hobbies and interests
- Choose good company
- Turn to friends and family members for support
- Don’t let anyone tell you how to feel (and don’t tell yourself how to feel, either)
- Move your body and

look after your physical health

- Keep structure in your day
- Set a regular sleep schedule
- Get extra rest
- Connect with your faith
- Go to a grief support group
- Set goals
- Make a list of daily activities
- Talk to a therapist or grief counselor

# HEIGHTENED EMOTIONS: A SYMPTOM OF GRIEF

BY LISA KENT

Grief has this way of skewing our perception of reality – things once clear are now hazy; that which we once knew to be true, is now up for question.

I’ve noticed that lately, my initial, instinctive reactions to normal life happenings, both positive and negative, are intensely heightened. Each relatively minute annoyance, such as a person cutting me off in traffic or stress from my job, has been subconsciously linked to an ever-present knowing that I am never going to hold my loved one in my arms again.

The image of myself that I present to the world has this dense undercurrent of grief; quietly, patiently residing beneath the surface. When a

disturbance occurs in the outer world and a pain-point is pushed, a jolt of electricity sends out shock waves to the water below, disturbing my once still waters. The voltage churns the water, mucking it up and quickly increasing the amplitude of the waves to a point where they become towering walls poised to crash over all of the work that I have done thus far. What to any other person would be a stressful yet manageable situation is to me, over-amplified by my grief.

In grief, much of the work we must do on ourselves is to try to retrain our brains so that the emotions we are feeling in these moments don’t lead to unhealthy behaviors and

undesirable outcomes. I’ve found that it is far easier to do this when I am meditating daily. For me, meditation allows me to expel some of the dark, thick sludge weighing me down. The more often I practice this mindfulness, the clearer the waters become.

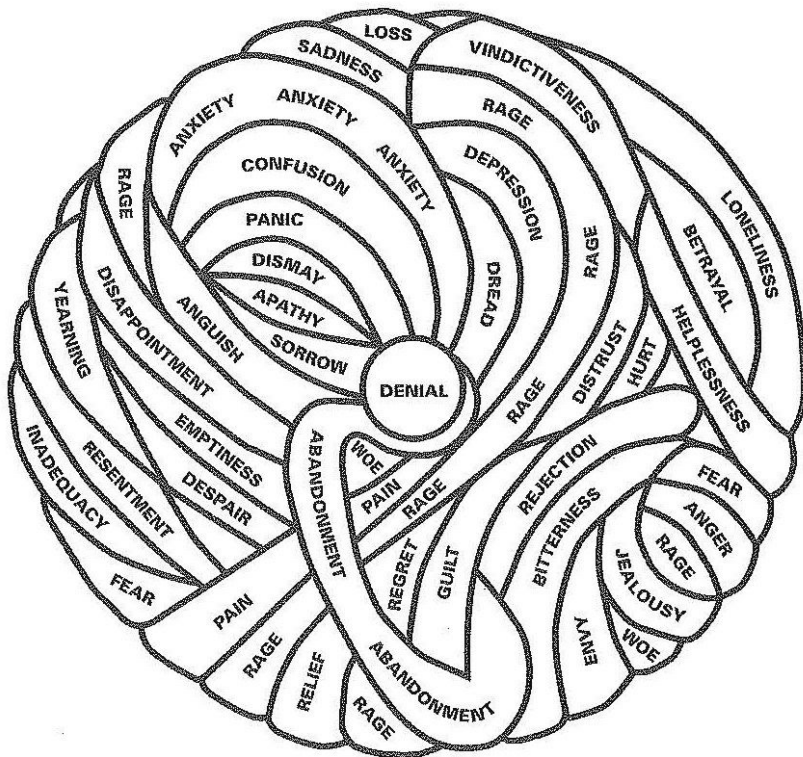
Yet, sometimes the pull to be overcome by these emotions is so intense that it takes everything I have to not react; to ride out the storm long enough for the waves to break and the water to settle. I know that unfortunately, there will remain times when I lose this battle. In these moments, I strive to extend grace towards myself; for I am only human and as long as I am trying my best, I am doing just fine.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Macomb County’s Survivors of Suicide group, part of the KnowResolve organization, is holding a

survivor conference on April 4, 2020 at the Macomb Intermediate School District, 44001 Garfield Rd, Clinton Twp.





### UPCOMING MEETINGS

2nd Wednesday and  
4th Tuesday of every month  
7-9 pm

Wednesday, March 11

Tuesday, March 24

Wednesday, April 8

Tuesday, April 28

FK Engineering Associates

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# Institute for Hope

and Human Flourishing



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Since 1990, we have helped people struggling with trauma, grief, depression, anxiety and those at risk for suicide. Our staff understands the importance of creating connection with each person while scanning for and addressing suicidal pain. In eliciting the story we illuminate patterns and origins of behaviors in order to both avert a crisis and inspire growth. We know that ultimately the person we are working with has answers to their life situation. By tuning in to their inner wisdom and encouraging expression of the authentic self, those solutions may be revealed. Discovering a sense of purpose through the revelation will result in feeling more self-accepting and confident.