

Coping with grief and loss



Grief and loss can impact people in different ways, whether it's the loss of a loved one, a job, a relationship, or even a significant life change. If you're experiencing a loss yourself or supporting someone who's grieving, the process can be complex and deeply personal. Here are some ways to navigate grief and care for yourself and others.

Connecting and reflecting



Seek support – Talking to a friend, colleague, counselor, or faith leader can be valuable, whether it's receiving comfort or gaining perspective.



Take time for yourself – Reading a book, listening to music, looking at photos, or journaling are good ways to help you process your emotions.

Self-care and well-being



Relieve tension – Physical activities, like stretching and walking, can help improve your mood. Or maybe it's enjoying a warm bath or practicing meditation that brings a sense of calm for you.



Nourish – Even when your appetite is low, fueling your body with nutritious foods helps support your emotional and physical well-being. Be mindful of alcohol and caffeine intake, as they can impact mood and energy levels.



Play – Mentally stimulating activities, such as puzzles, games, or creative hobbies, can provide a healthy distraction and a sense of joy.



Rest – Rest and sleep are essential for healing. Balance your activities with short naps or quiet moments of relaxation to help restore energy and clarity.

Supporting others in their grief

- **Be present** – Listening without needing to offer solutions can be one of the most powerful ways to support someone.
- **Honor their experience** – Avoid minimizing grief by urging someone to focus only on the positives. Acknowledge that their loss is significant and personal.
- **Offer support** – Practical help, like preparing a meal, doing errands, or providing child care, can ease burdens.
- **Encourage professional help when needed** – If someone is struggling, suggest they reach out for mental health support.

Signs of stress linked to grief and loss after a disruptive event

The signs of stress after a critical event can be physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral. People experience stress in different ways. When you're aware of your reactions and needs, you'll be better able to cope with stressful events. The list below isn't exhaustive, and individuals may experience some or none of the symptoms.



Physical

- Fatigue
- Chills
- Unusual thirst
- Chest pain
- Headaches
- Dizziness



Cognitive

- Uncertainty
- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Poor attention
- Poor concentration or memory



Emotional

- Fear
- Guilt
- Intense anger
- Depression
- Irritability
- Anxiety



Behavioral

- Restlessness
- Isolating behavior
- Increased alcohol use
- Change in appetite

Grief can be experienced in different ways and on different timelines. Be patient and kind to yourself. Your feelings may be unpredictable and uncomfortable. Acknowledging these feelings may help in coping with grief.

If you or someone you know needs additional support, resources are available. If you feel like your symptoms are getting worse or taking longer than feels healthy to resolve, reach out to your care team.

For crisis support, call or text **988** (TTY **711**) for confidential help.

Visit kp.org/mentalhealth to learn about available services.

Kaiser Permanente health plans around the country: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., in Northern and Southern California and Hawaii • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Colorado • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia, Inc., Nine Piedmont Center, 3495 Piedmont Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30305 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., 4000 Garden City Drive, Hyattsville, MD 20785 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest, 500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington or Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington Options, Inc., 2715 Naches Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98057