

12-Self-Help Suggestions for Coping With Trauma or Loss

1. Be gentle with yourself. Realize you are merely human and you are having normal, human reactions. Be aware of any harsh judgments you are making about your reactions or the reactions of others around you. There are no right or wrong ways to react. Each of us is doing the best we can.
2. Try to keep your daily activities as normal as the situation allows. Try to keep usual schedules for sleep and eating and daily rituals. This is not the time to make any additional unnecessary changes.
3. Consider structuring your day so that you get a sense of chunks of the day instead of what may be an overwhelming sense of 24-hours.
4. Making decisions may be difficult; but may also give you a sense of control. If you are inclined to let others take over, first ask yourself if this is really the best option.
5. Talk is one of the best healing forces. Talk to people you know care about you. People do care.
6. You may be tempted to numb the pain by misusing drugs or alcohol. Realize this will just further complicate your life. It can also prolong your pain by stopping the needed flow of feelings.
7. Within the first day or two, consider alternating periods of strenuous physical activity or exercise with periods of relaxation or rest.
8. It is all right to spend time by yourself, but keep in mind the usefulness of balancing this with sharing your feelings.
9. Do things that make you feel good. You deserve it. It is not disrespectful to enjoy yourself.
10. Keep in mind that others around you may handle their reactions differently than you do. They may also act in ways that you would not normally expect, and that you may not like.
11. Use any tools you know help you. These may include prayer, meditations, and writing in a journal, asking for extra hugs or getting a massage, or walking. All of these have been shown to have measurable positive results.
12. Give yourself permission to consult a professional counselor. Realize that knowing when in life it is appropriate to seek professional assistance is certainly not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of maturity and wisdom.

Moore, D. (2002) 12 self-help suggestions for coping with trauma or loss.
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