



Dealing WITH GRIEF toolkit



A toolkit designed to help you manage your grieving

What is Grief?

Grief is the response to a loss, particularly the loss of someone or a living thing that has died, with whom a bond was formed. Although conventionally focused on the emotional response to loss, grief also has physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, cultural, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions.

Types of Grief

Grief can show up in many different ways. In order to make sure you can support loved ones or even yourself, it's good to understand the different types of grief. Below are 5 types:

Mental

When grieving, it is normal to have intrusive thoughts. If negative thoughts continue, you can seek professional help from a licensed therapist.

Physical

Grief can manifest through physical aches, pains, and headaches. You may feel more strain on your body that you didn't feel before.

Emotional

You may feel worried and an overwhelming sense of uncertainty for the future, such as persistent anxiety. Any emotional response is directly related to your grief state. These are 3 common responses:

Fight

You try to escape the unexpected loss by becoming more aggressive

Flight

You try to escape the unexpected loss by running away from or ignoring the situation

Freeze

You can feel immobile or physically and emotionally numb, which is also known as dissociation.

Spiritual

The feeling of not being grounded, or feeling disconnected from your faith. Whatever your belief system, this is an important time to reconnect and find peace. Here are a few spiritual supports:

Community

Seeking a community of people who understand you and cheer you on through your highs and lows

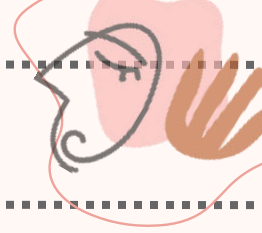
Energy Work

If interested in energetic work, search for reiki therapy or energetic healers who work outside of just massage therapy.

Meditation

Prayer

CHRONIC VS ACUTE GRIEF



It is important to identify ways to navigate these moments of grief and remembrance. You want to find something to help cope with the stress of grief. A **coping mechanism** is something that you do to help manage stress, such as exercising, journaling, watching tv, reading, listening to music, etc.

Acute Grief

A period of **intense grief** that can last up to 12 months after the loss of a loved one or a major medical event. Taking action to help you navigate acute grief is essential to help move through the stages of grief and get to a point where the grief is more manageable.

Chronic Grief

At this stage, anniversaries, birthdays, and special dates may still feel overwhelming but might be **more manageable than before**. Chronic grief begins after the 12 months when acute grief starts to fade. Learning to deal with chronic grief takes time and requires patience.

Handling Acute & Chronic Grief

- Seek therapy or counseling to help manage your feelings
- Find what makes you happy. This might be an activity, a person, a place, or something else.
- Breathe with your stomach to regulate your equilibrium. Use breathing and relaxation techniques to find equilibrium (see page 4).
- Find Community such as support groups
- Meditate
- Redirect - Focus your thoughts on something else



Things to Keep in Mind

- There is no right or wrong way to grieve.
- Grief goes beyond the loss of a loved one. It can include the loss of a pet, a major medical event, missing out on important events due to illness, etc.
- If grieving becomes too difficult to bear or continues longer than is helpful, please seek the help of a licensed therapist and/or spiritual leader.
- Lastly, feel what you feel and be okay with how you ground yourself. Utilize any healthy method to find balance.



SUPPORTING EACH OTHER IN MOMENTS OF GRIEF

Supporting those with chronic grief

Hold space for that person, and consider not pushing a person to get over something that may have affected them deeply

Community support & needs for those with chronic grief

- There is grief in many communities, but consider reciprocal grieving and embrace what they feel - Reciprocal support means taking part in a support group with others. We are all in this together!
- If you don't know what to say, sometimes saying nothing is the best medicine. "It's about being together...silence can be golden."

Remembering those who have transitioned

- Going to the cemetery
- Creating a ritual to process the loss
- Creating an altar as a physical representation of your loved one

RESOURCES

Mental Health Match

- <https://mentalhealthmatch.com/>

Inclusive Therapists

- <https://www.inclusivetherapists.com/>
- <https://www.therapyforlatinx.com/home>
- www.therapyforblackgirls.com

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress and prevention and crises resources for you or your loved ones.
- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- 1-800-273-8255

NAMI (Nami.org)

- NAMI Compartiendo Esperanza: You can attend bilingual presentations for Latino communities designed to promote mental health awareness.

Remember:

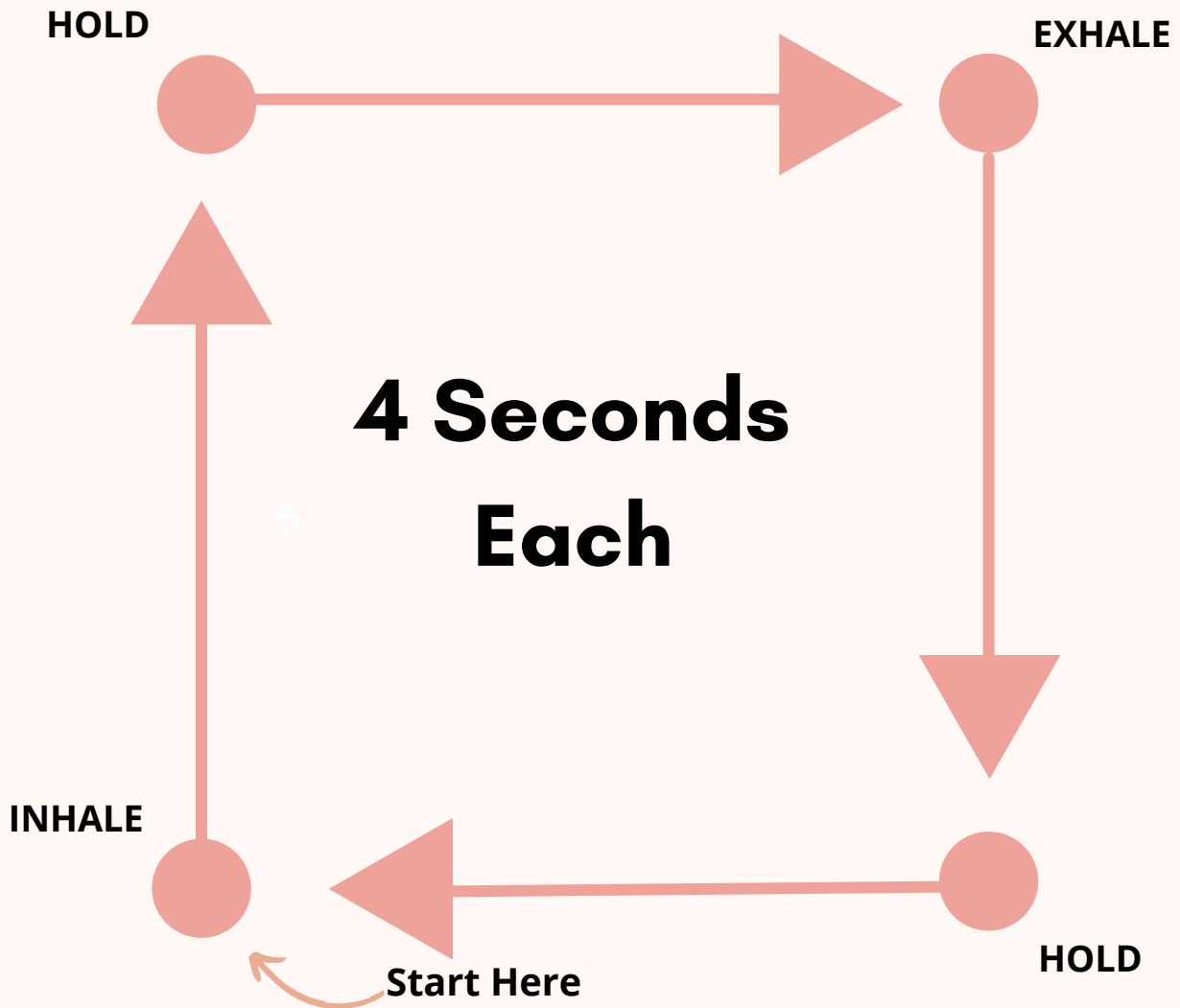
Help is always available.



BOX BREATHING: AN EXERCISE

Box breathing is a great way to reduce anxiety. Breathing exercises work because they calm the nervous system. As with many breathing exercises, you can do it anywhere without needing any physical tools.

Once you get the hang of it, it can be a great everyday tool to prevent anxiety from getting out of hand. It's also known as tactical or sniper breathing, and is taught in the military as a way to remain calm in dangerous or anxiety provoking situations.



In for four. Hold for four. Out for four. Hold for four. Repeat three more times.

If you felt even a little calmer, consider trying to use this exercise more often. You can even modify it to suit you better by increasing the number of seconds. You could also decrease them, but we wouldn't suggest going any lower than three seconds. We don't want to speed up your breathing faster than normal, that may have the opposite effect!