

CREATIVE & SOOTHING OUTLETS FOR GRIEF

Nature

Spending time in nature can be both therapeutic and spiritual. Green spaces have the power to uplift and heal. According to Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, a grief expert and educator, nature has the capacity to steady and calm. It also softens the pain of grief.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been linked to reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, and decreased stress levels. When you use your senses to engage in the present and remain fully aware of self or surroundings, you are being mindful. While grieving, the practice of mindfulness allows you to connect with your body and recognize the physical symptoms of grief. It can also help you to regulate your emotions or ground you when you feel disconnected. Mindfulness may help you to process your grief and heal.

Journaling

Journaling is a powerful tool for reflection and expression. Consider keeping a grief journal to write about your grief journey or to preserve memories. You may also choose to write in journal as though you're writing to the deceased. Use your journal for poetry, stories, and gratitude lists. Another idea is to write "future chapters" of your life. Keep the focus on positive things to come.

Art

Art is a powerful form of expression. Research links art and creative expression to mental wellness, increased positive emotions, and reduced levels of depression, stress, guilt, and grief. Art provides an innovative outlet for sharing and releasing grief, especially grief feelings that have been suppressed or that feel too painful to otherwise let out. Art is a means of mourning a loss. Art may also provide temporary relief as a distraction from overwhelming pain. Additionally, you can use art to create a memorial and then dedicate your work to the deceased.

Dance & Movement

Dance and movement allow your body to express what words cannot. Research indicates that dancing and dance therapy may improve physical and mental health, reduce pain, improve gait and balance, reduce stress, and even reverse signs of aging in the brain. Dance allows you to release pain and it awakens you from numbness. Dance therapy may also help to relieve tension and anxiety.

Music

Music is another powerful form of creative expression. Listening to or playing music can evoke strong emotions and help you to connect with feelings you weren't aware you had. Music and music therapy may reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

Massage

Massage therapy is not only relaxing; it may reduce pain and improve your health. Some research indicates that massage can help fight stress. What's more, human touch is soothing; therapeutic massage may provide consolation, much-needed rest, and relaxation while grieving a loss.

Light Therapy

Light therapy can help to reduce symptoms of depression and seasonal affect disorder. It may also alleviate symptoms of PTSD. Some research indicates that light therapy helps with insomnia. Consider this treatment if you have co-existing depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, or insomnia.

Aromatherapy

Essential oils are pleasant and soothing. When inhaled, the scent travels to the brain, signaling certain receptors associated with emotion. If you enjoy scented oils, consider using them to self-soothe or relax. Aromatherapy may even help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety when used in conjunction with massage or other alternative therapies.