



ACADEMY of Grief & Loss
INFORMATION
RESOURCES
EDUCATION
SUPPORT

Tips for Grieving College Students and Young Adults

Adapted from: *We Get It: Voices of Grieving College Students and Young Adults (2015)* by Heather L. Servaty-Seib and David C. Faigenbaum

- Find personally meaningful ways to memorialize your loved one(s) who died. There can be many seemingly small and routine but personally important ways to remember and honor your loved one(s).
- Be kind and patient with yourself in terms of commitments, demands, and choices about how to spend your time. Allow yourself plenty of time to do normal everyday activities. Try not to over-schedule yourself, you don't need the added stress. Rest when you can and need to; it's not a sign of weakness.
- Connect with your family members and know that each member of your family will grieve in their own way.
- Find and connect with peers who have similar grief experiences. Although it may be challenging to find them, they are out there. Risk sharing about your experience with others and you will find those you can relate to.
- Not everyone in your life will support you in the same way – different people have different ways of being supportive. It's okay to move away from those who are not supportive.
- Directly communicate with others about what you do and do not need. It can be hard for them to know otherwise.
- Keep in mind there is a national network of grieving college students, young adults, and supporters through the Actively Moving Forward Support Network (www.studentsofamf.org).
- Engage in community service projects. Contributing to causes, including those where you help others who are grieving, can offer a sense of giving back to the world and a feeling of control in an out of control situation.
- Consider religion, spirituality, and faith as possible sources of comfort and support.
- Reframe your grief (if and when possible) from something negative to a recognition of your love for the person who died. We grieve in proportion to our love.
- Explore counseling as an option. Find a counselor you are comfortable with and that may mean trying a few out.
Important note: you should consider professional help if you feel overwhelmed, hopeless, or helpless; you must seek help if you have suicidal thoughts. You can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24/7) at 1-800-273-8255.
- Engage in a moderate amount of physical activity and monitor your own sense of when you may use physical outlets as an "escape".
- Have a little fun. Do something that makes you laugh and/or smile. It might be difficult to do at first, but it is wonderful medicine for the grieving soul.
- Work to resist the temptation to use alcohol or drugs to help with your coping. They can interfere with the grieving process or cover it up.
- Grief can be a great stress on your body and mind. It can upset sleep patterns, lead to depression, weaken your immune system, and highlight medical problems. See your doctor if you're worried about any health-related symptoms.

For more, you can check out the entire book *We Get It: Voices of Grieving College Students and Young Adults* at our Grief Resource Lending Library located at Hamilton's on Westtown Parkway (3601 Westtown Parkway, West Des Moines).

