



GriefCare for Families
Module 2: Helping your family adapt after a loss
Topic 3: Thinking about the future

It may seem impossible to be happy. The future may seem empty and you may have a hard time imagining that you can ever experience joy or true satisfaction again. It's possible that you're not sure you even want to be happy.

Please remember that your life is important too. You can honor the person who died by restoring a sense of meaning and purpose in your own life.

Just as physical wellness depends on things you do, like eating, sleeping, and exercise, psychological wellness depends on doing things to meet basic mental health needs. Losing a loved one can make it more difficult to do things that are physically healthy. It can also be difficult to do things that are psychologically healthy. It might be helpful to understand what this means. Researchers have found that we have three basic psychological needs: 1) doing things that align with our deepest interests and values, 2) feeling confident that we can meet important challenges in our lives, and 3) feeling that we matter and belong in the world. It's helpful to do things that promote physical and psychological health while you are grieving.

Building psychological health

You might want to think about the future in a positive way but have no idea how to do this. You might feel that you have to resign yourself to a "new normal". You might think this is all you can expect, but that's not true. You can restore your psychological health, wellbeing and connections. You can start to think about your future with more enthusiasm.

One way to do this is to use your imagination. Take a few minutes each day to think about your desire to accomplish something of value. Take a few minutes to sit quietly and ask yourself, "If I could accept the reality of this death and changes it has brought, if my grief was at a manageable level, what would I want for myself?"

You may or may not have some answers to this question. If you do, you can write them down or just think about them. Don't worry if you don't have any answers. Instead, focus on thinking about things that you care about or things that are really interesting to you.

You might be caught up in feeling angry or very sad or in thinking this death should not have happened. You might think you will never accept it. You may believe your grief will never be at a manageable level. That's ok. You don't need to believe it's possible to be in a different place, just try to imagine what it could be like if you were. This is just an exercise. You can do it even if you don't believe it's possible.

Try to think about what you might want for yourself. Talk about it with a trusted friend. Write it here. Message our team.

Ask yourself what you care about and what are things that interest you. Do this at least once a day. Pose these questions to yourself even if it seems like you will never have an answer. You may be surprised by what happens when you take just a few minutes each day to ask yourself about your interests and values. Be sure you're not self-critical if you can't think of anything. Just do the best you can.