

Embracing Vulnerability in Grief

The loss of a loved one can leave us in a difficult emotional space that many of us often wish to avoid. Grief can throw us into moments of shock, destabilization, and confusion, which heighten and confront us with our own vulnerability. For many, vulnerability is a frightening word as it is often associated with reliance on others and fears of others not meeting our needs. This, however, is not the complete picture of what being vulnerable can mean. Vulnerability also allows us to open up emotionally and mentally with ourselves and trusted others thereby facilitating healing and growth during the grief process.

What then can we do to embrace vulnerability in grief? Below, we provide some tips that can help guide you towards becoming more comfortable with vulnerability in your grief.

Sitting with Complex Emotions

Embracing vulnerability begins with reflection and acceptance of varied emotions we may experience. A great way to begin this process is by naming the emotions you are experiencing and identifying where you feel them in your body. As you learn more about your feelings, you will identify the impacts they may be having on your grief and overall well-being. As best you can, allow yourself to sit with these emotions without judgment. Although this can open you to experiencing a heightened sense of what you are feeling, it can also allow you to find different coping strategies to better manage these moments. This connection between mind and body leads us to a place of love, healing, and self-acceptance even in the most challenging moments. This process may also be difficult at first, but, with practice, this process becomes easier over time.

Doing the Grief Work

Grief work is not easy to think about after experiencing the loss of a loved one. Some individuals may avoid the grief work due to the sense of vulnerability it often requires. Despite the desire to avoid our grief, this can also delay healing and moving forward in a healthy way. As you process the loss, grief work can begin by simply talking to others about the circumstances surrounding the loss and the feelings you are experiencing. Talking about the pain and loss in a support group or with a licensed mental health professional can help guide you out of those difficult moments into a more emotionally stable space. Grief work has no timeline and happens at one's individual pace—be kind to yourself during this process.



Verbalizing Our Needs

Part of allowing ourselves to be vulnerable is bringing others into our circle of support. For some, this may be the most challenging aspect of grieving as we manage the emotional ups and downs that can come with grief. We do not have to be alone in this. In fact, many of our friends and family are often willing and eager to help in whatever ways they can. By expressing and verbalizing our needs, we also help guide our loved ones in ways they can support us and alleviate the stresses faced after a loss. The support you need can be as simple as requesting a listening ear or accepting babysitting services to allow you some free time for self-care.

The tips above offer some guidance in helping you to become more comfortable embracing your vulnerability after a loss. For additional resources, please visit our website at www.childbereavement.org or give us a call at (888) 988-5438.



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