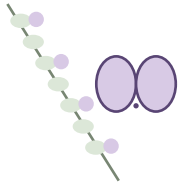


DIFFERENT KINDS OF GRIEF

TRAUMATIC GRIEF

When Loss and Trauma Become Intertwined



WHEN THE WAY SOMEONE DIED BECOMES PART OF THE GRIEF

Traumatic grief can occur when bereavement is intertwined with a frightening, violent, sudden, shocking, or disturbing experience. You may be grieving the person you love while also coping with traumatic memories, images, fear, or a nervous system that remains on high alert.

THE DEATH MAY FEEL UNREAL Shock and disbelief can be especially strong after a sudden, violent, accidental, or otherwise traumatic death.	IMAGES MAY RETURN You may replay what you saw, heard, were told, or imagined about the death. Intrusive memories can compete with memories of the person's life.	THE BODY MAY STAY ON ALERT Startle responses, racing heart, tension, sleep disruption, scanning for danger, or feeling unable to relax can accompany trauma.	AVOIDANCE CAN DEVELOP Places, conversations, news, photographs, medical settings, driving, or other reminders may feel too difficult to approach.
GUILT AND 'WHAT IF'S' Survivor guilt, hindsight, self-blame, or repeated thoughts about what might have prevented the death can become painful parts of grief.	YOUR SENSE OF SAFETY MAY CHANGE The world may feel less predictable. You may worry more about the safety of yourself or people you love.	REMEMBER THE WHOLE PERSON The circumstances of death are one part of the story. Intentionally recalling the person's life can help make room for memories beyond the final event.	TRAUMA-INFORMED HELP CAN HELP A qualified mental health professional can address trauma symptoms while respecting the continuing grief and bond with the person who died.

Remember This

Trauma and grief can occur together.	Your nervous system may need time and support.	The final event is not the whole life.	You deserve help with frightening symptoms.
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GENTLE WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

When a traumatic image appears, gently orient to the present: notice where you are, feel your feet on the floor, slow your breathing, and name several things you can see. Seek trauma-informed professional care if symptoms are persistent or disruptive.

The goal is not to erase what happened. It is to help the traumatic circumstances take up less space so the person's life, relationship, and memories can also be present.

"The way someone died matters, but it does not define the whole story of the person you love."

— *Mourning Discoveries*

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