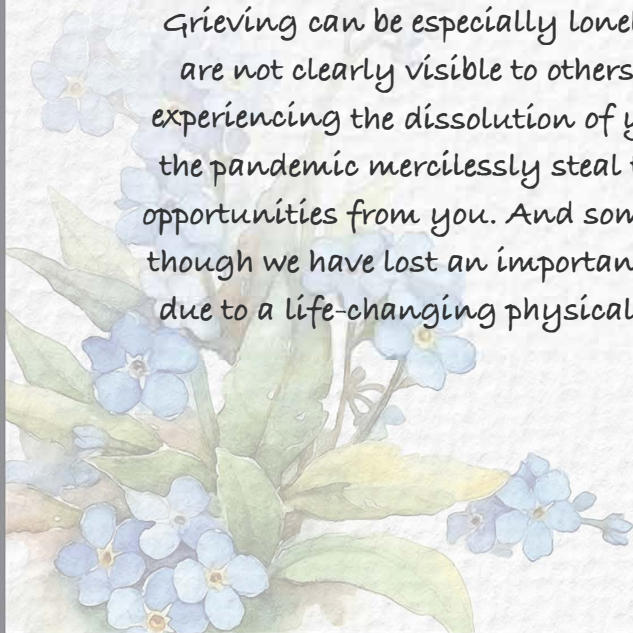


To a Grieving Heart

To lose someone or something close to our hearts is deeply painful, and sometimes goes beyond words.

Whether you are facing the loss of a loved one, the ending of a cherished relationship, family and friends relocating, or having a close friendship grow apart, the feelings accompanying your loss can be profound and overwhelming. Intense feelings may also pop up unexpectedly, leaving you caught off guard.

Grieving can be especially lonely when our losses are not clearly visible to others. Perhaps you are experiencing the dissolution of your dreams or had the pandemic mercilessly steal time and potential opportunities from you. And some of us may feel as though we have lost an important part of who we are due to a life-changing physical or mental illness.

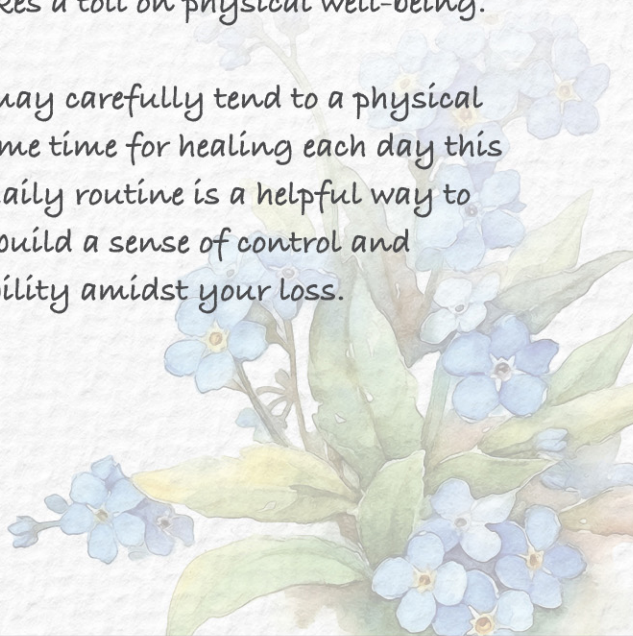


Not all losses feel valid, especially when we lose something we never really had. But the pain is still very real.

Going through the mourning process is essential to healing, and everyone grieves differently. Have you taken time to grieve the loss of what could have been?

The grief can manifest physically in our body. You may feel heaviness in your chest, or aches in your back. You may find it hard to relax and fall asleep. The connection between our minds and our bodies becomes evident during times of grief, as the emotional pain takes a toll on physical well-being.

And just as you may carefully tend to a physical wound, set aside some time for healing each day this week. Having a daily routine is a helpful way to gradually rebuild a sense of control and predictability amidst your loss.





Breathe in, Breathe out



Monday

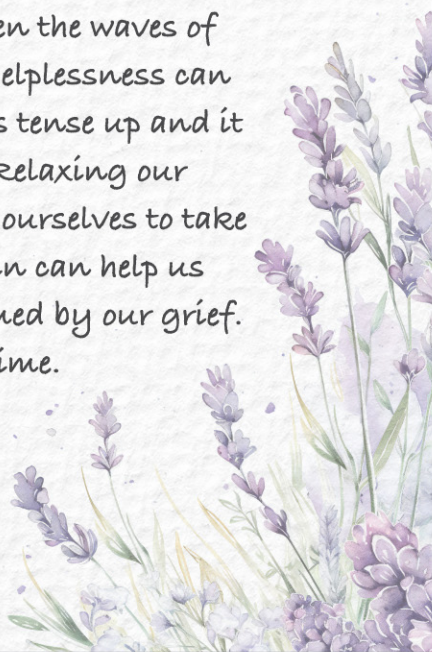
Slowly breathe in. Feel the breath expanding your chest, your ribcage, and your upper back. Slowly breathe out. Feel how your chest, your ribcage and your upper back slowly retreating to a relaxed state.



You may say to yourself:

"I breathe in pocket of calm and peace. I breathe out my suffering and discomfort."

There may be moments when the waves of intense grief, remorse and helplessness can feel so unbearable. Our bodies tense up and it becomes hard to breathe. Relaxing our breathing muscles, allowing ourselves to take slow and deep breaths again can help us gradually feel less overwhelmed by our grief. One breath at a time.



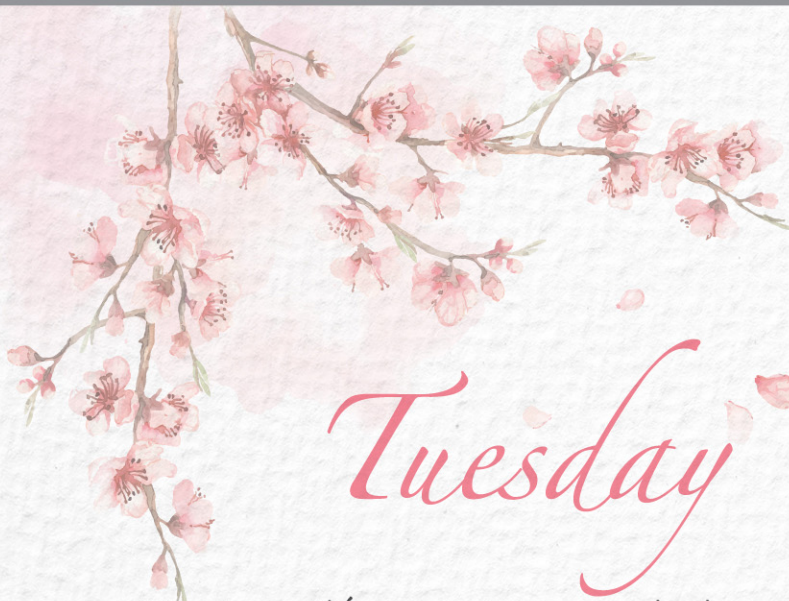


Tue

Calm



Tue



Tuesday

Name something you see as you slowly turn your head in different directions, front, left, right, up and down, wherever you feel like.

You may say to yourself:

"I may feel shocked and pained inside, but it is calm and safe out here where I am now."

Many losses come unexpectedly, and the shock may leave us feeling disoriented. We can take a break from the inner confusion by shifting our focus to our outer surroundings. When we can see clearly where we are, we can make better choices as to what is the next best step to take.

Wed



Go with the flow



Wednesday

While standing, gently sway back and forth slowly.

When leaning forward, grab the ground with your toes. When leaning back, feel the heels firmly on the ground (it may be easier to keep your balance if you hold your back straight). When you feel like stopping, slowly come to a stop when you find the point of balance where both feet feel firm on the ground.

You may say to yourself:

"It is okay for me to sway between the reality of my loss and a disbelief that it actually happened."

When there is no clear ending and we cannot have our usual rituals of saying goodbye, it becomes harder for us to accept the reality of the loss. If you find yourself wondering whether your loved one may return, or the loss you experienced may be amended, that is perfectly normal too. Our feet are the part of the body closest to the ground; they help us ground in the reality, let them help us navigate through the ambiguity.



Hanging on, Letting go

Thu





Thursday

Try to touch your shoulders to your ears, hold for a few seconds to sense the tension, then completely relax and drop your shoulders as fast as you could.



You may say to yourself:

"I can hold on tightly to the love, and the memories, and sometimes, I can also let go of the pain for a while."

When we grieve, we may find ourselves struggling between holding on and letting go. It is alright to want to hang on to what we cherish about our losses, but also okay to let go of the tension, the sadness, the remorse, or the anger stored in our bodies.





Finding strength



Friday

Take a seat and place both palms on the respective side of your lower back. Lean back into your palms while feeling the warmth and support it is giving you. You may even imagine the support coming from a good friend, family member, or higher power.

You may say to yourself:

*"Even though some things are beyond my control,
everything is under control."*

Facing losses are vivid reminders of our not having full power and control over our lives. We may feel helpless when facing our grief. Know that it is okay to feel weak and powerless, and there will always be someone, a higher power, or our inner strength supporting us.





Self-kindness



Sat

Saturday

Take care of your body. You can stretch, take a walk in a park, take a warm bath, make a cup of tea, or do something that feels good to you.



You may say to yourself:

"I can do something to make a difference for myself, even if just for a short while."

If you feel like there is nothing that can be done about your grief, taking care of your body can be the first step to becoming unstuck. Physical movements can help tremendously with our emotions while engaging in something enjoyable can add a glimmer of joy to our day.

Sat





Reaching out



Sun

Sunday

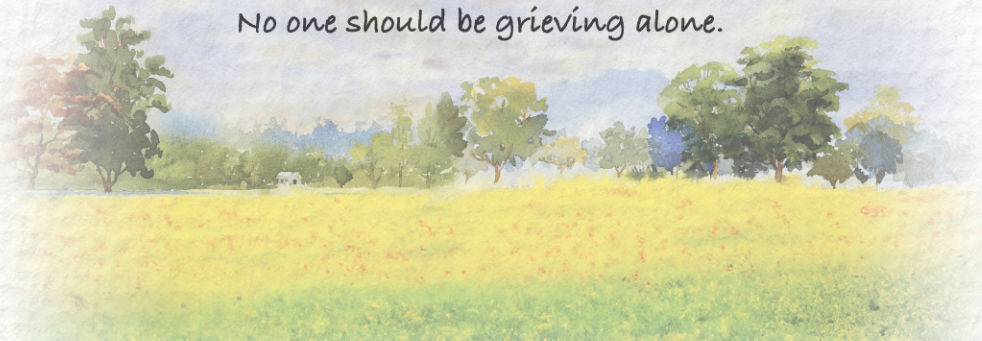
Perform an act of kindness for a family member or a friend who may also be grieving a loss. You may take initiative to reach out to others, by any means, to offer your companionship.

You may say to yourself:

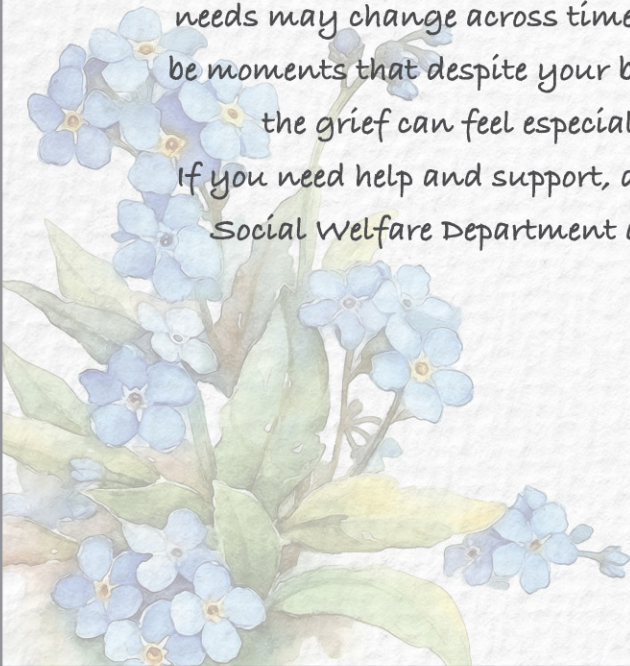
"Grief is a perfectly normal human experience.

I am never alone in this."

Supporting one another has long been a ritual of healing from grief. This is perhaps one of the reasons why funerals gather family and friends together. There are times when we may not believe that other people would understand our grief, or we may be embarrassed by our reactions. This can make the grieving process lonelier and more challenging. Do reach out to help and to seek help. No one should be grieving alone.



Experiencing loss is part of our life journey, and we can all learn ways to navigate the grieving process better. Allow yourself time to savor these self-care practices. Give yourself space to sense their impact on your mind and your body. If you find a particular practice especially comforting, you may focus on doing it. Perhaps the same practice may feel differently from day to day. Indeed, healing from grief is not a linear process, and your needs may change across time. There may even be moments that despite your best efforts to cope, the grief can feel especially intense. If you need help and support, do reach out to the Social Welfare Department at 2343 2255.



Published by : Clinical Psychology Unit (5)
Clinical Psychological Service Branch
Social Welfare Department
The Government of the Hong Kong Special
Administrative Region

Production House : HK Design Pro

Special Acknowledgment : Mr. CHAN Yuk-lun

Background Music : Sunset Landscape by Keys of Moon
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Published on : March 2024

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