



WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Healing After Loss



Letter from Bereavement Coordinator

I remember driving in my car on a cold, yet sunny day so many months ago, and a song came on the radio that reminded me of my late grandmother. Out of the blue, the tears started falling. I had not felt an intense reaction to this loss in a while, as my grandmother had passed some years back, but in that moment, the grief hit me all over again. Why did this happen so many years later? When we are experiencing grief, there are a number of things that can create an emotional or physical response related to our loss, and that response differs for each person and situation, and can be both expected, or completely unexpected, like in the case above.

These triggers can be challenging to navigate and understand in the moment. These reactions are a normal part of the process, and though they may lessen and be less intense over time, you may still feel yourself having these triggers for years to come. You are not alone

in experiencing this, and if you haven't experienced this yet, that is okay too. As a reminder from our last issue, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. In this issue, we will navigate this topic of "grief triggers," and share some suggestions of how to cope with these triggers.

Sincerely,
Lisa Gardner
Bereavement and
Volunteer Coordinator



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When Memories Surface: Identifying and Managing Grief Triggers: by Rebecca Fleckenstein, Volunteer Content Writer

Grief often brings unexpected waves of emotion that can catch us off guard. Whether you've lost a loved one recently or some time has passed, certain moments, objects, or memories can suddenly stir up deep feelings. These moments are known as triggers, and they're a normal part of the grieving process. Understanding what triggers are and learning how to handle them can help you move through your grief in a healthy and compassionate way.

What is a Trigger?

A trigger is something that activates the feelings of grief. Triggers can be expected or unexpected, positive or negative. A positive trigger can bring up a fond memory or a good time you had with the person. When we encounter a negative trigger, we may become overwhelmed by a sudden rush of our emotions, making it difficult to cope. Some common examples of triggers are:

- A birthday
- The anniversary of our loved one's passing
- A holiday
- A favorite song
- A place
- A smell
- An object
- A personal item
- Places tied to memories

in
loving
memory

For more information, please contact:
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Planned versus Unplanned Triggers: by Rebecca Fleckenstein, Volunteer Content Writer

Planned versus Unplanned Triggers

Planned (anticipated) triggers are those triggers you can expect will happen. For example, you can easily anticipate that a holiday gathering may be a trigger.

Anticipating that a trigger will happen can help you plan for that trigger.

Unplanned (unintentional) triggers are triggers that occur without warning and may be more distressing than planned triggers. For example, when you hear your loved one's favorite song while driving or walking about could be an unplanned trigger.

Recognizing what brings up strong feelings after a loss is important for healing, because these emotional triggers can be signs of deeper pain or memories. By noticing them, you can take care of yourself and process your grief in a thoughtful way, instead of feeling overwhelmed by sudden emotions.



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Coping Tools and Grounding Techniques: by Rebecca Fleckenstein, Volunteer Content Writer

Coping Tools and Grounding Techniques

Coping tools are ways to help you handle ongoing stress or grief long-term. Grounding techniques, on the other hand, are strategies you can use right away when you're feeling overwhelmed to help bring your focus back to the present moment.

Some coping tools are:

- Taking care of yourself- *mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally*
- Sticking to a routine
- Expressing your feelings- *this does not need to be verbal, it can be through music, writing, or art*
- Connect with family and friends who help you during the tough times
- Speak to a grief counselor
- Have access to "smile makers," things that make you feel good if an unplanned trigger happens, such as a quote or access to a favorite song.

Some grounding techniques are:

- Taking deep breaths
- Focusing on your five senses and what senses are being triggered in that moment
- Repeating a calming phrase or mantra

By using coping tools and grounding techniques, you can take steps toward healing.

Remember, you're not alone on this journey, and it's okay to seek support whenever you need it.



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How to Plan or Prepare for Milestones

Planning ahead for important days like holidays and birthdays can make those days a bit easier emotionally. Below are some suggestions on how we can do this:

Prepare Mentally and Emotionally

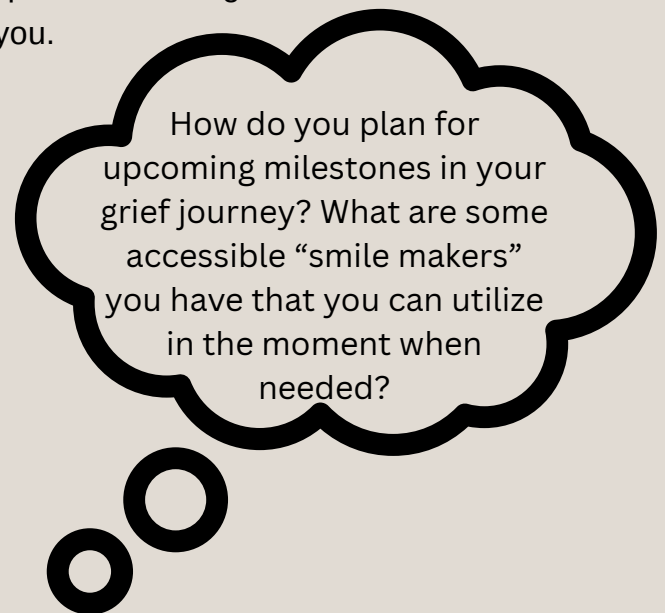
Create a plan for how you want to spend the day. Do you want to spend the day alone, with a few people, or with a larger group? Acknowledge your emotions and give yourself permission to feel those emotions without judgment. Consider talking with those you trust and let them know what you can and cannot handle so they can support you. Don't hesitate to see a grief counselor if your grief gets too heavy to bear.

Reinvent Holidays and Traditions

Honor your loved one's memory by lighting a candle, playing their favorite song, participating in an activity they loved, creating a scrapbook, donating in their name, or finding another way that makes sense for you.

Take Care of Yourself

Be kind and patient with yourself on those milestone days. Declining invitations or leaving an event early is OK.



SELF REFLECTION:

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References

References:

Understanding Trauma Triggers

<https://www.waldenu.edu/online-masters-programs/ms-in-clinical-mental-health-counseling/resource/understanding-trauma-triggers>

Triggers and the Psychology Behind Them

https://newsletter.miami.edu/acad-bufin/fsap/2022/mind-and-matter/summer/feature-article.html#:~:text=Identifying%20and%20understanding%20your%20triggers%20can%20help,triggered%20you%20*%20Talking%20to%20a%20professional

Grief

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24787-grief>

What Does it Mean to Recognize Your Grief Triggers?

<https://wellmanpsychology.com/mindbodyblog/2025/9/26/what-does-it-mean-to-recognize-your-grief-triggers#:~:text=Practice%20Grounding%20Techniques,you%20in%20the%20present%20moment>

Holidays After the Death of a Loved One

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/life-without-anxiety/201812/holidays-after-the-death-loved-one-0#:~:text=Again%2C%20notice%20it%20and%20try,a%20normal%20routine%20as%20possible.>

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3-PART VIRTUAL GRIEF AND LOSS SERIES

Presented by Interim Home Health and Hospice Bereavement Program

We know that grief and loss can be a complex journey, and at times, challenging to navigate. Whether you are experiencing a loss yourself, know someone who is experiencing a loss, or just would like to learn more to increase your knowledge around this topic, please consider joining us for the following grief and loss workshop series:

Wednesday, March 11th from 10-12

Different Types of Grief- Did you know that people grieve in many different ways? What do these different styles look like, and how do they impact one's grief journey? Come learn about how these different styles manifest themselves, and factors that may contribute to our grief journey.

RSVP required by Monday, March 9th

Wednesday, April 9th from 10-12

Common Emotional Responses to Grief- Based on the Five Stages of Grief Model, this workshop will explore the different ways our bodies respond to the grief journey, and coping tips on how to best support ourselves or others as we process those responses.

RSVP required by Monday, April 7th

Wednesday, May 14th from 10-12

Coping Tips and Suggestions- This workshop will explore some general coping strategies to help deal with grief and loss, and incorporate four dimensions of self-care, and how finding ways to support those dimensions can help us through the grief journey.

RSVP required by Monday, May 12th

**Registrants will get the link to join upon registration.
You do not need to sign up for all 3 to attend, though it is encouraged.**

**To RSVP by the above dates, please contact Lisa Gardner at
ligardner@interimhealthcare.com or by phone/text at (248) 986-1272.**