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SAFE CROSSINGS FOUNDATION

A GRIEF SUPPORT GUIDE

You Are Not Alone:
Helpful Support Ideas for Navigating Grief

Real-world advice and resources from Microsoft employees

Collected during the Microsoft GIVE event with Safe Crossings Foundation & Crisis Connections
October 22, 2026 | Part of the *You Are Not Alone* campaign

During our GIVE event, we asked employees: ***Think about a time in your life when you were experiencing grief. As you look back, what worked for you, or what do you wish you had done to help you through that time?***

Their answers were honest, generous, and full of hope. We've gathered their words here, anonymously, for anyone who is grieving and for those who want to support them. There is no "right" way to grieve — take what helps and leave the rest.

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This guide touches on grief, loss, and suicide.
Please take care of yourself as you read.

1. There Is No "Normal" Way to Grieve

- **There is no "normal."** *"It is so important to understand that everyone processes grief differently. There is no "normal" or typical."*
- **It's a winding road.** *"There's no one way to grieve. It's a long, windy, bumpy road with many ups and downs."*
- **Give yourself permission to feel.** *"I wish I had permission to feel the pain, fear, and depression that accompany loss. They are not negative emotions; they are appropriate emotions as a part of grief. I needed permission to feel them and let them wash over me."*
- **Let it out.** *"I find it helpful to let myself cry, experience every emotion, and talk about what I'm going through. You can also do things to distract yourself. It's okay to feel good about something else while you're grieving."*
- **Let go of the shame.** *"I had trouble processing my feelings and I felt shame for not feeling how I felt I was supposed to. Eventually being honest with a close friend about my feelings alleviated that shame and helped me understand my reaction was not abnormal."*
- **The world keeps moving.** *"It's so strange watching the world move on like nothing's happened when you and your family's world is turned upside down."*
- **Grief can stay with us.** *"I lost my cousin and it's been more than 20 years, but I carry the grief to this day because I couldn't meet her the day before when she called. It's one of the reasons I never say "No" to anyone."*

> *"Grief isn't easy, and I remember someone told me it's like a stone that will be forever in your pocket, but as time goes on it does get lighter."*

> *"Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim."*
>
> — Vicki Harrison, shared by an employee as a favorite quote

2. Lean on Your People

- **Share the memories.** *"I would often surround myself with my close circle and we would go over our favorite memories with that person. It was good to laugh, cry, be angry, and be sad with those who understand and knew them."*
- **Grieve together.** *"I was grateful to have loved ones and family around me and simply talking about the loved one that passed, specifically happy memories that made us laugh, or memories of traditions and special occasions. It helped to know that we were all grieving and that everyone grieves in different ways."*
- **Know who knows you.** *"When you need support it looks different for everyone. Go to that person that knows you, and knows how to support you."*

- **Find balance.** *"What has worked for me has been finding the right balance: finding an activity that brought me peace and calmness to be in my thoughts and process, creating a space that reminds me of the best of the loved one lost, but not alienating myself, and surrounding myself with those who I want to be around."*
- **Raise the white flag.** *"Don't be afraid to set boundaries or raise the white flag when you need support or a break. It's better to speak up early when you're just feeling too overwhelmed with emotions and life."*
- **Find others who understand.** *"Finding others in similar grief journeys has been very helpful. Putting yourself out there sometimes allows you to find others with similar stories and journeys. I have made friends with some others who have experienced similar loss."*

> *"Having a community and knowing you are not alone can mean so much."*

3. Professional & Community Support

- **Talk to a therapist.** *"For myself what helped was going to therapy and being able to let myself feel all the feelings, from anger, sorrow, and loss, and just being able to cry."*
- **Use your benefits.** *"I also used our benefits to speak with a counsellor. That helped tremendously."*
- **Join a grief group.** *"I joined a grief group. My family isn't big on talking about feelings and I had so many! Talking to people at different stages of grief, the collective understanding, regular check-ins, and just a dedicated space for big feelings."*

4. Care for Your Body & Mind

- **Move your body.** *"I like to run, and running helps me process very difficult emotions, including grief. I use running along with speaking with a therapist as needed."*
- **Get outside.** *"Get outside in fresh air or where you feel most at peace. For me it's outside somewhere that I can look at the beauty around me."*
- **Turn on the music.** *"When I am alone I love to listen to music (songs we both love) and just be."*

5. Staying Connected to Your Loved One

- **Talk to them.** *"It helped to talk about the feelings. It also helps to talk to the person you are missing so much. They may be listening."*
- **It's healthy.** *"I felt so weird talking to the person I was missing, but my grief counsellor assured me it is actually healthy."*
- **Imagine the conversation.** *"When I've experienced loss I've taken time to imagine a conversation with that person. It's always very emotional, but after taking the time I felt more at peace. While I was "answering" for them it was incredibly therapeutic. It truly helped me come to terms with the situation."*
- **Honor them.** *"Finding a new hobby or ways to honor your loved ones. I have created a memory box, or found a new craft or activities."*

- **Celebrate the days that matter.** *"Remember anniversaries of their passing in unique and celebratory ways, if that feels right for you."*
- **Make it tangible.** *"We did a butterfly release on the anniversary of the loss of a loved one. That was really special and tangible."*
- **It's the little things.** *"Every year on my dad's birthday I celebrate him by donating to suicide prevention and get his Panda Express order, so it's like he is there with me. It's the little things that remind me he is always there with me!"*

> *"This is how I want to think about grief: celebrate the life of our loved ones."*

6. When Someone Dies: Handling the Logistics

- **Let Copilot lighten the load.** During the event, one employee came off mute to share how much Microsoft Copilot helped her handle the unexpected logistics and work that come with losing someone. In the chat she added: *"Copilot also did help me a lot."*

7. How to Support Someone Who Is Grieving

- **Listen without fixing.** *"What worked for me was having people who checked in and listened without trying to fix things. Just knowing I wasn't alone made a big difference."*
- **Skip the clichés.** *"I know what I didn't want to hear initially: "You'll get over it eventually" or "Time heals everything.""*
- **Make it safe to share.** *"Most of my experience is the struggle to share about loss and death. I truly appreciate the work to destigmatize, and the vulnerability to share."*

You are not alone. Every person matters. Every connection counts. 💙