



Grief and Addiction

Grief and addiction are tragically connected, with one often causing or worsening the other.

Rehab can help individuals cope with both and end the cycle.

Selections by Krystina Murray, full article published at: www.rehabspot.com/treatment/co-occurring-disorders/Grief-And-Addiction

How Grief Causes Addiction

Losing a person you love is one of the most painful trials and tribulations one can experience in life. This pain can lead to psychological stress and the development of substance use disorders in an effort to cope with the onset of grief. It is not uncommon for someone who loses their son, daughter, wife, or husband to experience a range of emotions that fluctuates from denial and rage, to depression and despair. In response to this onslaught of emotions, even previously-sober grievers may begin to drink or do drugs to numb the pain, and those with a predisposition to or history of substance abuse are at even greater risk. Slowly, they begin to drink or use more and more as a means to regulate their emotions and take the edge off. Binge drinking and heavier periods of episodic drinking or drug use occur more frequently as the drinker desperately turns to alcohol and drugs as a means of self-medication. This drinking habit may then develop into a full-on addiction, (in the case of alcohol better known as alcoholism), as someone begins to need alcohol just to function.

Grief can take a serious toll, even on the most resilient of people. Alcohol and drugs may seem like an easy and often comforting coping mechanism to those grieving the loss of a loved one, but it is ultimately only one of self-destruction. Abusing alcohol and drugs gives way to further negative emotions that can make it even harder to work through grief. It is important that individuals going through the grieving process receive the help they need and express their emotions in positive ways rather than turn to alcohol as a means of self-medication.

Grieving the Loss of a Loved One to Addiction

Losing a loved one to a substance use disorder is probably one of the most painful experiences someone can endure. Each day, America loses 115 people to drugs like Heroin, Oxycodone, and Methadone. In 2016, 17,087 people died due to Opioid addiction. Family members and friends who have lost someone to addiction experience a cycle of grief.



These experiences can include:

- Shock
- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Grieving the Loss of Innocence and Joy

Grief and addiction are connected in many ways. The individuals struggling with the disease of addiction may grieve times when their lives were free of harmful substances...(Continued, page 2)

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They may grieve moments when they weren't withdrawing from harsh chemicals, perhaps when they led a simple life with a plan of action they committed to. Finally, they may mourn memories of when their relationships were uncomplicated and not destroyed by the abuse of addictive substances.

As a result, the individual may feel as if they have disconnected with their core joy and purpose in life, grieving goals, wellness, and peace of mind. Reflections of life before addiction may reveal a downward spiral of a loss of control and feelings of isolation. Hence a host of overwhelming emotions begin to resurface.

Underaged substance abusers, such as middle and high school students may sense they are not like other kids who don't abuse illicit substances. Some may use substances to repress troubling memories of early childhood trauma. By the time they enter high school and college, they have struggled with maintaining their youthful innocence as they have used harmful substances to cope.

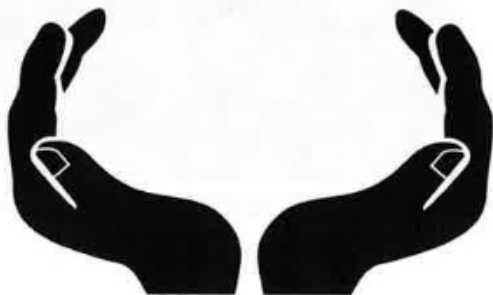
Grief and Healthy Coping Skills

The bereavement following the loss of someone who has used drugs can transform loved ones forever. During this time, the family member, friend, or spouse may feel anger, numbness, or sadness. Such a loss can make it difficult for a family member or friend to move forward in life. Family and friends may focus on the loss of their loved one and struggle with accepting their passing.

Family members should also find strong support groups encouraging love and acceptance. This allows for everyone to remain connected to the present and have someone to lean on during a crisis. Likewise, family members should continue to eat healthy, get good rest, and consider talking to a therapist. Therapists offer the needed guidance for people struggling with such loss, and identify unhealthy patterns of behavior. Therapists can also teach healthy coping skills for grief.

Start Healing from Grief and Addiction Today

Carrying the emotional trauma of a loved one who has passed can be a difficult battle. Support is available to help you mourn in healthy ways. Treatment experts can target which facilities specialize in grief and addiction. Call a treatment professional today to discover what programs and treatments are most effective.*



Safely Home

by Author Unknown

I am home in heaven, dear ones;
Oh, so happy and so bright.
There is a perfect joy and beauty
in this everlasting light.

All the pain and grief is over,
every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever,
safely home in heaven at last.

Did you wonder I so calmly
Trode the valley of the shade?
Oh, but Jesus' love illuminated
Every dark and fearful glade.

And He came Himself to meet me
in the way so hard to tread;
And with Jesus' arm to lean on
could I have one doubt or dread?

Then you must not grieve so sorely,
for I love you dearly still.
Try to look beyond death's shadows;
Pray to trust our Father's will.

There is work still waiting for you,
so you must not idly stand.
Do it now, while life remaineth;
you shall rest in Jesus' land.

When that work is all completed,
He will gently call you home;
Oh, the rapture of that meeting;
Oh, the joy to see you come!

The Thing Is

by Ellen Bass

to love life, to love it even
when you have no stomach for it
and everything you've held dear
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,
your throat filled with the silt of it.
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat
thickening the air, heavy as water
more fit for gills than lungs;
when grief weights you like your own flesh
only more of it, an obesity of grief,
you think, How can a body withstand this?

Then you hold life like a face
between your palms, a plain face,
no charming smile, no violet eyes,
and you say, yes, I will take you
I will love you, again.

The Art of Being Happily Single

By C. De Lima, published <https://tinybuddha.com>

Over the past ten years, I always had a man by my side. I was always in a relationship.

I was in a relationship for eight years before my ex and I got engaged, then broke it off because of the distance—my ex's reason. Not long after that I got into a two-year relationship with a man who loved, yet cheated on me. It was a messy breakup.

So after ten years in relationships, I found myself alone. I'm thirty-one and single! Recently some questions have bounced around in mind: What happened to me during those years? What did I get, gain, achieve in these two relationships? Why am I now alone? What will I do? How do I do things by myself?

Now what? Where to start?

I started to panic, to hyperventilate—until I found this quote:

“Single is not a status. It is a word that describes a person who is strong enough to live and enjoy life without depending on others.”

Yes, I am scared. I was so used to sharing everything. I was so used to having someone around.

But the reality is I am my own person, and if I can't enjoy being single, how can I enjoy being with someone else?

So I started reading about being single, and interviewing other happy single people. Surely I wasn't the only thirty-one-year-old person who felt uncertain about her new singleness. I needed to find proven ways to be happy as a single adult woman.

In my research, I learned some important truths about being single:

1. Being single gives you time to be by yourself, with yourself. Finally, some me time. This is the time to reconnect with myself, a time where I can talk to myself, debating all the questions and answers that are bouncing in my head. This is the time of reflection. This is the time of acceptance and letting go, which brings me to the second point...

2. If you don't let go of the past, you will never appreciate the present. Yes, I have fond memories of my exes, but that was in the past. I know I will always cherish those memories, but I need to stop clinging to them to live for today and plan for tomorrow. Buddha said every day you are born again—that means new experiences and adventures for today!

3. It's only after you have lost everything that you are free to find out what you were missing. During those ten years, I lost love, a pregnancy, and my health. I truly believed I had lost everything. I can't even start telling you how many tears I shed during those difficult times. Now that I'm single, I have an opportunity to do all the things I put off while I was putting all my energy into my relationships. I have to believe that I will eventually have the things I lost, but for now I'm taking this time to enjoy myself and complete myself.



4. Change can sometimes be good. Part of me feels afraid of this quick change. Adaptation takes time, yet I'm already thinking of all the possibilities—meeting new people, going to new places, tackling new projects. Sometimes change is the best thing for us, as it opens us up to new activities and environments.

5. Being single does not have to mean being afraid to love.

My heart has been bashed, bruised, and broken. But I don't feel traumatized, and I know I will love again. Hopefully the next someone will treasure and treat my heart with love and respect.

Staying open to love isn't just about attracting a new relationship; it's about being open to life.

6. Even if you're single, you still have so much to appreciate. “Being single is not the end of the world,” a friend said to me. She continued by saying, “There are other problems that are more depressing than being single—hunger and homelessness, for instance.” This felt like a slap in the face to wake me up. It reminded me that even with a broken heart, I am still standing. I'm still breathing. There are still so many possibilities for me.

7. You're not alone when you're single; you still have family and good friends. I am lucky to have a supportive mother and sister. They are my sanity—my light. Spending time with them relaxes me in a way. I'm also fortunate to have wonderfully good friends who are always there with open arms, ready to listen and support me. I know for sure I can always share my happiness and sorrow with them. I can always depend on them without feeling the slightest bit of guilt. And now that I'm single, I have even more time to devote to being there for them.

8. Being single is a call to focus on yourself. Sometimes being in a relationship can make you lazy about developing yourself. You can get so comfortable that your goals take a back seat. When you're single, it prompts you to look deep inside yourself and identify the person you really want to be—whether you're in a relationship or not.

9. Something better will come your way if you're open to it. I found a lovely quote through twitter, “To see a rainbow, one has to pass a storm.”

When something bad happens, we tend to concentrate on the negatives, forgetting that there must be something positive hidden somewhere in the havoc. You will know happiness in the future—and in the present, if you're open to it.

10. Life is a balance. When there is darkness there will be light. I believe that everything in life is a process. When something dramatic and fast hits us, it will take time to process it and start over.

I am starting over. As a newbie in singlehood I still have a lot to learn, understand, and explore. I sometimes need to be reminded to be grateful for what I have.

As we all know, these words are easier said than practiced. So I hold onto one important idea that I'd like to leave you with:

Change comes from within. You alone have to decide if you want that change. •

“Uncertainty is the only certainty there is, and knowing how to live with insecurity is the only security.”

~John Allen Paulos



Continuous Care
1519 West Fourth Street
Waterloo, IA 50702

JOIN US EVERY THURSDAY!

2020 Continuous Care Support Groups

Grief Support Social Outings

TIME: 5:30-7:00 p.m.

WHERE: Pizza Ranch Restaurant,
4302 University Ave., Cedar Falls

DATES: January 2
February 6
March 5

Afternoon & Evening Grief Support Groups

TIMES: 11:30 AM-1:00 PM or
5:30 PM-7:00 PM

WHERE: Kimball Ridge Center,
2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo, corner of
Ridgeway & Kimball, Classrooms 1 and 2

DATES: January 9, 16, 23, 30
February 13, 20, 27
March 12, 19, 26

Please feel free to bring a friend – All groups are free and open to the public!

WEATHER ALERT: If schools or businesses are closed due to weather,
the meeting is canceled.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE REV. MAUREEN DONERTY
OR THE REV. JOAN FARSTAD, 319-505-3048.

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quarterly newsletter list!