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Are you having trouble moving on after a loss? Angela Donaldson examines the therapies making a difference

natural grief relief

Grief is a minefield of emotion we will all experience at some time. "You never fully 'get over' losing someone," says Dianne McKissock, a psychotherapist and world-renowned expert on grief. "What you do, with the right support, is build enough life around the emptiness inside you so you can accommodate that emptiness in your life."

How we deal with grief is a personal choice, but McKissock says alternative and complementary therapies can help you through the process. The following treatments can be particularly helpful.

AcuEnergetics

Prolonged grief has an enormous effect on our bodies energetically and, if not released, can create myriad health problems says Kevin Farrow, founder and director of the healing modality AcuEnergetics. "If we refuse to let go of someone who is dead, we energetically close our heart and the energy centre at the back of the neck," he explains.

These energetic blockages can cause anxiety; panic attacks; shoulder, neck and back pain; digestive, respiratory, heart and autoimmune problems; fatigue; and chronic and fatigue syndrome.

AcuEnergetics works on the energetic systems and anatomy of the body to address physical, emotional and mental issues. Practitioners release the energy by opening the energy centres that hold grief and getting the person to verbalise letting their loved one go.

To help yourself, place your hands over your heart and think of the person who has passed on. Say 'I love you [their name] and I let you go'. Repeat this for 10 minutes. It may also help to "stop reading, listening to and watching sad news, books, movies and songs", says Farrow. "Do things that would normally make you happy."

Kinesiology

"Grief is a natural emotion the body and the person needs to experience," says Sydney-based kinesiologist Nicky Whisson. Kinesiology helps people feel, express and release grief so they can move forward and avoid illness. "If emotions are not expressed, they get stored in the body and can ultimately manifest as disease," says Whisson.

Using a technique called muscle testing, kinesiology accesses the unconscious ▶

Emotional first-aid kit

Create a 'first-aid' kit of small, appealing items to carry with you for when you need a pick-me-up. Keep them in a soft, manageable bag, such as a make-up purse or pencil case. The key is to choose items that make you feel good. This will stimulate the release of endorphins – the body's natural painkillers – to help ease you through difficult times. McKissock uses this strategy with her clients.

Include something to:

1. **See:** A picture of a beautiful scene, pretty item, or a photo of a pet or loved one.
2. **Hear:** A recording of a feelgood song, a meditation or affirmation.
3. **Smell:** A scent that you associate with happy times, perhaps a sample of a perfume.
4. **Taste:** Something that feels fantastic in your mouth, such as a Ferrero Rocher or Lindt chocolate ball.
5. **Touch:** A piece of fabric or small item that you love the feel of.

Seek the sun

Get a short, daily dose of sunlight. Sit in the sun with your eyes closed for between 10 and 15 minutes. In summer, do this at the start or end of the day. The eyes must be closed so the sun touches the eyelids. "This helps lift the mood," says McKissock. Scientific studies show sunlight stimulates the production of serotonin – a chemical in our body that influences mood.