

This Helps me/This Hinders me

Grief can leave us feeling confused and completely overwhelmed by our emotions which sometimes means that it's difficult to identify what makes us feel better or worse. Often, others may interfere and try and guide you with what they think is right for you but they don't always know best, even if their intentions are good. The best person to listen to is yourself.

When you have a quiet moment to pause and reflect, think about what is making you feel better or worse by doing the following exercise.

1. Print off the following page which is marked with two columns entitled 'This helps me' and 'This hinders me'. You should feel free to write anything you want here, don't worry about upsetting anyone because you don't need to show it to anyone else. If you are unsure of where to start, some ideas might be

"I feel better when I've had a bath or shower each day"

"I feel better when I've spoken to someone in my support group"

"I feel better when I've eaten a meal"

or

"I feel worse when I'm in noisy, crowded places"

"I feel worse when I wake up with a hangover"

"I feel worse when others keep telling me I should try to move on"



This can be an ongoing activity as you discover more about what is helping you and what isn't but keep it fluid as it can change as you work through your grief eg. Avoiding everyone in the early days might lead you to feeling isolated later on, so be open and flexible as to what is real for you at this moment only. It's important that you don't judge it or let anyone else do so, accept it as YOUR present truth.

2. Now you have created your list, keep it somewhere to hand so you can remind yourself of it. For example, if you don't want to be in crowded places yet and you feel guilty about saying 'no' again to a party invitation, check where it sits on your list. If it is listed as 'hinders' currently, then it probably is the right decision not to go.

3. Use your list as a way of self-healing. Follow up on the areas you have marked as helping you and do as much of the good stuff as you can! You might write your ideas on post-it-notes and stick them around your home as reminders eg. a post-it note on the fridge to prompt you to eat, a daily to-do list stuck on your bathroom mirror, or just ensure things are easily accessible eg. your walking shoes kept by the door to prompt you to regularly get fresh air, a morning meditation app saved on to your phone.

The purpose of this exercise is for you to create some control over how you manage your grief in a world that may feel like all control has been taken from you. And to create little steps to make each day a little more bearable.



This helps me

This hinders me

