Understanding Traumatic Grief

Traumatic loss is different from other types of grief because it involves **shock**, **distressing memories**, **and sometimes unresolved emotions**. It can feel overwhelming, unpredictable, and deeply isolating.

Common Reactions:

- **Emotional:** Numbness, anger, guilt, deep sadness, anxiety, or feeling "stuck"
- **✓ Physical:** Trouble sleeping, exhaustion, body aches, panic attacks
- **▼ Cognitive:** Flashbacks, racing thoughts, difficulty concentrating
- **Behavioral:** Avoiding reminders, withdrawal from others, hypervigilance

Remember: There is no "right" way to grieve. Healing is not about "getting over it" but about learning to carry grief in a way that allows you to keep living.

5 Ways to Cope with Traumatic Grief

- 1. **Acknowledge Your Pain** It's okay to feel everything (or nothing). Grief is not a weakness.
- 2. **Create a Safe Space** Avoid triggering situations if possible. Find places and people who make you feel safe.
- 3. **Regulate Your Body** Trauma is stored in the body. Try deep breathing, stretching, or mindful walking.
- 4. **Honor Your Loved One in Your Own Way** There is no "wrong" way to remember them. Write, create, or carry a small token of remembrance.
- 5. **Give Yourself Permission to Pause** Healing takes time. If today is hard, focus on just getting through the next hour.

Reach Out for Help If:

- You have overwhelming thoughts of guilt, anger, or hopelessness.
- Trauma symptoms are disrupting daily life.
- You need someone to talk to. (Call LOVS 310 337-7006)

Affirmations for Traumatic Grief

These affirmations help shift self-talk toward **compassion and grounding**. Read these aloud or choose one that resonates.

- "It is okay to grieve in my own way and at my own pace."
- "I honor my emotions, whatever they may be."
- "I am not responsible for what happened. My feelings of guilt do not mean I am guilty."
- "I do not have to be strong all the time. I give myself permission to rest."
- 📽 "I can find small moments of peace, even in deep grief."
- "I am safe in this moment."
- 🌿 "I carry love and memories, even when my loved one is no longer physically here."
- Activity: Write your own affirmation that brings you comfort.

Self-Care Guide for Traumatic Loss

Coping with trauma and grief requires **gentle**, **ongoing self-care**. Below is a simple **self-care plan** to follow.

W Daily Self-Care Checklist

- ☐ Drink water and nourish your body (even if appetite is low).
- Move your body (gentle stretching, walking, or breathing exercises).
- Rest when needed (listen to your body, nap if necessary).
- Avoid emotional overload (limit news, social media, and triggering conversations).
- ☐ Allow yourself to cry, express, or simply **be** without guilt.

→ When You Feel Overwhelmed, Try This

▼ 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

- Name 5 things you can see
- Name 4 things you can touch
- Name 3 things you can hear
- Name 2 things you can smell
- Name 1 thing you love about yourself

W Comforting Rituals

• Light a candle in memory of your loved one

- Hold a comforting object (a soft blanket, stone, or something meaningful)
- Listen to calming music or nature sounds

✓ Write a "Permission Slip" to Yourself

- "I give myself permission to rest today."
 "I don't have to have all the answers right now."
 "I will take life one moment at a time."