

Overcoming Isolation

- Recognize negative thinking and the stories you are telling yourself – *I'm not likable, no one wants to spend time with me, everyone else is happy, everyone else has someone they can talk to, I don't fit in anywhere.* Refuse to buy into these stories and look for evidence to the contrary. For those willing to see a therapist, Cognitive Behavioral Therapists are especially helpful when trying to combat negative thinking.
- Intentionally place yourself in social settings. If you're not ready to join a group, start by simply going to public places like the mall or the park.
- Look for evidence in your environment that you aren't in fact alone. Remember, loneliness isn't the same as being alone and one can feel lonely even when surrounded by family and friends.
- Avoid toxic relationships. These relationships can affirm your worst fears about people and increase the likelihood of emotional withdrawal.
- Step out of your comfort zone – accept an invitation or initiate plans with someone.
- Write an email, send a Facebook message, text a family member, send a letter, or phone a friend.
- Read our post on maintaining relationships with family and friends after the death of a loved one,
- Say hello, smile, or make eye contact when walking down the street.
- Volunteer somewhere where you're likely to have contact with other people.
- Join a club where people have similar interests to your own.
- Resist the urge to cancel plans or no-show.
- Ask people about themselves.
- Look for similarities in others, rather than differences.
- If one group doesn't work for you, try another.
- Ask for help.
- Try a support group.
- Try individual or group therapy.
- Make the best of your alone time; do something constructive, cathartic, therapeutic, or good for your health.

10 Ways to Overcome Grief-Related Anxiety

- Learn a little about how anxiety works. Anxiety is the mind's response to a fearful situation. Death and loss automatically sets off our fear-responders, putting you on alert and heightening physical sensations. Reminding yourself that this is a normal reaction and that it is our body's way of managing stress can help keep you calm.
- Check in with your grief. One reason we develop anxiety after a loss is due to unprocessed grief. Take some time to check in with yourself about your grief process. Are there emotions or memories that you are avoiding out of fear or

pain? If so, open yourself up to doing some work in these areas (on your own or with the support of a professional) and doing so will be sure to ease the pressure on your accompanying anxiety.

- Make amends. One of the reasons we get stuck in our grief and anxiety is because there is something left unsaid, or something we feel guilty about following a loss. Finding ways to ease your guilt and even make amends with your lost loved one can help with that pervasive sense of unease that comes with anxiety. It's never too late to seek forgiveness, even after someone is gone.
- Embrace resilience. Find ways to begin moving forward and healing. Sometimes we resist doing this because it feels like if we choose to move forward then it means we are letting go of our loved one. We will never get *over* the loss of a loved one but we can find ways to build a meaningful life in their absence.
- Write your way through. There is serious power in writing through your grief. Writing helps us explore our own process, release tension, and connect with our lost loved ones. Put a pen to paper to quell some of that anxiety.
- Understand how your brain works. Cognitive behavioral therapy is an intrinsic part of getting a handle on grief-related anxiety. Understanding how our thoughts work, and learning new methods to quell pervasive, repetitive and catastrophic thoughts is key to managing your anxiety.
- The power of meditation. Freeing yourself from pervasive thoughts and immersing yourself in the present moment can work wonders on the anxious mind.
- Explore your connection to your loved one. This one is integral to healthy grieving and helps quash anxiety in return. Finding ways to develop an internal or spiritual relationship with your loved one will serve to bring you a greater sense of peace and compassion for your experience. Open up to the idea that your relationship is not over.
- Get your affairs in order. Facing our own mortality and putting a few things in place for our own eventual deaths will help us feel less anxious about the inevitable. Ask yourself, if you were on your deathbed right now what do you want to take care of?
- Don't go it alone. Grieving is lonely business, but it doesn't have to be. One of the reasons we get so anxious is because we don't know how we're supposed to do this. Reach out and find some support, either in a grief group, one-on-one therapy or with a friend who understands.