

# GRIEVING WITH OTHERS: WAYS TO LET PEOPLE IN

Grief is very personal, but at the same time, it is communal. Others care, and they wish to support you. It is your right to decide how, and when, to let them into your process.

Learning to grieve with others may come naturally or may take practice. Finding ways to communicate your thoughts and feelings will help others help you. To start, try one thing each week (or other period) that allows you to connect to others. Here are some ways to establish boundaries, if you want them, while assuring those around you that love and support are always welcome.

## 01. Find one or two people whom you know to be trustworthy and capable.

They will be helpful companions and possibly will be able to run interference for you if you need it.

## 02. Set compassionate and respectful limits.

Let others know what you can do now. Consider how and whether your feelings may change as time goes on.

“Thank you, but I’m not up for that today.”

“I don’t want to go out, but I would welcome a visit here.”

“Maybe we can meet up in [a few weeks/a month/a few months/ etc.]”

## 03. Use truth and authenticity to address and minimize hurtful comments.

Most people mean well and do not intend to hurt you. But you can let them know what you are feeling and how to respond to you in the future.

“This [day/anniversary/holiday/etc.] is really hard for me.”

“That feels unhelpful to hear.”

“[Name] will always be a part of my life. I can’t move on, but I am moving forward.”

## 04. Share yourself and your child.

Ask others to participate or help you be and stay connected.

“Today I was remembering...”

“You never had a chance to meet [name]. This is something I would like you to know about them.”

“Do you have a special memory of [name]?”

## 05. Allow space for processing and rest.

Trauma and grief are exhausting. You may find that you are easily set off and respond to others in anger and frustration. Or that you are more reserved than usual, possibly tending toward isolation.

Find balance through sleep, deep and steady breathing, and other self-regulating practices that bring you relaxation and comfort.

\*Based on The Parmenter Foundation’s Parent Education Program session “Grieving Alongside Others” presented in collaboration with Courageous Parents Network by Taryn Schuelke, MS, CT, CCLS, Texas Children’s Hospital\*