

# Taking Action to be Kind to Yourself



**Resilient  
Parenting**

FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES

Being kind to yourself includes what you do for yourself as well as what you say to yourself. The Four Steps to Kinder Thoughts When You are Feeling Badly tool is one way that many parents are kind to themselves during difficult times. However, self-kindness is about more than saying kind things to yourself. It is also about taking action to care for yourself.

It can seem difficult to find the time just to do things to take care of yourself. You're already doing a lot. You may be working, caring for children, and doing many other things. Caring for yourself doesn't mean you stop doing these things, but it means you also tend to your own needs. Even 10 minutes a day for yourself can make a big difference!

Here are two kinds of experiences that many grieving parents have where you can practice putting self-kindness into action.



## Dealing with big grief-related events like anniversaries, holidays, and birthdays

Grieving parents face many significant grief-related events, such as the anniversary of a spouse's death. There are also holidays and birthdays, which feel different after the death. These big events can be painful and stressful for parents, who have to deal with their own feelings and grief while also helping their children through these times.

Take a moment to notice the feelings that you're having about an upcoming grief event. Then, see if you can think of some kind words you can say to yourself. Now, take it a step further – what are some things you can do for yourself to show yourself kindness today?

Here are some ideas.  
What else can you think of?

- » Schedule time to talk to a supportive friend.
- » Join an online grief support group.
- » Take some time to think of ways to remember the person who died on the anniversary of the death. Talk with your children about what they would like to do ahead of time.
- » Take some time to think about how you'd like to handle birthdays and holidays. Talk with your children about what they would like to do ahead of time.
- » Schedule some time to do things you enjoy.

### MODULE 1: Be Kind to Yourself

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## Dealing with day-to-day stresses after loss

Life after loss can be hard. There are a lot of emotions after the death of a partner or co-parent, including grief and loneliness. There may be new financial concerns. Some people take on new employment or learn to manage household details their partner used to handle. Parenting is also hard. There are extra responsibilities and roles to manage as a single parent. Parents must also help their children adjust to all the changes that have happened after the loss.

Sometimes it can seem hard to find time for yourself. See if you can get creative and set aside a few minutes for yourself each day when the kids are engaged in school, or when younger children are napping or watching their favorite TV program. Scheduling time to care for yourself is an important part of self-kindness!

Take a moment to notice the feelings you're having about the stress you are facing. Then, see if you can think of some kind words you can say to yourself. You can use the *Four Steps to Kinder Thoughts* tool if you like.

Now, take it one step further – what are some things you can do for yourself to show yourself kindness today?

Here are some ideas.  
What else can you think of?

- » Set a time to talk with a supportive friend.
- » Schedule time to work out.
- » Set aside a small area of your home that is just for you. Put whatever brings you comfort here, maybe photos, mementos, or your favorite music. Spend some time each day here.
- » Take a short walk alone or with a friend.
- » Spend time gardening or in nature.
- » Spend time on a hobby you enjoy.
- » Enjoy a cup of tea or other beverage in a quiet space.
- » Read a chapter in a book, some poetry, or a spiritual text.
- » Take a bath.
- » Meditate, do yoga, or pray for 5 minutes.
- » Write in a journal.
- » Create a ritual that gives you peace of mind that can be done regularly.



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