



My loved one/child did not survive a heroin overdose. Now what?

1. First take care of you! Ask for help and accept help when it is offered.

- A. Your only job right now is to get through the next few days past the funeral.
- B. Let others help you and your family. You need to focus on each other.
- C. Breathe. Allow yourself to be in the moment.
- D. Cry when you need to cry. You don't need to be strong today.
- E. It is normal to feel angry and scared. An overwhelming sense of sadness is normal.
- F. You may experience physical pain. Contact your primary care physician for help and guidance.
- G. You need to eat and you need to sleep. Even if you feel you can't.

2. Services

- A. Call the funeral home to make arrangements.
- B. Consider the financial side of the services. No one is prepared to bury a child. Reach out for help.
- C. Call Brave Choices 513-212-8176 to initiate a GoFund Me page. We will direct the funds to the funeral home for you.
- D. Focus on your child. This is the last thing you will ever be able to do for them. Make the service a tribute to their life and celebrate who they were before their addiction. (This was therapeutic for our family).
- E. Include happy memories, funny stories, and pictures of happier times.
- F. Provide clothing that your child would feel comfortable in and that speaks to who they were as a person.
- G. Choose music that your child liked or that speaks to your relationship.
- H. Your child is no longer an addict. They are no longer in pain. No one can hurt them anymore.

3. The days after the service

- A. Take your time and allow yourself to grieve. No one can tell you how to do this, everyone grieves differently.
- B. Allow each other space. Moods will change and fluctuate from day to day, hour by hour.
- C. Trying to get on with life after your child has died is very hard because at first, every minute can be full of reminders. You might think that you are losing your mind, but you're not - you're responding in a normal way to a terrible event.
- D. Create a support system. Gather caring friends and relatives who truly understand you and what you've gone through; those who you know will be there for you when you need them---to listen, to be compassionate, to support and encourage you. Individual therapy and a support group are very useful while you're trying to sort through the process of grieving, trying to pick up the pieces of your life, and trying to make plans for the next phase of your life.

4. Resources to call for next steps

- A. Brave Choices 513-212-8176 www.facebook.com/bravechoices
- B. SOLACE 513-516-7608 www.facebook.com/ClermontCoAH
- C. Fernside – Cincinnati Chapter (for grieving children and teens) 513-246-9140 www.fernside.org
- D. Compassionate Friends Cincinnati Chapter
Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter Chapter#: 1969
Carol (513) 271-6809
www.tfcincy.com
carolt@cinci.rr.com Meeting Info: 4th Tuesday of each month 7:00 pm
Meeting Address: St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 8101 Beechmont Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45255

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The thing I've learned about grieving.

Everyone grieves in their own way. Some cry, some are quiet, some are angry. No one can tell you how to grieve or whether or not you are doing it "right". Friends, family, onlookers have their opinions. Over the years I have been guilty of having my own opinions about the actions of those who have found themselves in an immediate place of loss.

Since we have lost our son I have come to realize many things. One being that I have a different outlook or sense of protection toward all my children even the one we have lost. My perspective is almost obsessive to protect them fearing that I might lose another or their memory might be tarnished or disrespected. My focus has turned to them and their father in a way that I am guarded almost too fault. I know this is part of the grieving process and that someday I will be able to relax and feel comfortable again.

I've learned to respect the actions of those which I do not understand. It isn't mine to understand. It is my mine to respect them, support them. Let them cry and hold them up when they cannot stand on their own. It is mine to have their back even when I don't agree with them, after all it is their immediate loss and only they have the right to make the decisions that need to be made and no one outside of that immediate loss has a right to judge them.

I've learned how important a phone call can be. How a text can brighten the day. How knowing that you are being cared for means everything. In a time of loss the last thing a grieving person needs is conflict, judgment, or being made to feel guilty for some reason or another. Those actions will damage a relationship very quickly and most likely damage beyond repair. The thought that hurts the most is that if I can't trust someone in my most vulnerable grieving state then I could never really trust them again. Maybe there wasn't any trust to be had in the first place.

I've learned that the loss of a child affects many people. But it affects no one to the depth of pain and loss felt by a parent and the siblings left behind. The siblings are the ones who get forgotten. They are the ones who have most likely never experienced a loss so close. They have lost their partner in crime, their confidant, the person they have looked up to for so long. They now have to watch their parents and other family members cry and hurt so badly and they can't do anything about it. They are helpless, they are hurting, and they are pushed aside without consideration of how things in the world around them are falling apart. It's pitiful really. The ones who should be held tight are getting pushed away and forgotten because others doesn't understand and think they have the right.

I've learned that patience and unconditional love is not felt by everyone. It is often replaced by self-serving justifications. I've learned that going forward and working through our loss I am finding a peace, an understanding of putting myself and my own selfish agendas behind me. It isn't about me. It isn't about what I think. It's about taking care of others fully and unconditionally. It's about love, a kind of love that many aren't capable of. A kind of love that I and my family have experienced from so many friends and family. The kind of love that is shown and protected and placed on a pedestal. The kind of love that is selfless.

Be kind to each other. Love each other. Never let a day go by when you had the chance to make things right but were too spiteful and selfish to correct it. Don't allow your legacy to be one of hatred and greed. There will come a day when you will regret it. Only you can make a difference to those around you. Only you can be the one who truly loves.

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Who we are:

We are a group that supports individuals who have suffered the loss of a loved one due to drug abuse as well as advocate for prevention in our County.

Clermont County Against Heroin (Empowered by SOLACE) is in partnership with the coalition for a drug free Clermont county. C.C.A.H. is a twofold group that supports individuals who have suffered the loss of a loved one due to drug abuse as well as advocate for prevention in the community.

We want to put a stop to the Heroin Epidemic plaguing Clermont County by helping those with addictions and their families find treatment options as well as support in their community. We hope to educate, prevent, and bring awareness to our community about the dangers of Heroin and other drugs.

SOLACE stands for: Surviving Our Loss and Continuing Everyday. This does not necessarily mean that you have to have physically lost somebody by death it can also mean you feel you have lost them due to their addiction. Everyone in the community is welcome to attend.

Meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 6 until 8 pm. The meeting location is the HOPE Community Center in Amelia, located at the corner of Ohio Pike and Cecelia.

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ClermontCoAH/timeline>

Coalition for a Drug Free Clermont County: <http://www.drugfreeclermont.org/>

Email: letsmakeachange123@yahoo.com

SOLACE Phone 513-516-7608

Scan this QR Code to access the
Substance Abuse Recovery Resource
Guide



The Progression of Grief

1. **SHOCK & DENIAL-**

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level, in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

2. **PAIN & GUILT-**

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully, and not hide it, avoid it or escape from it with alcohol or drugs.

You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn't do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

3. **ANGER & BARGAINING-**

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. Please try to control this, as permanent damage to your relationships may result. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion.

You may rail against fate, questioning "Why me?" You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair ("I will never drink again if you just bring him back")

4. **"DEPRESSION", REFLECTION, LONELINESS-**

Just when your friends may think you should be getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be "talked out of it" by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this stage of grieving.

During this time, you finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

More 7 stages of grief...

5. **THE UPWARD TURN-**

As you start to adjust to life without your dear one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your "depression" begins to lift slightly.

6. **RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH-**

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without him or her.

7. **ACCEPTANCE & HOPE-**

During this, the last of the seven stages in this grief model, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward.

You will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without pain; sadness, yes, but the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.