



## ***Coping strategies***

### **Keep it simple**

Avoid causing additional work for yourself such as using paper plates to eliminate doing dishes. Your goal here is twofold: to feel a sense of accomplishment at the end and to eliminate feelings of exhaustion or stress.

### **Identify your “Safe People” and use them**

Safe people are those who truly understand what you are going through and do not set unrealistic expectations or ask unwarranted questions. When family members or friends ask how they can help, don't be afraid to tell them.

### **Set realistic expectations**

Since how we feel can change so suddenly from one moment to the next, it's important to be aware of your capabilities in a given moment. Recognize your limits, and separate the things that must be done from those that can wait.

### **Reward yourself**

Grief work is about baby steps. It is essential to reward yourself for tasks completed and steps taken, even if they seem small to you. Those baby steps are the pathway to the bigger steps of the journey. Take the time to recognize how far you've come.

### **Change routines**

Consider having your meals at a different time of the day, in a different room, or serving foods you typically did not have. Changing routines reduces grief triggers and painful reminders. You do not need to make drastic changes, just simple ones.

### **Cooking is a ritual to honor loved ones**

Cooking is a beautiful way to honor your loved one, remain connected, and share their legacy with other people. Because cooking induces so many sense memories, it enables us to process the grief in a healthy way and achieve closure.

### **Plan ahead for special days**

Birthdays. Anniversaries. Holidays. These special days are stressful times. Its important remind yourself the anticipation is typically far worse than the actual day. It is important to talk to family members, and develop a plan (start with what you don't want vs. what you do) to get you through the day.

### **Journal**

Try to keep a journal or write letters to loved ones. Journaling is a safe way to share powerful, deep rooted emotions that are too difficult to verbalize. Releasing these feelings through the act of writing can be a liberating process which can lighten your emotional burden. Particularly if some of these feelings were left unsaid.

### **Take your grief temperature**

Take a moment to rate how you're feeling. On a scale of 1 – 10 rate your level of comfort in shopping or cooking for one. Knowing your temperature helps identify grief triggers and foster situational self-awareness.

### **Center your breathing**

Loss changes our breathing patterns and makes our respiration more rapid. This, in turn, can trigger waves of grief, racing thoughts or anxiety. Engaging in calming breathing patterns throughout the day can reduce these symptoms.



**Culinary  
grief therapy**