Dear Grieving Family,

We at the G.A.P. Network are so very sorry to hear about your loss. Please know that you have our deepest sympathy and empathy. Our hearts are truly saddened that your loved one has passed away, maybe currently serving time, or estranged from the family for various reasons. As people who have suffered the loss of a family member in any capacity, we wish comfort on you and your family.

We are part of an organization called the G.A.P. Network which stands for Grief to Advocacy for Prevention. Our members are individuals, family groups, and organizations who provide a voice for the thousands of Ohio individuals and families impacted by substance use, especially the opiate and heroin epidemic, incarceration, death by suicide, domestic violence and any other circumstance surrounding grief and loss. Not only will the G.A.P Network work with those individuals and families experiencing death due to overdose, but grief and loss due to any mental health circumstance. The G.A.P. Network is a program of Prevention Action Alliance which is a statewide nonprofit charitable organization founded in 1987.

This letter is to let you know that you are not alone. We know that all too often family members feel they are very much alone. The stigma of addiction and/or having mental health related deaths can add a new layer of emotions such as guilt, judgment, and anger to the already difficult grieving process. Many families feel overwhelmed trying to find answers as to how this happened to their loved one.

We hope that this packet of information can provide you with some valuable resources to help with both coping and a deeper understanding of grief/loss. Most importantly, we want you to know that we are here to offer support through providing resources, advocacy, and education. Our phone number and email is listed below. We invite you to reach out to us if you wish to talk, so we can provide you with the necessary tools to get through this tough time. We have walked in your path and know all too well the devastation of losing a family member.

With Our Deepest Sympathy,

The G.A.P. Network

Prevention Action Alliance
6171 Huntley Road, Suite G, Columbus, Ohio 43229
(614)540-9985 | PreventionActionAlliance.org
What is the G.A.P. Network?

Moving from Grief to Advocacy for Prevention.
Supporting individuals; providing a voice for families; mobilizing communities. Bridging the gap.

The G.A.P. Network was formed in response to a public outcry against prescription medication abuse and the heroin epidemic. As of current, the G.A.P network is expanding to integrate all forms of grief and loss. Members are engagement advocacy groups, individuals, and organizations which provide a voice for Ohioans impacted by substance abuse, suicide, domestic violence, incarceration, and any other traumatic loss or mental health circumstance. The G.A.P. Network provides information, education, advocacy, networking and support to enhance your local efforts.

Our Mission

"To provide support to families impacted by unexpected loss and take action to create community change."

Advocacy groups provide support for those coping with active addictions, coping with grief and loss, and those looking for general support during a tough time in life. Groups play a critical role in changing policies, through advocacy.
Our Approach

The G.A.P. Network offers training, technical support and grant opportunities. We can provide technical assistance, information, education, and resources to help your local efforts. Prevention is effective and we can help you make changes in your community through effective strategies.

Advocacy is Action

Advocacy helps sway public opinion, bolster community support and creates change. Every advocacy group faces a set of unique challenges within its own community. That's why the G.A.P Network provides local/regional support, training, resources, networking opportunities and advocacy guidance.

We’re Proud of Your Efforts

If you have advocacy challenges or would like help and support, contact us.

The G.A.P Network is a program of Prevention Action Alliance

If you'd like to join The G.A.P Network- find a support group, advocacy group, have your family engagement group listed on our website directory, or learn more about our training and advocacy opportunities, connect with us at the contact information below:

6171 Huntley Road, Suite G
Columbus, OH 43229
https://preventionactionalliance.org/connect/the-gap-network-2/
614.540.9985
Grief to Advocacy for Prevention

Only through self-care, can we then help others. Being effective and responsible in our self-care, the grieving and coping process is of the utmost importance throughout the journey. The urge to become a public advocate must be harnessed with respect to the emotions we feel in times of loss. Understanding and respecting our grief by seeking help is perfectly acceptable and encouraged. The G.A.P Network has support resources available, in addition to a tangible Grief Resource Folder to help heal as you grieve. The revamping of the G.A.P network has allowed for growth and understanding that grief and/or loss is not exclusive but inclusive to all. The G.A.P network aims to service those dealing with traumatic loss, anticipatory loss, death by suicide, death due to overdose, incarceration, domestic violence, and any other form of loss due to harmful factors of mental health well-being.

Advocacy

Once the appropriate and necessary time is spent respecting our grief, we then can be effective advocates. It's a challenging task, and at times uncomfortable, but its a necessary one. The G.A.P Network provides local support, training, resources, networking opportunities, and guidance to empower advocacy efforts. Two extension programs of the G.A.P network are: Parent Peer Support and GAP Academy. Parent peer support is a training program consisting of six modules, educating and equipping parents how to cope, effective self-care, empower the family/individual affected by the loss, community prevention and more. The G.A.P Academy will consist of regional trainings on prevention 101 and advocacy.

Prevention

In our battle to fight substance misuse, and the promotion of mental health and wellness, we must understand the effectiveness of prevention programs and strategies in our communities. It's up to us to educate our communities and public officials on the social and economic benefits that evidence-based prevention can offer. The G.A.P Network seeks to educate communities and policy makers on and promote the use of effective prevention efforts throughout Ohio.

The G.A.P Network Newsletter

To learn about advocacy opportunities, to stay up to date with government policies and substance use and prevention, inspirations for healing and coping, and connect with others who have similar experiences go to the website listed and sign-up: https://preventionactionalliance.org/connect/the-gap-network-2/the-g-a-p-network-newsletter/
Grief and Loss

Grief is a normal, natural reaction to loss. It is an emotional response usually caused by an ending of something or a change in something. The experience of grief is different for each of us. It is personal. It is a difficult process and can be more or less difficult depending on circumstances. Grief often involves a variety of emotions including anger, sadness, fear, loneliness, guilt, regret, depression, emptiness, confusion, anxiety, and despair. It is not uncommon to experience a mixture of these and other emotions. You may feel like you are on a roller coaster. Your emotions can quickly change from one moment to the next.

The challenge is to accept our emotions and give ourselves permission to feel whatever emotions arise. Accept that this is part of the grieving process. Don’t judge yourself or anyone else for how they feel. Try to share your feelings – it’s good to talk about them. Grief is painful. But we cannot avoid it. We can’t go over, under or around it. The only way is directly through it.

Many turn to short-term fixes: alcohol, drugs, overeating, sleeping, shopping, hoarding, etc. These only tend to interfere with the healthy resolution of grief and may become just another problem. Grief takes time. It takes as long as it takes. Many experts have proposed that there is a predictable progression through stages of grief. The most recognized of these is that of Elizabeth Kubler Ross. She proposed that we move through five stages: denial, anger, depression, bargaining and acceptance. No one moves through these in some orderly fashion, finishing one and moving to the next. Instead, we may go back and forth, repeating one or more stage before we move on.

Loss is an inevitable part of life, and grief is a natural part of the healing process. Feelings of loss are personal, and only you know what is significant to you. Dealing with a significant loss can be one of the most difficult times in a person’s life. The length of the grief process is different for everyone. There is no schedule for grief. Although it can be quite painful at times, the grief process should not be rushed. It is important to be patient with yourself as you experience your unique reactions to the loss. With time and support, things generally do get better. However, it is normal for significant dates, holidays, or other reminders to trigger feelings related to the loss. Taking care of yourself, seeking support, and acknowledging your feelings during these times are ways that can help you cope.

Common Grief Reactions:

• Feeling empty and numb, as if you are in a state of shock.
• Physical responses such as nausea, trouble breathing, crying, confusion, lack of energy, dry mouth, or changes in sleeping and eating patterns.
• Anger at a situation, a person or in general.
• Guilt about what you did or did not do.
• Withdrawal from family, friends and common activities.
• Difficulty focusing, working or making decisions.
• Questions about faith or spirituality.
Coping With Grief

As you grieve, it is helpful to find activities that help you heal. Each one of us has an individual style of coping with painful experiences. The following suggestions may help you manage your feelings of grief:

- Share your thoughts, feelings and memories with others. Find those that are comfortable listening to you talk about it and let them know how it helps you. Consider writing in a journal if you are not ready to talk.
- Accept support. Let your family and friends know what you need and what you find helpful.
- Get physical exercise. It can help you sleep better, lowers your risk of depression, and can boost your immune system.
- Eat healthy, good foods.
- Use religion, philosophy, poetry, music, art, gardening, and walks in nature to gain relief and understanding. All religions recognize that grievers need special help, even if you have not been attending regularly. You won’t be turned away.
- Have a little fun. Recognize that laughter doesn’t mean you are being disrespectful. Don’t underestimate the effects of small pleasures.
- Postpone major decisions, such as selling your home or changing jobs.
- Allow time to grieve. Be patient with yourself. Read about grief so that you can see what you are feeling is normal.
- Resist the temptation to use alcohol or drugs to numb your pain. These can interfere with the grieving process by delaying it or covering it up.
- Know that seeking professional help doesn’t mean you are weak, inadequate or crazy. Consider getting professional help if you feel overwhelmed, hopeless, or helpless.
- Respect the individual grieving timetable and method of grieving.
- Prepare for the holidays and anniversaries. Even when you have moved forward in your grief, these dates may bring back some painful feelings. Make plans to be with friends and family members with whom you feel comfortable. This is also the perfect time to check in with other family members about how they’re doing with their grief and share mutual support.

You cannot prevent, cure or skip the grieving process. The only way is through, by participating in the journey. Someday the pain will lessen, leaving you with cherished memories of your loved one.
Dealing with Survivor Guilt

When a loved one dies, feelings of guilt can be felt as there may be a tendency to blame ourselves for something we did or didn’t do that may have contributed to the death or things that were done or not done or not said. This is common. Guilt is a strong emotion. Symptoms of survivor guilt are often similar to those of anxiety and depression. They may be experienced as mild or severe and can include the following:

- Nightmares.
- Sleeplessness.
- Loss of motivation.
- Flashbacks.
- Reduction in or disinterest in self care.
- Increase in irritability or agitation.

If you are worried about any of the feelings or reactions you are having, it is a good idea to talk to a person who is close to you or a professional. The most important thing to remember is that grief is a process, and it takes time.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is an essential tool in our efforts to move forward in our grieving process. Forgiveness is a process of releasing ourselves from a painful burden.

Forgiveness is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward another who has harmed you. It can bring peace of mind and frees you from corrosive anger.

Forgiveness involves letting go of deeply held negative feelings. It allows us to recognize our pain without letting that pain define us.

According to research, forgiveness:

- Makes us happier.
- Improves our health.
- Sustains relationships.
- Helps resolve conflict.
- Boosts kindness and connectedness.
- Helps us heal.
- Helps reduce trauma.
Works Cited


Acknowledgements

This publication was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), and prepared by Mary Ellen Copeland, M.S., M.A., under contract number 99M005957. Acknowledgment is given to the many mental health consumers who worked on this project offering advice and suggestions.

Disclaimer

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Updated 11/02

Table of Contents

Foreword ................................................................. 2
Introduction ............................................................ 2
Help From Health Care Providers, Counselors and Groups ........ 3
Things You Can Do Every Day to Help Yourself Feel Better .... 5
The Healing Journey .................................................. 7
Barriers to Healing ..................................................... 8
Moving Forward on Your Healing Journey ......................... 8
Further Resources ..................................................... 9
Foreword

It contains information, ideas, and strategies that people from all over the country have found to be helpful in relieving and preventing troubling feelings and symptoms. The information in this booklet can be used safely along with your other health care treatment.

You may want to read through this booklet at least once before you begin working on developing your own action plans for prevention and recovery. This can help enhance your understanding of the entire process. Then you can go back to work on each section. You may want to do this slowly, working on a portion of it and then putting it aside and coming back to it at another time.

After you have finished developing your plan, you may want to review and revise it on a regular basis as you learn new things about yourself and ways you can help yourself to feel better.

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Introduction

This is a serious issue. This booklet is just an introduction—a starting point that may give you the courage to take action. It is not meant to be a treatment program. The ideas and strategies are not intended to replace treatment you are currently receiving.

You may have had one or many very upsetting, frightening, or traumatic things happen to you in your life, or that threatened or hurt something you love—even your community. When these kinds of things happen, you may not “get over” them quickly. In fact, you may feel the effects of these traumas for many years, even for the rest of your life. Sometimes you don’t even notice effects right after the trauma happens. Years later you may begin having thoughts, nightmares, and other disturbing symptoms. You may develop these symptoms and not even remember the traumatic thing or things that once happened to you.

For many years, the traumatic things that happened to people were overlooked as a possible cause of frightening, distressing, and sometimes disabling emotional symptoms such as depression, anxiety, phobias, delusions, flashbacks, and being out of touch with reality. In recent years, many researchers and health care providers have become convinced of the connection between trauma and these symptoms. They are developing new treatment programs and revising old ones to better meet the needs of people who have had traumatic experiences.

This booklet can help you to know if traumatic experiences in your life may be causing some or all of the difficult symptoms you are experiencing. It may give you some guidance in working to relieve these symptoms and share with you some simple and safe things you can do to help yourself heal from the effects of trauma.

Some examples of traumatic experiences that may be causing your symptoms include —

- loss of close family members and friends
- physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- neglect
- war experiences
- outbursts of temper and rage
Some things that may be very traumatic to one person hardly seem to bother another person. If something
bothers you a lot and it doesn’t bother someone else, it doesn’t mean there is something wrong with you.
People respond to experiences differently.

Do you feel that traumatic things that happened to you may be causing some or all of your distressing and
disabling emotional symptoms? Examples of symptoms that may be caused by trauma include —

- anxiety
- insomnia
- agitation
- irritability or rage
- flashbacks or intrusive memories
- feeling disconnected from the world
- unrest in certain situations
- being “shut down”
- being very passive
- feeling depressed
- eating problems
- needing to do certain things over and over
- unusual fears
- impatience
- always having to have things a certain way
- doing strange or risky things
- having a hard time concentrating
- wanting to hurt yourself
- being unable to trust anyone
- feeling unlikable
- feeling unsafe
- using harmful substances
- keeping to yourself
- overworking

Perhaps you have been told that you have a psychiatric or mental illness like depression, bipolar disorder or
manic depression, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, obsessive—compulsive disorder, dissociative disorder, an eating disorder, or an anxiety disorder. The ways you can help yourself handle these symp-
toms and the things your health care providers suggest as treatment may be helpful whether your symptoms
are caused by trauma or by a psychiatric illness.

**Help From Health Care Providers, Counselors and Groups**

You may decide to reach out to health care providers for assistance in relieving the effects of trauma. This is a
good idea. The effects of trauma, even trauma that happened many years ago, can affect your health. You may
have an illness that needs treatment. In addition, your health care provider may suggest that you take medica-
tions or certain food supplements to relieve your symptoms. Many people find that getting this kind of health
care support gives them the relief and energy they need to work on other aspects of healing. To find health
care providers in your community who have expertise in addressing issues related to trauma, contact your local
mental health agency, hospital, or crisis service.
If you possibly can, work with a counselor or in a special program designed for people who have been traumati-
tized. A counselor or people leading the program may refer you to a group. These groups can be very helpful. 
However, keep in mind that you need to decide for yourself what you are going to do, and how and when you 
are going to do it. You must be in charge of your recovery in every way.

Wherever you go for help, the program or treatment should include the following:

**Empowerment**—You must be in charge of your healing in every way to counteract the effects of the trauma 
where all control was taken away from you.

**Validation**—You need others to listen to you, to validate the importance of what happened to you, to bear wit-
ness, and to understand the role of this trauma in your life.

**Connection**—Trauma makes you feel very alone. As part of your healing, you need to reconnect with others. 
This connection may be part of your treatment.

If you feel the cause of your symptoms is related to trauma in your life, you will want to be careful about your 
treatment and in making decisions about other areas of your life. The following guidelines will help you decide 
how to help yourself feel better.

**Have hope.** It is important that you know that you can and will feel better. In the past you may have thought 
you would never feel better—that the horrible symptoms you experience would go on for the rest of your life. 
Many people who have experienced the same symptoms that you are experiencing are now feeling much bet-
ter.

They have gone on to make their lives the way they want them to be and to do the things they want to do.

**Take personal responsibility.** When you have been traumatized, you lose control of your life. You may feel 
as though you still don’t have any control over your life. You begin to take back that control by being in charge 
of every aspect of your life. Others, including your spouse, family members, friends, and health care profes-
sionals will try to tell you what to do. Before you do what they suggest, think about it carefully. Do you feel that 
it is the best thing for you to do right now? If not, do not do it. You can follow others advice, but be aware that 
you are choosing to do so. It is important that you make decisions about your own life. You are responsible for 
your own behavior. Being traumatized is not an acceptable excuse for behavior that hurts you or hurts others.

**Talk to one or more people about what happened to you.** Telling others about the trauma is an important 
part of healing the effects of trauma. Make sure the person or people you decide to tell are safe people, people 
who would not hurt you, and who understand that what happened to you is serious. They should know, or you 
could tell them, that describing what happened to you over and over is an important part of the healing pro-
cess. Don’t tell a person who responds with statements that invalidate your experience, like “That wasn’t so 
bad.” “You should just forget about it,” “Forgive and forget,” or “You think that’s bad, let me tell you what hap-
pened to me.” They don’t understand. In connecting with others, avoid spending all your time talking about your 
traumatic experiences. Spend time listening to others and sharing positive life experiences, like going to mov-
ies or watching a ball game together. You will know when you have described your trauma enough, because 
you won’t feel like doing it anymore.

**Develop a close relationship with another person.** You may not feel close to or trust anyone. This may be 
a result of your traumatic experiences. Part of healing means trusting people again. Think about the person 
in your life that you like best. Invite them to do something fun with you. If that feels good, make a plan to do 
something else together at another time—maybe the following week. Keep doing this until you feel close to this 
person. Then, without giving up on that person, start developing a close relationship with another person. Keep 
doing this until you have close relationships with at least five people. Support groups and peer support centers 
are good places to meet people.
There are many things that happen every day that can cause you to feel ill, uncomfortable, upset, anxious, or irritated. You will want to do things to help yourself feel better as quickly as possible, without doing anything that has negative consequences, for example, drinking, committing crimes, hurting yourself, risking your life, or eating lots of junk food.

- **Read through the following list.** Check off the ideas that appeal to you and give each of them a try when you need to help yourself feel better. Make a list of the ones you find to be most useful, along with those you have successfully used in the past, and hang the list in a prominent place—like on your refrigerator door—as a reminder at times when you need to comfort yourself. Use these techniques whenever you are having a hard time or as a special treat to yourself.

- **Do something fun or creative,** something you really enjoy, like crafts, needlework, painting, drawing, woodworking, making a sculpture, reading fiction, comics, mystery novels, or inspirational writings, doing crossword or jigsaw puzzles, playing a game, taking some photographs, going fishing, going to a movie or other community event, or gardening.

- **Get some exercise.** Exercise is a great way to help yourself feel better while improving your overall stamina and health. The right exercise can even be fun.

- **Write something.** Writing can help you feel better. You can keep lists, record dreams, respond to questions, and explore your feelings. All ways are correct. Don’t worry about how well you write. It’s not important. It is only for you. Writing about the trauma or traumatic events also helps a lot. It allows you to safely process the emotions you are experiencing. It tells your mind that you are taking care of the situation and helps to relieve the difficult symptoms you may be experiencing. Keep your writings in a safe place where others cannot read them. Share them only with people you feel comfortable with. You may even want to write a letter to the person or people who have treated you badly, telling them how it affected you, and not send the letter.

- **Use your spiritual resources.** Spiritual resources and making use of these resources varies from person to person. For some people it means praying, going to church, or reaching out to a member of the clergy. For others it is meditating or reading affirmations and other kinds of inspirational materials. It may include rituals and ceremonies—whatever feels right to you. Spiritual work does not necessarily occur within the bounds of an organized religion. Remember, you can be spiritual without being religious.

- **Do something routine.** When you don’t feel well, it helps to do something “normal”—the kind of thing you do every day or often, things that are part of your routine like taking a shower, washing your hair, making yourself a sandwich, calling a friend or family member, making your bed, walking the dog, or getting gas in the car.

- **Wear something that makes you feel good.** Everybody has certain clothes or jewelry that they enjoy wearing. These are the things to wear when you need to comfort yourself.

- **Get some little things done.** It always helps you feel better if you accomplish something, even if it is a very small thing. Think of some easy things to do that don’t take much time. Then do them. Here are some ideas: clean out one drawer, put five pictures in a photo album, dust a book case, read a page in a favorite book, do a load of laundry, cook yourself something healthful, send someone a card.

- **Learn something new.** Think about a topic that you are interested in but have never explored. Find some information on it in the library. Check it out on the Internet. Go to a class. Look at something in a new way. Read a favorite saying, poem, or piece of scripture, and see if you can find new meaning in it.
Do a reality check. Checking in on what is really going on rather than responding to your initial “gut reaction” can be very helpful. For instance, if you come in the house and loud music is playing, it may trigger the thinking that someone is playing the music just to annoy you. The initial reaction is to get really angry with them. That would make both of you feel awful. A reality check gives the person playing the loud music a chance to look at what is really going on. Perhaps the person playing the music thought you wouldn’t be in until later and took advantage of the opportunity to play loud music. If you would call upstairs and ask him to turn down the music so you could rest, he probably would say, “Sure!” It helps if you can stop yourself from jumping to conclusions before you check the facts.

Be present in the moment. This is often referred to as mindfulness. Many of us spend so much time focusing on the future or thinking about the past that we miss out on fully experiencing what is going on in the present. Making a conscious effort to focus your attention on what you are doing right now and what is happening around you can help you feel better. Look around at nature. Feel the weather. Look at the sky when it is filled with stars.

Stare at something pretty or something that has special meaning for you. Stop what you are doing and take a long, close look at a flower, a leaf, a plant, the sky, a work of art, a souvenir from an adventure, a picture of a loved one, or a picture of yourself. Notice how much better you feel after doing this.

Play with children in your family or with a pet. Romping in the grass with a dog, petting a kitten, reading a story to a child, rocking a baby, and similar activities have a calming effect which translates into feeling better.

Do a relaxation exercise. There are many good books available that describe relaxation exercises. Try them to discover which ones you prefer. Practice them daily. Use them whenever you need to help yourself feel better. Relaxation tapes which feature relaxing music or nature sounds are available. Just listening for 10 minutes can help you feel better.

Take a warm bath. This may sound simplistic, but it helps. If you are lucky enough to have access to a Jacuzzi or hot tub, it’s even better. Warm water is relaxing and healing.

Expose yourself to something that smells good to you. Many people have discovered fragrances that help them feel good. Sometimes a bouquet of fragrant flowers or the smell of fresh baked bread will help you feel better.

Listen to music. Pay attention to your sense of hearing by pampering yourself with delightful music you really enjoy. Libraries often have records and tapes available for loan. If you enjoy music, make it an essential part of every day.

Make music. Making music is also a good way to help yourself feel better. Drums and other kinds of musical instruments are popular ways of relieving tension and increasing well-being. Perhaps you have an instrument that you enjoy playing, like a harmonica, kazoo, penny whistle, or guitar.

Sing. Singing helps. It fills your lungs with fresh air and makes you feel better. Sing to yourself. Sing at the top of your lungs. Sing when you are driving your car. Sing when you are in the shower. Sing for the fun of it. Sing along with favorite records, tapes, compact discs, or the radio. Sing the favorite songs you remember from your childhood.

Perhaps you can think of some other things you could do that would help you feel better.
The Healing Journey

Begin your healing journey by thinking about how it is you would like to feel. Write it down or tell someone else. In order to promote your own healing, you may want to work on one or several of the following issues that you know would help you to feel better.

- Learn to know and appreciate your body. Your body is a miracle. Focus on different parts of your body and how they feel. Think about what that part of your body does for you. Go to your library and review books that teach you about your body and how it works.

- Set boundaries and limits that feel right to you. In all relationships you have the right to define your own limits and boundaries so that you feel comfortable and safe. Say “no” to anything you don’t want. For instance, if someone calls you five times a day, you have the right to ask them to call you less often, or even not to call you at all. If someone comes to your home when you don’t want them to be there, you have the right to ask them to leave. Think about what your boundaries are. They may differ from person to person. You may enjoy it a lot when your sister comes to visit, but you may not want a visit from your brother or a cousin. You may not want anyone to call you on the phone after 10 p.m. Expect and insist that others respect your boundaries.

- Learn to be a good advocate for yourself. Ask for what you want and deserve. Work toward getting what you want and need for yourself. If you want to get more education for yourself so you can do work that you enjoy, find out about available programs, and do what it is you need to do to meet your goal. If you want your physician to help you find the cause of physical problems, insist that he or she do so, or refer you to someone else. When you are making important decisions about your life, like getting or staying married, going back to school, or parenting a child, be sure the decision you make is really in your best interest.

- Build your self-esteem. You are a very special and wonderful person. You deserve all the best things that life has to offer. Remind yourself of this over and over again. Go to the library and review books on building your self-esteem. Do some of the suggested activities.

- Develop a list of activities that help you feel better (refer to the list in the section “Things you can do to help yourself feel better”). Do some of these activities every day. Spend more time doing these activities when you are feeling badly.

- Every family develops certain patterns or ways of thinking about and doing things. Those things you learn in your family as a child will often influence you as an adult—sometimes making your life more difficult and getting in the way of meeting your personal goals. Think about the ways of thinking and doing things that guide you in your life. Ask yourself if they are patterns, and if you need to change them to make your life the way you want it to be. For example, in your family you may have been taught that you never tell anyone certain family secrets. In fact, it may be very important to share some family secrets with trusted friends or health care providers. Or you may have been taught that you must always do what certain members of your family want you to do. As an adult, it is important that you figure out for yourself what it is you want to do. In effect you can become your own loving parent.

- Work to establish harmony with your family or the people you live with. Plan fun and interesting activities with them. Listen to them without being critical.

- Work on learning to communicate with others so that they can easily understand what you mean. When talking with another person about your feelings, use “I” statements, like “I feel sad” or “I feel upset” rather than accusing the other person. You may want to practice good communication with a friend. Ask your friend to give you feedback on how you can be more easily understood.
You may have lots of negative thoughts about yourself and your life. Work on changing these negative thoughts to positive ones. The more you think positive thoughts the better you will feel. For instance, you may always think, “Nobody likes me.” When you think that thought, replace it with a thought like, “I have many friends.” If you often think that you will never feel better, replace that thought with the thought, “Every day I am feeling better and better.”

Develop an action plan for prevention and recovery. This is a simple plan that helps you stay well and respond to upsetting symptoms and events in ways that will keep you feeling well.

Using the activities in the section “Things you can do to help yourself feel better,” make lists of things that will help you keep yourself well and will help you to feel better when you are not feeling well. Include lists:

- to remind yourself of things you need to do every day - like getting a half hour of exercise and eating three healthy meals - and also those things that you may not need to do every day, but if you miss them they will cause stress in your life, for example, buying food, paying bills, or cleaning your home;
- of events or situations that may make you feel worse if they come up, like a fight with a family member, health care provider, or social worker, getting a big bill, or loss of something important to you. Then list things to do (relax, talk to a friend, play your guitar) if these things happen so you won’t start feeling badly;
- of early warning signs that indicate you are starting to feel worse - like always feeling tired, sleeping too much, overeating, dropping things, and losing things. Then list things to do (get more rest, take some time off, arrange an appointment with your counselor, cut back on caffeine) to help yourself feel better;
- of signs that things are getting much worse, like you are feeling very depressed, you can’t get out of bed in the morning, or you feel negative about everything. Then list things to do that will help you feel better quickly (get someone to stay with you, spend extra time doing things you enjoy, contact your doctor); and
- of information that can be used by others if you become unable to take care of yourself or keep yourself safe, such as signs that indicate you need their help, who you want to help you (give copies of this list to each of these people), the names of your doctor, counselor and pharmacist, all prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, things that others can do that would help you feel better or keep you safe, and things you do not want others to do or that might make you feel worse.

Barriers to Healing

Are there any things you are doing that are getting in the way of your healing, such as alcohol or drug abuse, being in abusive or unsupportive relationships, self-destructive behaviors such as blaming and shaming yourself, and not taking good care of yourself? Think about the possible negative consequences of these behaviors. For instance, if you get drunk, you might lose control of yourself and the situation and be taken advantage of. If you overeat, the negative consequences might be weight gain, poor body image, and poor health. You may want to work on changing these behaviors by using self-help books, working with a counselor, joining a support group, or attending a 12-step program.

Moving Forward on Your Healing Journey

If you are now about to begin working on recovering from the effects of trauma, or if you have already begun this work and are planning to continue making some changes based on what you have learned, you will need courage and persistence along the way. You may experience setbacks. From time to time you may get so dis-
couraged that you feel like you want to give up. This happens to everyone. Notice how far you’ve come. Appreciate even a little progress. Do something nice for yourself and continue your efforts. You deserve an enjoyable life.

Always keep in mind that there are many people, even famous people, who have had traumatic things happen to them. They have worked to relieve the symptoms of this trauma and have gone on to lead happy and rewarding lives. You can too.

Further Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
Center for Mental Health Services
Web site: www.samhsa.gov

SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center
P.O. Box 42557
Washington, D.C. 20015
1 (800) 789-2647 (voice)
Web site: www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov

Consumer Organization and Networking Technical Assistance Center (CONTAC)
P.O. Box 11000
Charleston, WV 25339
1 (888) 825-TECH (8324)
(304) 346-9992 (fax)
Web site: www.contac.org

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
(formerly the National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association)
730 N. Franklin Street, Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60610-3526
(800) 826-3632
Web site: www.dbsalliance.org

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
(Special Support Center)
Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
(703) 524-7600
Web site: www.nami.org

National Empowerment Center
599 Canal Street, 5 East
Lawrence, MA 01840
1-800-power2u
(800)TDD-POWER (TDD)
(978)681-6426 (fax)
Web site: www.power2u.org
National Mental Health Consumers’
Self-Help Clearinghouse
1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1207
Philadelphia, PA, 19107
1(800) 553-4539 (voice)
(215) 636-6312 (fax)
e-mail: info@mhselfhelp.org
Website: www.mhselfhelp.org

National Technical Assistance Center (NATC)
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
66 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 302
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-739-9333 (voice)
703-548-9517 (fax)
Website: www.nasmhpd.org/ntac

Resources listed in this document do not constitute an endorsement by CMHS/SAMHSA/HHS, nor are these resources exhaustive. Nothing is implied by an organization not being referenced.

You could also contact your state consumer advocacy network/agency.
Grief and Addiction Support Resource List

We have found that social media such as Facebook pages on grief and addiction give families a sense of community, enabling them to reach out and be connected to other grievers and receive both support and resources.

Internet Resources for Grief

http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/the-grief-of-an-overdose-death/ Excellent web page for general grief with hundreds of links on grief. The three links below are specific links to overdose death.


https://www.facebook.com/groups/TAPUnited/ - The Addict’s Parents United Closed FB Group (for Parents and loved ones that have a child or family member with the disease of addiction.

www.griefspeaks.com and Grief Speaks Facebook page. - Lisa Athan lists many resources for all types of grief and mental health issues.

www.mastersincounseling.org/loss-grief-bereavement.html. -This link will take you to 115 helpful websites on grief and bereavement.

https://abedformyheart.com - Website and Facebook page.

www.griefshare.org - Offers on-line support and option for free daily encouragement email for a year. This is a worldwide organization offering a 12-week program in small group settings for grief. It has a spiritual basis but is not sponsored by any one church. All are welcome weather they are active with their faith or not. The website directs people to plug in their zip code to find a group close to them. Columbus has several groups at any given time meeting at various churches.

www.garyroe.com/please-be-patient-im-grieving/ - Website of author Gary Roe, chaplain and author of several books including Please Be Patient I’m Grieving.

www.compassionatefriends.org- Haven for families who have experienced the loss of a child, at any age or gestation and from any cause of death.

We hope all the resources in this list are helpful. If you would like to add resources please contact contact@PreventionActionAlliance.org. We thank the members of the GAP Network for providing the resources listed above.
http://www.drugfree.org - Partnership for Drug Free Kids is a good addiction resource and includes a link for a memorial page for your loved one.


https://www.ohealth.com/patients-and-visitors/support/grief-support-groups -support groups for all ages, one on one counseling, workshops, art therapy, infomraton and referall services.

https://cornerstoneofhope.org/columbus/support-groups/-Cornerstone of Hope offers grief support groups in 8 or 10-week sessions rotated several times throughout the year. Groups are open and accessible to all, regardless of ethnic, cultural and faith backgrounds.

https://www.syntero.org/programs/for-grief-loss-trauma/-Through group programs and individual counseling, Syntero helps people of all ages deal with grief, loss and trauma. -

https://cap4kids.org/columbus/behavior-counseling-addiction/grief-support/

https://www.hospiceofcentralohio.org/grief-healing/-There is no right way to grieve, but Hospice of Central Ohio can help friends and family members cope with their feelings and learn to express themselves in a healthy, healing manner.


https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm -Whatever type of loss you’ve suffered, there’s no right or wrong way to grieve. But by understanding the stages and types of grief, you can find healthier ways to cope.


https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/grief/ohio- Grief therapist

https://www.facebook.com/events/mount-carmel-hospice-and-palliative-care/mount-carmel-hospice-evergreen-program/222746314921435/-Evergreen provides an opportunity for families to cope with the death of someone special to them. After a pizza supper, children attend a group with others their age and adults attend their own group.

https://www.fernside.org/grief-resources/booklists-referrals- At Fernside, as part of the Goldstein Family Grief Center, we have an extensive resource library of bereavement education materials available to the community.

We hope all the resources in this list are helpful. If you would like to add resources please contact contact@PreventionActionAlliance.org. We thank the members of the GAP Network for providing the resources listed above.
Books

Beyond Tears: Living After Losing a Child by Ellen Mitchell - This book follows nine mothers who have each lost a child.

Dreamland by Sam Quiones - Understanding the opiate-heroin epidemic.

Life After Death, Rediscovering Life after the Loss of a Loved One (Christian book) by Tony Cooke

Rare Bird: A Memoir of Loss and Love by Anna Whiston-Donaldson

Passed and Present: Keeping Memories of Loved Ones Alive by Allison Gilbert

The Worst Loss: How Families Heal from the Death of a Child by Barbara D. Rosof

The Empty Room: Surviving the Loss of a Brother or Sister at Any Age by Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn

Additional Resources

Grandparent Resources

https://www.facebook.com/groups/GrandsUnited/ - Grands United was formed for Grandparents and other family members or trying to gain guardianship of our grandchildren/child due to the disease of addiction affecting our family unit.

https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/kinship care.stm - Kinship Permanency Incentive Program (KPI) - (KPI) program was created to support children in the homes of family or friends who have committed to caring for them when birth parents cannot. KPI provides time-limited incentive payments to families caring for their kin

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Ohio http://www.funeralsohio.org/documents.shtml

Legal Resources

Ohio Legal Aid https://www.ohiolegalhelp.org/find-your-legal-aid

Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation http://www.olaf.org/

Community Legal Aid NE Ohio http://www.communitylegalaid.org/

The Legal Aid Society of Columbus http://www.columbuslegalaid.org/

Southeastern Ohio Legal Services http://www.seols.org/

Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc http://www.lawolaw.org/

Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati http://www.lascinti.org/