

A Gentle Grief Reflection Timeline

Possible supports without a schedule

Before you begin

This is not a schedule, a list of stages, or a measure of whether you are healing. Grief does not move in a straight line. Use these as possible supports to revisit, skip, repeat, or adapt.

The first days and weeks: simplify and receive care

- Ask one trusted person to help with meals, errands, messages, or appointments.
- Choose one small daily anchor, such as drinking water, stepping outside, or taking a shower.
- Write down immediate practical tasks so your mind does not have to hold everything.
- Accept help without feeling obligated to explain your grief.
- Use a short prayer, verse, song, breath practice, or quiet moment if that feels supportive.

The months that follow: make room for changing needs

- Notice which situations make grief feel sharper and plan extra support around them.
- Tell one person what kind of support is useful: listening, company, practical help, or space.
- Make a small memory practice, such as lighting a candle, writing a letter, assembling photos, or sharing a story.
- Talk with a counselor, pastor, doctor, or support group.
- Revisit routines gently rather than demanding that life feel normal.

Anniversaries, holidays, and unexpected waves

- Plan ahead for significant dates while leaving room to change your mind.
- Decide which traditions you want to keep, change, or pause.
- Identify a person you can contact before or after a difficult day.
- Name the loss directly if it feels right: This day is hard because I miss them.
- Choose one compassionate response when a wave comes: rest, prayer, a walk, music, a call, or simply a pause.

At any point: return to what helps

- Ask: What is one caring next step - not the whole solution?
- Allow both gratitude and grief to be present.
- Seek professional or crisis support if you feel unsafe or unable to function.
- Bring questions about God, meaning, anger, or doubt into a trusted conversation.
- Remember that returning to an earlier need is not moving backward.

This educational handout is not a substitute for individualized mental-health care. If you are in immediate danger or may harm yourself, call or text 988 or call 911.