

# Alcohol and Grief

People who suffer a loss will experience grief in many ways. While some can come to terms relatively quickly, others will look for external ways to cope. Alcohol has become an all-too-common means of dealing with that grief.

*By Cooper Smith | Last Edited: July 24, 2019*

## The Relationship Between Alcohol and Grief

Alcohol and grief have a tragic, and all-too-common, relationship. When a loved one passes away, the fallout can be devastating. Parents, children, and partners can all be deeply impacted by the loss of someone they love. Grief is a response to that loss and can sometimes be overwhelming, especially when the person lost was an integral part of another's life.



Alcohol is very present in our modern world. Between bars, liquor stores, and parties, we are constantly surrounded by the substance. Even at funerals, it is common to toast to the recently departed as a way to show respect. This, however, can be the stepping stone to developing a larger issue down the road.

### **Please Take a Moment...**

Grief can weigh heavily on someone's life. If you feel that you are at your wit's end, please stop reading, and call [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255). The National Suicide

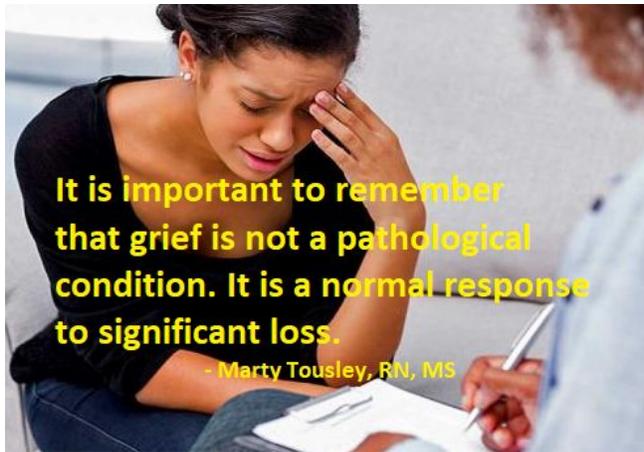
Prevention Hotline is open 24/7 and allows anyone to speak openly and anonymously. They provide an online chat as well if you feel more comfortable communicating non-verbally. You may also call the 24/7 New Mexico Crisis and Access Line [1-855-662-7474](tel:1-855-662-7474).

## How Grief Leads to Alcohol Abuse

People come to terms with loss in many different ways. In some cases, that can lead them to start using alcohol. It is one thing to drink alcohol recreationally. Someone could go for years drinking modestly without developing a problem, but once they start drinking for a specific reason, be it grief, depression, or even anger, they can easily fall down a rabbit hole of abuse.

For many, drinking after some kind of negative feeling is a way to take the edge off. It's easy to rationalize that a drink after a hard day can help someone relax and even go to sleep. However, once someone starts drinking in this way, it makes them more likely to form a habit of it. That habit may start out innocent enough, who would take a drink away from someone in mourning, it is that

reliance on it that makes people require more to get the same effect. Eventually, this tolerance they've built can become a dependence.



### **Alcohol Perpetuating Grief**

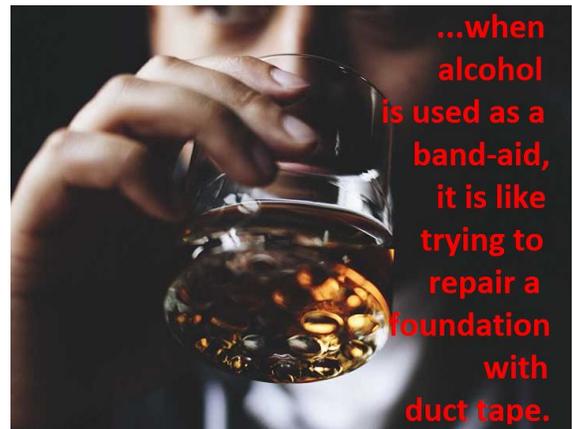
While alcohol can feel like an easy relief, the truth is that alcohol can actually perpetuate your grief. This is because alcohol functions as a depressant in the body, slowing the central nervous system and brain. This makes it harder for people to process their emotions and can leave their feelings unresolved.

Grief, no matter how bad it may seem, does pass. However, when alcohol is used as a band-aid, it is like trying to repair a foundation

with duct tape. Alcohol is not medication and it definitely isn't therapeutic. It is a drug. It provides temporary relief for a much deeper issue. While it may seem like it helps in the short term, using it as a crutch will only create bigger, longer-lasting problems.

### **Seeking Treatment for Alcoholism and Grief**

When dealing with alcoholism and complications from underlying causes, finding treatment for the addiction is only the first step. Without coming to terms with the root of alcoholism, the person suffering will likely falter down the road. This means you have to find the right rehab that understands your grief. If you or a loved one recently suffered a tragedy, and need help with alcoholism, then please reach out to a dedicated treatment specialist. They are available to answer any questions you may have about the recovery process and help you find the best treatment available.



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