



Balance In Grief B.I.G. Tip Sheet



Grief Coach
Kat Farace

Anxiety and Grief: Finding Calm Amid Grief Anxiety

Anxiety has become a familiar companion for many. In fact, nearly **1 in 5 U.S. adults** experience anxiety on a regular basis, and **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)** alone affects about **6.8 million adults every year**. While anxiety can take many forms, grief-related anxiety is unique. It shares some symptoms with general anxiety—such as restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and physical discomfort—but it is specifically triggered by loss.

What Grief Anxiety Looks Like

Grief anxiety often includes an intense yearning for the person who has passed away, constant preoccupation with thoughts about them, and sometimes a heightened fear of death or losing other loved ones. It can also bring on “**grief attacks**”—sudden surges of overwhelming emotion that may involve uncontrollable tears, deep longing, dizziness, nausea, or even panic.

By the time I was 30, I had endured multiple losses—my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, a cousin, and two friends. Each loss added another layer of pain, and over time, my grief became complicated by an intense fear of losing even more people I loved. Life no longer felt safe or guaranteed. I avoided conversations about death, refused to watch movies where characters died, and could not bring myself to attend another funeral or visit a gravesite. At the time, I didn’t recognize what I was experiencing as **grief anxiety**. All I knew was that I felt horrible and couldn’t find a sense of security in my relationships.

It’s important to remember that anxiety itself is not the enemy. At its core, anxiety is a **biological warning system**—a natural, adaptive emotional response that helps prepare us to deal with threats or challenges. It is meant to alert us, not consume us. But when misunderstood, untreated, or fueled by false beliefs, anxiety can become less of a warning sign and more of a problem in itself.

Over the past 20 years, rates of anxiety have risen significantly, especially among younger adults and those facing chronic stress or repeated trauma. The good news is that awareness and treatment options have grown too. Education about the signs of anxiety, combined with quick, compassionate responses, can prevent symptoms from becoming overwhelming.

Looking back, had I understood that my feelings after those multiple losses were actually grief anxiety—that they were warning signs of unaddressed emotions and unhealed grief—I may have navigated that season of my life with less fear and fewer long-term health struggles. With support, I might have found a path through my grief sooner.

Moving forward with support, this guide is just a small step toward helping you understand the connection between grief and anxiety. At *Balance in Grief*, we offer resources, education, and support to help you identify your symptoms and respond to them with care.

If you are experiencing prolonged anxiety, please seek the guidance of a licensed counselor who can provide deeper evaluation and support for your mental health. Remember: while grief anxiety is a **natural response to loss**, it does not mean you must carry it alone or indefinitely.

1. Understanding Anxiety in Grief

- **What it is:** Anxiety during grief often surfaces as racing thoughts, worry about the future, fear of being alone, or feeling unsettled in daily life.

Why it matters: This is a common grief response—not a sign of weakness. It reflects love, loss, and the shifting ground of what once felt safe and certain.

2. Immediate Soothing Strategies

- **Name it:** Gently acknowledge, *“I’m feeling anxious—this makes sense right now.”* It can soften the emotional charge.
- **Grounding exercise:** Use the 5-4-3-2-1 technique—notice 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste—to center yourself in the present.

Breath focus: Inhale slowly for 4 counts, hold for 2, exhale for 6. Even a few cycles can slow your nervous system and bring relief.

3. Emotional Clarity Through Reflection

- **Ask the soft questions:** What am I really afraid of—loneliness, forgetting, a changed future? Naming the fear helps reduce its power.
- **Journal freely:** Let your anxiety flow onto the page without judgment. Often, the act of writing helps lighten the load.

Reframe your thoughts: Change “I’ll never be okay” to “I’m going through a difficult time—and healing may come in its own time.” It invites space instead of pressure.

4. Reconnection Practices to Ease Anxiety

- **Supportive sharing:** Reach out to someone safe—even just to say, “I’m really nervous right now.” Connection calms.
 - **Join a grief circle:** Sometimes, hearing others say, “Yes, me too,” can dissolve anxiety’s isolation.
-

5. Daily Mindfulness & Emotional Regulation

- **Micro mindfulness:** Between tasks, pause for a single breath, feel your feet on the ground, or enjoy one moment of stillness.
- **Self-soothing reminders:** Keep a written phrase like, “May I meet this moment with kindness,” on your desk or nightstand.

Grief-friendly pacing: Validate that recovery is not linear; remind yourself gently: “This is my process.”

6. Creating Gentle Routines

- **Daily anchors:** Even minimal structure—like a walk, a favorite playlist, or reading a familiar poem—can help settle anxious energy.
- **Mini intentions:** Rather than pushing productivity, set emotional goals like “Today, I will pause when anxiety rises,” or “I will allow rest.”

Scheduled reflection: Set aside a brief quiet time—5 minutes for journaling or breathing—so anxiety doesn’t storm in unannounced.

7. Seeking Additional Support

- **Grief-informed care:** A grief coach or counselor—aligned with Kat Farace's approach—can support you in unpacking anxiety and building emotional resilience.
- **Emotional awareness tools:** Learning to distinguish between grief anxiety, general worry, and overwhelm helps you respond—not just react—to your emotions.

Your Actionable Checklist

Step	Action
1	Normalize anxiety as a common grief response.
2	Use grounding, breath, and naming to calm immediate tension.
3	Explore underlying fears and reframe harsh thoughts.
4	Seek connection or comforting rituals when anxiety strikes.
5	Practice micro mindfulness and keep self-compassion close.
6	Build gentle routines and small intentions into your days.
7	Consider grief coaching or counseling for tailored support.

Wrap-Up:

Experiencing anxiety during grief is entirely human—and a sign of profound love. This guide offers compassionate, realistic tools to help you breathe, acknowledge, and move forward—one peace-



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW WE CAN HELP
YOU AND THOSE YOU CARE ABOUT**

WWW.BALANCEINGRIEF.COM

*Book your
Complementary Consult or
Session Package with
Grief Coach Kat Farace
Today at balanceingrief.com*

Sign up for our FREE **B.I.G Newsletter** that provides articles on grief,
BIG Webinar Information and Grief Resources.

PLUS NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR RESOURCE LIBRARY

B.I.G. Webinars

**One hour presentations on multiple grief topics. Live on the
2nd and 4th Saturday of each month.**

Sign up at balanceingrief.com