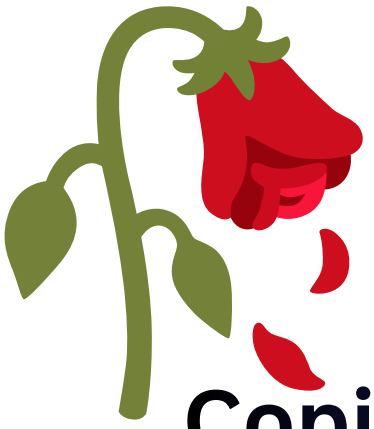


Coping with Violent Loss

How do you heal from something that should never have happened?

When a loved one's life is taken through violence, the grief that follows is unlike any other.
It carries shock, disbelief, rage, fear, and a deep sense of injustice.
This kind of loss doesn't just wound one person — it ripples through families, communities, and generations.
It can shatter your sense of safety and make the world feel unrecognisable.
There is no right way to grieve something that feels so wrong.

What Makes Violent Loss Different

- The suddenness of it — no time to prepare or say goodbye.
- The graphic reality — intrusive thoughts or flashbacks.
- The injustice — struggling to find peace when answers are missing.
- The anger — towards the world, the system, or yourself.
- The fear — that it could happen again.

These emotions are normal responses to an abnormal experience.

How the Body and Mind React

- Difficulty sleeping, eating, or functioning.
- Constantly replaying events or imagining "what ifs."
- Feeling numb or disconnected.
- Heightened anxiety, panic, or startle responses.
- Difficulty trusting others or feeling safe outside.

This is the body's trauma response — not weakness, but protection.

Navigating Grief After Violence

Acknowledge the rage.

Anger is part of mourning. It's energy searching for justice.

Avoid isolation.

Grief thrives in silence. Connection, even quiet presence, helps you breathe.

Seek trauma-informed support.

Regular therapy, homicide bereavement services, or peer groups can help rebuild safety.

Keep their memory alive.

Speak their name. Tell their stories. Celebrate who they were — not only how they died.

Avoiding the pain doesn't make it fade; it simply buries the love that's still there.

Grief becomes a little lighter when love has permission to keep breathing.

Take small steps.

Healing doesn't mean forgiving or forgetting — it means allowing yourself to live alongside the loss.

How to Cope in the Silence

The quiet moments after loss can feel the loudest.

When everyone else returns to normal, you're left with the echoes of what's gone.

These are sacred spaces — where release, reflection, and reconnection happen.

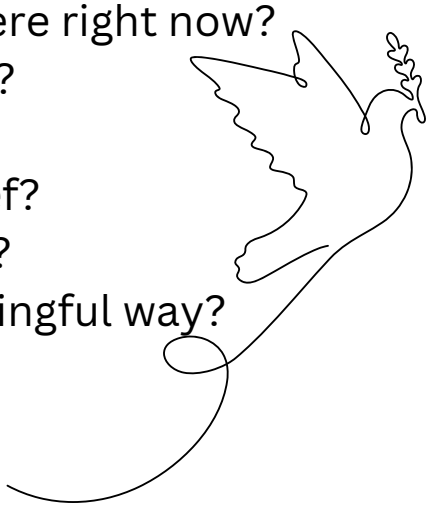
Allow yourself to:

- Cry without explanation.
- Scream into your pillow if you need to.
- Journal what you can't say out loud.
- Write letters to your loved one — update them, tell them what you miss, what you're proud of.
- Sit in silence and simply be.
- Light a candle, play their song, or look through photos with intention, not avoidance.

Your grief deserves time, not a deadline.

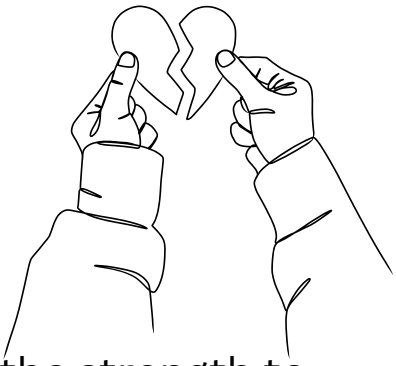
Journal Prompts for Gentle Healing

- What would I say to my loved one if they were here right now?
- What memories make me smile through the pain?
- How has this loss changed the way I see life?
- What do I wish people understood about my grief?
- What part of my loved one still lives through me?
- How can I honour them today — in a small, meaningful way?



Reclaiming Life After Loss

Over time, some find meaning in transforming pain into purpose — advocacy, community work, or creative healing.
Others focus on simply surviving each day — and that, too, is strength.
There is no timeline. There is no right way.
Only forward — with gentleness and grace.



Remember

You did not deserve this pain.
Your story is still sacred.
Healing doesn't erase what happened — it gives you the strength to carry love and memory without breaking under them.

If you need support:

- Akima Charity: contact@akimacharity.org | 0208 079 2198
- Victim Support: 0808 1689 111
- The Homicide Service (UK): via Victim Support referral
- Samaritans: 116 123 (24/7, free, confidential)