

7 Ways to Know You're Hiding Your Grief

Hiding your grief is a common coping behavior, and it can be driven by various psychological, social, and cultural factors. Therefore, it's important to address your emotions to allow your whole body to heal. Here are signs that you might be hiding your grief.





Ways to Know

#1. Avoiding Emotions

You may find yourself avoiding conversations or situations that trigger emotions related to your loss. You might also suppress your feelings or distract yourself constantly to avoid facing pain.

Avoiding your emotions can be a sign that you might be hiding your grief because your emotions are a natural and healthy part of working through loss and trauma. Here are some ways in which avoiding emotions can indicate underlying and hidden grief:

- **Numbness**
- **Distraction or Staying Busy**
- **Suppressing your feelings**
- **Using substances or overeating**
- **Avoiding triggers such as people, places or activities that remind you of your loss**

Acknowledging and allowing yourself to experience your emotions, even the painful ones, is an essential part of the grieving process.

#2. Putting on a Mask

You may find yourself putting on a façade of being “fine” or “okay” even when you’re struggling internally. This can involve pretending to be happy or strong to avoid showing vulnerability. Putting on a mask or adopting a façade can be a sign that you might be hiding your grief. Here’s how:

- **Maintaining a positive front and appearing “fine” to others and yourself**
- **Avoiding vulnerability with others**
- **Fear of judgement from others**
- **Maintaining normalcy to continue with daily routines or responsibilities.**
- **Cultural expectations or norms on suppressing emotions and burying feelings**
- **Protecting others from worrying or feeling burdened by your grief**
- **Avoiding confrontation of emotions**

#3. Isolating Yourself

You might withdraw from social interactions or isolate yourself from friends and family members. You may feel like you don't want to burden others with your feelings or that they won't understand your grief. You might find yourself:

- Avoiding painful emotions like sadness, anger, guilt or confusion.**
- Fearful of being vulnerable**
- Having difficulty in communicating emotions**
- Coping with overwhelming emotions**
- Losing interest in activities**
- Feeling like a burden to others**

Encouraging open communication, offering support without judgement and creating a safe space for expression can help one feel more comfortable sharing their grief and reduce the tendency to isolate themselves.

#4. Physical Symptoms

Hiding grief can manifest in physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, changes in appetite or trouble sleeping. These symptoms may be a result of emotional distress that is not being addressed. Here are some ways in which physical symptoms can indicate underlying grief:

- Stress-related symptoms such as muscle tension, headaches, fatigue, or digestive issues.**
- Sleep disturbances**
- Changes in appetite**
- Weakened immune system**
- Chronic pain**
- Increased heart rate or blood pressure**
- Fatigue and low energy**
- Psychosomatic symptoms where emotional distress manifests as physical symptoms without a clear medical cause. Some examples are stomachaches, chest tightness, or dizziness**

#5. Escaping Through Substances or Activities

You may turn to substances like alcohol or drugs, or engage in excessive activities such as work, shopping, or gaming, as a way to numb or escape your emotions. Some other examples include:

- **Seeking thrills or risky behaviors**
- **Emotional eating or overeating**
- **Social withdrawal or isolation**
- **Engaging in addictive behaviors such as gambling, internet use or compulsive gaming**
- **Physical exhaustion**

#6. Persistent Denial

1. You may deny or downplay the impact of your loss on your life. You might convince yourself that you're "over it" of that you should be able to move on quickly. These things include:

- **Avoiding emotional pain and/or refusing to acknowledge the reality of a situation.**
- **Creating a false sense of normalcy and appearing "fine" or "okay."**
- **Suppressing your emotions or pushing them down such as sadness, anger, guilt or fear.**
- **Rationalizing or minimizing your loss**
- **Avoiding triggers like people, places or things that serve as reminders of the loss.**
- **Delaying the grieving process**
- **Physical symptoms such as fatigue, insomnia, headaches, digestive issues or changes in appetite.**
- **Difficulty seeking support**



#7 Difficulty Talking About the Loss

You may find it challenging to talk about the person or thing you have lost, and you may avoid sharing memories or discussing your feelings related to the loss. Here are some reasons why this difficulty may arise:

- **Emotional overload of intense emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt or fear**
- **Fear of judgment from others**
- **Protecting others from discomfort or sadness of the grief**
- **Cultural or social norms like having difficulty discussing emotions openly**
- **Feeling alone and lonely**
- **Avoiding painful memories or triggers**
- **Lack of supportive environment**
- **Internalized beliefs such as “staying strong” or “keeping your emotions in check”**

If you recognize these signs in yourself, it’s important to acknowledge that hiding grief is a natural response but not a sustainable way to cope. Consider seeking support from a trusted friend, family member, counselor, or a support group to help you work through your emotions and grief in a healthy manner.





Discovering the Hidden Layers of Grief

Hello! I'm Julia Hollenbeck, a dedicated counselor specializing in grief and loss. I am passionate about helping

individuals uncover and navigate the often hidden aspects of their grief. Through my own journey and professional experience, I have come to understand that grief can manifest in many ways, sometimes even when we least expect it.

My Journey

My path to becoming a grief counselor began with a deep-seated desire to understand and alleviate the profound pain that loss can bring. Having experienced significant losses myself, I know firsthand how grief can be both visible and invisible, influencing our lives in unexpected ways. This personal connection fuels my commitment to helping others on their own paths to healing.

My Approach

I am trained in Brainspotting, Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART), and the Grief Recovery Method. These diverse tools allow me to create personalized healing journeys for each of my clients, ensuring they feel supported and understood. I offer Retreats, 3-hour Intensives, 8-week Group Programs, and Individual Therapy.

I hope you enjoyed the "7 Ways to Know You're Hiding Your Grief"!

Julia

