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INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE

# RESILIENCE RX

## LAUGH THERAPY

### Self care techniques for the bereaved

The science behind why they work and how to implement them after loss



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An iCare Aftercare™ resource  
International Grief Institute

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## BENEFITS

Those who need a good laugh are usually the ones who feel least like laughing, yet as a natural painkiller, it really is good medicine.

Laughter offsets the impact of mental stress. Fifteen minutes of laughter on a daily basis is good for the soul.

MICHAEL MILLER, M.D.

## WHY IT WORKS

A powerful healing modality, studies show that laughter offers many physical, psychological, emotional, and social benefits. Laughter stimulates the facial muscles that trigger the brain to release happy hormones called endorphins that promote an overall sense of well-being and even relieve pain. Studies also show that laughing decreases stress and increases immune and infection-fighting antibodies.

Laughter doesn't change reality but does help us to cultivate a positive mental attitude by releasing endorphins which help us feel good. The brain oxygenation and endorphins combination is like a Joyful cocktail. When we feel good and the mind is clear, we feel grounded and peaceful, less stress and less reactive.

## Positive coping strategies

Even in the most difficult of times, a laugh—or even simply a smile—can go a long way toward making you feel better. It stimulates the brain into a positive state, changes your perspective, and helps clear the mind.

When you're having a tough time, laughing creates psychological distance and can slow the momentum of overwhelm, frustration and disappointment.

Bonus: Fake laughter often turns into authentic laughter. The body can't tell the difference, and the health benefits are the same.

## Natural stress reducer

Endorphins are the body's natural pain killers. By laughing, you release endorphins, which can help ease both physical and psychological pain and make you feel good all over.

## Good for the grieving heart

One of the best benefits of laughter is that it releases stress, decreases your stress levels, and increases your immune response and overall energy. It's also a great cardio workout, especially for those who are incapable of physical activities. It gets your heart pumping and burns a similar amount of calories per hour as walking at a slow to moderate pace. So, laugh your heart into health!



- ✓ 10 minutes of laughter is equivalent to 30 minutes on a cardiovascular machine
- ✓ Laughter and crying are like yin and yang, they both release energy
- ✓ Laughing bypasses the mind and helps us keep a positive attitude
- ✓ Laughter engages in perfect diaphragmatic breath which oxygenates the brain and body
- ✓ When our brains are fully oxygenated, our minds become calm and clear

## LAUGH TRIGGERS

- ✓ Watch a comedy movie or show
- ✓ Watch funny YouTube videos
- ✓ Listen to children laughing
- ✓ Watch blooper reels on TV
- ✓ Read a funny book
- ✓ Look at funny pictures
- ✓ Read funny social media memes
- ✓ Listen to funny jokes