
INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE

RESILIENCE RX

SENSORIAL THERAPY

Self care techniques for the bereaved

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



An iCare Aftercare™ resource
International Grief Institute

INTERNATIONALGRIEFINSTITUTE.COM



BENEFITS

Our five senses play a role in how we feel, and can be influenced by what our senses take in. When grief overwhelms your day, treat your 5 senses to things that look, feel, smell, taste, or sound good. Treating yourself to something that evokes joy stimulates the feel-good hormones and lifts your mood.

A treat is a small pleasure or indulgence that we give to ourselves.

GRETCHEN RUBIN

WHY IT WORKS

Sensory impressions are considered crucial to health. Just as the food we eat creates our bodily tissues, our sensory impressions determine the quality of our thoughts and emotions. When grief feels like it's robbed your world of all joy, use sensorial therapy to remind yourself of simple pleasures. With practice, the physical awareness of delight eventually becomes effortless, and is an important step toward restoring balance after loss.

Sound

Every sound has a physiological effect. When you listen to upbeat music or uplifting words, it can change our mood and attitude.

Visual

The visual impressions you take in have a surprisingly profound effect on your emotions. Uplifting or soothing images can calm the mind and promote a sense of peace.

Olfactory

Considered the most primitive of all 5 senses, smell has a strong connection with our memories, emotions, and instincts. When we smell something, we are physically absorbing its molecules, making aromatherapy a powerful healing modality all on its own.

Tactile

Touch is fundamental to our health and well-being. When your skin is stimulated by a loving touch or something that feels good, it improves circulation and promotes restful sleep.

Taste

In addition to providing the flavor that makes eating pleasurable, research shows that certain foods help reduce stress, including chocolate.



Rules of 5

Every day practice the Rules of 5 by enjoying the following:

- ✓ 5 things you can **see**
- ✓ 4 things you can **touch**
- ✓ 3 things you can **hear**
- ✓ 2 things you can **smell**
- ✓ 1 thing you can **taste**

Suggestions

Sound

- ✓ Listen to children laughing
- ✓ Listen to birds chirping
- ✓ Enjoy ocean waves
- ✓ Listen to soft music
- ✓ Hang windchimes near a door

Sight

- ✓ Watch a sunrise or sunset
- ✓ Stroll through a flower garden
- ✓ Surround yourself with color
- ✓ Visit a museum

Smell

- ✓ Wash with a scented soap
- ✓ Light a fragrant candle
- ✓ Apply a scented lotion
- ✓ Buy a fragrant flower bouquet
- ✓ Try essential oils in a diffuser

Touch

- ✓ Wear a pair of extra soft socks
- ✓ Pet a dog or cat
- ✓ Wrap yourself in a soft scarf

Taste

- ✓ Enjoy a mug of herbal tea
- ✓ Chew flavored gum
- ✓ Indulge in dark chocolate
- ✓ Eat a ripe piece of fruit