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If you notice any typos or mistakes or have any questions, please feel free to email me directly at otunlimbited@gmail.com.

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Hold on to Hope!

Tori Martin

Overcoming Setbacks: A Guide on Coping with Limb Loss Focused on Grief and Recovery

Stages of Grief

**This cycle is NORMAL after amputations, NOT a sign of weakness! Do not hesitate to seek help from others!



Grieving does not always happen in this exact order and there is no set length of time for any one stage. The important thing to learn is how to recognize what stage you are in and learn how to cope during that time. Ask your healthcare providers for assistance through the process.

Shock, Denial, & Isolation

- Avoidance, Confusion, Fear, Numbness, Blame
- "This is not happening to me..."

Anger

- Frustration, Anxiety, Irritation, Embarrassment, Shame
- "How dare this happen to me? Why did this happen to me?"

Bargaining

- Struggle to Find Meaning, Reaching Out to Others, Desire to Tell Your Story
- "If only I had (or hadn't) done this or that? What if...? I promise to be a better person if..."

Depression and Detachment

- Overwhelmed, Lack of Energy, Helplessness
- Symptoms of this phase include sleeping too much/too little, negative feelings about the environment/future, feelings of hopelessness, talking about death
- "Why should I go on with life? What's the point now? I don't know how to move on. I don't care anymore."

Acceptance and Hope

- Empowerment, Security, Self-esteem, Finding Meaning, Exploring Options, Having a New Plan
- You understand what this change means in your life now
- Attitude changes to there may still be bad days, but there will be more good days than bad
- "I will be able to find a way forward. I can still do great things. I can still live a fulfilling life. I am ready for whatever comes."

Things to Look For

**If you notice these things or feel uneasy about your health, reach out to a healthcare professional. These signs may indicate a need to seek professional help. And that is OK!

Common Signs of Depression

- Changes in Appetite or Eating Habits
- Lethargy or Lack of Energy
- Changes in Sleep Habits - Sleeping Too Little or Too Much
- Poor Concentration or Ability to Focus
- Loss of Interest in Previously Enjoyable Activities or Social Activities
- Withdrawal from Family, Friends, or Social Activities
- Feelings of Hopelessness, Worthlessness, or Guilt

Common Signs of Anxiety

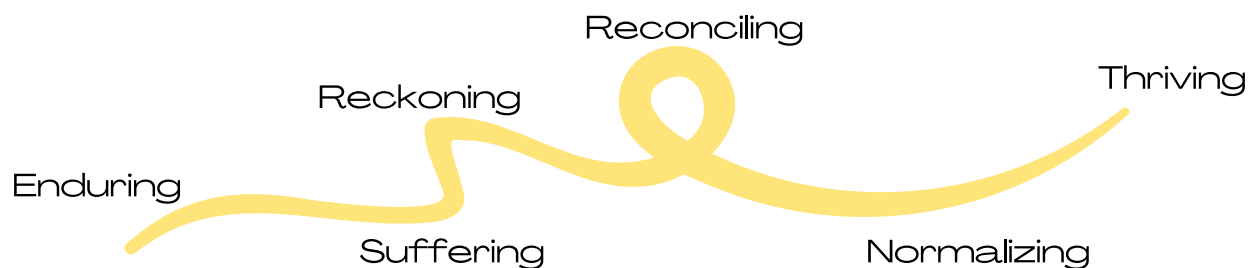
- Excessive Worry or Fear
- Restlessness
- Increased Fatigue
- Feeling Agitated, Irritable or On Edge
- Panic Attacks
- Irrational Fears or Fearing Things You Used to Do
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Muscle Tension
- Trouble Falling Asleep or Staying Asleep
- Avoiding Social Situations

****Disclaimer:** This is not meant to replace medical advice or to encourage instances of self-diagnosis. Instead, please watch for these signs and seek proper medical advice as necessary.



Milestones of Recovery

**These phases focus on emotional recovery and may vary for each individual. They also may occur in an order different from the one presented here.



Enduring

- Focusing on the Present
- Blocking Out the Future
- Making a Conscious Choice Not to Deal with the Full Effects of the Situation

Suffering

- Confused and Questioning
 - Why Me?
 - How Will I...?
- Vulnerable
- Coping with Discomfort
 - Physical
 - Emotional

Reckoning

- Aware of New Reality
- Accepting What You (Still) Have and Who You (Still) Are
- Dealing with the Future

Reconciling

- Putting Things into Perspective
- Regaining Control
- Aware of Strengths and Uniqueness
- Assertive
- Self-Managing (as possible) Situation and Recovery

Normalizing

- Reordering Priorities
- Beginning to Find Balance
- Establishing New Routines
- Participating in Things that Matter
- Self-Advocating

Thriving

- Living Life to the Fullest
- Trusting Yourself
- Increased Confidence
- Being a Role Model or Mentor for Others

****Disclaimer:** This is not meant to replace medical advice or to impose an exact recovery process. Instead, please use it as a guide and watch for these signs and seek proper medical advice as necessary.

Resources

Amputee Coalition. (2020). First steps: A guide for adapting to limb loss (8th Ed.). Amputee Coalition.
Brooks Health System. (n.d.). Amputee rehabilitation program: Patient/family education and discharge manual.
Green Prosthetics and Orthotics. (n.d.). Milestones - emotional recovery. <http://www.greenprosthetics.com/patient-experience/milestones-emotional-and-physical-recovery/>

