

# NARRAGANSETT INDIAN HEALTH CENTER

*Improving health in our community*

July 6, 2026

Dear Tribal Member,

The Narragansett Indian Health Center (NIHC) extends our deepest sympathy to the family, friends, and all those affected by the recent loss of a member of our Tribal community. We recognize that the passing of a loved one affects not only immediate family, but our entire community. During times like these, it is important to remember that grief is a natural response to loss, and you do not have to carry it alone.

## Need Support Today?

1. During NIHC business hours, NIHC Behavioral Health may be reached at 401-364-1263 ext. 122. At this time, the NIHC Behavioral Health Counselor is available Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If your call is not answered, please leave a voicemail message and the counselor will return your call as soon as possible.
2. If the NIHC Behavioral Health Counselor is not available and you need to speak with a counselor immediately:
  - o Call or text "Hello" to 988, the National Support Line.
  - o Call South Shore Mental Health Center / Gateway Health Care's 24/7 line at 401-364-7705 ext. 2, or follow the prompts for crisis support at any time.
3. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room or urgent care.

The following resources are being shared on behalf of the Tribal Government and the Narragansett Indian Health Center in the hope they may provide comfort, support, and guidance to anyone experiencing grief or emotional distress.

## Grief and Loss of a Loved One

The most readily accessible resource is the Office of Behavioral Health Program (OBHP) in place at NIHC. We currently have a LICSW on-site three days per week on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Please call 401-364-1263 extension 122 between 8:30 am to 4:15 pm. If your call is not answered, please leave a voicemail message and the counselor will get back to you as soon as she is available.

Many funeral homes offer grief support groups for those who lost a loved one. HopeHealth offers both in-person and virtual grief support groups as well as other bereavement resources. More information is available at: [www.hopehealthco.org/services/hospice-care/grief-support/find-a-grief-support-group/](http://www.hopehealthco.org/services/hospice-care/grief-support/find-a-grief-support-group/)

Because extended family plays such an important role in many Native communities, including ours, it is important to include everyone affected by a loss - from our young people to our Elders. A simple phone call, a visit, an offer of transportation or simply sitting with someone who is grieving can make a meaningful difference.

Children and youth may experience grief differently than adults, so parents, grandparents, caregivers, Elders, and other trusted adults are encouraged to check in with them regularly, listen with patience, and reassure them that they are loved, supported, and not alone.

Every person grieves differently. Some find comfort through counseling, while others find healing through family, community gatherings, traditional practices, time in nature, or quiet reflection. Whatever path you choose, know that you do not have to face grief alone.

We have identified resources that explain common grief reactions as well as signs that additional professional support may be helpful. Most importantly, please reach out to someone. Grief can bring sadness, emptiness, confusion, anger, or loneliness, and talking with others is often one of the first steps toward healing.

The following pages contain additional resources that may be helpful if you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress or a crisis.

In closing, please remember, our community has always found strength in one another. If you are struggling, please reach out. Whether you need someone to listen, help finding resources, or immediate support, the Narragansett Indian Health Center is here for you. Asking for help is a sign of strength, and no one has to walk through grief alone.

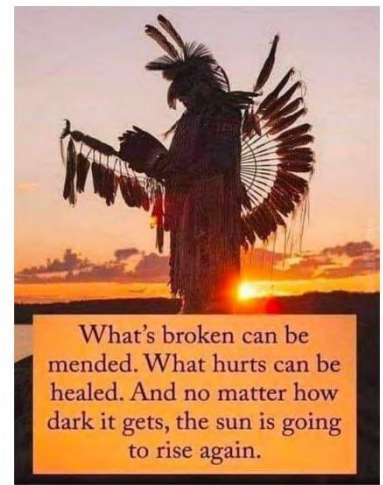
With deepest sympathy,

Your NIHC Team

# NIHC is here to help you in a time of crisis.

Crisis can be defined as one's perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that overwhelms a person's resources and coping mechanisms.

- A crisis can refer to any situation in which an individual perceives danger or a sudden loss of one's ability to use helpful problem-solving and coping skills.
- A number of events or circumstances can be considered a crisis: life-threatening situations, such as natural disasters (such as a hurricane), sexual assault or other criminal victimization; medical illness; mental illness; thoughts of suicide or homicide; and loss or drastic changes in relationships (death of a loved one or divorce, for example).
- Crisis intervention is the urgent and temporary care given to someone in order to interrupt the downward spiral of deconstructive behavior and return an individual to their usual level of pre-crisis functioning.
- Crisis intervention also refers to the methods used to offer immediate, short-term help to individuals who experience an event that produces emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral distress or problems.



## ***Purpose of Crisis Intervention***

Crisis intervention has several purposes. It aims to:

- Reduce the intensity of an individual's emotional, mental, physical and behavioral reactions to a crisis.
- Help individuals return to their level of functioning before the crisis.
- Improve functioning above and beyond this by developing new coping skills and eliminating ineffective ways of coping, such as withdrawal, isolation, and substance abuse.
- Assist individuals in coping with future difficulties more effectively.

Crisis intervention aims to assist an individual in recovering from the crisis and to prevent serious long-term problems from developing by talking about what happened and the feelings about the situation, while developing ways to cope and solve problems.

## **Supporting Our Children and Youth**

Every child experiences grief in their own way. Some may want to talk, while others may become quiet, withdrawn, angry, or confused. Parents, grandparents, Elders, caregivers, and other trusted adults play an important role in helping children feel safe, supported, and loved during times of loss. Take time to check in with them regularly, listen without judgment, answer their questions honestly in ways they can understand, and reassure them that it is okay to express their feelings. Sharing family stories, traditions, and memories of loved ones can also provide comfort and help strengthen the connections that sustain our community.

## **Crisis Appointment**

NIHC recommends you call us or another provider for a crisis appointment under the following circumstances:

1. Recent or current thoughts of harming yourself
2. Recent or current thoughts of harming someone else
3. Recent trauma (e.g., physical or sexual assault, emotional or spiritual trauma)
4. Hearing or seeing things that others do not

**While these are examples of reasons for an urgent counseling appointment, you may define your own crisis.**

- NIHC Behavioral Health Counselor: 401-364-1263 ext. 122
- Counselor available Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
- Call or text 988 anytime to reach a trained crisis counselor
- If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

# When Grief Feels Overwhelming

## *Mindfulness and Meditation*

Research has shown mindfulness to be effective against anxiety and depression. It can help reduce stress and helps the mind focus on the present moment without criticism or judgment.

## *Grounding with the Five Senses*

Grounding is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of emotions. Use the five senses to soothe, comfort, and reset.

Try this exercise to identify:

- 5 things that you see
- 4 things that you touch
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell or like to smell
- 1 thing you taste (alternatively, you can identify 1 thing you like about yourself if tasting is not readily available)

## *Breathing Exercises*

When we become stressed, we tend to breathe shallowly from our chest. Deep breathing from your belly increases the oxygen in your body, to your brain, and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes a state of physical and emotional calmness.

Try this exercise:

- Inhale deep and slowly for 5 seconds
- Exhale completely for 5 seconds
- Repeat as many times as you need
- You may use the breathing bubble video at the link below to help you count your breaths  
[youtube.com/watch?v=iaQed\\_Xdyvw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaQed_Xdyvw)



## Other Crisis Hotlines

- National Domestic Violence Hotline. Hours: 24/7 **(800) 799-7233** or text START to 88788.  
The National Domestic Violence Hotline Official Website is: <https://www.thehotline.org>
- Family Service of Rhode Island Crisis Line: **(401) 519-2280** Phone: **(401) 331-1350**  
[www.familyserviceri.org](http://www.familyserviceri.org)
- Day One offers immediate crisis intervention and advocacy. 24-hour helpline: **(800) 494-8100**  
Phone: **(401) 421-4100** [www.dayoneri.org](http://www.dayoneri.org)
- Trans Lifeline: **(877) 565-8860**