

## WHAT DO WE NEED DURING GRIEF?

**TIME** – Time alone, and time with others whom you trust and who will listen when you need to talk. Months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings that go along with loss.

**REST-RELAXATION-EXERCISE-NOURISHMENT-DIVERSION**- You may need an extra amount of things you needed before. Hot baths, afternoon naps, a trip, and a 'cause' to work or help others – any of these may give you a lift. Grief is an exhausting process emotionally. You need to replenish yourself. Follow what feels healing to you and what connects you to the people and things you love.

**SECURITY** – Try to reduce or find help for financial or other stresses in your life. Allow yourself to be close to those you trust. Getting back into routine helps. Remember to allow yourself to do things at your own pace.

**HOPE** – You may find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing some things that helped them, and realizing that they have recovered and time does help may give you hope that sometime in the future your grief will be less raw and painful.

**CARING** – Try to allow yourself to accept the expressions of caring from others even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative also suffering the same loss may bring a feeling of closeness with that person.

**GOALS** – For awhile, it will seem that much of life is without meaning. At times like these, small goals are helpful. Something to look forward to, like playing tennis with a friend next week, a movie tomorrow night, a trip next month helps you get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time is a rule of thumb. At first, don't be surprised if your enjoyment of these things isn't the same. This is normal. As time passes, you may need to work on some longer-range goals to give some structure and direction to your life.

**SMALL PLEASURES** – Do not underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures, as you are ready. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, a favorite food – all are small steps toward regaining your pleasure in life itself.

**PERMISSION TO BACKSLIDE** – Sometimes after a period of feeling good, we find ourselves back in the feelings of extreme sadness, despair, or anger. This is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. It happens because, as humans, we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death at once, so we let it in a little at a time.

**FEELING YOUR LOSS** – Take time to lament. It may be necessary to spend some time feeling sorry for yourself. It's all right to cry, to question, to experience the feeling of being a victim or protest the unfairness of what's happened. Allow yourself to feel whatever is there. There are no right or wrong feelings, just feel!

**HELP** – Remember, you may be a rookie at the grief experience you're going through. This may be the first death of someone close. You're new at this, and you're not sure what to do. As with any new skill, sometimes it's nice to have some help – a friend or counselor to talk with.

**DRUGS** – Avoid if possible – Even medication used to help people get through periods of shock under a physician's guidance may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. We cannot prevent or cure grief. The only way OUT is THROUGH. If you need medication, do so only under a physician's care!

**BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF** – Healing takes time. Allow yourself that time. Try to keep major decisions or new responsibilities to a minimum. You will want to conserve your energy for the healing process. Treat yourself with the same kindness you would a close friend who had experienced a similar loss.

**PRACTICE DECADANT SELF-CARE! EAT YOUR FAVORITE FOODS, EVEN WHEN TOUGH.  
LET OTHERS TAKE CARE OF YOU!**