

GRIEF – HELPING OURSELVES HEAL

The following are suggestions to help us along the journey of grief. Grief is different for everyone, so consider those ideas that appeal the most to you.

1. GO GENTLY

Our entire being can be worn down from grief, so try not to rush, take on new responsibilities right away, or make big decisions. Get plenty of rest and don't expect too much from yourself.

2. SEEK AND ACCEPT SUPPORT

Accessing caring and supportive friends, family, or professionals is vital during grief. Talk with them, cry with them, remember with them, and let them help you with practical tasks (yard work, errands, business matters, etc).

3. ACCEPT AND EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

There are many ways to do this – by crying, talking with a friend, writing a “letter” to the deceased person, keeping a journal, pursuing creative outlets.

4. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Get more rest, eat nutritious foods. Visit your physician for a check up and ask about an exercise program. Do things for yourself that are comforting, such as being with friends, taking a long, hot bath, gardening, participating in spiritual practices.

5. LEARNING ABOUT GRIEF

Understanding what grief is like makes it a little less confusing and frightening. Expecting those STUGs (Sudden Temporary Upsurge of Grief) helps us realize that we're not “going crazy”- that it's part of the grieving process. Read and talk with others who have been through it and are supportive.

6. SET ASIDE TIME TO DO YOUR “GRIEF WORK”

Healing from grief takes effort. Instead of staying so busy that you don't think about or feel your loss, take some time to experience your sadness. Do “grief work” – cry, look at photos, tell stories, remember, say good-bye, visit the grave, express your anger and sorrow, and examine your values and beliefs. And seek professional help if you'd like some extra support.

7. ALLOW YOURSELF TO ENJOY AND HAVE FUN

Laughter, children, pets, and hobbies are often welcome diversions during bereavement.

8. REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Giving of ourselves helps us to heal. Your giving may be through your career, volunteerism, helping a friend through a loss, or simply by being kind in your day-to-day actions.

9. CREATE A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR DECEASED LOVED ONE

You do not have to totally “let go” of your deceased loved one. Even though a life has ended, the relationship is still there. The challenge is to create a new relationship – one of memories, heart, mind, and spirit. You may carry aspects of that relationship with you by incorporating your loved one's values, heritage, and qualities into your own life.

10. HAVE HOPE