Am I Grieving Normally?

People often ask 3 questions when going through grief:

- “Am I normal?”
- “Am I going crazy?”
- “Will I ever get over this?”

A better question is whether your grief is healthy. There is, of course, no one right way to grieve. Many of the strangest emotions and thoughts are actually quite normal. But even people who grieve in a healthy manner may have times when they are overwhelmed by their grief.

The following checklist may help you figure out how you are doing. As time goes on, you will find you are answering yes to more and more questions. But if you are not satisfied with how you are doing, please seek help. Use this checklist to assess your grief. Answer the questions honestly, and if you do not notice some improvement, seek professional help.

_____ Am I able to laugh without feeling guilty?
_____ Do I pay attention to my personal appearance – hair, clothes, make-up?
_____ Do I enjoy being out with friends for an evening?
_____ Am I feeling pleasure in sexual experiences?

_____ Am I able to sit quietly by myself and think of things other than the loss?

_____ Do I take an interest in current events and news – television, or radio news, newspaper?

_____ Do I feel I can effectively parent my surviving children?
_____ Am I able to do the daily tasks I am used to performing – yard work, housework, cooking, household maintenance?

_____ Do I look forward to outings, trips, special events?
_____ Am I involved with activities that I participated in before the loss – church work, volunteer work, clubs, sports teams, a job?

_____ Can I talk about the loss without showing strong emotion
_________ - Sadness, anger, or jealousy?

_____ Do I feel like the fog has lifted?

_____ Do I pay attention to my surroundings – beautiful scenery, the taste of food, the smell of perfume?

_____ Am I able to get a good night’s sleep and awaken feeling rested?

_____ Am I able to concentrate on work and conversation?

_____ Am I less forgetful and able to think clearly?

_____ Can I recall past events?

_____ Do I feel stronger and more in control – less like an open wound, better able to cope with others’ comments, better able to cope with everyday crises?

_____ Am I able to deal with everyday life without feeling panicked, frantic, or worried? (Events like a minor injury to a child, someone arriving late, travel.)

_____ Have I maintained my general health with no unusual weight gains or losses?

_____ Have I kept scheduled appointments for checkups with my dentist, optometrist, and physician?

_____ Do I feel there is a meaning to my life?

_____ Can I look back at what happened and feel that something good came out of the tragedy?