Suggestions for Dealing with Grief – Hospice

Communication

- Talk about the person and your feelings with your family and friends. It may sound trite, but this is an excellent outlet for releasing bottled-up emotions.
- Try to resume old and start new relationships.

Nutrition

- Eat a balanced diet that includes milk, meat, vegetables, fruit and whole grains.
- Avoid “junk” and fast foods.

Fluid intake

- Drink eight glasses of liquids (juice, water, soda) per day. It can be useful to keep a measured jug of water in the refrigerator to assure that you drink enough.
- Use caffeine in moderation because it may cause dehydration, headaches, and/or low back pain.

Exercise

- Do something active every day, such as biking, walking, jogging, aerobics, or stretching. Even a walk around the block can be healthful.

Tobacco and alcohol

- Avoid tobacco because it depletes the body of vitamins, increases acidity of the stomach, decreases circulation, and can cause palpitations.
- Use alcohol in moderation because it depresses body function and natural emotional expression and may contribute to depression.
Rest
• Avoid increased work activity.
• Maintain rest patterns even if unable to sleep.

Reading
• Read books, articles, and poems that provide understanding and comfort so you do not feel so alone.
• Avoid “scare” literature and technical medical publications.

Writing
• Keep a diary or journal of thoughts, memories, and mementos.
• Write letters, notes, and/or poems to or about your loved one.

Physical exam
• Schedule a physical examination about four months after experiencing a loss to assess your physical health, as the body may demonstrate responses to grief also.

Big decisions/changes
• Don’t move or change jobs or relationships.
  Wait at least 12 months before making these changes.
• Avoid new or uncertain trips. Coping mechanisms and reflexes are impaired, making judgments difficult.
• Don’t put away clothes until you are ready.
• Don’t let others make decisions for you.

Faith
• Request help or support from your clergy to help renew your faith and hope. Resume past spiritual activities.
Help from others
If you want to talk about your loved one and how you feel, you may have to let your friends or relatives know when you want to talk and that you think they can help you by talking with you.

- Admit to yourself and family when you need help. This can lessen your pain and loneliness.
- Accept help from others. Let others know specific things they call do for you, such as providing food, company, or child care. Accept whatever they offer even if not requested, as long as it is not harmful to your family.
- Allow family and friends to share your grief and let them offer their support.
- Attend a support group. Others who have “been there” can give support, help, and hope.

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