

Understanding Grief

Grief, with its many ups and downs, lasts far longer than most people expect.

Be patient with yourself.

Everyone grieves differently; do not compare yourself to others.

You and your family will experience it and cope with it in your own way. Pay attention to your own needs.

There is nothing wrong with crying.

It is a healthy expression of grief and releases built-up tension.

Physical reactions to the death of a loved one:

- Loss of appetite
- Over-eating
- Insomnia
- Sexual difficulties
- Low energy
- Lack of concentration
- Headaches
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea

Practice Self Care

- A balanced diet
- Moderate exercise
- Rest
- Avoid the use of illicit drugs and alcohol
- Medication should be taken only under the supervision of your physician

Friends and relatives may sometimes be uncomfortable around you.

They want to ease your pain, but do not know how. Take the initiative if you can, and let them know how they can be supportive to you. Talk about your loved one so that they will feel freer to be able to do the same.

Consider putting off major decisions for at least a year.

Avoid making hasty decisions about your loved one's belongings.

Do not allow others to take over or to rush you. You can do it little by little whenever you feel ready.

The bereaved may feel he/she has nothing to live for and may think about a release from this intense pain.

Be assured that many bereaved persons feel this way, but that a sense of purpose and meaning does return. The pain does lessen.

Guilt, real or imagined, is a normal part of grief.

It surfaces in thoughts and feelings of "if only." In order to resolve this guilt, learn to express and share these feelings, and learn to forgive yourself.

Anger is another common reaction to loss.

Anger, like guilt, needs expression and sharing in a healthy and acceptable manner.

Be gentle with yourself