

COPING TIPS FOR GRIEF AND LOSS

All of us respond to grief differently. Yet grief is a universal human experience; a normal reaction when someone we care about dies. Grief is a *sign of our love*. If we had no concern, nor empathy or compassion, we would feel nothing. When we grieve, letting our emotions and pain permeate our spirit, we demonstrate the depth of our love. Our tears, sadness, sorrow, anger, fear, guilt, and overwhelming pain remind us of this. Oftentimes, the pain and anguish we feel is foreign and unimaginable. Sadly, there are no magical answers, nor a way to gauge the time it takes to heal.

To cope with grief we need to:

ACKNOWLEDGE OUR PAIN

- Talk about your feelings. Find at least one person to confide in, someone who will listen without passing judgment. Talk often.
- Letting others know how we feel increases the likelihood of getting our needs met. Expecting others to read our mind never works!

EXPRESS OUR FEELINGS

- Let your feelings out. Only by setting our feelings free can they find resolution. Crying, beating on pillows, vigorous exercise, painting, or writing are all constructive ways to express feelings. Only by letting the hurt out will we make room for healing.
- Accept that you have the right to grieve for as long and as hard as you need to.

PROCESS OUR FEELINGS

- Resolve to “roll with the tide.” Do not let yourself or others censor or measure your feelings, or put you on a rigid time schedule.
- Encourage and support a survival attitude in yourself. Be optimistic and do not give up on yourself.
- Be willing to seek help. Sometimes being strong means asking for help. There are times when seeking therapy is the most courageous and responsible thing we can do for ourselves and our family.
- Expect set backs. It’s normal to experience a mix of good days and bad days.

Elizabeth Levang, Ph.D.
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