

## ARTICLE: **WHAT AN ADULT NEEDS DURING GRIEF**

- **Patience with yourself in this difficult time.** Allow yourself to feel and to share as it seems helpful for you. Don't try to rush this process.
- **Support from your family and friends is important.** Seek out persons who are willing to allow you to be yourself and will listen as you need to tell your story of loss and talk about your favorite memories. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Most people are just waiting for an invitation to be able to do something to help you.
- **A balance of quiet and activity.** It is so tempting to get on a marathon road race of constant activity in order to avoid thinking and feeling. This is not healthy. You need a balance of activity – especially shared with others – and quiet to allow yourself the needed time to think and feel.
- **Rest is especially important during grief as it is an exhausting experience.** Allow yourself at least 8 hours of sleep per night and even a time to rest during the day during the first few months of grieving. If you experience an extended period of inability to sleep it would be helpful to talk with your primary care physician. Without adequate rest the emotional roller coaster of grief may be magnified and more difficult to manage.
- **Trust in the process of grief.** Grief is a natural process of bringing you back to a place of balance physically, emotionally, and psychologically. It has its own timing. Trust that within an emotionally safe environment you will be able to express the emotions that need to be expressed and will move toward healing naturally.

- **Talk with others who have experienced a similar kind of loss.** Sometimes it is helpful just to know that others have thought and felt like you do. It is common for grieving persons to wonder if they are going “crazy.” You will know you are not when you talk with someone who has walked a similar path.
- **Drink lots of fluids.** While this may seem a strange thing to mention as a part of the needs of grieving persons, it is important. It is a well-researched fact that during grief the body more quickly absorbs the fluids we drink. Thus, more fluids are needed. Drink more of that water!
- **Exercise a little bit every day.** Physical exercise helps to keep the body chemistry working normally and will help to decrease signs of depression. Take a walk with a friend. Go to a yoga class. Put on some music and just move about in the privacy of your own room.
- **Establish a daily grief container.** It can be very helpful to set aside a little bit of time each day, at the same time if possible. During this time be intentional about your grieving needs. Write about your thoughts and feelings in a journal. Look at photos and write stories. Listen to your favorite music and allow whatever feelings come up to be expressed. Limit this time to no more than 45 minutes. Begin and end this time period the same way each day. For example you might light a candle and then blow it out at the end. You might open your journal and return it to its place on the shelf each day. You might begin and end with a few moments of silence or prayer. Create your own ritual. This routine of opening and closing in the same way becomes the container that gives you cues this is the time to grieve and to “hold your grief inside” when the time ends.
- **Pay attention to your body.** Grief is a physical experience as well as emotional, psychological and spiritual. Notice the body sensations you experience

during this time, especially when you are actively grieving. Notice where in your body you carry your grief, or even certain aspects of your grief. For example, someone may carry their sadness in a certain way in their neck, and carry guilt in their stomach. Just pay attention to that whenever you notice it. Don't try to change it. Rather, just focus your attention on it and be quiet for a few moments. This engages the natural healing process of the body. We are wonderfully created and remember grief is normal and natural. SO, healing is a part of our make-up as well.

- **Ask for what you need.** Sometimes grief can be complicated by the circumstances of the death, a difficult relationship, multiple losses in a short period of time, and a number of other factors. If this is the case ask for some professional help. Grief counseling with a specially trained professional will make a difference. Know you will not feel this way forever. You will heal.
- **Embrace this opportunity** – Grief has the power to transform us in amazing ways. Choose to grow!