

Dealing with Grief

Communication

- Talk about the deceased and your feelings with your partner, family and friends. It may sound silly, but this is an excellent outlet for releasing bottled-up emotions.
- Try to resume old and start new relationships as a couple and as individuals.

Nutrition

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

Fluid Intake

- Drink 8 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.
- Don't drink caffeine or alcohol because they 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 useful.

Tobacco and Alcohol

- Avoid tobacco because it depletes the body of vitamins, increases the acidity of the stomach, decreases circulation and can cause palpitations.
- Don't drink alcoholic beverages because they depress body function and natural emotional expression and contribute to depression.

Rest

- Avoid increased work activity.
- Maintain rest patterns even if unable to sleep.
- Develop a “bedtime” routine.

Reading

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

This information has been reviewed and recommended for use by the UAMS/CPED/Patient Education Advisory Committee.

Writing

- Keep a diary or journal of thoughts, memories, and mementos
- Write letters, notes, and/or poems to or about your relationship with the deceased.

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.
- Contact your physician if you have concerns.

Big decisions/Changes

- Don't move or change jobs or commit to a new relationship. Wait at least 12 months before making any big changes in your life.
- Avoid new or uncertain trips. Coping mechanisms and reflexes are impaired, making judgements difficult.
- Don't put away items belonging to the deceased until you are ready. Don't let others press the issue.
- Don't let others make decisions for you.

Help from others

- 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 can do for you such as providing food, company, or child care. Accept whatever they offer even if it is 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 that have "been there" can give support, help, and hope.

Faith

- Request help or support from your clergy. Resume past spiritual activities.

Limbo, R.K. & Wheeler, S. R. (1993). A handbook for healing and helping La Crosse, WI: Lutheran Hospital-La Crosse.

This information has been reviewed and recommended for use by the UAMS/CPED/Patient Education Advisory Committee.

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES
4301 West Markham Street - Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

Revised 7/09
Reviewed 8/14