

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

In caring for ourselves we need to identify those activities that are healing to us as well as areas that may hinder our healing and cope with each appropriately. There is no “right” way to grieve. You will find the way that feels best for you. Grieving does not proceed in an orderly fashion. You will have setbacks, and feel that you’re back to “Square One” on some days, moving further ahead on others. Below are some suggestions from professionals and from people who have lost a loved one.

- Give yourself permission, time and space to grieve.
- Don’t pretend that death doesn’t hurt; it’s o.k. to cry.
- Feel free to protest the “why” of the death.
- Don’t judge your level of grief and healing by how others are grieving and healing, but by your own internal awareness.
- Respect your partner’s timetable and method of grieving.
- Get rid of imagined guilt and “if only”.
- Confront the fears of your death and the death of other loved ones.
- Honestly express your feelings about this death to people who will understand and not be judgmental and who will not be hurt by your honest expression of feelings. This may mean you include some family members, but not others, some friends, but not others. You will know who will understand and be a support for what you need, and who will not. You are not under obligation to talk to everyone and/or anyone.
- Use religion, philosophy, poetry, music, art, gardening, tennis, walks at nature centers, reading, volunteer work to gain relief and understanding.
- Tell others what you want from them: help, emotional support, just being with you.
- Continue to participate in activities that are fun for you and with people who are special to you, don’t underestimate the effects of small pleasures.
- Laughter doesn’t mean you are being disrespectful to your child’s memory.
- The anxiety of a significant day approaching (birthday, anniversary, special time of year) may be worse than the actual day itself.
- If you are not sleeping or eating well after a few weeks, consider contacting your health care provider for some temporary assistance.