

Helping Yourself through Grief

We can all benefit from the help of relatives, friends and professionals in dealing with grief. At the same time, it's important for us to make the effort to help ourselves. Treat yourself with the same care and affection that you would offer to a good friend in the same situation. Most of us are aware of the saying, "Love thy neighbor as you would thy self." Don't forget to love yourself through this process.

Below are some helpful suggestions in grieving significant loss.

Give yourself permission to grieve

- Be patient with yourself. Healing takes time.

Avoid new responsibilities right away

- Don't overextend yourself. Keep major decision-making to a minimum.

Ask for help

- Family and friends can't read your mind. It's important to find someone who is compassionate and understanding and whom you can confide in. It's "ok" to need comforting.

Be willing to accept help when offered

Reach out to others

- For example, invite them to dinner or out for dinner. Be willing to accept an invite from them. It's important to maintain contact with family and friends. Don't isolate yourself.

Lean into the pain

- It cannot be outrun. Let the grief/healing process run its full course.

This is an emotional experience.

- It is "ok" to feel discouraged or depressed. Crying can be a constructive release.

Holidays

- If special occasions or holidays are especially difficult, schedule activities that you find comforting during those times.

Seek assistance

- If grief is unresolved for a prolonged period, seek the assistance of a counselor or clergy.

Get adequate rest

- Go to bed earlier. Avoid caffeine products like coffee, tea and colas. Good nutrition is important in the healing process.

Keep a journal

- It's a good way to express what you are feeling and thinking. In time you will be able to look back and see your progress.

Read about it

- There are many helpful books about grief. When grief is understood, it can make the process more manageable.

Exercise

- Moderate exercise like walking, tennis, swimming, and other activities can help and assist in working out your frustration and may aid in sleep.

Avoid

- Avoid telling others you feel fine if you don't. You can share details based upon your desire to share.
- Avoid telling yourself you "should" do things. Make "doing things" your choice, not what you think others expect of you.

Seek new friends.

- Try new activities and hobbies. Join organizations you would enjoy. Take time for the things that are important to you.

Have an imaginary conversation with the person you miss.

- Talk over your future plans and say good-bye so you can move ahead on your own.

Be aware of your surroundings and those around you.

- It may help to occupy your thoughts.

Take time for yourself

- Remember that being alone, part of the time, permits you to process your thoughts and begin to heal.

Feelings

- Normal feelings include a variety of emotions, just like the weather includes the rain, wind, storms and sunshine. So don't be surprised by the variety you will experience as you process through your grief. We grow and learn and are strengthened by our experiences.

If you feel stuck in your grief, or need additional emotional support or help going through the grief process, call DIRECTION for Employee Assistance at (541) 345-2800.