

## Living with Grief: How Can You Help Yourself?

When someone you love dies, your world is forever changed. You must go on living and adjust to the world without the physical presence of your loved one. You may experience a wide range of reactions during this process of grief. Rest assured that this is normal. Physical, emotional or spiritual reactions can emerge while you are thinking about your loved one and continuing life without this person. Focusing on your own needs is an important part of grief.

HERE ARE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME.

- Remember that your grief experience is yours alone. Although everyone in the family is affected by the death, your grief experience will be personal and individual. How you grieve is affected by many factors, including your relationship with your loved one, responsibilities for your family, and how the death of your loved one affects your plans for the future.
- Become informed. There is information available about what you can expect to feel during the process of grief. Read books and visit websites that talk about how people grieve and how they recover from their loss.
- Take care of your health. Grief can leave you feeling tired and physically vulnerable. It is important to eat and rest regularly. A check-up with your family doctor can help you understand the physical symptoms of grief.
- Tell others how to help you. Friends, family members, neighbors, people in your community and at your place of worship, and co-workers all want to find ways to assist you. Let them help you with the practical tasks that may be difficult for you to manage on your own, such as: making phone calls, preparing meals, picking up your children from school, etc.
- Wait to make major life-changing decisions: While you are grieving, it will be hard to make major life decisions with clear judgment. If possible, try to wait to make these kinds of decisions until your feelings become less intense.
- Allow yourself special time to think about your loved one. Grief can sometimes feel overwhelming and appear when you least expect it. Give yourself specific times for reflection, and these feelings will be less likely to disrupt your daily routines.



- 🌀 **Plan on how to cope with special days:** Thinking about birthdays, anniversaries and holidays is often more difficult than the days themselves. Think about how you want to honor your loved one and don't be afraid to try something new.
- 🌀 **Seek support:** Speaking with a professional who understands the special needs of someone who is grieving can help you find new ways of coping with grief. Attending a support group with other people who have lost a loved one can help you feel less alone and give you a safe place to talk with people who understand. CancerCare offers free individual and group counseling to individuals who are grieving.

## CANCERCARE CAN HELP

CancerCare's staff of professional oncology social workers understands the complex needs of grieving individuals and helps you find ways to cope with your grief experience. We offer individual and group counseling by telephone, online, or in person. CancerCare also offers education, information, and referrals to other resources to help you and your family members cope and heal.

## The CANCERCARE® Constellation of Services



CancerCare's services are provided  
free of charge to anyone affected by cancer

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