

The Hope Pages

~Special Message From Your Bereavement Team ~

Welcome to Haven's Bereavement Program. In this special, welcome issue we will explore possible grief responses to the grieving process, ways in which grief may manifest, the importance of self-care, and several "rights" that grievers have in experiencing the grieving process. As you begin the healing journey please know that there is support available should you feel it would be beneficial for you or your family.

Our Bereavement Program offers a variety of service options. Please know that you can meet with a member of the Bereavement Team for an individual session, receive a copy of *The Hope Pages* every other month over the thirteen months you are on service, and/or receive periodic calls from a member of the Bereavement Team. If you do not feel these services are needed please contact the Bereavement Team at 562-426-7500.

~Coping with Grief~

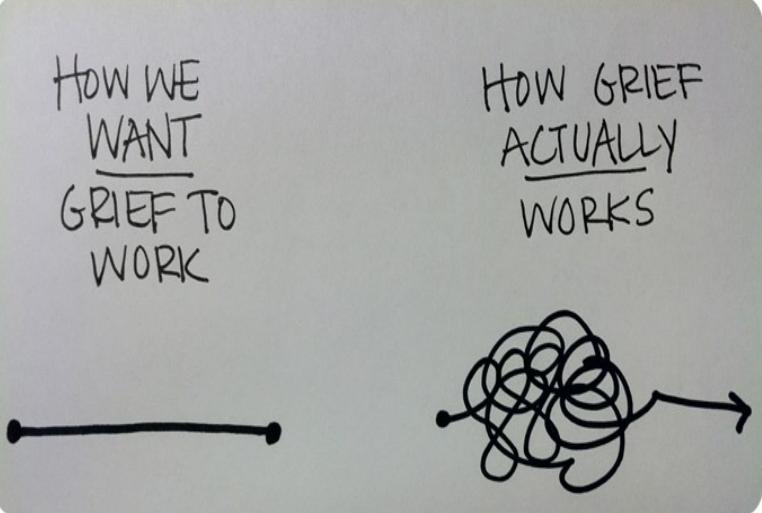
Grief has been described as conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior, or an emotional response to loss. The intensity of these feelings may depend upon many factors; such as: how much of your daily life, future, or emotional feelings involved the lost object or person you are grieving for.

What to Expect

The emotions felt after the death of someone close are hard to predict, and it is important to remember that we all grieve differently. While grieving, it is not uncommon to experience a full range of feelings that can affect people psychologically, physically, and emotionally. There is no "normal" process to grieving, yet you may experience some or all of the following: anger, denial, sadness, guilt, relief, helplessness, yearning, anxiety, shock, confusion, loneliness, and/or fatigue. However you feel it is important to remember that you are grieving in your own unique manner.

Some people grieve via being "task oriented" vs. being "feelings oriented". Either way is an appropriate form of the grief response as long as one isn't avoiding grief. Men and women also may respond to the grieving process differently as do introverts and extroverts. No two people grieve in the same way. Please honor how you are grieving and allow yourself to feel and experience this sacred time in the manner of your choosing.

The image to the right explains the Dual Process by Stroebe and Schut regarding the grief response. It refers to the common occurrence of going back and forth between feeling and experiencing the grieving process with beginning to create the "new normal" or new way of responding and interacting with



life.

Myths for Dealing with Loss

Grief and mourning are often influenced by how we were taught or influenced to respond to loss. Some of the most common myths for dealing with loss are: don't feel bad, replace the loss, grieve alone, just give it time, be strong for others, and/or keep busy.

Grief often has a dramatic effect on a mourner's physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual systems. At best, it is a difficult process to bring these systems into balance, particularly if we aren't fully aware of ourselves. Caring for ourselves is extremely important, and there are four areas of personal care that we should be mindful of when considering this self-care. (continued to next page)

Physical Caring

Physically caring for ourselves includes getting enough exercise. Walking, swimming, jogging, doing yoga or tai-chi, playing golf or tennis, training for a marathon or a walking fundraiser are all excellent suggestions. Creating a space for rest & relaxation including setting aside specific times for activities you find restful can be helpful in coping with loss.

Another suggestion is nutrition. Eat regular and balanced meals (high in fiber and low in alcohol, processed sugar, and caffeine; see your physician about what vitamins may be helpful). The last suggestion that we will include is to get a massage, haircut, manicure, or facial.



Emotional Caring

There are several ways in which we can care for ourselves emotionally. They include becoming aware of emotions and feelings, keeping a journal, writing letters to loved ones (living and deceased), give yourself permission to express emotions (scream, cry, curse, laugh), develop a friendship with someone you can share anything with, and/or attend a grief support group.

Intellectual Caring

For those who are experiencing the intellectual aspects of the grieving process, these suggestions might be of some support. Go to the library or a bookstore one day/evening every week to browse, read a book every month (any book that interests you), and/or take a course in adult education, arts and crafts, photography, or cooking.

Spiritual Caring

Caring for ourselves spiritually includes more than church related activities. They include taking a day or weekend trip to the mountains or beach, spending time walking on a trail, keep a journal on thoughts and feelings, go on a retreat, take a spiritual workshop, revisit the religion of your childhood, or explore other faith traditions that are of interest to you.

Many of these activities fulfill more than one of the four personal care areas. Take some time to identify ways you can meet your needs in the different categories. Evaluate what has worked for you in the past and what you enjoy doing the most. It may be helpful to think about activities and hobbies you had as a child, or something you have always wanted to do, but have yet to try.

*More Than Surviving: Caring for Yourself While You Grieve (1990). Centering Corporation.

~ Manifestations of Grief ~

Feelings	Physical Sensations	Cognitions	Behaviors
Anger	Depersonalization	Confusion	Absent Mindedness
Anxiety	Dry Mouth	Disbelief	Appetite Disturbances
Emancipation	Hollow in Stomach	Hallucinations	Crying
Fatigue	Breathlessness	Preoccupations	Searching/Calling Out
Guilt	Lack of Energy	Sense of the Deceased's Presence	Sleep Disturbances
Helplessness	Oversensitivity to Noise		Social Withdrawal
Loneliness	Tightness in Chest		Treasuring Objects
Numbness	Tightness in Throat		
Relief	Weakness in Muscles		
Sadness			
Yearning			

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~ Manifestations of Grief ~

(Continued)

Grief can manifest in many ways. For each griever the response to grief can range from a wide variety of experiences to a limited few. Grief can affect us physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and mentally. We encourage our bereaved to seek a varied support system. They say it takes a village to raise a child. We believe it can take a village to walk the journey of grief with a griefer. There are times when we are experiencing the physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental aspects of the grieving process and may benefit from additional support. For example, current issues, physical and emotional/mental diagnoses can become exacerbated through the grief response. If you are experiencing any signs of physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual symptoms please reach out to your physician, therapist, psychiatrist, or faith community leader for additional support. It is very important to receive the most appropriate and helpful support during



It's Okay
NOT TO BE OKAY

~The Mourner's Bill of Rights ~

By Dr. Alan Wolfelt

- 1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief.** No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. Don't allow others to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.
- 2. You have the right to talk about your grief.** Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief.
- 3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.** Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Know that there is no such thing as a "wrong" emotion. Accept all your feelings and find listeners who will do the same.
- 4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.** Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.
- 5. You have the right to experience grief "attacks."** Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.
- 6. You have the right to make use of ritual.** The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring

people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you that rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.

- 7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality.** If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry with God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.
- 8. You have the right to search for meaning.** You may find yourself asking, "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like, "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.
- 9. You have the right to treasure your memories.** Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.
- 10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.** Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.



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