

## The Process of Grieving

Grief is painful and at times the pain seems unbearable. It is a combination of many emotions that come and go, sometimes without warning. It is normal to experience all these reactions during the process of grief.

### Healing and Recovery

- ***Accept the grief.*** The only way around the pain is through the pain. In order to heal, you must face the painful feelings. Allow yourself to cry, shout, and just "be with" your grief.
- ***Treat yourself and others with patience and kindness.*** This process takes time. Remind yourself that your responses are normal and give yourself permission to do whatever you need to do to take care of yourself.
- ***Forgive yourself.*** 'For all the things you think you should have said or done. You did the best you could at the time.
- ***Talk about it.*** Share your grief with others. Find someone who will listen without passing judgment.
- ***Spend time with others.*** Even if you don't feel like talking, it can be comforting to know you're not alone. Withdrawing will only make you feel more isolated.
- ***Take care of yourself.*** Do things that feel good to you without feeling guilty, such as going to a movie, listening to music, or reading a good book. Sometimes you will need to take a break from the grief by doing something frivolous, distracting, and comforting.
- ***Get plenty of rest and eat well.*** Grief is exhausting. At this time of emotional and physical depletion, your body needs good nourishment and rest more than ever.
- ***Exercise regularly.*** Physical activity is a good outlet for stress. Return to your exercise program or begin one as soon as you can. Find a routine that is reasonable for you.
- ***Wait to make any major life decisions.*** This is not the time to put pressure on yourself to make big life choices. Wait before deciding to sell your home, getting a divorce, or changing jobs.
- ***Keep a journal.*** If you enjoy writing, this can be a good outlet to process your feelings.

- ***Get help.*** Some people may gain comfort through spiritual guidance or bereavement groups. It can help to spend time with people who have been through a similar kind of loss. Such groups can help you recognize your feelings and put them in perspective. They can also help you feel that you are not alone, and can provide comfort, reassurance, and support.
- ***Give yourself time.*** Take as much time as you need to grieve. Many people find that there is hope after death. Death takes away, but grief can give back. People eventually recover and re-discover peace and purpose. As difficult as it feels now, remember that others have gone this way before you and you will survive.

If you are concerned about your reactions, or need to speak to someone, please contact the Center for Work and Family Life Employee Assistance Program at 213-821-0800.