

Helping Yourself Through Grief

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you can not do.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

You have had a terrible loss in your life, and the truth is things will never be the same again. You might even hurt so bad that there are times when you wish you would have died along with your loved one. But you are still here with a life that needs to be lived. Although you might not believe it now, you can reach the point where you find enjoyment in life again.

For many grieving people, some of the support you received in the past may dwindle in the months after a death. Friends may call less often, or seem not as interested in how you're coping. Your employer may expect you to perform your job at the same level you did prior to the death; or members of your own family may no longer talk about the deceased. This is the time when you need to understand that although the support may be waning, you are still grieving. This may be the time to develop or strengthen your coping methods. Try doing things that provide energy and make you feel good about yourself. Below are suggestions that may be helpful.

- Pay Attention to Your Physical Health

- Eat well and get plenty of rest.
- See a doctor if you are experiencing health problems.
- Remember that our immune systems are weakened by stressful events.

- Identify Your Support Network

- Surround yourself with people who have proven their support for the long-haul. If those people don't exist, seek out a grief support group.

Continued on back

- Express Your Feelings

- You might not think there are people interested in hearing how you feel anymore; or you might worry about “burdening them”, or even annoying them. Chances are most friends and family members are still interested, concerned and willing to listen. If you are not comfortable sharing your thoughts and feelings with others, journal about these feelings.

- Trust Yourself

- You are probably going to receive some well-intended pieces of advice. Remember that everyone grieves differently. Trust that you are grieving in the way that you need to grieve – as long as you are not causing physical harm to yourself or others.

- Exercise

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk around the mall a couple extra times when you are already there shopping.
- Join a wellness program.
- Take an exercise class. This is also a good way to meet new people.

Cedar Valley Hospice offers a variety of Grief Support Services:

- **Individual Counseling** - Provided by our Grief Counselors, we conduct one on one counseling with phone or face to face sessions. Counseling for couples and families are also available.
- **Grief Groups** - We provide general six-week groups as well as groups for specific kinds of loss.
- **Social Support** - We offer coordinated social events that meet on a regular basis to provide support and friendship to members.
- **Eucalyptus Tree Program** - This program is offered to address the needs of children. We offer family educational sessions, grief mentors and individual support to provide children with ways to process grief issues. Visits from Katie and Quincy Koala open conversation and provide encouragement to younger children.

For more information, contact your nearest Cedar Valley Hospice office or visit cvhospice.org.

Waterloo: 319.272.2002

Waverly: 319.352.1274

Independence: 319.334.6960

Grundy Center: 319.824.3868

Toll-Free: 800.617.1972

NOTE: On behalf of the Cedar Valley Hospice Grief Support Services Program, grief mailings are sent for 13 months following a death on our hospice program. These mailings offer additional support and advice to help families on their grief journey. If you would prefer to not receive these mailings, please let us know by calling Nathan Schutt at 319.272.2002.