



My Bereavement Booklet

Information & Guidance After the
Loss of a Loved One





*Honoring Life.
Delivering Compassion.*

published for you by the
Hospice Care Plus Bereavement Program

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"Grief is not a disorder, a disease, or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical, and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve." - DR. EARL A. GROLLMAN

Introduction

You've received this booklet because we had the honor of caring for your loved one. We'd like to thank you for allowing us to be part of their care and offer our help and support as you go through the grieving process.

This booklet is just one way we can support you. Over the course of the next year, we'll be here with a variety of tools and resources. From timely mailings to visits, support groups, and memorial events, you can choose among them based on your needs and wishes.

Please contact us anytime you feel the need for extra support or want to know more about our bereavement care. You can always reach us at the numbers on the inside of this booklet's cover.

**With our thanks and best wishes,
The Hospice Care Plus Bereavement Care Team**

About Grief



Grief is a deep sadness or sorrow that results from a loss. It's a natural response to any important change or loss.

We often associate grief with death, but your grief process may have begun when you first became aware of your loved one's illness.

You may be surprised that grief can affect more than just your feelings. Your grief response may affect these four areas: feelings or emotions, the body, behaviors, and the mind.

FEELINGS

Anxiety
Shock
Sadness
Loneliness
Hope
Anger
Helplessness
Depression
Guilt

THE BODY

Lack of energy
Excess energy
Muscle tension
Headaches
Sense of emptiness
Restlessness

continued



About Grief

BEHAVIORS

Changes in sleep
Crying
Forgetfulness
Changes in eating
habits

THE MIND

Disbelief
Confusion
Difficulty concentrating
Slowing of thought process
Difficulty with simple
tasks

It's important to remember that everyone is unique and will go through the grieving process in their own way and at their own pace.

Self Care



It's also important to take care of ourselves as we grieve. Try to take the time to follow these suggestions:

BE AWARE OF YOUR FEELINGS.

It's important to try to listen to and accept your feelings. If you need to cry, it's okay. If you feel angry, that's okay, too.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY.

If you're feeling tired, allow yourself to notice and to take a nap. Both your body and mind may need a rest.

TRY TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

If you find it difficult to settle in to sleep, try a new routine, like a warm bath followed by warm milk or hot, decaffeinated tea.

TALK TO SOMEONE WHO WILL LISTEN.

Friends or family who listen well without feeling the need to "fix" everything are especially helpful.

EAT HEALTHY.

You will benefit from hydrating well and eating as healthy as you can.

continued



Self Care

CONSIDER SOOTHING EXERCISES.

Take a walk and enjoy nature. Try to be active, but don't overdo it.

WRITE A JOURNAL TO YOUR LOVED ONE.

Tell him or her what you miss about them and what you're thankful for.

PAMPER YOURSELF.

Take a long bath with candles and music. Get a manicure. Take a weekend getaway.

TRY SOMETHING NEW.

Consider a new hobby or volunteer role.

ACCEPT HELP.

If a friend offers to bring a meal, let them. And remember that professional guidance is also available.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO GRIEVE.

Don't let anyone take your grief away from you. You deserve it, and you must have it. If you had a broken leg, no one would criticize you for using crutches until it healed. Grief is a major wound. It does not heal overnight. You must have time and the crutches until you heal. Grieving is nature's way of healing a broken heart."

- DOUG MANNING,
"DON'T TAKE MY GRIEF
AWAY"



Grief Feelings

Feelings, or our emotions, can affect us physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially. Feelings are one way we react to something that's happening now or has happened. Some of the feelings that may come with grief are described here.

PHYSICAL

- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting
- Weight loss, gain
- Aches and pains (headache)

SPIRITUAL

- Anger at God
- Questioning faith
- "Why" questions
- Finding comfort in faith
- Developing a stronger faith

EMOTIONAL

- Sadness (crying)
- Loneliness
- Guilt ("I didn't do enough.")
- Anger (maybe at God or at someone for failing you or your loved one)
- Fear (of being alone)
- Relief (that a long illness is over)

SOCIAL

- Sleeping more
- Wanting to be alone or afraid to be alone
- Friends may avoid activities with you, or you may feel uncomfortable around your "couple" friends
- Lack of interest in activities

Grief Feelings



WAYS TO COPE

- Acknowledge your pain
- Face-to-face support from people who care
- Take physical care of yourself
- Name your feelings and acknowledge them
- Know that your grief is unique to you



Coping with Reminders

You may find that grief will surface over and over. Many times, during special days, holidays, and events like weddings or graduations, you may find yourself pulled back into your grief. Or, you may find that your grief and emotions seem to be missing at these events.

Our grief comes in many forms, and it has its own timetable. It doesn't follow a calendar. However, we can prepare for these events that remind us of our loved one.

CONSIDER THESE IDEAS:

- Make plans that can be changed.
- Plan a distraction.
- Start a new tradition in honor of your loved one.
- Reminisce, sharing memories and stories about your relationship.
- Connect with others who have lost a loved one, and ask how they got through special days and holidays.
- Ask friends and family for help and support.
- Give yourself permission to laugh and to cry.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT GRIEF IS A JOURNEY, and that your grieving is your journey; it is unique to you. As you grieve, remember to take care of yourself. You can be kind to yourself with the gift of healing.

"The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same; nor would you want to."

- DR. ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS



Healing after Loss

Healing from your grief is a journey.

For everyone, the journey is different and can take many forms. Everyone heals at different times and in different ways.

Here are some suggestions that may help with the healing process:

- Identify the source and acknowledge your loss
- Allow yourself to cry
- Talk about it
- Treat yourself lovingly
- Focus on gratitude
- Be patient
- Express yourself
- Keep your routine
- Sleep, eat, exercise
- Avoid things that numb your pain
- Seek support systems, including grief support, grief counseling, and support groups

Family Grief



It's important to remember that the way each family member grieves can be very different. After all, each member of the family had a unique relationship with your loved one. So, how each family member expresses or mourns their loss can be unique.

This is a very general overview of some of the differences you may notice in the way people grieve.

WOMEN

- Expressive with emotions
- Suppress grief feelings in order to take care of everyone else

MEN

- Stoic (tries to keep emotions in check)
- Do not always show how they feel
- Action-focused, rather than verbal or emotional expression

CHILDREN

- Their age greatly influences how they grieve.
- Younger children are only beginning to understand that death is permanent and unchanging.
- Children and teens may express their grief through anger and negative behaviors ("acting out").



Family Grief

NOTE: If your child is having difficulty with the loss, please contact the Hospice Care Plus Bereavement Team or a counselor at the child's school.

Remember that each person grieves in their own way; be respectful of other expressions of sadness while remaining true to yourself.

READ MORE ABOUT FAMILY GRIEF

Many of the following resources are online. If you need help or do not have internet access, please call the Hospice Care Plus Bereavement Team. We're happy to print and send you the article(s). We can also recommend books that may be helpful.

The resources on the following page can also be found on our website.

Visit hospicecareplus.org/services/bereavement-services/ or simply point your smartphone camera at the QR code below.



Family Grief



Read More about Family Grief, Continued

- "35 Ways to Help a Grieving Child," published by The Dougy Center. Order by calling The Dougy Center at 503-775-5683, or visit dougybookstore.org.
- The Dougy Center website. Visit dougy.org to explore free grief resources and tip sheets.
- "Helping a Man Who is Grieving," by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD. Link available at hospicecareplus.org/services/bereavement-services/
- "How Children Grieve," by Kate Jackson. Link available at hospicecareplus.org/services/bereavement-services/

"Should you shield the valleys from the windstorms, you would never see the beauty of their canyons."

- DR. ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS

The Journey Continues



You may never stop missing your loved one. Some days, the pain can be intense.

But, know that life will go on.

There will come a day when you realize that you've had more good days than bad. You'll decide you can build a new life for yourself. Other days, you'll hold onto your grief; letting go seems so hard.

At times, you'll remember your loved one without the pain. Eventually, your grief will take less energy.

You'll find you can enjoy life. You can face your own future. You'll be able to smile at happy memories, and keep them stored in your heart.

You'll come to understand that you can have a full life, though different than before.

THE HOSPICE CARE PLUS BEREAVEMENT TEAM

Our Bereavement Team is here to support you throughout your journey, especially during the first year. Please contact us when you need support, guidance, and encouragement. You'll find our numbers on the back of this booklet.



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