

# APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS

You can expect that:

- Grief takes longer than most people think
- There is no right or wrong way to grieve
- Grief involves many changes and will continually develop
- Healthy grieving requires you to express and process your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors through talking, writing, composing, and creating
- Healthy grieving holds the potential for personal growth; pain is transformational
- Healthy grieving is not about forgetting, but remembering and forming a new relationship
- Expect to grieve losses symbolic, tangible, past and future; grief will threaten your sense of security, hope, independence, and control
- Loss will resurrect unsettled issues, feelings, and unresolved conflicts from the past
- Grief may cause you to experience a lack of self-concern
- Grief bursts may be common – acute upsurges of emotional pain that occur without warning
- Certain days of the week or month, anniversaries, special events, or holidays can bring upsurges of grief
- Society will have unrealistic expectations about your grief journey and may respond inappropriately to you and your loss
- Often the people we think will help us don't, and those who are helpful seem to come from nowhere
- Future losses may resurrect past losses causing more powerful than expected emotional pain, and a temporary upsurge of grief
- People are fundamentally resilient; you can and will survive

Adapted from Judith Skretny, M.A. and from *How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies* by Therese A. Rando, Ph.D. Edited by Karl J. Shackelford for We Grieve

