

WHAT A GRIEVING PERSON NEEDS



TIME

Time alone and time with people they trust and who will listen when they need to talk. Grieving people need months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings that accompany loss.

REST-RELAXATION-EXERCISE-NOURISHMENT-DIVERSION

Grieving people need extra amounts of things they have always needed. Hot baths, afternoon naps, a trip, a “cause” to work for to help others — any of these will provide a lift. Grief is an exhausting process emotionally. Following what feels healing and what offers connection to the people and things they love is critical.

SECURITY

It will be important for a grieving person to reduce or find help for financial or other stresses in life. Getting back into a routine will help create motion and a sense of purpose, and staying close to trusted people will enhance the feeling of belonging. Grieving people need to be allowed to do things at their own pace.

HOPE

Hope and comfort are found in connecting with those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing some things that helped them, and realizing that they have recovered, and that time does help, gives grieving people hope that sometime in the future their grief will be less raw and painful.

CARING

Grieving people will struggle with receiving help but need to try hard to accept the expression of caring from others, even though doing so may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative who is suffering the same loss usually brings a feeling of closeness with that person, and that soothes grief.

GOALS

For a while, life will lose meaning for grieving people. At times like these, small goals will be helpful. Having something to look forward to — like playing tennis next week, a movie, a trip next month — helps grievers get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time helps, as a rule of thumb. At first however, grieving people’s enjoyment of these things isn’t



the same. This is normal, and with the passing of time long-range goals will give structure and direction to life.

SMALL PLEASURES

Small pleasures are so very important to a grieving person. Sunsets, a walk, a favorite food — all are small steps toward regaining pleasure in life itself.

PERMISSION TO BACKSLIDE

A person suffering grief may sometimes, after a period of feeling good, find themselves back in the old feelings of extreme sadness, despair, or anger. This is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. It happens because, as humans, we cannot take in all the pain and the meaning of life at once. We let it in a little at a time and the intensity is diminished.

DRUGS ARE NOT HELPFUL

The use and abuse of drugs and alcohol may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. We cannot prevent, cure, avoid, or anesthetize grief. The only way to get to the other side of grief is to go through it.

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