

HEALING GRIEF

- **Accept the Grief:** Do not try to be "brave". This also applies to men. Strong men can and do cry.
- **Talk about it:** Share your grief within the family. Do not attempt to protect others by your silence. Find a friend to talk to, someone who will listen without passing judgment. If possible find someone who has experienced a similar sorrow. Talk often. If the friend tells you to "snap out of it", find another friend.
- **Keep busy:** Do purposeful work that occupies the mind, but avoid frantic activity.
- **Take care of yourself:** Bereavement can be a threat to your health. At the moment you may feel that you don't care. That will change. You are important and your life is valuable - care for it.
- **Eat well:** At this time of emotional and physical depletion your body needs good nourishment more than ever. If you can choose, select a balanced diet. A vitamin supplement might be helpful, but it will not make up for a poor diet. Be good to yourself.
- **Exercise regularly:** Return to your old program or start one as soon as possible. Depression can be lightened by the biochemical changes brought by exercise - you will also sleep better.
- **Get rid of imagined guilt:** you did the best you could at the time, all things considered. If you are mistaken learn to accept it, we are all imperfect. Only hindsight is 20-20. If you are convinced that you have real guilt, consider professional or spiritual counseling. If you believe in God, clergy can help you believe in God's forgiveness.
- **Accept your understanding of the death:** For the time being, you have probably asked "why" over and over and have finally realized that you will get not acceptable answer. But you probably have some small degree of understanding. Use that as your viewpoint until you are able to work up to another level of understanding.
- **Join a group of others who are grieving:** Your old circle of friends may need to change for a while. Even if it does not, you will need new friends who have been through a similar experience. Bereaved people sometimes form groups for friendship and sharing.
- **Associate with old friends also:** This may be difficult. Some will be embarrassed by your presence, but they will get over it. If and when you can, talk and share naturally, without avoiding the subject of your loss.
- **Postpone major decisions:** For example, wait before deciding to sell you home or change jobs.
- **Record you thoughts into a journal:** if you are at all inclined toward writing. It helps to get feelings out and record your progress.
- **Turn grief into creative energy:** Find a way to help others. Helping to carry someone else's load is guaranteed to lighten your own. If you have writing ability, use it. Great literature has been written as a tribute to someone loved and lost.

- **Take advantage of your religious affiliation:** if you have been inactive in matters of faith, this might be the time to become involved again. The Bible and other religious works, has much to say about sorrow. As time passes, you may find your faith returning and you are not so mad at God after all.
- **Get professional help if needed:** Do not allow crippling grief to continue. There comes a time to stop crying and live again. Sometimes just a few sessions with a trained counselor will help you to resolve anger, guilt and despair that keep you from functioning.

Remember: no matter how deep your sorrow, you are not alone. Others have been there and will help share your load if you will let them. Do not deny them the opportunity.

Remember: EAP is a no-cost, confidential place to discuss feelings and improve performance at work and home. For assistance please call: In Tucson: 575-8623 Out of area: 888-520-5400.