

# CorsoCare Hospice Bereavement Program

## Suggestions for Coping with Loneliness and Isolation

**Think about who is supportive** to you in your environment and what gives your life purpose and direction (family members, companion animals, friends, neighbors, co-workers, teachers, colleagues, clubs, athletic activities, groups, church, support groups, bereavement counselor). With whom are you most comfortable, and who is the most comfortable (accepting and caring) with your grief? Look for those who will listen without judging you, or for those who have suffered a similar loss.

**Find time with others** to talk, to touch, to receive support. Be honest with others about what you're feeling. Allow yourself to express your sadness rather than masking it.

**Don't expect** others to guess what you need. When you want to be touched, held, hugged, listened to, or pampered, say so.

**If all you want** from others is help with simple errands, tasks, and repairs, say so.

**Let others** (especially children) know if, and when, you need to be alone, so they won't feel rejected.

**Go somewhere** and have a good long cry – and do it as often as you wish. You have every right to miss the person who has died. Accept your feelings as normal.

**Find time alone** to process what's happened: to remember, to dream, and to think.

**Identify your loneliest times** and think of how you can alter your routines and environment (ex: rearrange furniture; plan weekend time; use microwave for quick and easy meals).

**While some folks** really are thoughtless and don't think before they speak, bear in mind that many well meaning individuals have yet to experience a significant loss, so they really don't know what grief feels like, or how to respond, or what to say. They aren't deliberately trying to hurt you. You can choose to bear with such people, you can enlighten them about what you know about grief, or you can look to others who more understand, to find the support you need.

**Realize** that no one can totally understand the relationship you had with your loved one.

**Ask people to remember**, talk about, and share stories about your loved one with you.

**Become more aware** of how your own usage of words affects other people. Rather than saying something hurtful, admit that you don't know what to say.

**Consider getting a companion animal** (which can be a wonderful source of unconditional love), but only after you've investigated what kind of pet would suit you and your lifestyle.