

CorsoCare Hospice Bereavement Program

Suggestions for Helping Yourself Through Grief

This title is not meant to indicate that others in our lives do not help us through grief. We do need the help of relatives and friends, and may need the help of professional counseling. At the same time, it is important for us to make the effort to help ourselves. Remember that a lot of energy will be used for healing. Treat yourself with the same care and affection that you would offer a good friend in the same situation. Most of us are aware of “Love thy neighbor” – we forget the part – “As you love yourself.” Not all suggestions will be helpful to everyone. Grief has its unique side. Choose the ideas that appeal to you.

1. Go gently. Do not rush too much. Your body needs energy to repair.
2. Do not take on new responsibilities right away. Do not overextend yourself. Keep decision-making to a minimum.
3. Accept help and support when offered.
4. Ask for help. Our family and friends cannot read our mind. It is very important to find someone who cares, understands, and with whom you may talk freely. It is okay to need comforting.
5. Seek the support of others. Invite a relative/friend to dinner or overnight. Also consider meeting new people.
6. Be patient with yourself. Healing takes time.
7. Lean into the pain. It cannot be outrun. Let the grief/healing process run its full course.
8. Through this emotional period, it is okay to feel depressed. Crying does make you feel better.
9. If Sundays, holidays, etc. are especially difficult times, schedule activities that you find particularly comforting into these time periods.
10. Seek the help of a counselor or clergy if grief is unresolved.
11. Try to get adequate rest. Go to bed earlier. Avoid caffeine in coffee, teas, and colas.
12. Good nutrition is important to help the healing process. Decrease junk food and try to eat a balanced meal.
13. Keep a journal. It is a good way to understand what you are feeling/ thinking. Hopefully, when you re-read it later, you will see that you are getting better.

14. Read – there are many helpful books on grief. If grief is understood, it is a little easier to handle.
15. Moderate exercise helps (walking, tennis, swimming, etc). It offers an opportunity to work off frustration and may aid sleep.
16. Begin towards building a pleasant time with family and friends. Do not feel guilty if you have a good time. Your loved one wants you to be happy.
17. It is okay to be angry. You may be angry with yourself, God, and the person who died, others, or just feel angry in general. Do not push it down. Let it out (hit a pillow, scream, swim, exercise, hit a punching bag, etc).
18. Do not have unrealistic expectations of yourself. Grief takes TIME. It comes and goes.
19. Do things a little differently yet try not to make a lot of changes. This sounds like a contradiction, but it is not.
20. Plan new interests – join a tennis group, read a novel, take a class (crafts, skills, self-awareness); learn and do something new. Re-discover old interests, activities, and friends.
21. Plan things to which you can look forward – a trip, visit, or lunch with a special friend. Start now, to build memories today, for tomorrow.
22. Find quotes/posters that are helpful to you and post them where you can see them.
23. Pray for others.
24. Other ideas: Take a hot relaxing bath; bask in the sun; take time for yourself (movie, theater, dinner). Be good to yourself.
25. Do something for someone else. Join either a volunteer or support group. Helping others (phoning, attending meetings, typing, mailing) does much to ease pain.
Reach out and touch someone.
26. Be determined to work through your grief.
27. Remember, you will get better. Hold onto HOPE. Some days you just seem to exist, but better days will be back. You will develop a renewed sense of purpose gradually.
28. Simply stated – put balance into your life.
Pray, rest, work, read, and recreation.

Hopefully, you will become as healed as possible. You will be able to enjoy this life again and will be able to look forward to your life in Heaven with your loved one.