



FUNERAL CHAPEL

Dedicated To Those We Serve

Caring Connections:

The Grief Experience

It is essential to allow oneself to feel all the emotions that arise, as painful as they may be, and to treat oneself with patience and kindness.

Grieving people have two choices: they can avoid the pain and emotions associated with their loss and continue on, hoping to forget. This is a risky choice, since experience shows that grief, when ignored, continues to cause pain. The other choice is to recognize grieving and seek healing and growth. Getting over a loss is slow, hard work. Give into the pain, even over other emotions and activities, because grief is a pain that will get in the way later if it is ignored. Realize that grief has no timetable; emotions may come and go for weeks, months, or even years. While a show of strength is admirable, it does not serve the need to express sadness, even when it comes out at unexpected times and places.

Talk about your loss.

Take the time to seek comfort from friends who will listen. Let them know you need to talk about your loss. People will understand, although they may not know how to respond. If they change the subject, explain that you need to share your memories and express your sadness.

Forgive yourself.

For all of the things you believe you should have said or done. Also forgive yourself for the emotions such as anger, guilt or embarrassment you may have felt while grieving.

Eat well and exercise.

Grief is exhausting. To sustain your energy, be sure to maintain a balanced diet. Exercise is also important in sustaining your energy, find a routine that suits you – clear your mind and refresh your body.

Indulge yourself.

Take naps, read a good book, listen to your favorite music, go to a ball game, rent a movie. Do something that is fun, distracting and that you personally find comforting.

Prepare for holidays and anniversaries.

Many people feel especially “blue” during these periods, and the anniversary date of the death can be especially painful. Even if you think you’ve progressed, these dates bring back some painful emotions. Make arrangements to be with friends and family members with whom you are comfortable. Plan activities that give you an opportunity to mark the anniversary.

Learning about the grief process will help support a grieving loved one.

- Formal and informal supportive services may be helpful to a person who is grieving. These support services can be guides through some of the challenges of grieving as the person adjusts to their loss.
- Grief counseling can be provided by professionals.
- Consult a hospice in your local community, as all hospice bereavement programs provide grief support to the community, regardless of whether their loved one was cared for by hospice or not.

Through learning about the grief process, you can help support a grieving loved one as well.