



GRIEF



Helping You Cope With Your Loss

CENTENARY CAMPUS **416-284-8131**
Chaplain's Office Ext. 7225

AJAX-PICKERING CAMPUS **905-683-2320**
Chaplain's Office Ext. 2510



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Adult Grief Support Program – Canadian Centre for Bereavement Education and Grief Counseling
(416) 926-0905
- Bereaved Adult Support Group
Scarborough Hospital Grace Division
(416) 495-2535
- Family Services Of Toronto
(416) 595-0307
- Toronto West Support Group
(416) 653-3535
- Bereavement Library Resource Centre Rosar-Morrison
Funeral Home
(416) 924-1408
- Scarborough Hospital General Division
(416) 431-2800 Ext. 6397
- Evergreen Hospice Markham-Stouffville
(905) 472-5014 (Adult's & Children's Groups)
- Grief Resource Centre at Armstrong
Funeral Home, Oshawa
1-905-433-4711
- Living with Loss Grief Support Program
Towne Funeral Home Whitby
Martin Frith
1-866-441-2050

*The staff at Rouge Valley Health System
extends their sincere sympathy to you.*

*We hope the information in this
booklet will provide support and
practical help to you in your grief.*

BOOKS

Martin, Rev. John D. and Ferris, Frank D.,
M.D. **“I Can’t Stop Crying”**. Key Porter Books
Ltd., 70 The Esplanade, Toronto, Ontario M5E
IR2

Rando, T.A. **“How To Go On Living When
Someone You Love Dies”**. Bantam Books, 1991.

Sanders, Dr. C.M. **“Surviving Grief and Learning
To Live Again”**. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1992.

These and many other helpful articles and books are
available at your local library.

In addition, most funeral homes offer a wide variety of
videos and reading material and many are able to provide
direction regarding grief counseling and support groups.

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INTRODUCTION

Grief can affect you on many different levels – emotional, physical, social and spiritual.

Grief is hard work – requiring the expenditure of both physical and emotional energy.

No two people grieve in exactly the same way. Men grieve differently than women and children, teens and young adults have their own unique responses to loss.

It is important to allow yourself whatever time you need for your grief – whether it is 6 months or 3 years.

The feelings of grief can seem over whelming at times.

It is important to take good care of yourself during the grieving process.

REMEMBER

- You have the right to experience your own unique grief.
- You have the right to talk about your grief as this will help you heal.
- You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Respect what your body and mind are telling you.
- You have the right to make use of ritual. The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It provides you with the support of caring people.
- You have the right to express your spirituality. If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you.
- You have the right to search for meaning.
- You may find yourself asking, “Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?” Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not.
- You have the right to treasure your memories.
- You have the right to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly.
- Remember – grief is a process not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself.

- Do things you feel you are able to do – phone calls to friends, social get-togethers, meals out.
- Engage in spiritual activities if they are comforting for you.
- Recognize the memory of a loved one through a toast at dinner, a donation in memory of, or some other significant activity.
- Share your feelings with others – both happy and sad.
- Remember that family and friends are not mind readers – communicate your wishes, needs and emotions.
- Realize that children face different needs and limits – consider their wishes, needs and emotions.
- Know that every holiday and special occasion is different and new, unlike holidays of the past.

PHYSICAL RESPONSES TO GRIEF

YOU MAY:

- Have difficulty sleeping.
- Feel tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest.
- Experience an empty feeling in the stomach and loss of appetite.
- Feel anxious and restless.

WHAT TO DO:

- Try and eat reasonably.
- Tend to your own health needs at this time
- Try to get adequate rest.
- Realize you are more susceptible to illness when under stress.
- See a physician if your physical symptoms are concerning you.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO GRIEF

YOU MAY:

- Feel the loss isn't real – that it did not actually happen.
- Find it hard to concentrate or focus.
- Sense your loved one's presence-expect them to walk in the door or to hear their voice.
- Feel guilty about things done or left undone, said or left unsaid.
- Feel angry with your loved one for leaving.
- Cry at unexpected times.
- Feel mood changes over the slightest things.
- Need to tell and retell memories about your loved one and the experience of their death.
- Feel you need to be alone or are reluctant to be alone.
- Experience times of profound sadness.

WHAT TO DO:

- Realize that numbness often sees you through the first few days or weeks. Do not be surprised if a let down comes later.

Understand that there is no set time for grieving. It varies from person to person.

SPECIAL DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Special days and holidays are times when people remember important and happy occasions. When there has been a death in the family, emotional wounds are left that can ache during these times of warmth and cheer. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are common.

Holidays and special occasions (such as birthdays and anniversaries) are especially difficult in the first year following the death of a loved one.

Some planning and forethought will help you get through these difficult times.

WHAT TO DO:

- Be gentle with yourself.
- Special days, holidays, and the anniversary date of the death of your loved one are emotionally and physically draining.
- Get adequate rest and exercise.
- Be aware of increased intake of sugar, caffeine and alcohol and guard against overuse of any substances.

SPIRITUAL CONCERNS

YOU MAY:

- Find your religious or spiritual life is deepened, renewed or changed as a result of your loss.
- Feel abandoned by, disappointed in and unsure of your spiritual or religious beliefs.
- Find yourself searching for meaning.

WHAT TO DO:

- Allow yourself to grieve. Ignore those who tell you that if you have a faith, you do not need to grieve.
- Acknowledge your feelings of anger at God. This is a normal response to the death of a loved one.
- Seek out someone who is willing to listen to you. Explore your thoughts and feelings and re-examine your religious and spiritual values, this could lead to a spiritually transformative time in your life.
- Talk and cry with others when you feel ready. While you may feel pressured to put on a brave front, it is important to make your needs known by expressing your feelings to those you trust.
- Try to support children to know that sadness is normal and neither theirs nor yours needs to be hidden.
- Know that it is okay to experience periods of happiness without feeling guilty.

- Recognize that initially it may be difficult to be alone. This does not mean that you will always be dependent on others.
- Give yourself space to be quiet and still if that is what you need.
- Be aware that severe upset is not unusual and, if you feel overwhelmed, seek professional help.
- Enjoy the gifts of each holiday found in special memories and the contact and comfort of family and friends.

RELATIONSHIPS

YOU MAY:

- Find friends and family who are most available early in your bereavement.
- Find friends or others, who are not directly affected by your loss and can offer you valuable support.
- Find attending social gatherings difficult at first.

WHAT TO DO:

- Try to help people understand your needs.
- Try to be open to support from people outside your immediate circle of family and friends.
- Consider attending social events for brief periods – give yourself permission to leave if you feel it necessary.
- Take your time with new relationships.

PRACTICAL MATTERS RELATED TO GRIEF

YOU MAY:

- Feel overwhelmed by banking, insurance forms, pension applications and other paperwork.
- Feel the need to sell your house, change your job or move to a new location.

WHAT TO DO:

- Avoid making major life decisions, during the first year, unless absolutely necessary.
- Ask for help with forms and applications.
- Seek advice from more than one expert before making any major financial decisions.
- Be aware that having a job or doing volunteer work may be helpful when you are ready. Be careful not to over extend yourself.