

# Coping With Grief

## What You Can Do For Yourself

- Give yourself time, alone and with others, to feel and understand the loss
- Talk about your feelings with people who listen well, and without judgment
- Eat nourishing food
- Exercise regularly, to ease depression and sleeplessness
- Postpone major decisions
- Set small goals, taking one day at a time
- Beware of alcohol and drug abuse
- Accept caring and practical support from others

## What You Can Do For Others

- Get in touch and stay in touch with the griever; sympathetic company usually is welcome, and is one of the best kinds of support we can offer
- Be yourself- express your natural concern openly
- Be willing to talk about the loss, and encourage the griever to do so
- Be a good listener – accept, don't judge, what you hear
- Accept silence or anger – respond by providing emotional support as best you can
- Reassure the griever that grief symptoms such as anger, guilt, and sadness are normal
- Be patient – it takes time for the griever to accept the loss, and to deal with the changes it has caused
- Volunteer to help with practical necessities (food, laundry, etc.) – don't wait to be asked
- Allow the griever the time and behavior needed to come to terms with the loss. It may be helpful to say things like:
  - I can see that losing your (\_\_\_\_\_) has been hard, and is causing you a lot of pain.
  - The feelings you're having are understandable.
  - What help do you need right now?
  - I'd like to be with you, if that's all right.
  - I don't know what to say, but I care.

***Do not underestimate the healing power of small pleasures and diversions***

*For more information about CAPS, please call (805) 893-4411  
or visit us in the Counseling & Psychological Services building (Building 599).*

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## What Not To Do For Others

- Don't say things like:
  - Be strong
  - Take a trip
  - It will be better soon
  - Count your blessings
  - You're better off than most people
  - Keep your chin up
  - You must put it behind you and get on with your life
  - Time will heal
  - If there's anything I can do, just let me know

*These platitudes alienate and do not help the griever.*

- Don't push a resistant griever to talk about the loss
- Don't discourage expressions of grief. Repetitive accounts of the loss are part of the healing process for the griever
- Don't give in to the impulse to talk about your own losses
- Don't attempt to resolve the griever's feelings of grief

## Mental Health Peer Program

### ***College Stress Busters***

- Write 2 Lists: For one, write stressors that you can change and how to change them. For the other, write down stressors you can't change and just let them go. Don't stress over what you cannot change!
- Don't Be So Hard on Yourself!  
You're at a great university; don't forget it.
- Live Mindfully  
This means bringing awareness to the present moment. College is a culture of thinking forward. It is important to be aware of the here and now, too.
- Practice Time Management  
Organize your time wisely. Schedule time for your meals, your favorite TV show, and your exercise. Life exists outside of school.

***Remember, if someone you care about is grieving, reach out –  
you can make a difference!***

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