



COPING WITH GRIEF

- **Grief has no set time.** You will become more comfortable with your loss even though it may feel intolerable at times. Talk is an important healer through the ups and downs.
- **Keep a healthful routine.** As you begin to feel less anxious, your actual sadness may increase which can be exhausting. Be sure you include enough rest, relaxation, nutrition, and good times. Try not to isolate yourself.
- **Find your own pace.** With the best intentions, others may expect you to progress at a faster pace. Don't allow anyone to tell you to forget or to "put your feelings behind you."
- **Share your story.** It is helpful and hopeful to hear and see others in various stages of bereavement. Grief support groups and friends are one way to instill hope.
- **Accept help.** Even though the death was several weeks or months ago, you can still benefit from the kindness of others. Allow them to be there for you.
- **Emotions are emotions, neither good nor bad.** Grievers experience a range of feelings which will come and go, even months after a death. It is only human to feel anger when someone you care about is taken from you. We also experience remorse, guilt, deep longing, and sadness. Talking to a trained bereavement counselor is helpful if you feel "stuck" with some feelings or you have questions about this process.
- **Drugs, alcohol, medications.** Misuse of alcohol and some prescription drugs will not benefit you at this time. There are some appropriate prescription medications which are not addictive and may be helpful if your feelings are overwhelming. Do not hesitate to consult your MD. Individual counseling along with these medications is even more helpful.
- **Allow yourself to experience the pain of loss.** It is human nature to avoid pain, but dealing with difficult emotional issues requires us to recognize loss in its many forms. You have not only lost a loved person, but you may have lost your job as a caregiver, as a friend, parent, or as a child. The list is long and different for each of us. As we gradually adjust to the loss, we will begin to identify secondary losses.
- **Remember to remember.** It is also normal to avoid thinking of the loved one, but now may be time to begin to reminisce about memories of the good times and even the not so good times. Try to remember the person as the real human being they were. Picture albums are helpful and can be comforting.

Hospice of Spokane offers bereavement resources at no charge to our community. Gathering with others who are journeying through grief is comforting and informative for many people. Our grief support groups focus on several types of grief and are available throughout the week. Special programs for bereaved children and parents are also offered at no cost. Individual counseling is available on a sliding fee basis.
