

Living With Grief: How Can You Help Yourself?

When someone you love dies, your world changes forever. You must go on living and adjust to a world without their physical presence with you. This fact sheet will cover the following:

- Ways to handle the early days
- How to move forward
- Getting help from others



The Early Days of Loss

The first days and weeks after you experience loss can be very difficult. The following may be able to help:

Honor your feelings. Grief can bring many different kinds of emotions at different times and different ways. Allow yourself to feel what you feel without judgment.

Grieve in the way that is right for you. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Others may have their own forms of grief, but yours is appropriate to yourself.

Take care of your health. Grief can leave you feeling tired and weak. Keep in mind your own health. It is important to get plenty of rest, eat regularly and stay active.



Moving Forward

After the early period of grief, life may seem to return to normal. For you, however, a great deal may have changed.

Give yourself special times to think about your loved one. Grief can overwhelm you when you least expect it. If you set aside special times to think about your loved one, you may find that your feelings of grief are less likely to disrupt your daily routines.

Plan ahead for how to cope on special days. Think about how you would like to honor your loved one for birthdays, anniversaries or holidays. Give yourself permission to try something new. Ask for help, if you need it.



Getting Help

Seek support. You do not need to go through this alone. A counselor can help you work through grief, while support groups provide spaces to share with others. CancerCare offers free individual and group counseling for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

Help others help you. Friends, family, co-workers and others may want to help. Ask if they can prepare meals, pick up your children from school, or anything else that can help you focus on other tasks or rest.

Become informed. Many books, websites and other resources offer information about coping with grief and recovering from the loss of a loved one. You may find it helpful to read what others have written about these experiences.

CancerCare® Can Help

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