**Taking Care of Yourself while Grieving**

**Nutrition, Sleep, and Exercise**

* **Eat a balanced nutritious diet and avoid junk food or empty calories.**
* **Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.**
* **Avoid alcohol or drugs to mask pain.**
* **Exercise regularly if possible - can help with energy, establishing a routine, improving**

 **mood states and sense of control.**

* **Get plenty of sleep. If you have a hard time sleeping – try listening to soothing music or**

 **try a relaxation/guided imagery tape.**

* **Try going to bed and waking up the same time each day.**
* **Watch for significant weight loss or weight gain. See your physician for assistance if you see changes or find yourself having trouble eating or sleeping.**
* **Realize that physical reactions are typically not permanent and tend to ease as the grieving process continues.**

**Emotional and Psychological Care**

* **Give yourself permission, time and space to grieve.**
* **Acknowledge and express feelings in healthy ways.**
* **Allow yourself to cry, but also know that it is OK not to cry.**
* **Don’t avoid feelings or pretend that death doesn’t hurt.**
* **Allow others to reach out to you and share verbal and nonverbal forms of caring for you. You do not have to grieve alone. Talking to others and sharing your grief experiences with supportive people in your life can be comforting.**
* **Don’t escape into loneliness, but also know that wanting to be alone at times is OK.**
* **Honor that all people grieve differently and that there isn’t one right way to grieve.**
* **Ask for help when you need it.**
* **Know when to seek professional help from a counselor, social worker or psychologist. Seeking counseling services does not mean you are weak, crazy or inadequate.**
* **Allow yourself to let go of guilt or “if only’s.”**
* **Grief consumes a lot of energy. Cut yourself some slack and take it easy if you need to.**
* **Keep a Journal - “off-load” and sort out thoughts and feelings by writing them down**
* **Grief is exhausting at times and can create challenges with trying to remember things Keep a “to-do” list to keep track of daily tasks.**
* **Take time to make decisions and avoid making major decisions right away.**
* **Set small goals for yourself.**
* **Create routine and take things step at a time.**
* **Feel free to ask “why” when searching for answers to death.**
* **Find a support group – sharing with others who can relate where you are coming from can offer comfort and hope.**
* **Tell others what you would like or need from them – help, emotional support, time together, a friendly ear.**
* **Serve others. Sometimes helping another person in need can ease the pain and hurt you feel.**
* **Allow yourself to take periodic breaks from grieving.**
* **Find a hobby – reading, art, poetry, gardening, walking, etc.**
* **Avoid judging yourself with others on how you are doing with your grief process as compared to another person. Everyone grieves in a different way and on a different time table.**
* **Laugh and have fun. It is OK to laugh, play, and have fun - doing so doesn’t mean you are avoiding or not honoring someone’s death.**
* **Read books, articles or poetry written by others who have experienced loss.**
* **Create a memory book of photos and writings that help you honor the impact this person had on your life.**
* **Realize that you can’t prevent or skip the grief process. You also can’t cure or fix grief. Typically the only way out of grief is working through the grief.**

 **Spiritual Care**

* **Know that it is common to question your spiritual belief system after someone dies. Spiritual people may decide they want nothing to do with spirituality. Sometimes those who have had nothing to do with things of a spiritual nature suddenly have a great desire to seek out spiritual resources and discover a spiritual path that works for them.**
* **Death can bring up spiritual questions for many people. Sometimes it helps to share spiritual questions and concerns with someone who will understand, support and accept you, regardless of your spiritual belief system.**
* **If it is comforting, seek help from your source of spiritual strength.**
* **If you need a break from things of a spiritual nature, take a break.**
* **If it helps, draw on spiritual strength of others or spiritual resources. Many individuals often find comfort through scripture study, articles, church attendance, or clergy.**

**For more information on grieving loss or to schedule an appointment with a Licensed Professional Counselor or a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, call us! Our LCCC Counseling and Campus Wellness number is (307) 778-4397.**