



Halcyon
H O S P I C E
& Palliative Care



Seasons of Grief

S U M M E R

GRIEF IS ALSO PHYSICAL

The loss of a loved one and the grief that follows is a stressful life experience. The emotional response is intense and unpredictable. The body often responds in equally intense and unpredictable ways. It is as if the body protests what the mind can't fully comprehend as we attempt to adjust to the unacceptable. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between emotional and physical pain. Especially soon after the death, we can feel our longing for the deceased loved one physically. Sometimes we describe the longing as an intense ache in the area of the solar plexus, as if describing a "broken heart." It is not unusual to experience sleep disturbances and loss of appetite. Simply surviving each day can sap our strength and leave us vulnerable to illness and accidents. Because we deal with stress in different ways, the ways we express grief physically are different for each person. We might have increased headaches, digestive-system problems, heart palpitations, or an exacerbation of pre-existing physical vulnerabilities. On the other hand, we might have minimal physical responses. The body's language of grief asks us to do what seems to be necessary at that time: to slow down, pay attention and take special care of ourselves.



FAMILIES AND GRIEF

When a family member dies, the surviving family members struggle to regain a sense of balance. Death affects everyone differently, and each family member grieves in his or her own way and time frame. Grief affects how family members interact daily and how they communicate with each other. As you can imagine, members of a family need special understanding of each other as they grieve. As families struggle toward finding a new kind of "normal," it is important to not only support each other, also to accept each other's individual ways of grieving. As you and your family move through grief, you'll want to be open in communicating your grief experience without being overly protective. Because all of you are grieving, you may not be able to support each other enough and may want to seek additional help from others outside the family. This may include close friends, grief counselors and trusted others.



In one of the stars
I shall be living.
In one of them
I shall be laughing.
And so it will be...
When you look
At the sky at night.

The Little Prince
- Antoine de Saint Exupery

A death has occurred and everything is changed by this event. We are painfully aware that life can never be the same again that yesterday is over that relationships once rich have ended, but there is another way to look upon this truth. If life went on the same without the presence of the one who has died, we could only conclude that the life we here remember made no contribution, filled no space, meant nothing. The fact that this individual left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to this individual. Life can be the same after a trinket has been lost, but never after the loss of a treasure.

- Paul Irion

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN RESOURCES FOR COPING

You'll find many ways to cope with your loss. What helps you will be individual to you. Here are some things that have helped others. Nothing helps all the time, but many things help some of the time.



PEOPLE HELP. Friends and family can support you, even though they may struggle to find the right words or actions to express their concern. As you learn what kind of contact with people helps and what doesn't, accept help from those who can understand and support you as you grieve.

SOLITUDE HELPS. You may want to have some time to be alone with your thoughts, feelings and memories. Being alone with your thoughts can be painful at times. But in your solitude, you may also find occasions for ritual, remembrance, writing and living with memories you want to preserve and honor.

REST AND SLEEP HELP. Grief is exhausting and it is important to replenish your stamina—physically, emotionally and spiritually.

ROUTINES HELP. Routines can give some order and meaning to chaotic time. They can also help you feel that you can create some sense of "normal" in your daily life.

TIME HELPS. Life after the loss of a loved one will never be the same. Your world has changed, yet life will persistently demand your presence. Participating in life doesn't betray your loved one and doesn't diminish the importance of your loss. Over time, it is important to re-enter your life and into the lives of those around you.

NATURE HELPS. The natural world can offer you peace and a sense of life's seasons and continuity. Spending time in the outdoors, walking, hiking, listening and observing nature can be comforting.

Grief Services Information

Halcyon Grief Support offers individual, couples and family counseling. Counselors are licensed professionals with specialized training and experience in grief and loss. Because people grieve in different and personal ways, Halcyon Grief Support offers counseling to meet the distinctive needs of different age groups and types of loss.



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Grief support is available to you and your family for the first year of your bereavement and beyond. This includes individual and family counseling for adults and children, as well as a variety of grief support groups. To learn more of what's available, call Halcyon Hospice Grief Support at 720.325.2987 and ask to speak with a grief counselor.

Volunteers are at the heart of Halcyon Hospice & Palliative Care
Volunteers make important contributions to the lives of Halcyon Hospice & Palliative Care patients and their families every day. Depending on your skills and timing of your loss, there are many opportunities available. Contact Halcyon Volunteer Program at 303-329-0870 or myhalcyon@volunteergroup.org for more information and to learn more about volunteering.