

Taking Care of You

You may not be concerned about your own health at this time, but it is important that you take care of yourself, even in the midst of your sadness.

Nutrition

Eating well is one of the hardest things to do after the death of a loved one. You may find yourself eating to find comfort, or the thought of food may be repulsive. Weight gain or loss is very common following the death of a loved one. But consult a health professional if your weight changes by more than 10%.

Rest

Sleep may seem like it will never come. The loneliness seems worst at night. It is important to maintain your regular rest schedule, even if you are unable to sleep. If you can't fall asleep, find a comfortable chair and try reading, but don't get up to do something active. Reserve those activities for the times when your body is accustomed to being awake.

Exercise

This is a key component to staying healthy. Although you probably won't feel like doing anything very strenuous, it is helpful to maintain or start a regular program of activity. If you can, find someone who will take a daily walk with you.

Beverages and Medications

Avoid alcohol, tranquilizers and caffeinated beverages. It is tempting to numb your pain with these substances, but the relief is artificial and only prolongs the necessity of facing your pain.

Talking

You may find people – even relatives and friends – who will discourage you from talking about your loved one who has died. But it is healing to express your feelings. Do it as much as you feel the need.

Crying

Many people try to suppress their tears, but tears often bring comfort.

Writing

Keeping a journal seems to be one of the most helpful things that many people do while grieving. Feelings that may be uncomfortable to share in other settings can be safely written down.

Decisions

Avoid making big decisions, or making changes. Don't move, change jobs or relationships in the near future. At the same time, don't let others make decisions for you. Don't put away your loved one's belongings until you are ready.

Asking for Help

It may seem awkward, but friends and relatives can make things easier. Others want desperately to be of service but don't know what to do. You can delegate meal preparation, childcare or housekeeping chores to people who want to assist you.

Support Groups

Attending a local group will put you in an environment where it is okay to grieve and where you can gain support from others who have been through similar situations.

Loma Linda University Medical Center offers support groups beginning in early January, April, July and October. Call 909-558-4367 to register or get more information.

A number of other local support groups may be found at lluh.org/bereavement.

Time Is a Healer

If you don't run from the pain of your grief, time will provide the opportunity to work through it. Healing will come... in time.