

It is important to take care of yourself physically after a loss.

- 1. Drink an adequate amount of water.** Under stress and emotional upheaval of grief, you will tend to be dehydrated without being aware of it. Over the length of time required for recovery, this dehydration weakens your immune system. The ideal amount to drink is two quarts of pure water each day. It is a large quantity and yes, drinking this much does have the expected results on your bladder. If you can't drink that much water, do the best that you can! Soft drinks, tea, coffee or alcoholic beverages are not a substitute for water
- 2. Eat nutritiously.** This too may be a challenge, but it is important to maintain a well-balanced nutritional plan. Avoid junk food, high-fat foods and an excess of sugar, caffeine and alcohol. One challenge is that for most of us, eating is a social occasion. If you eat alone, food may not interest you. It is common to put off eating until hunger reaches a point of discomfort then overeating the wrong foods. It is best if you can maintain your weight within five pounds of what it was prior to your loss.
- 3. Get adequate exercise.** Exercise within the boundaries of your own limitations, is helpful both physically and emotionally. Exercise releases endorphins which act as a natural antidepressant. A brisk walk does wonders for relieving the symptoms of depression and it is free. Try walking in a swimming pool for the added benefits that the water provides. You will tend to exercise more regularly if you find someone to exercise with you. The most difficult part of any exercise program is doing it when you don't feel like it, but having company helps you keep on track.
- 4. Get sufficient rest.** There is no substitute for getting enough rest while dealing with grief. It is good if you can stay as close as possible to the sleep pattern that you had before the loss. Because of the fatigue and stress involved with grief, it is even better to get additional rest in the form of naps for the first several months. However, sleep disturbances are very common after a major loss.

Take care of your emotional, social and spiritual needs.

- 1. Give yourself permission to grieve.** Learn to break the rules!
- 2. Be a part of a support group.** Rally a network of support around you, family, friends, your clergy or your social group. Joining a support group created specifically to meet your grief needs is very helpful.
- 3. Set aside some time each day to express your feelings.** Try listening to music, watching a sad movie, reading poetry, writing or drawing in a journal
- 4. Give grief a voice, make some noise.** Sing, shout or cry.
- 5. Get physical!** Pound some pillows, bang on some wood, hit some tennis balls or golf balls, or use a tennis racket and smack the bed.
- 6. Do a good deed.** A deed that your loved one did or would have done.
- 7. Look for open doors:** for new opportunities, new activities and new friends.