

## TIPS FOR COPING WITH GRIEF

*Working people spend almost 50 percent of their waking hours in their place of employment. Often the relationships that develop between co-workers have intensity and a life all their own, even when the work relationship is not carried over into their personal lives. Usually co-workers see one another daily, perhaps spending more time with co-workers than at home with significant others. These types of interactions can develop strong emotional connections. Co-workers come to rely on one another, not just for help performing tasks, but also for support and understanding. We also develop strong ties with the Patients we serve.*

*The loss of a co-worker through death can create a variety of strong feelings and reactions. Because these losses are not fully recognized by society, there are no clear customs about how to work through the loss. It is important to openly communicate, resolve issues of "how to proceed from here" and to be certain that your emotional needs are met. Grief is a normal process that proceeds from feelings of sadness and pain to healing and wholeness. Below you will find some tips that seem to help this process along.*

- ◇ Take your time. Don't judge or measure your reactions by those of others. The experience of grief is unique and personal and not everyone will experience it in the same way or intensity. For some the healing will take longer.
- ◇ Talk, share your feelings and the meaning the loss has for you. Talking with people who can give you support is key to the healing process.
- ◇ Surrender to your own grief. Accept and acknowledge your pain with honesty. Don't try to hide your grief so others will feel comfortable. When you are really hurting, don't try to pretend you're okay. Share your true feelings without shame.
- ◇ Pay attention to your body. Rest and take time to reflect about your loss and allow yourself to relax. The most common symptom of grief is lack of energy. You need to be able to sleep to recover.

- ◇ **Don't be afraid of tears. The best way past the pain is through it.**
- ◇ **Take care of your body. Exercise and a good balanced nutrition are the essential components of the healing process.**
- ◇ **Avoid alcohol and other mind altering substances that can affect the way you experience your feelings. You need to get in touch with your pain in order to conquer it and learn how strong you really are.**
- ◇ **Don't isolate yourself from others. Surround yourself with those who love and support you, share your pain, your memories and your feelings.**
- ◇ **Learn to be sensitive to the changes this loss brings and be flexible with your new needs and new lifestyle.**
- ◇ **Seek professional help if necessary. It's important to seek professional help if you feel you've exhausted your resources, or if you feel the need to ease your pain through eating or drinking compulsively, or through other compulsive or self destructive behaviors. These will only prolong the process and can make it even more painful.**
- ◇ **Work on developing your spirituality. As time goes by, you'll be able to understand the meaning of your loss and will be able to feel calm and inner peace.**

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**Call for free, confidential help 24 hours a day.**