

PORTER LORING GRIEF SUPPORT

Most people think they know something about handling grief until they have experienced it. No matter how well prepared we are for the loss of a family member or friend, we can be caught off guard by the depth of our emotions. We find ourselves reacting in ways we had not anticipated and often find that our beliefs and relationships with others undergo trying times.

The grief process has a life of its own. It is a unique and profound time. We face what we have lost, our own mortality, and the challenge of learning to live without that special person. The journey can be overwhelming, confusing and even frightening, because our feelings are so intense and often out of control. It takes time, compassion for yourself and a willingness to allow this grief to evolve into a healing experience and renewed life.

What Will Help

- It is believed that 60% of your energy is taken up in grieving, so it is important to take care of yourself. Sleep and eat when you can, even if just a little. Don't pressure yourself when you can't. Drink lots of water and try short periods of light exercise. Set priorities and don't push yourself.
- Talk about your grief and the one you lost. Sharing what you are going through is the most powerful form of healing.
- Find a balance between the solitude that is needed to grieve and contact with a support system of family and friends. Journaling, looking at pictures, and reflecting on memories are good ways to spend time alone. And when spending time with others, choose people who encourage you to express yourself and discover ways to find meaning in life.
- Exercise your faith. Our spiritual beliefs are often challenged during this time. So to help find peace of mind, you may need to seek guidance from your clergy or simply just sit in your house of worship.
- Look for ways to celebrate the one you have lost and the progress you are making in your grief. The funeral is the first step in this process. Later you may do things like set up a memorial fund, plant a tree, have a service in the person's honor or some other very personal and private ritual.
- Resolve to heal. Avoiding grief only makes it more complicated and overwhelming. If you have loved, sooner or later, you must grieve. It is a continuation of your relationship with the one you lost. Embrace your grief and you will discover how that person can live on in your heart and into the future.