Dealing with Death

The death of a loved one is one of the most difficult things we will ever experience. It is traumatic. We can experience a rollercoaster of emotions: shock, disbelief, confusion, denial, anger, sadness, yearning, guilt. It takes time to process our grief and learn to adjust to a new routine and experiences. It’s not something we ever “get over.” It’s about finding strength and comfort in what you both shared.

- **Be patient with yourself.**
  Grief is a personal process. There is no set time for healing.

- **Make an extra effort to take care of yourself.**
  Grief can take a toll on our physical health. Make sure you eat right, get sleep, and exercise.

- **Try not to make any major decisions.**
  Grief impacts our ability to concentrate, think, and make decisions. When possible, wait until you are better able to function.

- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.**
  It may be tempting to reach for alcohol or drugs to numb the pain. This can make things worse. Substance use can intensify negative feelings and make it harder to work through the grief.

- **Stay connected to family and friends.**
  Talking to caring people can help. Long periods of isolation can increase stress.

- **Do an activity or project that honors your loved one.**
  Doesn’t need to cost a lot of money. Can be something simple. Pick something that is meaningful for you. Maybe planting flowers in a community garden, volunteering at a nature program, helping out at church, or sharing memories with kids or grandkids.

- **Seek help if you have:**
  - Major changes in weight (weight loss or weight gain)
  - Continued trouble sleeping
  - Thoughts of suicide
  - Prolonged distress

If you are unable to return to daily activities after a couple of weeks, talk to your family doctor. Tell him the symptoms you are experiencing. If you are thinking of taking your own life, call the National Suicide Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 for free, confidential support 24/7. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911.

*Suicide is very much preventable. For more information, go to HelpHimStay.org.*