



Appendix D: 'The Grief Journey' (Patient Handout)

The Grief Journey		
When a death occurs	Adjusting to loss	As life goes on
SOCIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from others • Unrealistic expectation of self and others • Poor judgment about relationships 	SOCIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushing into new relationships • Wanting company but unable to ask • Continued withdrawal and isolation • Self-consciousness 	SOCIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interest in daily affairs of self / others • Ability to reach out and meet others • Energy for social visits and events
PHYSICAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath and palpitations • Digestive upsets • Low energy, weakness, and restlessness 	PHYSICAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in appetite and sleep patterns • Shortness of breath and palpitations • Digestive upsets 	PHYSICAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical symptoms subside • Sleep pattern and appetites are more settled • Gut-wrenching emptiness lightens
EMOTIONAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying, sobbing, and wailing • Indifference and emptiness • Outrage and helplessness 	EMOTIONAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense and conflicting emotions • Magnified fear for self or others • Anger, sadness, guilt, depression 	EMOTIONAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions are less intense • Feeling of coming out of the fog • More peace; less guilt
MENTAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion, forgetfulness, and poor concentration • Denial and daydreaming • Constant thoughts about the person who died and/or the death 	MENTAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of going crazy • Memory problems • Difficulty concentrating/understanding • Wild dreams or nightmares 	MENTAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased perspective about the death • Ability to remember with less pain • Improved concentration and memory • Dreams and nightmares decrease
SPIRITUAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaming God or life • Lack of meaning, direction, or hope • Wanting to die or join the person who died 	SPIRITUAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to contact the person who died • Sensing the presence of the person who died; visitations • Continued lack of meaning 	SPIRITUAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnection with religious / spiritual beliefs • Life has new meaning and purpose • Acceptance of death as part of life cycle
WHAT HELPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace yourself moment to moment • Make no unnecessary changes • Talk about the person and the death • Identify and access practical and emotional supports 	WHAT HELPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and express emotions • Acknowledge changes • Understand grief and know that others • experience similar responses 	WHAT HELPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on progress since death • Begin envisioning a future • Engage in new activities • Establish new roles and relationships

Adapted from "The Grief Journey"; Victoria Hospice Society.

If you have ongoing concerns, please contact _____