

Take Care of Yourself

Bereavement can be a threat to your health. You are important – your life is valuable – so please take care of it.

Eat well At this time of emotional and physical depletion, your body needs good nourishment more than ever. If you can only pick at food, a vitamin supplement might be helpful, but it will not fully make up for a poor diet.

Exercise regularly Return to your old program or start one as soon as possible. Exercise releases tension and anxiety. Depression can be lightened a little by the biochemical changes brought by exercise, and you will sleep better. An hour-long walk every day is ideal for many people.

Avoid drugs, sedatives Although drugs may provide some needed relief, they must not be taken for the purpose of avoiding the pain and realizing the loss that ultimately has to be faced.

Rest and sleep Some degree of sleep disturbance is normally expected, however, a lack of sufficient sleep may lead to mental and physical exhaustion. Speak with your physician if you have severe insomnia.

Physical health A certain amount of physical disturbance is a normal component of grief because grief assaults the body as well as the mind. Bereavement is a time of high health risk. Be sure to schedule a medical evaluation and follow-up of physical symptoms if they develop.

There is no question about death being the greatest stressor in the human experience. Neither is there any question about severe stress causing some serious ailments. We can't remove the source of the greatest stress – death, but we do encourage you to care for your life.

Traumatic Event Helpful Hints to Deal with Stress

Trying some of the following hints may help to alleviate the emotional pain associated with a traumatic event.

For Yourself	For Family Members & Friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to rest a bit more ▪ Contact friends ▪ Have someone stay with you for at least a few hours or periods of a day or so ▪ Reoccurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks or normal. Don't try to fight them. They will decrease over time and become less painful. ▪ Maintain as normal a schedule as possible ▪ Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even when you don't feel like it) ▪ Try to keep a reasonable level of activity ▪ Fight against boredom ▪ Physical activity is often helpful ▪ Reestablish a normal schedule as soon as possible ▪ Express your feelings as they arise ▪ Talk to people who love you ▪ Find a good counselor if the feelings become prolonged or too intense. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen carefully ▪ Spend time with the traumatized person ▪ Offer your assistance and a listening ear even if they have not asked for help ▪ Reassure them that they are safe ▪ Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, minding children ▪ Give them some private time ▪ Don't take their anger or other feelings personally ▪ Don't tell them that they are "lucky" "it wasn't worse". Traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.

If the symptoms described above are severe or if they last longer than six weeks, the traumatized person may need professional counseling.

Contact a private practice psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker, or your local community mental health center or community health department for assistance.