



Grieving as an Adult

August 2019

Senior Management Services

Grief is such a personal experience. As a working caregiver, you may be grieving a loss of a parent, spouse, relative, close friend or even a child. You may be grieving the loss of someone who is declining in their health (mental or physical). They may still be alive, but the relationship has changed drastically over the past year or more.

Often our grief is experienced alongside our family members who are each having their own individual experiences as well. It can be difficult to know how to cope together during these times.

Pathways Center for Grief and Loss has some tips for coping together as a family:

- *Communication is the key to coping and growing as a family through grief.*
- *It is important to be together to talk, cry, rant, or even sit in silence with each other.*
- *At the same time, each person needs to respect the fact that everyone in the family will cope differently.*

Here are some suggestions to help with family grief.

- *Be sensitive to each other's feelings, as they are often difficult to verbalize. Listen to what is meant, as well as to what is said.*
- *Offering a hug, or a hand on the arm or back provides comfort and a sense of closeness.*
- *Set aside time to be "alone together." Encourage, but don't pressure, family members to express grief in their own way. Be a good listener.*
- *Discuss the loved one's former role in the family which now necessitates new roles for everyone else. Be careful not to expect a family member to replace or be the same as the person who died.*
- *If depression, withdrawal, grief or family problems are getting out of control, seek professional help.*
- *Recognize that anniversaries, birthdays and special holidays may be difficult. Discuss together how to observe these occasions.*
- *Consult family members about what to do with the loved one's possessions. Take your time and tread carefully where these precious mementos are concerned. If possible, put off making major decisions about moving or giving away belongings.*

Remember it is difficult to help your family if you are falling apart. Addressing your own grief needs will enable you to help your family to cope with their grief.

Pathways Center for Grief and Loss Newsletter:

<https://www.hospiceandcommunitycare.org/wp-content/uploads/Pathways6-19-Pages-2.pdf>

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