



Survival Guide for Early Grief

Attend To Your Physical Health:

Drink plenty of fluids. They help flush out the toxins that result from stress. Drink a minimum of 8-10 8 oz. glasses a day, unless you need to restrict fluids. Limit intake of caffeine and alcohol, as they tend to dehydrate.

Eat 5 or 6 small meals a day. Or eat one item of food every 2-3 hours. Keeping an even blood sugar helps curb emotional swings.

Engage in physical exercise. Even a brisk 10 – 20 minute walk can do wonders for your body and spirit, including helping you focus better.

Rest during the day. Take breaks from whatever you're doing to nap or just rest. Listen to calm music or picture yourself in a serene setting. Breathe deeply to help you relax—count to 5 as you inhale and again as you exhale.

Create bedtime routines to help you sleep. Go to bed at the same time each night. Take a soothing bath or drink a cup of warm milk. To help you fall asleep, say a short repetitive prayer or count sheep. If your spouse died, try sleeping in a different room or curl up with a large pillow. If nothing helps, contact your doctor about some medication.

Accept These Typical Reactions:

- A wide range of thoughts and feelings, including a sense of unreality and disbelief
- Physical symptoms, such as shakiness, a tight throat, queasy stomach, and bodily aches
- Inability to sleep, lack of appetite
- Fatigue and exhaustion
- Difficulty focusing and making decisions, or feeling like you're going crazy
- Thinking more about the person's death or illness than their life
- A resurgence of grief for prior losses

Seek Support From Family and Friends:

- **Ask them for help** with everyday tasks or simply to be with you for periods of the day.
- **Talk or write** about your feelings and cry when you feel like it.
- **Ask for private time** when you need it, but do not be alone all the time.
- **Try to overlook statements** that seem insensitive, or gently correct when others offend.

