**Grief Education Packet**

**Thoughts on Grief and Mourning**

Grief is not understood very well in our society, and mourners are expected to recover quickly. Be gentle with yourself during the many ups and downs of the coming days.

The experience is unique to each person, yet there is much you will have in common with others. Guard against putting expectations on others; and against accepting the expectations of others as your own.

Tears make many people uncomfortable but they are a healthy and acceptable part of the pain process. Cry when you need to and do not apologize for tears.

Grief affects every aspect of your life. A balanced diet, adequate fluids, moderate physical exercise, and rest are all important during the mourning period.

Friends and relatives may avoid you and talking about the death of your loved one. Let them know if you need to talk about you loved one and if talking helps.

This is a very difficult time of transition for you. If possible, avoid making any major decisions for the next year.

There will be a certain group of people who want to move out your loved one’s clothes and possessions immediately. Wait until you are ready to decide what to do.

Many people may try to tell you what to feel. Your feelings and emotions are real. They are yours. Whatever they are, you need to find people who will let you express those feelings honestly and openly without judgment.

Holiday and anniversary times are reminders of you loss. Plan ahead to avoid some of the added stress. Remember that others may not understand and be sensitive to your feelings. Take time for your needs.

You are not alone. Mutual help groups put you in touch with others having similar experiences. There are others who understand and care.

**Common Experiences of a Grieving Person**

1. Some have insomnia, some sleep most of the time.

2. under or over interest in sex.

3. Behaving unpredictably and erratically; fear of losing one’s own sanity.

4. Episodic crying spells.

*5.* Erratic ups and downs, progress and regression.

6. Weight change loss or gain.

7. Restlessness, inability to concentrate, irritability.

8. Fatigue, dizziness, excessive sweating, skin rashes, heart pains.

**Common Grief Reactions**

1. Shock and surprise---Families often experience shock early in the grief process.

The anguish associated with this shock can be extreme.

2. Emotional release--Crying and open expression of anguish is typical of this aspect of grief

3. Loneliness---The ongoing sense of loss and the feeling of being left alone is often seen in grieving people. Such emotions are strong and surge over the survivor resulting in discomfort, withdrawal, hopelessness, and fearfulness reflecting the loss of frequent companionship.

4. Physical distress and anxiety--Waves of confusion, agitation, and stress are felt resulting in interference in routine daily activities. The result of physical stress can result in the onset illness or the exacerbation of existing physical illnesses.

5. Guilt--The survivor sometimes believes he is responsible for the death or events that resulted in the death. This often takes the form of believing that “1 didn’t do enough for the person....I didn’t have a chance to say...I should have been there.”

6. Anger---Survivors often become extremely angry and hostile and identify a real or imagined person or cause of death. People often express anger at the loved on for dying and leaving them alone. Anger is also directed at God for allowing this to happen.

7. Lassitude---The survivor exhibits fatigue and weariness that slows daily functioning.



