



Dear Bereaved,

At this time in your bereavement, a great deal of activity (calls and letters, settling the estate, etc.) may have lessened. It is possible that the initial feelings of shock and disbelief have faded and you may now be experiencing the greater impact of your loss. This change can result in increased personal stress and you may find yourself increasingly anxious or depressed.

Coping mechanisms are those actions people use to deal with change. To assess how you usually cope with stress, ask these questions of yourself:

- * How do I usually react when things get rough?
- * In the past, what have I done in dealing with other losses or similarly stressful situations?
- * Are those ways of dealing with stress adequate for me now?
- * What kind of new ways can I find to relieve my stress?

Enclosed is a worksheet "Things to Do When I'm Feeling Blue." Complete it as best as you can. Put it in a place where you can refer to it when you are depressed or anxious. There may be times when you are just too "down" to remember new or creative ways to handle stress. If you have ideas available to you on paper, it may be easier to take action or work yourself out of a depressed period.

Time may lessen the initial intensity of grief, but time alone is not enough to heal the deep wounds of loss. You may need to consider taking a more active role in developing new ways of coping and expanding your personal support network. Please remember we are here to support you during this time through a variety of groups including Mourning After and our writing and art based groups.

Sincerely,

Margaret Hartsook
Grief Counselor

Nancy Jakobsson
Director of Pathways for Grief and Loss

Amanda Hillman
Grief Counselor

Renee Baker
Grief Counselor

First Aid for Your Mental Health

- **Talk it out – find a level-headed person you can trust.**
- **Escape for a while – find a spot of peace and quiet.**
- **Work off your anger – pitch into exercise or hobbies.**
- **Give in occasionally – admit that you can.**
- **Do something for others – it takes your mind off yourself.**
- **Take things one at a time – shun the “super-person” urge.**
- **Give yourself a pat on the back for the things you do well – but don’t try to be perfect.**
- **Go easy with criticism – others have virtues, too.**
- **Give the other fellow a break – cooperation is contagious.**
- **Make yourself available – often others are only waiting for you to make the first move.**
- **Schedule your recreation – essential to good physical and mental health.**
- **Tell someone you care – do it with a word or a smile.**
- **Be able to laugh at yourself – don’t take yourself too seriously.**

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Things to Do When I'm Feeling Blue

This worksheet is designed to remind you of the important and comforting things already present in your life that you may want to think about when you are feeling down.

My three favorite persons to talk with are:

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

My favorite place to go:

My favorite meditation/prayer:

My favorite song or music:

Books I'd like to read:

Letters, poems or stories I'd like to write:

A thought that sustains me:

Physical activities I enjoy:

Recreational activities I enjoy:

Plans to redecorate my room or home:

My next project is:

List the first three steps in beginning this project.