

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 five or six 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

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