



Caring for families

Along The Way

Helping you understand your journey through grief.

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Brenan's
FUNERAL HOMES
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port group for teens that may be offered by a local school, mental health unit or funeral home.

Young people seem resilient and may give the impression of not being affected by the death or having “gotten over it” very quickly. However, this is not usually the case and deep inside they are grieving. When adults can take time to listen, to provide resources and basically just understand, the tightrope of grief will not be as terrifying as it would be if the young person felt abandoned and misunderstood.

Websites

www.griefworksbc.com

This web page of the women’s Health Centre of British Columbia offers support to adults and teenagers alike.

www.grievingchild.org

This is the web page of the Dougy Center for Grieving Children and Families. It offers helpful support to adults seeking to help young people.

www.huckhouse.org

This organization provides support for young people in crisis. There is a helpful page on teens and grief.

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Understanding Grief

by Dr. Bill Webster



Losing someone you care about can be one of the most difficult experiences of life. There are no words to describe the overwhelming sense of pain you may feel. You are possibly reading these words through tears, and wondering how you are ever going to manage to get through this situation. You may even feel like “it’s over” as if your own life has ended.

I understand a little of this from my own personal experience. My wife was in her late 30s when she died unexpectedly of a heart attack. It just didn’t seem possible. I couldn’t bring myself to believe that my wife ... my wife ... had died. This was not what I had signed up for.

As difficult as it was, at first I actually seemed to be coping well. People told me that I was “handling the situation” and that I was “so strong.” But looking back, it wasn’t so much that I was strong, I was numb. And a few weeks after her death, that numbness wore off and I began to experience an explosion of emotions and reactions to my loss. It was unbelievably difficult. But what made it even worse was that many of the

people who at the time of the funeral had thought I was “doing so well” were now saying, “Well, what’s wrong with you? You have to pull yourself together and get on with it.”

It was not as simple as that, unfortunately. The problem is that sometimes it is when people think we should be getting ourselves together, that the grieving person feels like they are falling apart.

However, I have come to realize that my reactions were part of a grief process. I believe that grief is not a disease, but rather a normal, human response to a significant loss. People may encourage you to “be strong” or “not to cry.” But how sad it would be if someone we cared about died and we didn’t cry, or carried on as if nothing had happened. Frankly, I’d like to think that someone would miss me enough to shed a tear after I’m gone. Wouldn’t you?

So as painful and as difficult as it is, we need to remember that grief is a “high level complaint.” As Queen Elizabeth said to the people of New York City after the events of 9/11, “Grief is