Healing from the Loss of a Friend

The loss of a friend or loved one is among the most difficult events that a person can experience. The emotions of grief and the grieving process are painful but natural, expected, and necessary parts of healing and recovery.

Grief is a process.
There is no one way to grieve and no definite time frame for grief. Each person will experience it in their own way. The idea when grieving is to work with it, little by little, a day at a time, rather than to sweep it under the rug. This means acknowledging and dealing with your thoughts and feelings about what has happened and about what it means to you.

Will I ever get over this and, if so, how long will it take?
While there is no erasing this difficult event, over time most people come to feel like themselves again. Some may feel they are doing fairly well amidst their grief a few weeks and months after the death while others may take longer to feel fully engaged in their lives. Everyone copes in their own way. For some who have “made peace” with their loss, the first anniversary of the loss may be is difficult. This is a common reaction.

Some grief reactions you may be noticing...

- Sadness, depressed mood, mood changes
- Feelings of helplessness, loneliness, & loss of control
- Panic and anxiety
- Poor concentration, easily distracted
- Shock, denial, numbness, or disbelief
- Guilt, regrets
- Anger
- Sleep disturbances
- Tearfulness, crying
- Decreased interest, energy, or enjoyment
- Confusion
- Intrusive thoughts and memories

How to Help Yourself

- **Care for yourself emotionally.** Give yourself permission to grieve. Allow quiet time alone to reflect and to explore and experience your thoughts and feelings. Allow time to heal without setting unrealistic goals and deadlines. Resist/delay making major decisions/changes in your life.

- **Care for yourself physically.** Get adequate rest, nutrition and exercise.

- **Express your feelings.** Allow opportunities to express the full range of your emotions. This includes sadness, but also perhaps, fear, guilt, anger, resentment, and relief. Avoiding emotions can prolong the pain of loss.
• **Seek support.** Gathering and using social support is essential. Support from others reduces isolation and loneliness and increases one’s sense of security, safety and attachment. Talk to friends openly about your loss. If religion or spirituality are important to you, talk with a member of the clergy or a spiritual advisor. Consider joining a support group for people who have experienced a similar loss.

• **Consider seeking professional help.** Many people find counseling to be very helpful with the healing process. The University Counseling Center offers individual counseling, support groups and workshops on grief. We can also refer you to resources in the community. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call us at 442-5800 or visit us @ 400 Patroon Creek, Suite 104, between the hours of 9AM and 4:30PM, Monday through Friday. You can also walk into a Let’s Talk site on campus, with no appointment needed. Check our website for Let’s Talk times and locations. (albany.edu/counseling_center)

### How To Help A Friend

• **Be available.** Call, stop by to talk, share a meal or activity. Your presence and companionship are important. Mutual support can help get everyone through the grieving process.

• **Listen/be patient.** Listening is an often overlooked gift of yourself. Allow your friend to vent feelings. Don’t judge the person’s thoughts or feelings. Don’t feel you need to offer advice. Listening itself is very powerful.

• **Encourage self care.** It is important to allow time for rest. Make sure to eat, sleep and engage in exercise and or/other activities that you find relaxing. Encourage your friend to seek out support and/or professional help at the University Counseling Center, if needed.

• **Accept your own limitations.** Accept that you cannot eliminate the pain your friend is experiencing. Grief is a natural, expected response to loss and each person must work through it in his/her own way and at his/her own pace. Be supportive, but care for yourself too. Remind them of resources they have on campus, like the Counseling Center, a Let’s Talk site, and Middle Earth.

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**You are not alone.**

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<th>Call us or Stop-in</th>
<th>Email Us</th>
<th>Visit Us on the Web</th>
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<tr>
<td>University Counseling Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:consultation@albany.edu">consultation@albany.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="http://albany.edu/counseling_center">albany.edu/counseling_center</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>400 Patroon Creek Blvd., Suite 104</td>
<td>518.442.5800</td>
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- Let’s Talk Sites – Various Convenient Campus Locations (locations and times on web)

You can also call the Middle Earth Peer Assistance Hotline.

“Students Helping Students”

518.442.5777

M-Th: 1PM-12AM, Fridays & Weekends: 24 hours