

## **HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF**

Give yourself permission to grieve. Some days you can handle the feelings that surface, and some days you may "fall apart." These "ups and downs" are a natural reaction to loss.

- Go ahead and cry. Tears are a natural and necessary part of grieving. They are not a sign of weakness; they are a sign that you have loved.
- Express feelings of anger with someone you trust. Suppressed anger can lead to prolonged depression and poor physical health.
- Tell people what you need. People may avoid you because they are afraid that they will say the wrong thing. When you let others know what you need, they are usually grateful and relieved.
- Be good to yourself. Get the rest you need, balanced with regular exercise and a good diet. You may not feel motivated to do these things now, but they are crucial to your physical and mental well-being.
- Give in ways that you can. Giving to others will assist you in your own healing. Consider joining a grief support group. As you benefit from the love and courage of group members, your presence and personal story will also be helpful to them.
- Write in a journal. Record your thoughts and feelings. Get them "out of your system."
- Do not make major decisions too quickly. Change requires lots of energy. Put that energy into taking good care of yourself.
- Maintain a support system. Whether they are family or friends, make sure you have someone to talk to.
- Believe in yourself. Think of all the reasons your loved one cared for you. These qualities are still present and will help you find strength and meaning in the future.

— Linda Cunningham