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PLEASE

When we are experiencing grief and loss, our *emotional vulnerability* tends to increase, meaning we are more easily overwhelmed by challenging emotions. In Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, a therapy designed to teach emotional regulation/stress management skills (as well as distress tolerance, mindfulness, and interpersonal effectiveness skills), we talk about a skill called PLEASE, which is an acronym used to represent the core self-care practices designed to decrease our emotional vulnerability.

PL: Treat physical illness. In other words, when you are sick or injured, take care of yourself. Examples include seeing a doctor when ill and in need of medications, taking medications as prescribed, staying home from work when sick, getting additional sleep when feeling ill, and/or resting injured body parts.

E: Balanced Eating. This means eating enough throughout the day that you are physically, emotionally, and mentally energized. Avoid eating either too much or too little and try to only eat sweets in moderation. A balanced diet includes a mix of carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, protein and healthy fats.

A: Avoid mood altering substances. It is best to avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs (remember, take medications only as prescribed). It is also good practice to avoid or limit caffeine.

S: Balanced Sleep. Avoid sleeping too much or too little, and instead get the right amount of sleep for your body. Most adults and teens need 8-10 hours of sleep per night, whereas most children need 10-12 hours. Try to minimize napping, avoid exercise or screens within 2 hours of bedtime, and try to wake up/go to sleep at the same time each day (even on weekends!).

E: Balanced Exercise. Just 20-30 minutes of movement per day is enough to stimulate endorphin production. Keep yourself as physically active as possible, either through purposeful work outs or by doing daily physical activities like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or shoveling snow instead of using a snow-blower.

If you or someone you know could benefit from additional help with grief and loss, self-care, stress management, and/or anxiety/depression, please reach out to us at McCaskill Family Services. Our licensed clinicians specialize in these areas and can be reached by phone at 734-416-9098 and/or through email at office@mccaskillfamilyservices.com to set up either an in-person or tele-health session.

Reference:

Eich, J. (2015). *Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents: A practical workbook for therapists, teens & parents*. PESI Publishing and Media.