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5 Helpful Tips for Coping with Grief and Loss

The experience of grief and loss is highly individualized. There is no cookie-cutter amount of time grieving lasts, nor is there a step-by-step foolproof plan to eliminate the often painful feelings associated with loss. However, there are many tips and strategies to help ease discomfort while allowing the grief process to unfold naturally. Below are 5 of our most helpful strategies.

1. **Seek out a support system.** While experiencing grief, spending time with supportive friends, family members and people in your community can be extremely helpful. If you feel comfortable, discussing your emotions and grief experience with your support system can be very therapeutic. Joining a support group can connect you with others who are enduring similar grief experiences and can help diminish feelings of loneliness/isolation.
2. **Engage in self-care.** While grieving, by taking care of ourselves through exercise, eating healthy, prioritizing a healthy amount of sleep, engaging in social connections, refraining from mood-altering substance use, etc., we can reduce our vulnerability to stress and painful emotions.
3. **Engage in pleasurable activities.** It can be especially helpful to continue to partake in the pleasurable hobbies and interests you engaged in before the loss, as there can be comfort in routine.
4. **Acknowledge and express your feelings.** Shock, denial, anger, sadness, guilt, and anxiety are common feelings associated with grief and loss. Trying to avoid these feelings all-together can actually backfire and keep them around for longer. Writing about your feelings in a journal or through art can be a calming outlet for emotional expression.
5. **Give yourself permission to take time to grieve.** There is no appropriate amount of time the grieving process is supposed to take, and usually feelings and the intensity of grief fluctuate. Be patient with yourself and make a conscious decision to practice self-compassion.

If you or someone you know is grieving and would like further support, please contact McCaskill Family Services to schedule an appointment with a licensed mental health professional who specializes in grief therapy. Both tele-health and in-person appointments can be made by telephone at 734-416-9098 and/or by email at office@mccaskillfamilyservices.com.