

Living Through Loss Counselling Society of BC

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COPING STRATEGIES FOR THE CAREGIVER

Caring for someone who is ill can be stressful and it is important that caregivers develop techniques to care for themselves.

All Caregivers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gain a sense of control/mastery to counter feelings of helplessness. ▪ Have a life outside of caregiving through exercise; meditation; hobbies; friendships etc. ▪ Create a positive outlook and attitude by balancing engagement and detachment to caregiving. ▪ Rituals symbolize transition and healing. ▪ Continue activities that give you identity and self-esteem and joy. ▪ Focus on today. ▪ Understand your personal limitations. Set and maintain boundaries. ▪ Take a vacation from caregiving. ▪ Learn to find a new place in your life for those who have died. ▪ Try to resolve each loss as fully as possible. ▪ Keep your sense of humour! ▪ Work through the feelings with friends, family, professional assistance. ▪ Establish a support network. ▪ Attend a peer support group so that the experience is understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take care of yourself physically through sleep, nutrition and exercise ▪ Develop and accept support from friends, family, co-workers, spiritual community ▪ Take some personal time on a regular basis; know your limits and boundaries ▪ Ask for help when needed- you do not need to know it all ▪ Find a way to express your own grief ▪ Share responsibilities – or change your routine and tasks when you can ▪ Get creative, try new approach to regular tasks ▪ Get in touch with your feelings ▪ Learn to identify the unique ways in which your body informs you that you are stressed ▪ Remind yourself that you cannot change anyone – you can only relate to them ▪ Say “I choose” rather than “I should” or “I have to” ▪ Look for the good things that happened during the day ▪ Explore treatment options as a method of gaining back control.
Family and Friends and Caregivers	Professional Caregivers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Normalizing the abnormal – beware that you are living through an abnormal experience. ▪ If you have had multiple losses it is important to keep memories alive. ▪ Develop a self-healing program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain realistic expectations of yourself in relation to your job. ▪ Have regular formal meetings with your supervisor. ▪ Avoid shop talk during breaks ▪ Take responsibility for your chosen career.