

The Healing Journey

Zusman Hospice Bereavement Support

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Exercise & Moving Through Grief

We all know exercise is good for you, but did you know that physical activity has been proven to help with symptoms of depression and anxiety? And since many of the symptoms of depression and anxiety are the same as the symptoms of grief, exercise can be a powerful aid in coping with the loss of a loved one.

Exercise Can Help Overcome Depression

For many years, experts have known that exercise enhances the action of endorphins, chemicals that circulate throughout the body. Endorphins improve natural immunity and reduce the perception of pain. They may also serve to improve mood. Another theory is that exercise stimulates the neurotransmitter norepinephrine, which may directly improve mood. Exercise offers other health benefits too – such as lowering blood pressure, protecting against heart disease and cancer, and boosting self-esteem.

Start Exercise Gradually

Of course, in the beginning, mourners may be virtually immobilized. Sleeping and eating are difficult enough. There may be no leftover energy for exercise. As the months pass, however, exercise can play a powerful role in re-engaging with life.

We eventually come to a point where we choose to say ‘Yes’ to life again.

Grieving is hard, exhausting work and initially demands much of our energy. When enough healing has occurred, we no longer focus as much of our energy on our loss.

At this point, we find renewed energy to invest in the life ahead of us.

We come to understand that it is possible for us to achieve a happy full life again, though it will be different from our life before our loss.

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Work Up to More Regular Exercise

Once someone is feeling more like him or herself, for general health, experts advise getting half an hour to an hour of moderate exercise, such as brisk walking, on all or most days of the week.

Run or Walk in Someone's Memory

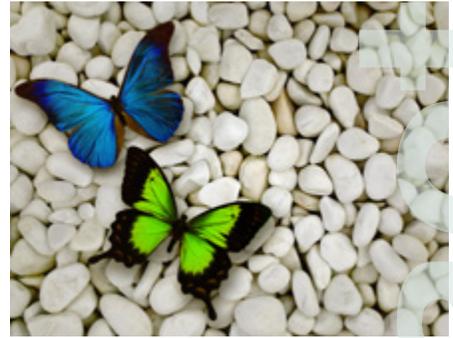
Participating in a local race or walk that benefits a charity or supports a medical cause in memory of a loved one can help with the grieving process because it's a time to let feelings out and think about the person who is gone. Grievers can feel like they're doing something meaningful to honor their loved one and at the same time connect to their community, which can reduce their feelings of isolation.

Losses tear apart the fabric of the routines around which our life is structured. They rob us of our comfortable roles. Any changes, especially involuntary ones, disrupt the flow of our life. Our responsibilities may seem to have doubled overnight.

Grieving the loss of our routines is an essential part of healing. It is helpful to minimize change elsewhere in our lives when we are faced with a loss. It is also important to be gentle and patient with ourselves as we establish new roles and routines and take on additional responsibilities. We are often forced to forge a new identity and learn new skills as part of our recovery. We learn what we must do to survive in our changed world.

The experience of working through grief can be overwhelming. You don't have to go through it alone. Call us at **614-559-0350**. We're here to help.

Made possible by the Alice & Robert Estrich
Fund of The Columbus Foundation.



Grief support is available to you and your loved ones from the
Zusman Hospice
Bereavement Staff.

We offer support through phone calls, individual counseling and group sessions.

Please contact us at
614-559-0350.

This is what I have learned:
Within the sorrow, there is grace. When we come close to those things that break us down, we touch those things that also break us open.

– Wayne Muller

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