



## Depression and Grief

Depression is an emotional state associated with loss. It includes feelings of sadness, apathy, hopelessness, pessimism and discouragement. When depressed, many people withdraw from others and activities. They may also experience decreased interest in work, family responsibilities and relationships.

Many depressed people wonder if they will ever look forward to things again. Often they may feel pretty good one day, but then have a few days that are filled with pain and gloom. Longer and more frequent crying spells can occur. Physical discomforts such as aches, pains, fatigue or sleep and eating disturbances are also common. The loss of capacity for pleasure and avoidance of activities you previously enjoyed add to your feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The desire to be alone for awhile to sort out your feelings and thoughts is a normal response to the death of a loved one. However, prolonged withdrawal and lack of interest are possible signs of a deeper problem.

As with symptoms of grief, the degree of depression and style of coping will differ among the bereaved. Mild to moderate depression is normal after someone dies. However, if symptoms are severe and prolonged, and there is a loss of interest in self, others, or the outside world, professional help may be needed. The key symptoms of severe or “clinical” depression are feelings of deep pervasive sadness, hopelessness, helplessness and decreased self-esteem that last for longer than two weeks or preoccupation with thoughts of suicide.

A severely depressed person lives in a world with little emotional satisfaction either in self, in activities or in other persons. Severe depression can be immobilizing and threatening to your life. If you experience these symptoms, it is important to discuss them with your physician, clergyman, bereavement counselor, or friend/family member who can get you the help you need. With counseling and medication, severe depression can be controlled.

## Suggestions for Coping with Depression

- Recognize the symptoms of depression. It is better to deal with the symptoms and work through them rather than to avoid them.
- Talk things over with an understanding friend or loved one. Talking to a trusted friend or professional may help alleviate some of the symptoms of depression.
- Redirect energy into more constructive channels. Write down a daily plan of action, from rising to bedtime, including small manageable goals and pleasant activities.
- Take a break for a favorite activity such as an evening out or a trip.
- Exercise or meditate to help work off bottled-up tension. Practice deep breathing or yoga to help stimulate physical energy.
- Allow yourself to experience the many feelings and emotions that may come over you (such as anger, guilt, etc.).
- Express your feelings, let out your anger by hitting a pillow or a punching bag, screaming, crying, etc.
- Become involved with people by doing volunteer work or helping other people.
- Avoid extra stress or life changing decisions if possible, unless they are financially or medically necessary.
- Remember that good nutrition is important for mental and physical health.
- When faced with overwhelming or complicated tasks, break them into small steps and set manageable goals.
- Seek professional help if depression is severe or persistent.
- See a physician for a complete checkup and discussion of symptoms.



# HOSPICE B U F F A L O

## **Bereavement Services**

150 Bennett Road  
Cheektowaga, NY 14227  
*Return Service Requested*

To be removed from The Hospice Bereavement correspondence program please call 601-3888.

## Hospice Bereavement Support Groups

Hospice provides grief support groups for you, your family and friends. These groups meet monthly for the purpose of providing opportunities for persons with similar grief experiences to share feelings and reactions to these experiences and offer mutual support. Spouses, adult children, relatives and friends of your loved one are welcome to attend the support group. The meetings last about ninety minutes, and are led by professional staff. There is no fee or registration required for these groups.

**First Thursday** of the month at **2:30 pm - 4:00 pm**

**Third Monday** of the month at **5:30 pm - 7:00 pm**

**Fourth Monday** of the month at **10:30 am - 12:00 noon**

### **Wilson Support Center**

150 Bennett Road  
Cheektowaga, NY 14227

**Thank you for utilizing Hospice Bereavement services.  
Please call us at 601-3888 if we can be of assistance.**