SELF-HELP TIPS©

What can I do for myself?

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LEARN HOW TO RESPOND TO UNHELPFUL STATEMENTS & ACTIONS.

Oftentimes people don't intend to be insensitive—they just aren't aware of the impact of their statements or actions (e.g. "At least...," "It was God's will").

Suggestions:

- "A lot of people believe that, but I don't find it comforting."
- "I used to think that way, too, before xyz, but I don't anymore."
- "I know you mean well and this (belief/action) has been helpful to you, but it isn't helpful to me."
- Write a non-confrontational, constructive letter to enlighten them about what may have upset or offended you.
- Don't be afraid to tell them how they made you feel again if it happens a second time. Sometimes people need to hear something more than once.
- TRY NOT TO ASSUME THAT PEOPLE KNOW what you need, what you want, or what would make you feel better. Your needs won't always be obvious to others.

Suggestions:

- Let people know if you want to be cheered up <u>or</u> if you want some time to feel sad.
- Let people know if you want company <u>or</u> if you need some time alone.
- Let people know if you want to talk about the loss/diagnosis/event <u>or</u> if you don't want to talk about it.
- Let people know when they can visit (and what they can do to help) <u>or</u> when you need time for privacy.
- UTILIZE E-MAILS, NOTES or "SPOKESPERSONS" TO PROVIDE UPDATES TO OTHERS (e.g. medical updates, psychiatric updates, death notifications).
- LET PEOPLE KNOW SPECIFICALLY WHAT THEY CAN DO TO HELP.

If it will make it easier for you, consider writing a mass e-mail to your family, friends, or others in your life.

Suggestions:

Others can prepare meals for you or your family, walk your pets, take you out for coffee, pick up prescriptions, administrate medical or other bills, locate a therapist or support group, manage car-pooling and child care, etc.

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• ALLOW OTHERS TO HELP YOU & LET THEM FEEL THE "JOY OF GIVING." You will be giving a gift to others if you permit them to support and help you.

INVITE THOSE WHO LIVE A LONG DISTANCE AWAY TO HELP.

<u>Suggestions</u>: They can call (*to listen*) or write supportive letters. They can organize a group of family, friends, neighbors, etc. to volunteer to share the care (e.g. they can ask for volunteers and then help the group create a list of tasks and work out a rotation schedule). They can find local support groups, help you find a therapist, conduct research for treatment options, etc.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO EXPRESS YOUR EMOTIONS.

Laughter can help you heal. Or, tears can be thought of as "tender tributes."

CONSIDER "PET THERAPY."

Research has shown that owning or being in contact with a pet can have psychological and physiological benefits!

LEARN THE BENEFITS OF TALKING.

Even though there may be no apparent solution to your problem, at the very least, talking to someone will help you feel less alone.

■ DO SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF EVERY DAY—EVEN IF IT IS JUST FOR A FEW MINUTES (e.g. work on a jigsaw puzzle, exercise, meditate, or watch the grass grow for 10 minutes ©)

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