

# Caring Heart

by Social Work Team at HELP FSC

*My husband passed away two years ago of heart failure. Although he had a history of heart attacks and had undergone a heart bypass surgery, his death is still a shock for my children and me. It was fine initially.... I continued with my work and my 14 year-old son and 9 year-old daughter went on with their studies. But recently, for no reason I have been crying a lot. Everything at home just reminds me of my husband. I cannot cope with my work. My employer is unhappy with my work performance. People around me have been telling me that I should have “come out” of my husband's death and be strong for me children. But somehow I just can't do it... I feel so useless and worthless! Am I abnormal? Would I be able to be my usual self again?*

There is no way we can fully prepare ourselves for our loved one's death, no matter how informed we are. And it is always so difficult to let our loved one go even though we know that he/she is suffering. When death occurs in the family, everyone hopes to get back to life as “normal” as possible. Life around us continues. The adults will resume their work and the children their studies. You may have thought that by keeping yourselves busy you would have gotten over his death. But it is just a form of distraction. It only makes one more day go by.

When a loss has taken place, things may not be the same again. The feeling of reaching out for someone who has always been there, only to find he is no longer there for us, jolts us into the reality of his death.

People around you or even yourself might think that you are abnormal because you started crying and missing your husband after two years of his demise. But what you are experiencing now is very normal and natural. You are grieving now! The fact that you have been coping with your loss by keeping yourself busy and by trying to be strong for your children do no help in dealing with your grief over the loss of your husband. It just provides a short-term relief to your pain.

Firstly, you need to be in touch with your feelings that are associated with the loss, be it negative or positive. Then acknowledge the existence of the feelings. Denying or suppressing the feelings is not a solution. Next you have to accept the feelings that you have. Feelings are neither right nor wrong. They are just there. Lastly, learn to let go of the feelings by talking about it with the person you trust.

Besides looking at your own grief, it is important for you to help your children to talk about the loss of their father. Children do grieve like any adult. Usually, our parental instinct would refrain us from exposing our children to any negative or unhappy events. We would want to buffer them as much as possible. However, this is not any other loss, but a loss of a significant person in their life. To be exact, they are not just losing their father but you as well. The fact that you are not able to be like before is another major change that they have to learn to adapt and adjust. There are times that



some children may not be ready to talk about the loss. It is okay. Keep channels open for them to come back to you if you need someone to talk to.

Start working towards your recovery. Recovery from loss is achieved by a series of small choices. You need to acknowledge that a problem exists and it is associated with the loss of your husband. Take action! Join a support group. Meeting up with other single parents could help in garnering support from those who may have gone through similar experience as yours. Make arrangement to meet up with a counsellor. He or she will help to take necessary actions for moving beyond loss. The fact that you have reached out to seek help is the first step to your recovery.

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