

SELF-CARE AND HEALING FOR CAREGIVERS AFTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MURDER-SUICIDE

After murder-suicide occurs, the grief and trauma may feel overwhelming for everyone in the family. The following self-care and healing activities can help caregivers adapt, cope and heal.

SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

Reach out for Help

Adjusting to a new role while grieving is hard. Therapy and/or support groups can be a tremendous support as you navigate your own grief and the challenges of being a new caregiver.

Identify Your Support System

Identify different people to fulfill different roles. Ask for help and be specific with your needs. If people ask what they can do, give them a task. For example, "please pick up John from school" or "I need help with yardwork."

Take Care of Yourself

Deliberately set aside time for yourself. Eat healthy, nourishing food and drink plenty of water. Limit the use of alcohol or other substances. Rest when needed. Regularly attend doctor's appointments. Incorporate physical activity into your day, if possible.

Allow for Expression

Find something that helps you express yourself: music, photography, art, or gardening. Try taking a class or trying a new hobby. Keep a journal. Write a letter to the deceased.

SELF-CARE FOR FAMILIES

Plan A Specific Family Event Each Week

Do things together that are interactive to build bonds within a new family. Have a picnic, ride bikes, or cook together. Movie nights or "pajama days" where you can relax together are great family events! Build routines like eating breakfast or dinner together.

Set Aside Time For A Family Meeting Each Week

Create a box where children and adults can write down things they need to talk about on a slip of paper. Put them in the box during the week and read them at family meetings. For example, someone may be having a bad day but not want to make everyone sad. He or she can then talk about it at the family meeting.

Create Moments To Remember The Deceased

If children are ready, participate in memory activities together. Make a memory box or photo album of the deceased. Think of ways to give back in honor of the deceased, such as volunteering for their favorite cause, participating in a run or walk, or planting a tree.

Plan for Holidays, Birthdays, Death Anniversaries

Decide together how the days will be spent. You may light a candle, eat the loved one's favorite meal, or visit the cemetery. At a holiday, you may also decide to start new family traditions.