

## **Mourner's Rights**

When your child, sibling, spouse, or partner dies, you become a mourner.

You stay a mourner for at least a year.

While you are a mourner, you are at higher-than usual risk for:

- \*dying
- \*getting a new illness
- \*not getting enough sleep (or sleeping too much)
- \*becoming malnourished
- \*making decisions that you later regret
- \*thinking that you are losing your mind.

On the positive side, you are more also likely than usual to:

- \*notice what you appreciate about being alive
- \*become more aware of your deepest values and top priorities
- \*get a clear view of the status of all your relationships

You deserve lots of extra support while you are a mourner.

You deserve help to protect your physical and mental health, and you deserve support to take advantage of what is special and precious about mourning.

This is true whether the person who died was young or old, whether you were close or estranged, whether they died slowly or suddenly, and whether or not you expected their death to “get to you.”

In some cultures, a mourner is “legally insane” for a year. The mourner is allowed to blaspheme, break promises, wake people up at night, change his or her mind repeatedly. He/she is allowed to express emotions, including anger at the one who has died. The mourner is generally not held responsible for his or her actions for a year.

Many of us find that grief takes the shape of a spiral. We spin from feeling “normal” to being very aware of being a mourner, and back again.

The swings get less dramatic as time goes by, but they don’t stop happening.

I’m okay	It’s really hitting me
I’m over it	I can’t function normally (can’t eat, sleep, focus, stop crying)
Why can’t _____ move on?	Why doesn’t _____ care?