

SESSION 3

TOPIC: CONFRONTING VS ESCAPING GRIEF

INTRO

This session focuses on how we sometimes want to escape the pain, and why it's important to confront and work through grief.

SCRIPT

1. Last week's unfinished business.
2. Report on phone calls. How did they go?
3. Report on caring plan. How did they go?
4. Review: How did it go with communicating with family and friends?
5. This session is dedicated to sharing pictures and personal mementos so we can all get to know your special person.

DISCUSSION

1. **Discuss escaping.** Our natural reaction as humans are to fight, flight or freeze—it's how our brain responds. While escape is sometimes appropriate, the only way to escape grief is to grieve. Therefore, the time comes when it is appropriate to confront our grief by outwardly mourning. We can easily put off facing the reality of our feelings maybe for days, weeks, months, years, or even a lifetime.
 - We aren't really escaping, there is no escape; but we give an appearance of escape.
 - By not confronting and working through the grief, the feelings may be ever present.
 - If not in consciousness, they will work on our physical or emotional system, leading to sickness and disease.
2. **How do some of us escape our feelings?** In what ways are you escaping? Examples include:
 - ✓ Addictions, work, prescription drugs, substance use, alcohol, inappropriate loving.
 - ✓ Overeating or undereating.
 - ✓ Activity frenzy through lots of travel and busyness.
 - ✓ Isolating and avoiding situations where we need to talk about our feelings.

REMEMBER

- ✓ Start and end on time.
- ✓ Keep conversation moving and productive.
- ✓ Ensure every participant has an opportunity to share or pass during the discussion.
- ✓ Protect the conversation from being monopolized.
- ✓ Stay supportive yet neutral.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Notebook & pen
- ☐ Index cards & pens
- ☐ Refreshments
- ☐ Nametags
- ☐ Tissue

HOMEWORK

- ☐ The Photo Album of my Mind
- ☐ Self-care assignment

3. **Discuss confronting our grief** and the need to deal with the reality of our feelings when we're ready to do so. This helps to relieve the physical and emotional self of the need to indefinitely carry the pain. How do we confront our feelings?

- Do some writing about our loss.
- Allow alone time to really **think** vs frantic busyness.
- Talk about feelings and loss with others.
- Consciously externalize (physically express) our feelings.
- Dispose of clothing and personal effects, if desired.

ACTIVITY

In this safe environment, you will show your loved one's photo and/or mementoes, and also share your feelings about his or her death so you have an opportunity to confront and externalize some of those feelings. If this is not strange to you, it will reinforce what you're already skilled at. If it is, a beginning in this safe environment will help form a pattern for your future needs.

- Tell us what this picture means to you.
- What stories does it remind you of?
- What feelings does it bring to the surface for you?

CONCLUSION

- **Review this session.** Encourage participants to read handout, journal their thoughts, and try this week's Resilience Rx self-care tip.
- **Phone numbers** for next week's calling.