
INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE

RESILIENCE RX

SELF CARE PLAN FOR WIDOWS

ADJUSTING TO LOSS OF A SPOUSE

Self care techniques for the bereaved

The science behind why they
work and how to implement
them after loss



An iCare Aftercare™ resource
International Grief Institute

INTERNATIONALGRIEFINSTITUTE.COM



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

SELF CARE PLAN FOR WIDOWS

Losing our life partner changes how we live and who we are. The first step is to take good care of yourself. Creating a self care plan and practicing techniques that tend to our physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs can help anchor our ability to weather times of upheaval.



The love in the world begins with the love within ourselves. DEEPAK CHOPRA

WHY IT MATTERS

Self care can improve our well being, minimize stress, reduce the damaging effects of grief, and help us adjust as we learn to live with our spouse in our heart instead of our arms. By identify things you enjoy, you'll be able to create a unique and helpful self-care plan you'll stick with.

CREATE YOUR PLAN

- STEP 1:** Identify your emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs.
- STEP 2:** Create your self care plan and fill it with activities you enjoy.
- STEP 3:** Put it into action and stick to it.
- STEP 4:** Reassess it every 3 months and adjust as needed.

EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Our emotional needs after loss are met through understanding, empathy, and support from others.

- ✓ Surround yourself with others who speak your loss language.
- ✓ Develop friendships that are supportive.
- ✓ Talk to loved ones about your loss and how you are coping.
- ✓ Express your emotions in a journal.
- ✓ Engage in enjoyable outlets such as coloring, knitting, gardening, puzzles, etc.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Nourishing your body with oxygen, hydration, and healthful food will help you physically feel better. When you feel better, you cope better.

- ✓ Practice good sleep hygiene. Use a body pillow to help the marital bed feel less empty.
- ✓ Engage in light exercise, housekeeping or dancing to keep the body moving.
- ✓ Stay hydrated and eat for health.
- ✓ Make time for restorative relaxation.
- ✓ Enjoy a good belly laugh at least once daily.
- ✓ Join a walking or hiking club.

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Our spiritual needs are met through inner reflection.

- ✓ Each day write down one thing you're grateful for, or try spiritual journaling.
- ✓ Engage in reflective practices such as prayer or meditation.
- ✓ Attend church, mosque, temple or a spiritual center.
- ✓ Try laughter yoga or forest therapy.
- ✓ Talk to clergy or a spiritual mentor.

SOCIAL NEEDS

Fulfilling engagements and interactions help guard against depression, anxiety and isolation after loss.

- ✓ Volunteer in the community.
- ✓ Take or teach a self enrichment class.
- ✓ Join a book, tennis, quilt or knitting club.
- ✓ Travel

MORE TIPS

- ✓ Paint a color-by-number picture.
- ✓ Join a monthly potluck club.
- ✓ Stomp on bubble sheets.
- ✓ Listen to music you love.
- ✓ Start a garden.
- ✓ Pull weeds.
- ✓ Get a pet.