

RESILIENCE RX TIP 3

SLEEP WELL

Losing a loved one creates upheaval that can lead to many sleepless nights. Juggling such emotional strains often leads to serial tossing and turning, sleep disruption and insomnia. In turn, the ensuing sleep deprivation magnifies emotions and reduces our ability to cope with the upheaval.

WHY IT MATTERS

Studies show that good sleep helps you cope better in times of stress. It can also improve your memory, lower blood pressure, help keep your immunity strong, and put you in a better mood.

Managing sleep disruption and insomnia by practicing good sleep hygiene, coupled with medical management when needed, can help restore a restful sleep pattern after loss, and lead to significant improvements in other distress symptoms (National Institutes of Health, 2008). If you continue struggling with sleepless nights after trying the tips below, consider seeing your doctor for further management.

SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS:

Try the following suggestions from the National Sleep Foundation to help you reestablish a restorative sleep pattern after losing someone you love.

- To help regulate your body's clock, stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and wake time, even on weekends.
- Exercise early in the day. Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no exercise.
- A sleep environment between 60 and 67 degrees is ideal.
- If your partner snores, consider using a fan, earplugs, or white noise.
- Use comfortable pillows and bed linen.
- Consider moving bedroom furniture around, repainting the bedroom walls, and purchasing new bed linen.
- Avoid bright light in the evening to keep your circadian rhythm in check.
- Avoid caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol and heavy meals later in the day.
- Try wearing a weighted blanket across your feet and/or a sleep mask to help reduce stimuli and calm your mind.

CREATE A RITUAL

Creating a relaxing bedtime ritual gives your mind and body time to wind down. It sends a signal to your brain that bedtime is near, and trains it to go into quiet mode.