

Sleep

“Grief makes one hour ten.” - William Shakespeare

Sleeping too much, waking up in the middle of the night or not getting enough rest is one of the most common reactions to grief. Not getting the proper amount of sleep can cause more difficulties than might be expected. It could result in: Lowered immune system and greater susceptibility to illness; poor concentration increasing the risk of accidents or injury; damaged relationships because of increased irritability or impatience; inability to wake up and get to work on time or poor job performance.

Common definitions related to sleep include:

Drowsiness - This is feeling the need to sleep. The common activities that we engage in can be impacted by drowsiness. An example would be driving when overly tired.

Fatigue - This can be caused by grief and it is a feeling of weariness, tiredness or the lack of energy. This also results in the lack of motivation to do anything.

Tips for reducing fatigue:

Learn and acquire better ways to relax. This could include yoga or meditation. Take a multivitamin on a regular basis. Be educated on the impact of such things as caffeine and other stimulants in regard to fatigue. Sedatives also may actually worsen fatigue in the long run.

Here are some suggestions that might help:

Try to stay on a regular sleep cycle. Go to bed and wake at the same time each day. Avoid caffeine, alcohol or nicotine. Also avoid sweets before sleep. Take a warm bath before bed. Have a cup of chamomile tea (which has a natural calming agent). Put your clock out of your line of vision to prevent focusing on the time. Eat magnesium-rich foods before bed: almonds, cashews. Whole grains enhance sleep: whole wheat, brown rice, crackers. Have your doctor assess your current medications and seek his/her advice for any additional suggestions to aid with your sleep. The scent of lavender eases anxiety and insomnia.

For more information contact Cedar Valley Hospice office or visit cvhospice.org. Waterloo: 319.272.2002