

FAMILY & FRIENDS –

HOW GRIEF CHANGES RELATIONSHIPS

Grief changes everything. One reason the loss of a loved one is so hard to bear is that everyone and everything around you seems to change. Those you may have depended on for support in the past may simply not understand or be comfortable with your sadness and vulnerability. You may have difficulty with this yourself, and may feel anger or resentment over the fact that you have to face this while others go on with their lives. Grief can intensify stress in a relationship. Everyone needs to handle grief in their own way and this must be respected. Listening and extra patience are what is often most helpful.

It is important that you honestly reflect on *your* needs. Pay attention to your feelings and listen, without judgment, to your heart. Spend time with people who can recognize, hear and support you, and ask them for what you need. Specific requests are helpful: “I’d like to talk this out with you,” or “Just sit here quietly with me for a while.” You may ask them to visit more often or check in by phone. You may want them to run an errand. Remember that many people care about you and want to help, but they may be unsure how to help you. Sometimes people feel their grief is too much for friends and families; this may be the time to explore a new source of support, such as one of our monthly groups.

PATHways Center