



# THE FIRST STEP

**First things first.**

**Put the most important thing first.**

WHEN YOU ARE ON AN AIRPLANE, THEY TELL YOU “IN AN EMERGENCY TO PUT ON YOUR OXYGEN MASK **FIRST**, THEN HELP OTHERS”... IT IS THE SAME IN LIFE AS WELL... IF YOU DON'T TAKE CARE OF YOU **FIRST**, THEN THERE IS NO “YOU” TO BE ABLE TO HELP OTHERS... MAKE TIME FOR “YOU-TIME”, PUT YOURSELF **F.I.R.S.T.**

Putting yourself FIRST doesn't mean you don't care about others.  
Putting yourself FIRST does NOT mean you're a narcissistic ego maniac.  
Putting yourself FIRST means you're smart enough to know you can't help or love others if you don't help or love yourself first.

- 1) If you don't fill your gas tank you can't carry passengers.
- 2) Putting Yourself First is the “AHA” moment necessary to grow and develop others to be: **Authentic Honestly, Adventurous**
- 3) If You Learn to Love Yourself, You'll Know How to Actually Love Other People

a. Your health depends on it.

b. Your happiness depends on it.

“Happiness is a journey not a destination”.

c. You can't give it away if you don't have it.

d. You won't enjoy what you do have without it.

e. You're worth it; You're your best investment!

**FIRST  
THINGS  
FIRST**

The term “**self-care**” describes the actions that an individual might take in order to reach optimal physical and mental health. Mental health professionals often use the term *self-care* to refer to one's ability to take care of the activities-of-daily-living (ADL's), such as feeding oneself, showering, brushing one's teeth, wearing clean clothes, and attending to medical concerns. Physical self-care, such as sleep and exercise is also considered an “activity-of-daily-living”.

**SELF-CARE** requires that we learn how to **PUT OURSELVES FIRST**.

**Putting yourself F.I.R.S.T. begins with recognizing 5 NEEDS:**

**#1 The NEED for F**-orgiveness (what's limiting/hurting me?)

- Rid yourself of what **BOGS** you down:
  - DO you I have safe **B**oundaries?
  - Have I forgiven **O**thers?
  - Have I forgiven **G**od?
  - Have I forgiven **S**elf?

**#2 The NEED for I**-dentity (who I am?)

- Discover who you are.
- What are my **NEGATIVE SELF PERCEPTIONS/TALK?**
- What are my **POSITIVE SELF PERCEPTIONS/TALK?**
- Who are my negative "contributors" to my negative self-talk or perceptions?  
Get rid of them! Infections can become terminal.
- I am a reflection of my Creator: Love, Joy, Peace, Forbearance, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.



**#3 The NEED for R**-esponsibility (What part do I play?)

- **ACCEPT** responsibility; Don't be afraid to **OWN** your issues.
- **AVOID** excuses, shaming, blaming, minimizing, rationalizing and justifying.
- **A.C.T. Action Changes Things.**

**#4 The NEED for S**-upport (Who can help?)

- Ask for help.
- Discover new opportunities and strength in healthy relationships:
  - Friends who are *where you WERE*.
  - Friends who are *where you ARE*.
  - Friends who are *where you WANT TO BE*.

**#5 The NEED to T**-ransition (What is my plan?)

- Transition involves *developing plans, establishing goals, being willing to dream* which initially may cause stress/change.
- What are your 1<sup>st</sup> steps? 2<sup>nd</sup> steps? Goals? (*One-at-a-time, FIRST things FIRST*).

**Make yourself a priority once in a while. It's not selfish. It's necessary.**



This support group material was written with the objective of building compassionate communities who model a philosophy of empowerment rather than dependency, developing well-informed support systems to assist individuals experiencing challenging life issues (ie.. grief, addiction, depression, loneliness, life-limiting illness, etc.)

## **LIFE CARE F.I.R.S.T. GROUP EXPECTATIONS**

LCF works to provide safe spaces for participants to journey successfully through the oftentimes blurry landscape of life-limiting experiences.

LCF is NOT about “being an expert”, it’s about initiating a willingness through vulnerability and trust to discover *inner* and *outer resources* available to assist us as we experience potential life-limiting events in our life-journey.

LCF groups promote *listening over directing, walking alongside of others* rather than attempting to fix oneself or others. In LCF *each participant is a facilitator* and must be willing to *participate* and *persevere* (never-give-up-attitude) in order to achieve life-giving results.

LCF supports individuals through community acceptance, hope, support, resources, renewed meaning and a rediscovered purpose.

LCF begins each session by reviewing “group expectations” to ensure continuity, accountability and progress in achieving our individual and group goals:

**G**ive others a chance to speak; avoid interruptions.

**R**espect everyone’s opinions without judgments... be flexible.

**O**penness and honesty are gifts that require vulnerability, be mindful of that gift. Value one another.

**U**se “I” statements, avoid “u” statements; speak from your personal perspective.

**P**articipation is life-giving; “passing” is ok; utilize “put-ups” NOT “put-downs” in your communication efforts.

**S**afe Zone: this is a confidential space- let us honor one another.



FIRST  
THINGS  
FIRST

## SECTION 1: WHY LIFE CARE F.I.R.S.T.?

LIFE CARE F.I.R.S.T. (LCF) can provide multiple benefits:

- To help “normalize” life’s limiting events that oftentimes cloud our perception and judgement.
- To provide a safe non-judgmental space to share one’s thoughts, experiences, emotions and struggles.
- To Provide a place where individuals wrestle through the issues surrounding our roles, relationships and personal identities.
- To Empower and equip each participant to discover and develop their “inner” and “outer” resources, enabling the use of effective coping skills and strategies.
- To encourage each participant to retain a willingness to request help and to receive support for themselves, while standing ready to assist others also.
- To assist each participant to learn new ways to problem-solve that include the ability to include assistance from others.
- To assist participants in learning self-acceptance, self-care, self-compassion resulting in a resilience-building (recover quickly) posture of assurance and hope.
- To assist participants to incrementally accept and integrate each life-experience whether perceived initially as “good” or “bad”.
- To guard against minimization, rationalization, justification and isolation which only results in shaming and blaming.
- To “BUILD” compassionate communities: Believing, Understanding, Inclusive, Loving, Demonstrative.

**FIRST  
THINGS  
FIRST**

LCF groups are a positive, rewarding opportunity for individuals experiencing life-limiting events to develop a life-giving self-awareness resulting in self-acceptance and self-care.

## SECTION 2: HOW LIFE CARE F.I.R.S.T. GROUPS WORK

In LCF participation, vulnerability and transparency are helpful tools to assist you in your healing process. Choose to trust, take a risk, believe again, one-minute-at-a-time.

As you prepare for your LCF experience, it may be helpful to review the 5 NEEDS we will focus on in order to put yourself FIRST:

## #1 The NEED for F-orgiveness (what's limiting/hurting me?)

### What FORGIVENESS **is**?

- When individuals determine they have been unfairly treated, willfully abandon resentment (to which they have a right), and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer with compassion, unconditional worth, generosity and love, to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act, have NO right.

### What FORGIVENESS is **NOT**:

- Pardon, legal mercy or leniency
- Condoning or excusing
- Reconciliation
- Justification (it may remain UNFAIR)
- Forgetting (forgetting would leave you vulnerable to the offense again)
- Balancing Scales
- Letting time heal the wound
- Abandoning resentment
- Possessing positive feelings
- Saying, "I forgive you"
- Making a decision to forgive (forgiveness is a process)
- A quick fix (forgiveness takes time)
- Accepting what happened
- Moving on
- Accepting what happened knowing that "God will punish them"
- Saying, "I have the satisfaction of not letting that person get to me"
- "Letting the person know how much they owe me"



### Let's BEGIN by discovering:

- 1.) What B.O.G.S. me down?
- 2.) What's interfering with my health and happiness"?
- 3.) What's preventing me from "moving on"?
- 4.) What's CAUSING the "hitch in my giddy up"?

LET'S ADDRESS THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR (past) BEFORE WE focus on THE WINDSHIELD (what's ahead of us: future).

## Forgiveness Quotations

*“When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free.”* Catherine Ponder

*“The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naive forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget.”* Thomas Szasz

*“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”* Lewis Smedes

*“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”* Mahatma Gandhi

*“There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love.”* Bryant H. McGill

*“To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness.”* Robert Muller

*“Always forgive your enemies - nothing annoys them so much.”*  
Robert Muller Oscar Wilde

*“Sincere forgiveness isn't colored with expectations that the other person apologize or change. Don't worry whether or not they finally understand you. Love them and release them. Life feeds back truth to people in its own way and time.”* Sara Paddison

*“Forgiveness is the release of all hope for a better past.”*  
Buddy Wakefield

## GRIEF SENTENCE COMPLETION

Right now, I feel \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I feel the saddest when \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The thing I miss the most about the person I lost is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Since the lost, things have been different because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My family usually feels \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If I could ask the person I lost one thing, I would ask \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My worst memory is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Something I liked about the person who I lost was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I learned from the person who I lost was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Let's examine 4 COMPONENTS of forgiveness:

### I. **B**OUNDARIES

- a. What boundaries have been crossed (violated)?
- b. What boundaries have not been established?
- c. DISCUSSION: Healthy VS un-healthy boundaries.
- d. What boundaries have not been maintained/guarded? (no-guilt zone)

### II. **O**thers

- a. Who specifically has hurt me? (*Intentionally or unintentionally*)
- b. Name that person (*for the sake of anonymity you may create an alias*).
- c. Are they safe to include in my life at this juncture?
- d. If they have died and you feel abandoned, have you forgiven them?
- e. Is there a need to forgive this type of loss?
- f. Have I forgiven "them"? (**REMEMBER: Forgiveness DOES NOT necessitate relationship**).

### III. **G**od

- a. What anger/blame may I have in this "Divine Influence"?
- b. If you do not believe in "Creator" or "God", eliminate #3 and move on to #4.

### IV. **S**elf

- a. What area have I held myself responsible for, consciously or unconsciously (*intentionally or unintentionally*).
- b. Is my judgement fair?
- c. Have I forgiven myself?
- d. What is my self-perception?

## #2 **The NEED for I-identity** (who I am?)

**"A bad attitude is like a flat tire; you can't go anywhere until you change it"**

- My Identity is **not** my *diagnosis*.
- My identity is **not** my *marital status*.
- My identity is **not simply** my *race*.
- My identity is **not simply** my *gender*.
- My identity is **not simply** my *religious beliefs*.
- My identity is **not** my *socio-economic status*.

## IDENTITY QUOTES

“Never forget what you are, for surely the world will not. Make it your strength. Then it can never be your weakness. Armour yourself in it, and it will never be used to hurt you.” — George R.R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones*

“Nothing of me is original. I am the combined effort of everyone I've ever known.”  
— Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*

“We know what we are, but not what we may be.” — William Shakespeare

“It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.” — Patrick Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*

“When I discover who I am, I'll be free.” — Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” — Mahatma Gandhi

“Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life, but define yourself.” — Harvey Fierstein

“We can spend our lives letting the world tell us who we are. Sane or insane. Saints or sex addicts. Heroes or victims. Letting history tell us how good or bad we are. Letting our past decide our future. Or we can decide for ourselves. And maybe it's our job to invent something better.” — Chuck Palahniuk, *Choke*

“Over the years, I have come to realize that the greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity, and power can indeed present a great temptation, but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions. The real trap, however, is self-rejection. As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I am rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking, “Well, that proves once again that I am a nobody.” ... [My dark side says,] I am no good... I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned. Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the “Beloved.” Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence.” — Henri J.M. Nouwen

“I hate how I don't feel real enough unless people are watching.” — Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*

## When my self-esteem Increases, I build a life of safety and well-being.

### My identity is inclusive of:

- 1) MY Personality traits
- 2) MY Likes and dislikes (social or anti-social)
- 3) MY Belief systems
- 4) MY Moral code (*criminal or just*)
- 5) What Motivates me
- 6) What I Value

**Abraham Lincoln said,** “Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be”. (DISCUSSION)

*“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he”* – Proverbs 23:7

*“Your attitude, not your aptitude, determine your altitude”*- Zig Ziglar

- The “attitude Indicator” is a flight instrument that informs the pilot of the aircraft orientation relative to the earth’s horizon, it gives an immediate indication of the smallest orientation of change
- The *adjustment knob*, to account for the pilot’s line of vision, moves the aircraft up and down to align it against the horizon bar.
- The top half of the *Attitude indicator* instrument is blue to represent the sky, while the bottom half is brown to represent the ground. (DISCUSSION)

### POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS:

- |  |   |                                  |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| • I am beautiful                             | • I feel happy                            | • I keep my body healthy         |
| • I am smart                                 | • I am truthful                           | • I am a good listener           |
| • I am kind                                  | • I am loving                             | • I am supportive                |
| • I am perfect just the way I am             | • I am a leader                           | • I work hard                    |
| • I am helpful                               | • I choose my attitude                    | • I am awesome                   |
| • I am forgiving                             | • I reach for the stars                   | • I show others care             |
| • There is no one in the world quite like me | • I support others with love and kindness | • I am a great employee/employer |
|  | • I am strong                             | • I am loved                     |

## WHO AM I?

My Name is - \_\_\_\_\_

My ethnicity/race/culture is - \_\_\_\_\_

My hobbies/extra-curricular activities - \_\_\_\_\_

My Birthday is - \_\_\_\_\_

My family - \_\_\_\_\_

Places I have lived - \_\_\_\_\_

Persons I look up to - \_\_\_\_\_

Pets - \_\_\_\_\_

An accomplishment I am proud of - \_\_\_\_\_

Where I spend my free time - \_\_\_\_\_

I have never - \_\_\_\_\_

Most memorable recent event - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Childhood memory - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite food - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite music - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Movie - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Book/Magazine - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite color - \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite sports team - \_\_\_\_\_

## MY STRENGTH AND QUALITIES

3 things I'm good at: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 compliments I have received: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 things I like about my appearance: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 ways I've helped others: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 things that make me unique: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 times I made others happy: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 things I do very well: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 ways I face my problems or adversities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 things that make me a good friend: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EXPRESSIONS ALL ABOUT ME

I worry about \_\_\_\_\_

I dream about \_\_\_\_\_

I am proud of \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in \_\_\_\_\_

I am afraid of \_\_\_\_\_

I don't believe in \_\_\_\_\_

I am good at \_\_\_\_\_

I am poor at \_\_\_\_\_

I have to \_\_\_\_\_

I feel like \_\_\_\_\_

I regularly \_\_\_\_\_

I never \_\_\_\_\_

I can't stand \_\_\_\_\_

I have difficulty \_\_\_\_\_

I have a habit of \_\_\_\_\_

I no longer \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ makes me laugh.

\_\_\_\_\_ makes me sad.

\_\_\_\_\_ makes me angry.

### #3 The NEED for R-responsibility (What part do I play?)

- Whose RESPONSIBILITY is it for me to succeed?

*“Accepting responsibility for our problems is the first step to solving them”*

*“The moment you accept responsibility for everything in your life is the moment you gain the power to change anything in your life”.*

- What OBSTACLES are in the way preventing me from either accepting responsibility or initiating responsibility? (*ie.. Abuse, trauma, resources, attitudes*).

**FIRST  
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### RESPONSIBILITY TIPS:

#### MAINTAIN AWARENESS

- Own your thoughts, feelings, words, actions make a list.
- Denial, Shame, Blame, Complaining and Excuses only postpone the pain. Replace negativity with an attitude of gratitude (avoid the Eeyore syndrome).
- Be intentional; ask, “What if I refuse to ACT?” (do something, anything).
- Love yourself, don’t take it personal.
- Live in the moment.
- Ignoring the issue(s) won’t make it go away, it may grow into an infection.

#### EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

- Make a list; ask for help. Categorize by “pros” and “cons”.
- Ask yourself, “what could possibly be the outcome of that decision?”
- Make a decision; be positive; look for the good in everything, in everyone.
- Eliminate distractions; make healthy choices; choose healthy relationships.

*“Procrastination is like credit cards, it’s a lot of fun until you get the bill.”*

#### EXECUTE THE PLAN

- Prepare yourself for ANYTHING.
- Make a plan, include goals, timelines and rewards.
- Tell others about your goals.

#### JUST DO IT!

## RESPONSIBILITY QUOTES

“Take responsibility of your own happiness, never put it in other people’s hands.” — Roy T. Bennett, *The Light in the Heart*

“Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility.” — Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

“If you hang out with chickens, you're going to cluck and if you hang out with eagles, you're going to fly.” — Steve Maraboli, *Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience*

“The price of greatness is responsibility.” — Winston S. Churchill

“The knowledge that we are responsible for our actions and attitudes does not need to be discouraging, because it also means that we are free to change this destiny. We can alter the chemistry provided we have the courage to dissect the elements.” — Anaïs Nin, *The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Vol. 1: 1931-1934*

“To say you have no choice is to relieve yourself of responsibility.” — Patrick Ness, *Monsters of Men*

“Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so.” — Noam Chomsky

“The right thing to do and the hard thing to do are usually the same.” — Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*

“Victory has a hundred fathers and defeat is an orphan.” — John F. Kennedy

“In dreams begin responsibilities.” — W.B. Yeats, *Responsibilities*

“You may believe that you are responsible for what you do, but not for what you think. The truth is that you are responsible for what you think, because it is only at this level that you can exercise choice. What you do comes from what you think.” — Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"*

“Like crying wolf, if you keep looking for sympathy as a justification for your actions, you will someday be left standing alone when you really need help.” — Criss Jami, *Killosophy*

# Safety Plan: RESPONSIBILITY

## STEP 1: KNOW WHEN TO FIND HELP »

What are the warning signs when you begin thinking of suicide or when you feel very distressed? These can include thoughts, moods, images, or behaviors.

## STEP 2: COPING SKILLS »

What can you do by yourself to take your mind off of the problem? What obstacles might there be to using these coping skills?

## STEP 3: SOCIALIZING WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY »

If you are unable to deal with your distressed mood alone, contact trusted family members or friends. List several people (name and phone number) in case your first choices are not available.

_____.	_____
_____.	_____
_____.	_____

## STEP 4: CONTACT PROFESSIONALS AND AGENCIES »

Contact local professionals or emergency services if you continue to have suicidal thoughts or serious distress.

Local emergency number \_\_\_\_\_

Local professional or agency \_\_\_\_\_

Suicide hotlines in the United States:	1-800-SUICIDE 1-800-273-TALK 1-800-4889 (for deaf or hard of hearing)
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## How to practice grounding

1. Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down and, if you feel comfortable, close your eyes.
2. Take several slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
3. Use your 5 senses to notice the following:



**5 things you can see** around you.

Maybe it's a book, a paintbrush or a chair.



**4 things you can touch** around you.

Maybe it's your dog, your desk or your leg.



**3 things you can hear** around you.

Maybe it's a ticking clock, a car alarm or a dog barking.



**2 things you can smell.**

Maybe it's the scent of soap or lotion on your hands, air freshener or freshly cut grass.



**1 thing you can taste.**

Maybe it's the drink or the snack you just had.

4. Notice how your body feels. Are you relaxed?  
Is your mind calmer?

## #4 The NEED for S-upport (Who can help?)

What does a healthy SUPPORT system look like?

- a network of individuals or activities that can provide you with *physical, practical* or emotional support to help you improve your overall health, reducing stress and anxiety.

**FIRST  
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### A Healthy Support System:

#### 3 Types of FRIENDS:

- I. Friends who are where you were.
  - These friends allow you to give-back from what you have received.
  - Avoid this stage of friends until you are healthy.
  - These friends allow you to see how far we have grown and ensure humility.
- II. Friends who are where you are at.
  - These friends meet us right where we are and understand our experiences but have little to offer us in recovery.
- III. Friends who are where we want to be.
  - These friends are seasoned, experienced in life, friends who have successfully navigated through many trials and are willing to offer refreshment, advice and practical assistance.

#### FRIENDS TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR:

- 1.) Seek friends who aren't afraid to ask questions to help you discover a solution.
  - a. How can I support you?
  - b. You seem a little upset today. Would you like to talk about it?
  - c. I know you're going through a tough time. How have you been holding up?
  - d. What's happening in your life lately?
- 2.) Seek friends who are willing to listen, really listen:
  - a. ... who display open body language.
  - b. ... who avoid distractions (ie..cell phones).
  - c. ... who nod or utilize reflective listening.
  - d. ... who purposefully avoid too many words or initial advice.

- e. ... who ask for clarification.
- f. ... who summarize what you say in order to ensure accuracy and understanding.

3.) Seek friends who Validate:

- a. ... who are willing to see YOUR perspective, who say things like:
  - i. "I'm sorry you're dealing with that situation. It sounds so painful.
  - ii. That sounds so upsetting. I understand why you're feeling so stressed right now.

4.) Seek friends who allow you to vent and are careful NOT to give you advice unless you specifically ask for it.

5.) Seek AUTHENTIC Friends over PERFECT Friends.

- a. ... who BUILD you up.
- b. ... who stay connected (calls, cards, notes, genuine affection, housework, meals, etc).

Activities to consider:

- Yoga
- Support groups
- Health club membership
- Walking
- Bicycling
- Reading
- Music
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Grief goes far beyond the initial days of loss or struggle.**

## MY SUPPORT SYSTEM



*Who can I call when...*

**I'm feeling lonely:**

---

**I need some company:**

---

**I need someone to talk to:**

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**I need someone to encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun:**

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**I need someone to remind me to follow my self-care plan:**

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**I need someone to inspire me:**

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**Other:**

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# Stressful Life Experiences

Looking at each of the categories below, discuss how each of the situations causes stress in your life and at the end list the stresses/challenges to being a caregiver.

## 1. Health/Medicine

- An illness in the family
- Inability to access health providers
- Worry about aches, pains, nausea.

- Spouse/family/paramour requiring a lot of help, dependent upon you
- Little or no support from spouse/family/paramour

## 2. Activity Level

- Overly active
- No motivation to engage in activities
- Being involved in different activities/clubs/organizations

## 10. Anxiety

- Worry about family, friends, health
- Worry about finances, housing, providing food, shelter and other essentials
- Worry about the future (for yourself, your children, your parents, friends)

## 3. Work

- Working long hours/days
- Stressful work/ work environment
- Unable to find employment
- Demands of work taking away from family and personal obligations

## 11. Sleep

- Not getting enough sleep/difficulty falling asleep, waking during the night
- Sleeping too much

## 4. Emotional/Attention

- Trouble paying attention even when you really try to
- Your child or spouse has difficulty paying attention
- Having too many things to think about at once, prioritizing commitments
- Restless
- Lack of motivation to participate in activities
- Feeling sad, irritable, hopeless, overwhelmed, "just not yourself"
- Feeling out of control, angry, extremely frustrated

## 12. Eating

- Overeating, Lack of appetite, upset stomach or other pains when eating or soon after, not having a balanced diet.

## 8. Friends

- Maintaining friendships
- Friends having difficulties (illness, friend going through a "rough time")
- Strong social supports?

## 13. Community

- Violence in the community
- Relationships with neighbors

## 9. Spouse/Family

- Disagreements with spouse/family/paramour

## 14. Economic

- Transportation difficulties; car troubles
- Child care decisions
- Money for basics; food, clothing, rent
- Child support

## 15. Housing

- Rent is due or overdue
- Crowded conditions
- Bedding or furniture for children

## 16. Other Stressors:

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## #5 The NEED to T-ransition (What's my plan?)

- Transition produces TRANSFORMATION.

In order for me to move from where I am to where I want to be, this requires:

- 1.) I remove ALL obstacles to my progress: FORGIVENESS
- 2.) I am aware of who I am: IDENTITY
- 3.) I am willing to take action: RESPONSIBILITY
- 4.) I am not afraid to ask for help: SUPPORTS

And lastly...

- 5.) I am committed to make a step-by-step plan to move forward: TRANSITION

**FIRST  
THINGS  
FIRST**

**QUESTION:** How do you eat an elephant?

**ANSWER:** One bite at a time.

Imagine 2 competing sports teams meeting to play, but no one has identified the game, the rules, the players, their uniforms or the direction of the players goals.  
(DISCUSSION)

Let's begin by making some SMART goals:

S – specific

M – measurable

A – attainable

R – relevant

T – timebound



# SMART GOALS

**S**  
Specific

Describe your goal:

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**M**  
Measurable

How can you track your progress?

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**A**  
Attainable

Who is going to help you with your goal?

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Who will be your accountability partner?

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When will they check in with you?

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**R**  
Relevant

List skills and resources you need in order to meet your goals:

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**T**  
Time Bound

Goal for check in date 1 \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Goal for check in date 2 \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Goal for check in date 3 \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# 12 PRACTICAL WAYS TO ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE GOALS

*Life Goals*



## LIFECARE F.I.R.S.T. GROUP EVALUATION

- 1.) What was the most/least helpful?
- 2.) What changes would you recommend?
- 3.) Was the facilitator clear, knowledgeable and sensitive to the needs of the group?
- 4.) Did you find the resources and handouts helpful?
- 5.) Did you find the location and timing of the group suitable?
- 6.) How would you compare how you felt before the group, and now that you have completed it?
- 7.) Did you make connections with one or more other members, do you intend to keep in touch?
- 8.) What was the most important thing you learned about your grief and coping with grief?
- 9.) Was there anything missing for you in this group?
- 10.) Would you recommend this group to a friend, family or colleague? Why or why not?

