



It is common for both the memory impaired person and their caregiver to experience feelings of loss and grief when faced with the diagnosis and progression of dementia.

### How grief and loss affects the caregiver:

*Grief associated with a chronic illness like dementia may extend over many years. . . .*

#### **Some of the losses are:**

- Companionship with the person
- Relationship to the person
- Enjoyment in shared activities
- Dreams for future plans – enjoying travel, grandchildren or hobbies
- Division of labor – “you manage the checkbook and I’ll do the cooking”

#### **Caregiver Tips for handling grief:**

- Maintain daily routines and schedule time to rest
- Find ways to relax—relaxation tapes, reading, prayer, or music
- Make time for physical exercise—take walks, use exercise tapes, join a wellness or fitness center
- Do not forget to laugh—try to find humor even in difficult situations
- Maintain friendships and connections to family
- Seek help from support groups, spiritual community, or professional counselors
- Use resources that will help you care for the person

#### **Memory impaired person: Tips for handling grief:**

- Stay involved in activities or enroll in an adult day care program
- Get plenty of physical exercise
- Join a support group for those who can participate in the early stages
- Seek psychological or spiritual counseling

### How grief and loss affects the person with dementia:

*The person who has dementia may be aware of a gradual loss of many aspects of self, and their connection to others and their way of life.*

#### **Some of the losses are:**

- Gradual decline in memory
- Changes in thinking and language
- Personality changes
- Ability to perform simple tasks
- Independence and roles
- Driving privileges
- Relationships and activities
- Control over one’s own future