



STERLING ESTATES

Senior Living Communities

What Do We Do with Our Grief?

One of the most misunderstood emotions experienced in American culture is the emotion of grief. Most of us think that grief must always be used in the same sentence with death: "My mother died and losing her has caused me terrible grief."

But grief is often more than just our response to death. Grief is a normal, natural, and necessary emotional response to any kind of loss: the loss of a job, the breakup of a relationship through divorce or separation, the loss of a home, or the loss of one's health or independence due to an accident or illness.

Our "Greatest Generation" is particularly vulnerable to grief. Most of them survived the trials of the Great Depression, World War II, and the Korean Conflict. Many have experienced the death of a spouse, family members, or friends. But the only support they received from those around them were firm admonitions like "You should be happy because you know they are in a better place", "You need to be strong," or "You'll feel better if you keep busy." And that is what they tried to do, but their unexpressed, unresolved grief took up residence in their heart and they carry it still.

Now, years later, some have lost their health, their homes, their friends and access to their religious and faith communities. One of these losses can cause a person to experience significant grief. More than one loss can drastically and negatively affect their ability to enjoy their surroundings and the joy of living. While changes are often necessary to provide a safe, comfortable life-style, the loss of familiar parts of their lives can create a reservoir of grief that, if left unacknowledged and unaddressed, will linger and influence all aspects of life, living, and particularly loving.

One symptom of profound grief is a sense of loneliness. No matter how many activities a person engages in or how many people are around them, if the cause of the underlying grief is not acknowledged and addressed, the loneliness will likely persist.

At Sterling Estates, we want our residents to experience life to the fullest. We want them to find joy in everyday living. We provide them with a comfortable, beautiful setting and a selection of tasteful, healthy meals. Our Life Enrichment Director and our Wellness Director work together to plan a variety of daily activities that are fun, educational, offer the opportunity to stay fit, and to enjoy engagement with other members of the Sterling community. But we also recognize that many members of our Sterling family might be grieving from life losses, both past and present. In our effort to provide wholistic care for our residents, Sterling Estates has a fulltime Chaplain on staff to provide emotional and spiritual support to residents who need a caring presence as they constructively deal with their grief and find new joy in their lives.



Brought to You By Your Friends at Sterling Estates Senior Living Communities

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