

## Promoting Healing – Caring for the Caregiver

*Self-care is important at all times, and even more so when going through difficult and tragic times. There are many things students (and adults!) can do to care for themselves.*

*Remember that as everyone grieves differently, strategies for healing are unique for each individual. Some of these will work for you and some will not. When we are feeling stressed and overwhelmed, it can be difficult to think of what to do, so here are some suggestions to ease the burden of having to think about what to do next:*

### **Be Healthy**

- Drink plenty of water and eat well
- Limit alcohol and caffeine
- Exercise to release endorphins and decrease stress: try yoga, take a walk, hike or bike ride

### **Mental Escapes/Take a Break**

- Do things you enjoy: If you can't think of anything right now, ask someone what you used to enjoy. Do it even if it sounds like too much right now
- What are your guilty pleasures? Do them.
- Enjoy all that nature has to offer
- Rest & Relaxation: light a candle, take a bubble bath, get a massage
- Swim: water can be therapeutic
- Play with your favorite pet
- Hold a baby (then give him/her back to the parent if he/she isn't yours!)
- Play with a child
- Meditate
- Watch a funny TV show (but not too much and not right before bed)
- Laughter is the best medicine: hang out with your funniest friend
- Watch a pleasurable/funny movie
- Read a page turner

### **Internal Coping**

- Write lists of gratitude
- Be easy on yourself
- Give yourself permission to feel/grieve
- Accept yourself
- Remember that this is hard and takes time
- Don't blame yourself

### **External Coping**

- Reach out to others to talk: professionals, colleagues, friends, family, clergy (make sure these are people you trust!)
- Attend a religious service
- Ask for a hug

### **Expressive Activities**

- Communication is 90% nonverbal: dance, sing, cry, perform, draw
- Listen to (or create) relaxing/soothing music
- Write in a journal
- Write poetry

### **Maintain Structure**

- Eat, sleep, pray at regular times
- Plan your day
- Keep as normal a routine as possible (though this may be a *new* normal)