

SECTION 6



SELF-CARE GUIDE

SELF-CARE GUIDE

It is vital to remember to take care of yourself

Stress symptoms are NORMAL

Physical symptoms

Emotional Symptoms

Behaviourial symptoms

Helpful Tips

Daily Commitment

You are not alone



Self-Care

It is vital that you remember to take care of yourself. If you don't take care of yourself first, you cannot take care of others, or stay well as you search for your loved one.

Consider a BUDDY SYSTEM so someone can keep an eye on you, and step in to give you a break.

Stress symptoms are normal under these circumstances.

How you are feeling is normal and natural.

It is experienced differently by each family member.

Here are some symptoms. This is not a complete list; you may be experiencing other symptoms not included here.

Physical Symptoms

Chills

Thirst

Nausea

Vomiting

Dizziness

Headaches

Chest pains

Elevated Blood Pressure

Shock symptoms

Tension

Insomnia

Fatigue Exhaustion

Stomach/digestive problems

Sometimes these symptoms need medical attention.

Contact your doctor if your symptoms persist.



Emotional Symptoms

Fear	Inappropriate emotional responses
Guilt	Emotional outbursts
Grief	Mental confusion
Denial	Nightmares
Anxiety	Hyper-vigilance
Agitation	Suspiciousness
Depression	Difficulty problem solving
Intense anger	Difficulty making decisions
Feeling overwhelmed	Poor concentration/memory
Disconnection	Heightened/lowered alertness
Loss of emotional control	Hyper-critical

Behavioural Symptoms

Any change in normal behaviour	Absenteeism – missing work/school
Withdrawal	Pacing
Irritability	
Anger	
Restlessness	
Irregular sleep	
Change in social activity	
Using old coping habits	
Appetite	
Alcohol consumption	
Increasing anxiety	



Talk to your doctor if symptoms last for more than a week.

Refer to the Useful Resources Section 8 which as resources available to support you, your family and friends.

Helpful tips

- Plan regular family meetings to check in with everyone and see how each of you is doing. This is an opportunity to share information and plan together, helping communication.
- Know that you are not alone. There are people that want to help you search, people to support you, and people to talk to. Reach out – people do care!
- Talk with someone. Whether it is an Elder, a therapist, family member or a friend, you need to be able to speak freely with someone who will listen openly to your feelings.
- Remember that you can also attend or request a ceremony.

How's Your 5?

Creates a common language to support each other across five fundamental domains of human experience

Work – employment/school

Love – relationships/social support

Play – self-care/joyful activities

Sleep – sleep habits

Eat – food and drink

Daily Commitment to Self-care

Make a commitment to do at least one thing for yourself and your well-being each day.

This helps you stay balanced and reduces stress. Try to

- Take a 10-15 minute walk

- Call a friend and go for coffee
- Write in a journal
- Be in nature
- Exercise
- Light a candle
- 5 minutes of quiet time
- Take an afternoon nap
- Talk to an Elder or spiritual advisor
- Your body needs fuel and sleep to be able to stay healthy.
 - Eat a balanced diet with regular meals.
 - Get 7-8 hours of sleep a night.
- Find a quiet place with no distractions where you can go to feel at peace.
 - Even a few minutes will help.
- The strong emotions you are feeling
 - May help drive you in the search for your loved one.
 - Remember to release emotions in a positive way as they build up.
 - Take time to blow off steam in a safe and healthy way.
- Sometimes it may feel like you should have been there or done something differently in order to prevent this from happening.
 - Be gentle with yourself and others.
 - Blaming yourself or others isn't helpful to you or your loved one.
- Some people find relief in writing:
 - A letter
 - Journaling
 - Scribbling thoughts
 - Just writing everything you are feeling, and thinking about can help.
- If they are old enough, let younger siblings take part in the search if they request it.
 - It may give them a sense of purpose, and helpfulness
 - Make them feel better for contributing.
- Allow younger children return to school if they want
 - Make sure a school counsellor is there, if needed.



- Do not try to go through this alone and be the rock for the whole family.
You have every right to have your feelings.
They are normal and natural.
- Acknowledge how you really feel:
It is important.
Explore how to use your feelings in a good way.
- Other families have also traveled this journey.
They have survived.
So will you.
You are not alone.
- Never give up.
Don't stop looking.
Smile at the good thoughts that remind you of your loved one.
Never lose hope.

Always remember, you are not alone.

