DEALING WITH SEPARATION & LOSS

COPING STRATEGIES WHICH OFTEN WORK

Problem Solving

- Making a plan of action and following it
- Taking one step at a time
- Talking with close friends and loved ones
- Draw from past experience

Pleasant Activities

- Doing something that you know makes you feel better
- Going some place that is fun
- Going to a favorite place
- Getting closer to nature – being by yourself in nature

Attitude and Lifestyle

- Talking about your reactions and feelings
- Cutting back on non-essential activities to conserve strength & energy
- Taking things a bit more slowly than usual
- Letting the natural healing process of time work – not trying to hurry things
- Making time to spend with family & friends to counter feelings of isolation
- Volunteering to help others, if you have the energy and it doesn’t deplete you
- Avoiding alcohol, drugs, or overworking as a way to cope
- Taking action to prepare for life’s future emergence
- Seeking counseling if reactions are overwhelming or persistent

COPING STRATEGIES WHICH OFTEN DO NOT WORK

Avoidance

- Keeping feelings to self
- Eating, drinking, or sleeping more
- Avoiding others or lashing out to keep them away

Rumination

- Thinking about how alone you feel
- Thinking about your shortcomings
- Analyzing yourself

For further information contact Patrick Thornton, Ph.D., Counseling Associates for Loss & Life Transition, 707.747.9550

Adopted from the findings of (a) The Stanford Project on bereavement and (b) Daniel Weiss, Ph.D., Dept. of Psychiatry & Langley Porter Institute; University of California, San Francisco