

SUPPORTING YOURSELF WHEN DAD MOVES ON

As a motherless daughter, coping with the news that your dad is starting to date again can be emotionally challenging. It may evoke complex feelings related to your mum and her passing, adding another layer to your grief. In this fact sheet, we offer some tips to help you navigate this difficult period.

REMEMBER YOUR DAD'S LOVE FOR YOUR MUM

It's important to recognize that your dad's decision to date again doesn't mean he has forgotten your mum. The love and memories he shared with her are still a part of him, even if he doesn't openly talk about them. His new relationship is not a replacement for the love he had for your mum.

COMPANIONSHIP, NOT REPLACEMENT

Sometimes, after losing a spouse, dads seek companionship or a distraction from their grief. Understand that your dad still loves your mum deeply, but he also doesn't want to be alone. Knowing this can provide comfort, as it signifies that he values connection and isn't suffering from loneliness. It's essential to acknowledge that his new partner can't fill the void left by your mum.

EMBRACE POSITIVE FEELINGS

It's perfectly normal to have mixed emotions about your dad's new partner. You may even feel guilty for liking her. Remember, it's okay to like and get along with her. Try to focus on her good qualities and the positive aspects of your relationship. Building a friendly connection with her doesn't diminish your love or memory of your mum.

VALIDATE YOUR FEELINGS

Your feelings are valid, no matter what they are. You're allowed to feel upset, angry, disappointed, heartbroken, or any other emotion. It can be challenging, but try to prioritise your relationship with your dad. Suggest spending one on one time with him (if that's something you'd like to do), which can provide a sense of connection and allow you both to remember and honour your mum.

KEEP YOUR MUM'S MEMORY ALIVE

If you find it difficult to discuss your mum with your dad, consider normalising conversations about her with other supportive individuals in your life. Share stories and memories to ensure her legacy lives on. If adjusting to these changes proves tough, surround yourself with family or friends who understand and support you in building a life that honours your mum. Our online Peer Support Group is a valuable resource filled with individuals who face similar challenges and can offer guidance and understanding.

Remember, you are not alone in your journey, and your feelings are valid. It's essential to prioritise self-care and seek support from those who understand and empathise with your unique experience as a motherless daughter. Seeking out some professional support to help you work through and navigate this tricky dynamic can be extremely helpful, too.