

Ask to Come Home. Ask for Caldwell Hospice.



## I Just Want to Help

### Tips for Helping a Grieving Person

- Be available. Offer support in an unobtrusive, but persistent, manner.
- Listen without judging, interrupting, or giving advice.
- Sometimes, there are no words.
- Realize that no one can replace or undo the loss. To heal, the individual must endure the grief process.
- Be patient, kind, and understanding, but don't claim to "know" what the other person is feeling.
- Accept and encourage the expression of feelings. However, don't force the individual to share feelings, if he/she doesn't want to.
- Physical and emotional touch can comfort the bereaved. A squeeze of the hand, a touch on the shoulder, or a gentle hug says a 1,000 times more than a few ill-chosen words or clichés.
- Be there later, when friends and family have all gone back to their routines.
- Remember holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries which have important meaning for the bereaved.
- Send a card or flowers at the time of the death, and at a later date, as well.
- Call periodically. Don't expect grieving people to call you. Their energy level may be too low to make the effort, even though they need to talk, or they might think they would be imposing on you.
- Offer to do something with the person. Set a specific activity, time, and date. Ask when the "bad time" is: Some people are especially lonely during the weekends, in the evenings or maybe during the morning.
- Bring food or invite the person to eat with you. It can be difficult to eat alone.
- Talk about the loved one. People like to hear the name, and sharing memories helps them to accept the loss. They don't want to think the person might be forgotten easily.
- Do not talk down to the bereaved or treat him/her as if he/she is no longer able to think.
- Do not "protect" the person; if grieving is postponed, it might express itself in illness or some worse form later on.
- Encourage the person to allow at least a year before making life-changing decisions. Given time, he/she will be able to make decisions based on what he/she wants, not on his/her grief.
- Be patient. The bereaved need to tell and re-tell the story of their losses until they can accept it, sort it out, and make sense of it.
- The bereaved need to know they still have a valuable life to lead. Encourage participation, as the person is able, in daily activities.
- Provide for times of lightheartedness. Laughter and play are wonderful ways to regain some needed energy.
- Go for a walk together. Walking is good for depression and will help the grieving person "walk off" some feelings.

### 7 Things a Grieving Person Needs to Know

1. You are lovable, even when you are a confused mess.
2. Crying is a gift.
3. Almost every thought, feeling, and behavior is normal.
4. You are not alone.
5. People are uncomfortable with grieving people.
6. No matter how bad you feel, you will survive.
7. It takes as long as it takes.

### What TO Say to Someone Who Is Grieving:

- I am so sorry that you're having to go through this experience.
- I can't even imagine what you must be going through.
- I am so sad for you.
- I think of you often.
- I will keep you in my prayers.
- I will miss (Mary) very much.
- Thank you for sharing your feelings/thoughts/memories with me.
- Do you want to talk about what you're going through?
- This must be a terribly difficult time for you.
- What can I do for you?
- Why don't I come over? We can make a list of what needs to be done.
- I have some free time on Sunday. Why don't I come over, and you can give me your grocery list.

### What TO Say to a Grieving Child:

- It's okay to talk about what you're feeling.
- You can talk to me about what you're feeling any time you want/need to.
- I don't know why such painful things happen, but I'll be here whenever you need me.
- I miss (Mary, Grandmamma, Uncle Jim) very much, don't you?

### What NOT TO Say to Someone Who Is Grieving

- I know how you feel.
- We all have to die sometime.
- He/she is not suffering anymore.
- He/she is at peace.

- He/she has gone to a better place.
- He/she looks so good.
- He/she led a good, full life.
- It is a blessing.
- The worst is over.
- He/she would not want you to cry.
- Tears won't bring him/her back.
- You have to go on.
- It was God's will.
- God takes the ones we love the most.
- But at least you were married for \_\_\_ years.
- Don't you think you should be over it by now?
- You should forgive/not get angry/not feel guilty.
- You did everything you could.
- You'll get over it.
- You have a lot to be grateful for.
- You've got to face up to it.
- You need to — make new friends, get out more, attend church, start dating, etc.
- You are holding up so well.
- You'll find someone new someday.

### What NOT TO Say to a Grieving Child:

- God needed a good daddy/mommy to help Him in heaven.
- Daddy/Mommy went away and is not coming back.
- Jesus came and took him/her.
- You are the man of the house now.
- Your daddy/mommy is watching you.

*Lend me your hope for a while.  
A time will come when I will heal,  
and I will lend my renewed hope to others.*

— Eloise Cole

Realize that, although the person may seem to be doing well, there is a lot of grief to work through, and grief resolution takes longer than people think. Remember that everyone's grief journey is unique. Each person grieves in his/her own special way and time.

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[www.caldwellhospice.org](http://www.caldwellhospice.org)