



## **18 WAYS TO HELP THE GRIEVING**

Excerpts from a piece by Victor Parachin, Grief Recovery facilitator in Clairemount, California

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### **RESPOND IMMEDIATELY**

As soon as you learn there has been a death, call expressing sympathy. "I'm so sorry!" is sufficient.

### **TREAT THE BEREAVED NORMALLY**

Don't add to the person's load by acting as though he or she had suddenly become incapable of making decisions.

### **REFRAIN FROM GIVING ADVICE**

They need someone to hear their grief, not advice unless requested.

### **RESPECT PERSONAL GRIEVING STYLES**

Some welcome one to stay with them, others need space, some need to know you are available.

### **AVOID PLATITUDES**

A simple, "I'm sorry" or handshake or embrace convey more loving concern than empty platitudes.

### **LISTEN WITH YOUR HEART**

Don't be intimidated by tears. Listening and sharing the pain shows you care.

### **MENTION THE NAME OF THE DECEASED**

Using the name tells a survivor you are open to hearing more about them.

### **DON'T MENTION REMARRIAGE OR REPLACEMENT**

These statements discount the loss for the grieving.

### **AVOID SAYING, "I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL"**

These words can be more irritating than assuring.

### **REMEMBER THAT FAMILY MEMBERS GRIEVE DIFFERENTLY**

Different personalities have different grieving styles, these should be respected.

### **SPREAD OUT YOUR SUPPORT**

Continue to provide emotional support over the next 12-24 months.

### **NEVER SAY, "DON'T CRY"**

Tears bring healing, both physically and emotionally.

### **BE REASSURING TO THE BEREAVED**

Assure the bereaved that confusion and lack of organization will pass with time.

### **REMEMBER THE GRIEVING ON SPECIAL DAYS**

Holidays, anniversaries, birthday and death dates are all difficult times.



**WRITE OUT A MEMORY OF THE DECEASED AND MAIL IT TO THE GRIEVER**

Put down on paper an event you shared with the deceased or how you felt about the person or something you recall about the deceased doing that impressed you. Then mail it to the survivor.

**EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT GRIEF ISSUES**

Many people fail to comfort because of lack of experience and information.

**FINALLY, BE PATIENT WITH THE GRIEVING**

Never rush the grieving or try to force them to “get over it”. People heal and recover from grief but it takes longer than most people expect.