

Helping Those Who Are Grieving

The following principals may be useful in assisting those who are grieving:

1. ***Don't rush someone through grief.*** The grieving period variable. It may take weeks, months, or years. Impatience with grief is a prevailing characteristic of our society. We need to give our friends and loved ones time to grieve.
2. ***Don't trivialize someone's grief.*** We might do this by our actions or words. We may act as if they should be getting on with their life, as if nothing happened. We may say hurtful things unknowingly such as "Be strong" or "She lived a long life" or "This was meant to be." We might also discount certain losses such as that of a beloved pet.
3. ***Make your support available especially beyond the funeral period.*** The bereaved are often "on their own" after the funeral. They need our support and concern after this period long after the funeral is over.
4. ***Allow the deceased to be important during the grieving process.*** We can do this by encouraging memories of the deceased.
5. ***Give permission to grieve.*** We can do this by talking about our own reaction to the death. By engaging in open talk about the deceased and our feelings, we can give the bereaved permission to do the same.
6. ***Help the bereaved deal with guilt or anger.*** These are common components of grief and may be rational or irrational. Talking about them can be helpful.
7. ***Realize the importance of obsessive review.*** The bereaved may be preoccupied with memories of the deceased and how the death took place. Provide an environment that allows them to talk about the death.
8. ***Remember that grief is highly individual.*** Don't expect the bereaved to follow an established set of rules. Allow for individual differences.
9. ***Help the bereaved to get on with living, to form new relationships.*** Be there for them, but don't rush them into a premature "resolution" of grief.



Source: Fulton & Matress Perspectives on Death and Dying, 1995.