

What do I do if I am Grieving?

Tend to the Essentials.

- **Eat a well balanced diet.** Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, lean proteins and drink plenty of water and other health liquids. A daily multi-vitamin can help cover any missing nutrients.
- **Take necessary medications.** Grief makes people more vulnerable to illness.
- **Get enough sleep.** Grief is exhausting. If you feel tired nap.
- **Exercise every day.** A simple walk, a bike ride, yoga, or a harder workout can ease agitation, anger, and depression.
- **Avoid risky behavior.** In the wake of a profound loss, people often justify using dangerous coping strategies—such as drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, or engaging in impulsive or self-destructive behavior. The short term relief is not worth it if the behavior persists.
- **Delay big decisions.** Grief can cloud thought processes, and people who make abrupt decisions may regret them later.
- **Practice self-care.** People who are grieving should regularly ask, “What would help me most today?”

Turn to Family and Friends.

- **Tell People what helps.** People who are grieving may need to say, “I just need to cry right now,” or “There’s nothing you can do to fix this, just stay with me for an hour.”
- **Embrace mixed Feelings.** It is entirely normal to have mixed emotions about the loss and about your loved one. It helps to express these so that other people understand what you are going through.
- **Take away uncertainty.** Often, people aren’t sure how to act around you when you are grieving. Tell them exactly what you want or how you are feeling.
- **Find others who understand.** People who have lost a loved one may be more understanding. Ask them outright: “What helped you?”
- **Leave the door open.** People who are grieving sometimes may wish that everyone else would just go away and leave them alone to sort through their feelings. But don't push to hard because they might not be there when you need them.
- **Realize that everyone grieves differently.** People who experience the same loss often grieve in different ways.

Commemorating a Loved One.

Create **art work** to express your feelings,. Write a **journal** to memorialize a loved one. Make a **memory box** for display or keepsakes. Use pictures and music to create a **slide show**. Put up a **collage** of pictures,. Contribute to a **good cause** in memory of a lost friend. Decorate the **grave site**. Plant a **garden** or a tree.

Adapted from “A Guide to Getting Through Grief”, Harvard Mental Health Lette, December 2011, Copyright 2011, by Harvard Health Publications Group.

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A Guide to Getting Through Grief

Other Community Resources

Sinnissippi Centers
Phone: 815-625-0013
www.sinnissippi.com

Catholic Social Services
Phone: 815-625-6945
www.rockforddiocese.org

Lutheran Social Services
Phone: 815-626-7333
www.lssi.org

Focus on the essentials and try to let people know what support you need.

Doing things the Steamer Way.

The loss of a loved one is painful. What can you do to help those who are grieving?

11 Ways to Comfort Someone who is Grieving

1—Name names. Don't be afraid to mention the deceased. It won't make your friend any sadder, although it may prompt tears.

2—Offer hope. People who have gone through grieving often remember the one who offered reassuring hope, the certainty that things will get better.

3—Make phone calls. Call to express your sympathy. Your friend or relative may need you even more after the first few weeks when other people may stop calling.

4—Write a note. If you had a relationship with the deceased, try to include a warm, caring, or funny anecdote that shows how important to you he or she was.

If you didn't know the deceased, offer your sympathy and assure the bereaved that he or she is in your thoughts or prayers.

5—Help out. Be specific when offering help. Volunteer to shop or do laundry, bring dinner, pass on information about funeral arrangements, or answer the phone. Pitch in to clean up the kitchen.

6—Be sensitive to differences. People mourn and grieve in different ways. Avoid criticizing the funeral arrangements or memorial service. Also, try not to impose your beliefs about death on your friend.

7—Make a date. Ask your friend to join you for a walk or meal once a week. Be aware that weekends are often very difficult, and suggest an activity. Low-stress activities may be the best. Sometimes just being there without saying much is enough.

8—listen well instead of advising. A sympathetic ear is a wonderful thing. A friend who listens even when the same story is told with little variation is even better. Often, people work through grief and trauma by telling

their story over and over. Unless you are asked your advice, don't be quick to offer it.

9—Express your feelings. If you share your friend's sorrow, say so. It's even all right to blurt out that you don't know what to say. Be careful not to express your feelings so emphatically that your friend has to take care of you.

10—Handle anger gently. People who are grieving sometimes direct angry feelings toward the closest target. If that happens to be you, try to be understanding.

11—Keep your promises. If you offer to do anything, follow through. This is especially important where promises to children are involved. Losing a loved one is abandonment enough.

Adapted from "11 Ways to Comfort Someone Who's Grieving", HealthBeat, August 24, 2010. Copyright 2010 by Harvard University.

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Be present and offer hope and a positive outlook toward the future.