

RIVER

My **INTENTION** is to:

RELATE

INVITE

VALIDATE

EMPOWER

REASSURE

My **HOPE** is the person will come to see:

They are not alone

Their story is welcome

Their reactions are understandable

They can find their way

Their grief is a process

My **FOCUS** is on:

- Affirming that each of us has experienced the death of someone close to us.
- Affirming that each of us is having a unique grief experience.

- Creating a safe space for them to share their story
- Listening wholeheartedly

- Asserting that there is nothing wrong with how they feel
- Recognizing that grief is affecting how they act, think, feel, and believe

- Not knowing what the person needs or what they should do
- Honoring the person's decisions and being willing to help

- Observing that grief is a lifelong journey
- Characterizing grief as a human experience, not as pathological

My **ACTIONS** are in harmony with my intention, my hope, and my focus:

- I express my belief that their loved one's life mattered.
- I ask if they'd like to talk about the person who died.
- I tell them their person's death deserves recognition and respect.
- I say I can see that they are hurting because of their loss.

- I ask if they want to share about what is happening to them.
- I emphasize their right to choose what they share in all situations.
- I am curious, and I ask them open-ended questions.
- I demonstrate that I have time to listen — or that I will find time.

- I tell them it is OK to feel how they feel, including strong or painful feelings.
- I mention a grieving person I know with feelings similar to theirs.
- I suggest that a troubling behavior of theirs might come from their grief.
- I encourage harm reduction with potentially damaging behaviors.

- I notice and stop myself if I have the urge to fix their pain or emotions.
- Before meeting with them, I do "centering" or "de-stressing" practices.
- I am aware if I am trying to persuade them of anything, and I stop it.
- I ask them about specific needs I know they have that I can help with.

- I tell them I don't believe grieving has a timetable.
- I stop it if I feel impatient or think they are "stuck in their grief."
- I say that grief is a natural — but painful — response to a loved one's death.
- I share an example of grieving that shows it is a lifelong journey.