

Holding the Sacred *Space*

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Holding the
Sacred
Space



Grief is in two parts.
The first is loss.
The second is the
remaking of life.

—ANNE ROIPHE

The background is a gradient of pink and purple. On the left side, there are several thin, light-colored lines that appear to be part of a larger, faint geometric pattern. On the right side, there are more prominent, radiating lines that look like light rays or a stylized sunburst.

What to *Expect*

What to expect

The grief process has many stages



What to expect

What's normal

- Crying and wailing
- Ranting and raving
- Repeating oneself
- Forgetfulness
- Loss of appetite, weight loss
- Excessive sleeping
- Staying in bed
- Not getting dressed
- Isolation



What to expect

What's not

- Prolonged poor hygiene
- Severe withdrawal
- Talk of self harm or suicidal ideation
- Substance abuse
- Risky or reckless behavior
- Physical anger
- Abrupt personality change
- Absent grief (lack of)
- Psychotic symptoms or delusions



What to expect



What to watch for

If the grief reactions don't begin to **slowly lessen** in severity or frequency, or are getting worse.

If any **red flags** are present, seek immediate intervention.

What to expect

#1

Grief is like a fingerprint.

Every journey is unique; no two are alike.

#2

You can't fix grief.

It's natural to want to fix things that are broken, but grief is beyond your repair. Don't feel guilty about it.



What to expect

#3

Crying is normal and may last for years.

Crying is a healthy response to emotional pain.

Suppressed grief leads to complications.



What to expect

#4

Grief is an emotional wound.

Because the brain can't tell the difference between emotional pain and physical pain, it's helpful to think of the bereaved as an ICU patient.



What to
expect

#5

It takes time.

When we lose our loved one,
we lose our world. Transition is
inevitable, but will happen slowly.



The background is a gradient of soft pink and purple hues. It features several thin, white, curved lines that sweep across the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is ethereal and artistic.

What to *Say*

What to say #1

Don't say: "How are you? Are you okay?"

This ignores the obvious.

Do say:

"I've been thinking of you. How is your appetite?"

This invites him or her to open up.



What to say #2

Don't say: "I understand how you feel."

That isn't possible. Grief is unique as a fingerprint.

Do say:

"Tell me about it. I'm a good listener."



What to say #3

Don't say: "Time heals all wounds."

It doesn't.

Do say: "I heard the rawness softens over time."



What to say #4

Don't say: "At least s/he lived a long life."

Do say: "S/he was a very special person."



What to say #5

Don't say: "It will get better every day."

Grief isn't linear.

Do say: "Some days will be better than others.
When you're having a rough day, call me."



What to say #6

Don't say: "Call if you need anything."

We don't know what we need. And we won't call for fear of being a burden.

Do say: "I'm going to the store. Do you need milk or toilet paper?"



What to say #7



Don't say: "You're so strong!"

Don't say: "You need to stay strong for your family."

Both statements evoke guilt for wanting to cry.

Do say: "You don't need to stay strong. We'll be strong for you."

What to say #8



Don't say: "You'll find someone else."

Don't say: "You can always have another child."

One person doesn't replace another.
Also, when in great emotional distress,
we are virtually incapable of looking ahead.

Do say: "You are loved and we will do this
journey together."

What to say #9



Don't say: "Loss is part of life. Tough it out."

This is dismissive and lacks compassion. Telling us to tough it out is asking us to hide our grief. This is the worst thing we could do. Bottling emotional pain can lead to depression, anxiety, hypertension, insomnia, and more.

Do say: "I'm so sorry. Loss is so hard."

What to say #10

Don't say: "It's time to move on."

This implies that you're domineering, lack compassion, and know what's better for us than we do.

Do say: "I'm so sorry for your loss."



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What to
Do

What to do #1

Don't let fear keep you away.

Attend the funeral. Even if you haven't seen them in years, visit the family and offer a hug.



What to do #2

Bring or send groceries.

Deliver a meal in disposable, non-returnable containers so we don't have to remember who needs pans replaced when the original gets lost in the shuffle.



What to do #3

Help with unexpected expenses.

- Send a gift card to ease financial burden of needing to buy unexpected supplies.
- Give stamps for all those thank-you cards.



What to do #4

Pitch in.

Look around. Chores are piling up. Wash dishes or do laundry. Please.



What to do #5

Drop and run.

Deliver supplies without
expectations of being
entertained.



What to do #6



Run interference for us.

- Answer the door
- Arrange meals
- Help with mundane chores
- Feed the pets
- Get the mail
- Carpool the kids

Don't wait to be asked.

What to do #7

Leave a care package.

Leave an anonymous care package on our doorstep so we don't have to write a thank-you card.



What to do #8

Share freely.

Share memories of our loved one. Say their name. Often. It's like music to our ears.



What to do #9

Help with our children

Offer to watch the children so we can accomplish what needs to be done or take a much-needed nap.

Better yet, drive the kids to practice and buy them a milkshake on the way.



What to do #10

Check on us.

Send a quick text or leave a voicemail without expecting a response. It warms our heart to know you're thinking of us.





How to Help

How you
can help

Remember:

- Listen. Hug. Repeat.
- Remember confidentiality.
- Be patient.
- Don't be afraid.
- Think before you speak.
- Don't take it personally.
- Meet the griever where they are.
- Put your own well-being first.





Caregiving *Tips*

Caregiving tips



Importance of self care



Caregiving tips



Self care tips

- Tend to your own health
- Maintain a self care routine
- Laughter is good medicine
- Give yourself daily TLC

Laughter offsets the mental impact of stress.
-MICHAEL MILLER, M.D.

Caregiving tips



TLC Rule of 5-4-3-2-1

- Sight
- Sound
- Scent
- Touch
- Taste

You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world. -LUCILLE BALL



Surviving the *Turbulence*

Tip #1

Recognize that you simply cannot lessen the pain.

Trying to do so will only exhaust you both.



Tip #2

S/he is coping with a significant wound that cannot be healed any faster than life itself.

If a simple statement or gesture could fix it, they would have done it.



Tip #3

Give yourself permission to take time out. Recharging your own battery is important.



Tip #4

Do not feel guilty for enjoying life.

Depriving yourself serves no purpose.



Tip #5

If you have difficulty finding compassion, take a break.

Run errands or go for a walk.



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Forget Me Not

Forget Me Nots

- You can't fix grief.
- You can only do so much.
- Recharge your battery.
- Don't feel guilty.



You can't be a resource for others unless you
nourish yourself first. -ALEXANDRA STODDARD

Forget Me Nots



Patience and compassion are key.

Providing a safe outlet to share their fears and vent their sorrow will help the bereaved process and work through his/her loss.

A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out. -WALTER WINCHELL