

The Process of Grieving

- There is no set time frame on grieving
- People will process grief differently (especially based on circumstances)
- Emotions can be triggered at any time, in any place, even long after the loss

Responding To The Other Person

Before You Speak

- Pray as you enter into situations where you will be ministering to a grieving person
- Remain prayerful throughout your time with them, asking God to help you and guide you
- Remember to listen more than you speak

When You Do Speak

- Ask good questions to get grieving people to talk (but stay alert to their desire to not talk)
- Listen to what they share and use that as a springboard for other questions
- Don't minimize the other person's feelings through your words
 - "You'll get through this."
 - "Others have suffered the same thing and made it through."
 - "You may feel lost but you're not."
- Avoid sharing religious sounding platitudes
 - "Everything happens for a purpose."
 - "God works in mysterious ways."
 - "You just need to have faith."
 - "God is in control."
- They will likely ask,
 - "Why did this happen?"
 - "Why did God let this happen?"
 - You can gently share that "Why?" is not really the best question
 - "Who...?" "What...?" and "How...?" questions tend to be better
 - "Who/what will I lean on during this tough time?" (*Make sure it is a healthy source of strength, NOT substances or destructive escape mechanisms*)
 - "How can I use my time to (still) help others?" (*Especially good for caregivers no longer caring for a sick loved one*)
 - "What am I learning about God and myself during this difficult time?"
- Encourage the person to embrace their feelings, but to push back on dark thoughts that may invade and start to take over.

Ministering to the grieving person(s)

- PRAY for them, especially praying God's Word for them.
 - Psalm 139
 - Psalm 23
 - John 16:23
 - 1 Peter 1:3-9
 - Matthew 6:9-13
 - Romans 8:18-39
 - Etc.
- TEXT to let them know you're thinking of them and praying for them
 - No need to get overly wordy. Letting them know you care is what's important.
 - Remember to stay away from religious sounding platitudes
- CALL to let them know you're thinking of them and praying for them
- INVITE them to get together
 - Remember there is a potential for emotional breakdowns, especially soon after the loss, so choose an appropriate environment to get together
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 - Be prepared for them to decline invitations, especially soon after the loss, but continue to check in and invite. Eventually they are likely to accept your invitation
 - Understand that the grieving person will want "alone time" but that "alone time" can become excessive. Too much alone time leads to depression
 - Encourage the person to push back on dark thoughts