

Douglas County
Sheriff's Office



Victim Assistance
Program
303-660-7535

Dealing

With Grief.....

How Can I Help ?

Suggestions for Friends and Relatives

1. Your presence at any public service will provide support. Don't worry about what to say. A handshake or hug may say more than any rehearsed remarks.
2. Get in touch with the person. Telephone them. It is never too late to express your sympathy.
3. Don't say, "Call to let me know if I can help." Most people will never call. Take the initiative:
 - Cook a meal
 - Freeze a meal for future use
 - Babysit
 - Do some shopping they need done
 - Help with phone calls
 - Do some driving (airport, hotels, etc)
4. Let families talk. Listening is the most important support now. Let them tell their story over and over again. It is in telling the story that survivors are able to begin the healing process.
5. While listening, be cautious not to assume feelings, place blame, or realize reasons for what happened. You are not there to agree or to disagree, Listen and affirm their right to feel as they do.

6. Avoid making comments such as:
 - “You have other children”
 - “You’ll get married again someday”
 - “It was God’s will”
 - “Be brave”
 - “Don’t cry”
 - “Don’t talk about it”
7. Accept them for who they are and their changes. Your support now will help them accept themselves and to come to some sort of peace with the loss.
8. Share positive memories with families.
9. It is hard for most of us to accept help. The family will need your help more and more as months pass, not less and less. Be gently persistent, thoughtful, and patient.
10. Don’t suggest sedatives, drugs, or alcohol. If there are concerns or medication requirements, consult a physician.
11. Be sure to allow the family to arrange the services as they wish. Well-intentioned friends or relatives may discourage arrangements that are important to the families. Make suggestions and ask positive questions.
12. Understand that there is no timetable for grief. Allow families all the time they need. It could take months, and often years. Your thoughtfulness and patience will be appreciated.
13. Birth dates and death dates are remembered by survivors. Don’t try to ignore them. Acknowledgement with a phone call or visit is reassuring to the family.
14. Don’t be discouraged. With your love and support, they will gain the strength to continue on to find joy in life again.
15. Accept silence.
16. Comfort the children in the family.
17. Allow families to “work through” grief. Do not whisk away clothing or hide pictures. Do not criticize behavior you may judge as morbid.
18. Write a letter.
19. Encourage postponement of major decisions until after the initial period of intense grief.
20. Help families locate support services or groups.