

TEN WAYS TO HELP THE BEREAVED

Source: Bereavement & Loss Training Manual

By Alice Goodall, Tim Drage and Gillian Bell - Published Winslow Press

1. By being there
2. By listening in an accepting and non-judgemental way
3. By showing that you are listening and that you understand something of what they are going through
4. By encouraging them to talk about the deceased
5. By tolerating silences
6. By being familiar with your own feelings about loss and grief
7. By offering reassurance
8. By not taking anger personally
9. By recognising that your feelings may reflect how they feel
10. By accepting that you cannot make them feel better

KEYS TO GOOD LISTENING

(Barbara Ward and Associates(1994) , Good Grief ,4th ed, Jessica Kingsley Publisher)

Warmth and Caring - being concerned, accepting, friendly.

Empathy - trying to understand how it feels to be in someone else's shoes and showing that you want to understand.

Non-judgemental Acceptance - not being shocked or judging someone. Accepting the person and their feelings.

Respect - allowing someone the dignity of having the right to feel any emotion and the free choice to choose any action.

Genuineness - being real, not just someone 'playing' a role.

Limit Your Own Talking - you can't talk and listen at the same time.

Clarifying - if you don't understand something, or feel you may have missed a point, clear it up by asking a relevant question.

Summarising - periodically check back with the person that you have heard them correctly by summarising the main points of what has been said. You may wish to encourage them to do the summary.

Questions - always use open-ended questions, ie questions which cannot be answered by just 'yes' or 'no'. Be careful not to interrogate.

Don't Interrupt - a pause, even a long pause, doesn't mean the person has finished saying everything they want to say.

Turn Off Your Own Words - personal fears, worries, problems not connected with the person easily distract from what they are saying.

Listen For Feelings - don't just concentrate on the facts as these are often less important than the feelings.

Don't Assume or Jump to Conclusions - don't complete sentences for the person either verbally or in your mind.

Listen For Overtones - you can learn a great deal from the way the person says things and what they do not say.

Concentrate/Attention - focus your mind on what the person is saying. Practice shutting out distractions.