



## 20 HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS AND HANDY TOOLS

### 1. Normalize the grief

- assure bereaved they are not going crazy
- provide information on the grieving process

### 2. Allow the bereaved to tell their stories

- encourage them to talk about the loved one's life and death, and their relationship with the deceased

### 3. Allow exploration of their feelings

- some of the feelings that may surface are sorrow/sadness, isolation, loneliness, regret, guilt, anger, fear, relief
- suggest some ways to vent anger safely

### 4. Teach relaxation, meditation, breathing techniques, and/or visualization techniques

- helps to boost the immune system
- gives a time-out from the pain of grieving
- aids sleep

### 5. Suggest listening to music

- match music to mood
- use as a relaxation aid

### 6. Help grievors to devise rituals

- to recognize different aspects of grief

### 7. Encourage creativity

- to open up new possibilities

### 8. Suggest writing

- clustering, journaling, writing letters, writing stories, composing poetry

### 9. Suggest drawing analogs as alternative to writing

- this activity uses the right side of the brain instead of the analytical left
- it makes inner thought visible

### 10. Suggest making a memory book of loved one's life

- arrange photographs & other elements into some order so they tell a story

### 11. Suggest making a collage



- use cutouts from magazines to represent loved one's life, the griever's life, or the relationship between the griever and lost loved one

**12. Suggest recording dreams**

- dreams often contain symbols significant to the grieving process
- do not interpret the dreams
- allow dreamer to draw own conclusions as to meaning of the dreams.

**13. Encourage self care**

- regular routines of sleeping, exercising, and eating a balanced diet
- importance of taking time off/of, treating oneself

**14. Suggest respites from the grief**

- actively think about something else for a while
- put aside some time each day to grieve

**15. Suggest planning ahead for special days that might be difficult**

- birthdays, anniversaries, holidays

**16. Encourage talking with a close friend**

- this not only helps to unload but gives the friend a specific role to play

**17. Encourage enlisting others' help**

- often friends and relatives don't know how to help
- get the bereaved to be specific about what helps and what doesn't help

**18. Suggest writing important things down**

- bereaved are often forgetful
- it helps to keep track on paper

**19. Assist bereaved in finding professional help if required**

- grief therapist
- financial advisor
- spiritual advisor

**20. Listen, accept, and assure**

- listen to what the griever has to say
- accept where the griever is at
- assure the griever that the pain will ease