

## WHEN OTHERS ARE GRIEVING



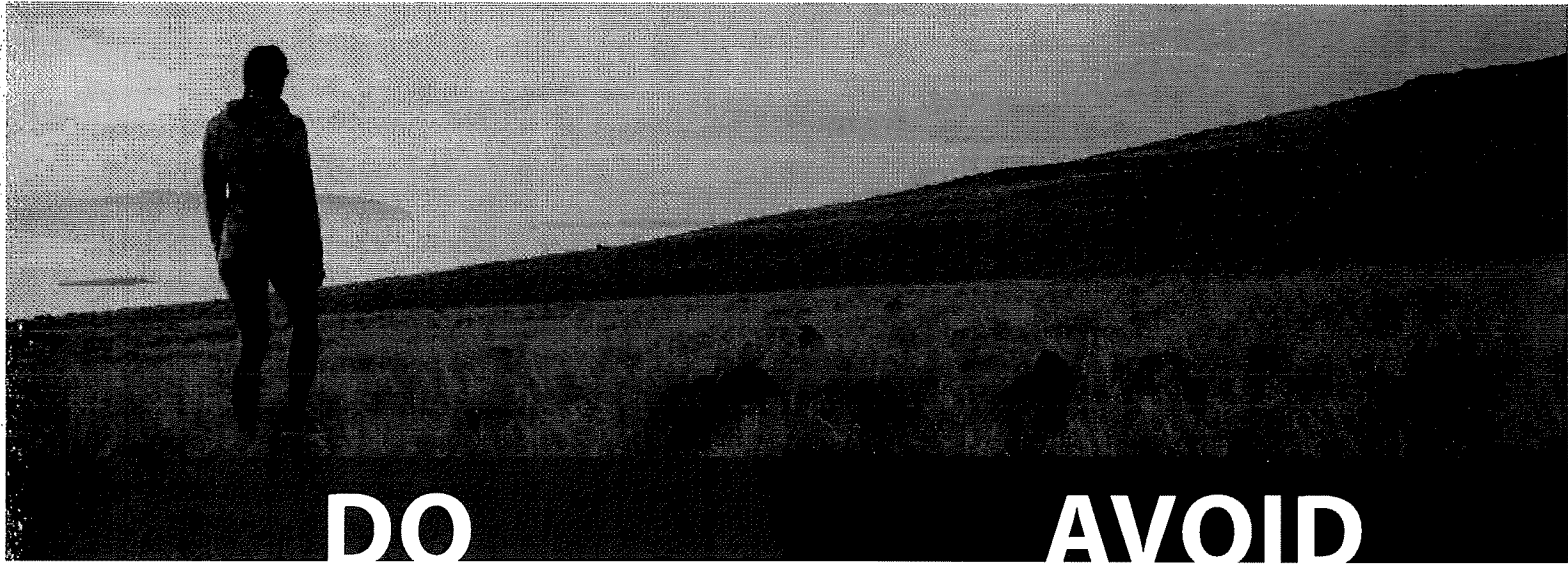
### DO

### AVOID

- **Assist with meal needs** like grocery shopping or dropping off a casserole
- **Look after their children and pets**
- **Tackle housework** such as cleaning, laundry, and yard maintenance
- **Get them out of the house** – go on a walk, to a movie, or out to lunch
- **Talk about their loved one** using their name; memories are healing
- **Ask if they feel like talking** and be a compassionate listener; also allow for crying and silences
- **Admit that you don't always know what to say**, but care very much; a hug or squeeze wordlessly conveys the same message
- **Offer support on special days** that might be triggering: birthdays, anniversaries, holidays
- **Respect boundaries** and recognize when to give space
- **Choose words sensitively** using soft statements starting with, "Have you thought about..." and "You might try..."
- **Pay attention to body language and reactions** to conversation topics – use these indicators to determine the course of communication
- If receptive, **offer to connect them with others** dealing with grief, or help them seek professional support; go with them to a support meeting
- **Encourage other close friends and family to reach out and help** – a support system is ideal

- **Letting fears of saying or doing the wrong thing stop you** from reaching out or avoiding them
- **Steering away from the topic**
- **Asking** "How are you?" or "Can I do something?"
- **Offering advice** unless asked
- **Telling them how they should or shouldn't feel**
- **Making judgments** on their timing and actions or taking things personally
- **Assuming you understand** how they feel
- **Minimizing their loss**
- **Push for talking if they don't want to**
- **Telling them what to do** or using statements like "You should..." or "You will..."
- **Comparing experiences** or doing all the talking
- **Rushing the grieving process**
- **Imposing a time limit** on your support
- **Tagging someone grieving in photos** of the deceased on social media
- **Pushing your faith** onto someone
- **Making assumptions or comments** on their appearance
- **Using overly simplistic and overused statements** for calming; steer away from silver linings and platitudes
- **Encouraging them to make major changes** in their lives
- **Trying to take the place of the deceased**

## WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING



### DO

- **Acknowledge your pain and express yourself** by crying, shouting, or physically hitting a pillow
- **Be patient with yourself** and make time to grieve
- **Think in cycles**, not lines; accept that grief isn't linear
- **Allow permission to backslide** – this is not failure
- **Be realistic about your limitations**; say “No” to something and “Yes” to yourself
- **Learn about grief** through books/articles and others who have coped previously
- **Join a support group**; talk with a therapist or grief counselor
- **Support yourself** emotionally by taking care of yourself physically; get enough sleep
- **Eat nourishing meals** each day, even if the food isn't tasting like it used to
- **Move your body** - try gentle exercise like yoga, tai chi, or walking
- **Spend time in nature** for fresh air and warming sunlight
- **Recognize good days**, celebrate when you feel like it, and laugh – don't feel guilty
- **Plan ahead for triggers** like holidays, anniversaries, birthdays; plan to spend time with others on these days
- **Revise a new routine** that works for you; set small, reachable goals
- **Get out of the house** – get coffee or take a walk
- **Feel close to your loved one** by making a memory box, spending time in a special place, or wearing their jewelry

### AVOID

- **Attempting to play the part of** “superman/superwoman”
- **Trying to be strong** in the face of things or worrying about keeping it together
- **Burying or not dealing with feelings**
- **Withdrawing** or isolating from others
- **Letting anyone tell you how you feel** or don't feel
- **Using alcohol or drugs** to numb the pain of grief or lift your mood artificially
- **Setting a grieving timeline** for yourself or adhering to anyone else's timeline
- **Over scheduling yourself** to bury grief
- **Forgetting to care for your body and hygiene**; consider it your win for the day
- **Judging or berating yourself** for not doing better
- **Making major decisions or changes** immediately; postpone until the timing is right
- **Social media**
- **Comparing the way you are grieving** with how others have grieved or are grieving
- **Minimizing your feelings** - the good and “bad” feelings are all part of the process
- **Avoid, as best as you can, the “shoulda, woulda, coulda” thoughts** that come from guilt with grief

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For additional information and resources, contact us at [OconnellFuneralHomes.com](http://OconnellFuneralHomes.com)

(Kessler, Interventions for Dealing with Unattended Grief, 2021)**The Best Things to Say to Someone in Grief**

1. I am so sorry for your loss.
2. I wish I had the right words, just know I care.
3. I don't know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.
4. You and your loved one will be in my thoughts and prayers.
5. My favorite memory of your loved one is...
6. I am always just a phone call away
7. Give a hug instead of saying something
8. We all need help at times like this, I am here for you
9. I am usually up early or late, if you need anything
10. Saying nothing, just be with the person

**The Worst Things to Say to Someone in Grief**

1. At least she lived a long life, many people die young
2. He is in a better place
3. She brought this on herself
4. There is a reason for everything
5. Aren't you over him yet, he has been dead for awhile now
6. You can have another child still (Kessler, Grief and Finding Meaning, 2020)
7. She was such a good person God wanted her to be with him
8. I know how you feel
9. She did what she came here to do and it was her time to go
10. Be strong

