Coping with Grief during COVID-19

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

Ten Tips for Helping Others Grieve

1. **Immediately acknowledge the loss.** Reach out to say, “I am so sorry for your loss.” Don’t be nervous. It doesn’t matter if you know the bereaved or the deceased well, just reach out.

2. **Do not minimize the loss or try to “take away” the pain.**

3. **Avoid statements like: “He/she is in a better place” or “I know how you feel.”**

4. **Know that grief is not linear.** People often cycle between the different stages of grieving.

5. **Focus on the person grieving.** Don’t compare your experiences. Allow the person to navigate their own grief.

6. **Don’t judge how the bereaved is reacting.** Everyone grieves differently. There is nothing wrong with how they are feeling or coping.

7. **Don’t rush the process.** Everyone grieves at a different pace. There is no timeline to “move on” or “get over it”.

8. **Allow for crying and silences.** Expressing emotions is healthy. Resist the urge to fill silence with words.

9. **Lend a helping hand.** Instead of saying, “Let me know how I can help,” tell them what you will do. For example: “I’ll be by to mow your lawn on Tuesday.”

10. **People who are grieving often forget to take care of themselves.** Have groceries delivered or send a gift basket with items to help them take care of their basic needs.