

Grief and Grieving class
Immanuel Adult Education/Discipleship Ministry 2023

Website encouragement <https://www.robindugall.com/home/grief-and-grieving-immanuel>; <https://fromacorntoak12.com/?s=grief>.

Grief - When we experience LOSS – we experience GRIEF

- Don't trivialize personal pain.
- Don't compare pain.
- Understand that loss causes shock – shock symptoms – denial, numb feelings, disassociation, panic, anger, breathlessness, headaches, nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, muscle and emotional tension, body “tightness.”
- We all need to express emotion – no emotion is bad.
- We all have feelings – depression, loneliness – feelings are God's gift, but they are just feelings.
- GOD CAN SPEAK TO GRIEF, bring His comfort, peace, and healing.

10 Practical Ideas for Comforting those in Grief

1. Remember, your job is not to fix them.
2. Listen more, speak less.
3. Avoid the cliches. Don't give trite, cheap, easy answers in such a significant and difficult time.
4. Make it a point to check in with them consistently in the coming months.
5. When you don't know what to say, tell them that.
6. Everyone grieves in different ways and at different times. Give people space - and permission - to grieve in healthy ways as they need. And don't take it personally, become defensive and overreact if it is different than what you expected or anticipated.
7. Verbalize compassion.
8. Embrace. Hugs, arms around shoulders and embraces are not only beneficial but oftentimes necessary for the grieving process. There are physiological benefits to touch during times of grief. Be generous (but equally appropriate) with touching and embracing others.
9. Ask. Sometimes a direct, caring question is appropriate: "What do you need from me/us right now?" or "How can we help you in the next seven days/month?"
10. Make a commitment to be in prayer for them. Don't say "I'll pray for you" unless you actually mean it - and will do it!
11. BONUS – “Sitting shiva”

Other issues –

What do you say to a hurting person/going through grief:

1. ISSUE IS LISTEN! Focus on THEM not You! (when we encounter grief the temptation is to focus on you because you are certain with you)
2. Understanding, empathizing with or validating someone's struggles.
3. You will feel helpless – that's OK
4. Be ready to handle anything – let them be
5. NO air chair theologian
6. Got to be sensitive – what is welcomed or TOO intrusive
7. Getting people to open up – open ended questions – follow their lead
8. Power of presence
9. Connect meaningfully

10. If you share a personal story – be brief, use them sparingly, know that what you did to handle a hard time may or may not help the person, if you have endured a similar situation share your story (2 Cor 1 issue) – the issue is to communicate, “you are not alone”
11. Silence is ok...comfortable with silence? If not, get comfortable
12. Sometime people just need to cry
13. People need validation – never say, “you can’t feel that way”
14. Share the hurt – hand on shoulder, prayer, cry with them
15. Mercy gifts? Or no mercy gifts? Send them a person with mercy gifts
16. Don’t measure progress...in other words, you might not make a difference and that’s OK
17. Send cards, texts
18. Calls – “is this a good time to chat?” Then what? LISTEN!
19. Share reading stuff – wait initially (they have a lot on their plate), realize what you love might not be what they love, give don’t lend book, you had better know the book you recommend well
20. Spiritual assurance and prayer – David Seamands wrote great books, “Healing of Memories” and “Healing of Damaged Emotions” – God is in the business of reframing pain – they will never not remember...so the Lord can bring healing of memories

What NOT to do:

1. Talking too much, listening too little
2. Feeling personal discomfort when experiencing someone else’s pain
3. Focusing on self and not hurting person
4. Wanting people to get over it
5. Avoiding painful subjects
6. Giving advise
7. Minimizing the significance of pain or suffering
8. Being judgmental
9. Wanting to hear only the positive
10. Responding with cliché’s, platitudes, pat phrases
11. Identifying too closely with the other’s pain

Words that hurt (though they may be true):

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I know how you feel” • “It’s for the best” • “They are at peace now” • “They are in a better place” • “They are not suffering anymore” • “He’s better off” • “They are with Jesus now” • “It’s a blessing” • “Stay strong” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You should or shouldn’t” – no advice giving • “God doesn’t give you more than you can handle”...research 88% of people react negatively to that and God does • “It’s Gods will” • “Pink thinking” Don’t sing songs to a heavy heart – overly optimistic |
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SUMMARY

- PRAY
- BE THERE – show up
- NAME ELEPHANT
- REMEMBERING – telling stories
- HELP PRACTICALLY
- FOLLOW UP - Not “how are you doing?” but what are you doing?