



COMFORTING A SUICIDE SURVIVOR “DO LIST”

- Give them time, love and understanding.
- Remember that individuals grieve in their own way, in their own time frame. Give them the space they need to grieve, and don't try to rush them.
- Encourage them to talk about what they are feeling or thinking, and to express their grief.
- Offer ideas and not advice. Let them decide what they want to do and when.
- Help them to not feel guilty for taking care of

themselves - remind them to get a lot of sleep, eat regularly, drink plenty of water, and exercise.

- Pay attention to their loved ones in the following months. Survivors are often “hyper vigilant” - afraid to lose someone else. Help them to understand that these feelings are natural. Assure them that they are not alone in watching out for their loved ones.
- Listen when they want to talk about their loved one who died by suicide - you may be the only person listening to their stories.
- Encourage them to find a support group. Being with people who have experienced similar losses is a good idea. These groups can be found by calling your local crisis center or checking online at www.suicidology.org or www.afsp.org.

“DON'T” LIST

- Don't assume you know best, or how they feel.
- Don't make comparisons to your own losses.
- Don't tell them how they “should” feel, or try to change their feelings. Feelings are unique to each individual. There is no such thing as a good or bad feeling - they are just “feelings”, and we all have them.
- Don't tell them this was God's will or preach to them. They will draw strength from their own faith, if that is important to them.
- Don't give them your pills or personal medications.
- Don't change the subject if they want to talk about their loved one.
- Don't take over their responsibilities unless they ask you to do so.
- Don't stop visiting them or calling them.
- Don't alter their loved one's room or belongings. They can do that in their own time, and they may consider making such changes to be their own special project.
- If they have lost a child to suicide, do not point out that they still have other children. Each individual and each relationship is unique.
- Don't add to their feelings of grief and guilt by pointing out things that should have been done differently.
- If you would like personal assistance or to set up an appointment for an assessment, please contact Catherine Hill at 225-924-1431, ext. 206 or send an email to chill@brcic.org.