

## **What Can I do After the Funeral Service?**

### **General Thoughts and Guidelines**

Everyone's grief is unique. Even members of the same family experiencing the same loss the same way may express their grief in dramatically different ways. It is important not to judge the way people grieve or express their grief, even though it may make you a little uncomfortable. The thought is not to try and pull or push them through their grief, but to walk along side of them, accompanying them in their journey and at their pace.

### **Ideas on Supporting Someone who has lost someone they love**

- Just be there for the family.
- Let them be alone if that is what they want.
- Help with day to day practical things
  - Offer to grocery shop
  - Take their kids to shop for school clothes
  - Help him/her cut the grass
- Listen to them. Let them talk without interruption, advice or judgment
- Visit them 30, 60, 90 days after the funeral. And as often as you can manage.
- Drop them a line, message, or email letting them know that you care and that you miss the person who died (use their name)
- Use the name of the person who died. It helps keep their memory alive.
- Maintain your relationship with the griever.
- Accept the various expressions of their grief and the fact that this process will last the rest of their lives. They will never be over it but hopefully they will learn to live with the loss.
- Be aware of things that may be difficult for the griever to experience (love songs, movies with death in them, etc.)

### **Things Not to Do**

- Don't try and change the way they express their grief
- Don't force them into a role, "Be Strong, Don't Cry"
- Don't expect them to be back to their old self in a week or two.
- Don't expect a thank-you card

### **Additional Resources**

*How to Help a Grieving Friend*, Stephanie Whitson, Navpress 2005

*How Can I Help*, June Cerza Kolf, Fisher Books 1999

*The Art of Condolence*, Leonard Zunin, MD and Hilary Zunin, Harper Perennial 1992

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