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# When a loved one dies

Kara encourages the grief process by considering it a normal part of human life. The directors and volunteers at Kara have assembled a list of helpful hints for families who are grieving over the death of a loved one:

If any family member needs space to be alone and quiet, it should be provided.

If any family member needs closeness, it should be given upon request or upon sensing that closeness is needed.

When tears come, they should be allowed to flow.

Periodically the family should get together to assess how they all are adjusting. Never take it for granted that everyone is doing well.

On holidays and anniversaries during the first year make it a point to talk about the person who is gone. Expect some sorrow, but plan something meaningful also.

Expect a gradual buildup of residual sorrow that may manifest itself in unpleasant ways that affect family harmony. Try to see what is behind these flare-ups.

Remember that some in the family will adjust sooner than others.

Understand that no one family member may meet all of one person's needs. It is all right if someone needs to turn to people outside the family for help.

If one family member is "touchy," try to remember that everyone was deeply injured. The pain lingers even though it may not be openly discussed.

Understand that the world soon forgets about the loss. Outsiders may act as if nothing ever happened. Outside support is withdrawn too soon.

Do not expect any one person in this family to be the "strong" person who supports the rest of the family.

Disposing of personal items that belong to the one who is gone should be done slowly and with the feelings of all the family taken into consideration.

Do not assume that any family member is too young or too old to grieve.

Do not make hasty decisions or move during the first year of grief.

Do not be surprised if a family member experiences a temporary loss of faith. Questioning is a normal part of trying to make sense out of what happened.



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