

NEEDS OF LOSS SURVIVORS

1. They need to be encouraged to mourn the loss of the deceased.
2. They need an opportunity to express feelings (loss, abandonment, fear, anger, guilt relief etc.) in a non-rejecting atmosphere.
3. They need to be encouraged to consider life without the deceased.
4. The counselor needs to inquire into the presence of suicidal thoughts.
5. The bereaved survivors need to be told what kinds of feelings and experiences they are likely to have during the grief process.
6. They need to be allowed (or encouraged) to talk about the deceased.
7. The counselor needs to encourage the support of others in the community.
8. Religious beliefs and rituals are often helpful and can be encouraged when they are consistent with the individuals' own beliefs.
9. However, avoid God-like talk and magical thinking. It only keeps people from experiencing the reality of the loss. Some well-meaning phrases often used in error:

"Everything will be all right"
"You should be happy for him - he's in heaven now"
"Just pray about it and God will make things better"
"It was God's will that he died, so somehow this will turn out for your own good"
10. They need to reach an understanding of the death that preserves their self-esteem and satisfies their search for meaning.
11. An antidote for all survivors is the permission to accept any emotion as legitimate in grieving for a death.
12. The bereaved need to be given permission to postpone major decisions.
13. They need to recognize that forgiveness of self and others is a vital part of the healing process (sometimes)
14. The grieving person also needs to realize that any new death - related crisis will stir up feelings about past losses.

