

## HOW TO COMFORT THOSE WHO GRIEVE

1. Be a Good Listener.
2. Spend time away from the group and encourage the student to talk about their feelings.
3. Be sure to have good eye contact and use simple, direct words. Let them be mad or express other feelings.
4. Let the student know that you care and are concerned about what they say, think, or feel.
5. Give information about what's going to happen. Be as predictable as possible and keep any promises made.
6. Children generally model their responses to death according to the reactions of adults in their family.

### Ways to Help

Parents and teachers can help by **encouraging children to ask for help without feeling guilty**. Provide an environment in which the teenage can **talk about anxieties and worries**. Take their problems seriously and **refrain from giving easy answers to what can be very complex problems**.

Rather than offer advice, teens will consider it more helpful if the **listener asks questions that express concern and show a willingness to listen**. Questions can help teens identify their emotions and help them see what they can do to improve the situation. Some of the following questions may lead a distressed young person to a greater awareness of the situation.

#### Ask questions in a warm, caring, and supporting way.

- What are you afraid of?
- How much change is going on in your life?
- What can you control or avoid when dealing with a difficult problem?
- Do you feel you are falling short of some ideal?
- Have you given up on a situation?
- What role do you have in shaping your feelings and reactions?

Get involved, trust your instincts. **Ask a person directly if they are considering self-destructive behavior**. Don't avoid the topic or wait for the person to ask for help, a person in need will feel you care. **Be alert to a child's feelings**. Teen problems are perceived to be more devastating to the young persons: failing to achieve a goal, feeling unattractive, feeling unloved, fearing competition and failure, feeling guilty for the problems of others, breaking up a meaningful relationship. **Be a resource so if a friend is so depressed that the help of a professional is needed you can find help and encourage the person to seek counseling**.

**Discuss appropriate ways to deal with stress and depression**. Provide opportunities for group support, to enable teens to share their problems. Encourage: physical activities, listening to music, going out with friends. **"A joy shared is doubled, a sorrow shared is halved."**