

## Concrete Tips: Working with Grieving People

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### Overview

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- What is Grief
- Overarching Principles
- Don'ts/Dos

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## What is Grief?



- Grief is a normal reaction to loss
- Grief is the process of moving from “What Was” to “What Is”
- Grief is often the most intense, and longest emotional process in life.

## Overarching Principle 1



**It's Not Your Job to Make a Griever Feel Better.**

## Overarching Principle 2



**Do Not Judge.  
You are not the Grief Police**

## Overarching Principle 3



**You may be  
Uncomfortable...  
BIG DEAL!!**

## Overarching Principle 4



**Forgive Yourself.**

## Don'ts: What Not to Say...



Avoid Exclamation Point Sentences:

- I Know how you Feel!
- You Have to Stay Positive!
- ITEPs

## Do...



Instead, meet her where she is.

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## What Not to Say...



Avoid “Don’t” Sentences:

- Don’t feel bad...
- Don’t say that...
- Don’t talk that way...
- Don’t give up...

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Do...



Instead: Meet them where they are.

“It sounds like you feel pretty hopeless...  
is that where you are right now?”

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Resist the Temptation...



- To give awards
- To give advice
- To change the subject
- To make religious presumptions
- To talk about others' experiences
- To answer unanswerable questions

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Do...



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# LISTEN

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Do...



- Normalize, Normalize, Normalize
- Forget about your personal comfort
- Basics: Food, Clothing, Shelter
- Beyond Basics: Counselors,  
Therapists, Massage Therapists,  
Yoga Instructors

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## Understand

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Grief is a normal response to loss.

Be accepting of it in your clients,  
and in yourself.

## Final Golden Rule...

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**Forget Judgment: Be Gentle  
with your Clients, Be Gentle  
with Yourself.**



## Questions and Answers



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## Resources



- <http://www.corgenius.com/>
- [www.grief.net](http://www.grief.net)
- [www.degriefing.com](http://www.degriefing.com)
- [www.hospicenet.org](http://www.hospicenet.org)
  
- The Grief Recovery Handbook, John James and Russell Friedman
- When Children Grieve, James, Friedman
- The Courage to Grieve, Judy Tattlebaum
- Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, William Worden
- Waking the Tiger, Healing Trauma, Peter Levine
- The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion

## Professional Application



Understand the Symptoms of Grief

- The Lead Suit
- Scattering and Shattering to  
Linear Thought
- Sensory Distortion

## Remember:



“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.”

~Eleanor Roosevelt

## In Conclusion



Grief is the single most transformative process in the human emotional lexicon.

If you learn to cope with grief, you will not only help your clients in their transformation, but you may also transform as well.

## Thank You!



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