

## **APPENDIX F HOW TO COMFORT THOSE WHO GRIEVE**

1. *Be There:* attend the funeral, visit, and spend time with those grieving.
2. *Listen:* grieving people need to talk about this sudden vacuum in their lives.
3. *Send a note:* notes can share personal memories, short and simple.
4. *Give a gift:* a collection of poems, a book to the library in memory of the deceased.
5. *Extend an Invitation:* consider what the person likes to do. Eat out? Go to a play? Take a drive?  
  
Bereaved people often decline invitations or cancel at the last minute.  
  
Don't give up. Ask again.

### **GRIEF PROCESSING SUPPORT STRUCTURE Some Ideas/Suggestions**

1. Establish a "Drop-in Center" all day the first day that news of a sudden death is disseminated.
2. More than one counselor/facilitator is may be needed in the group at one time; it's also a good idea to have others available for relief purposes.
3. Focus on:
  - a. Memories, positive experiences with person who died
  - b. Feelings about the loss
  - c. Stages of grieving (grief education); students may bring up spirituality
  - d. Funeral services – appropriate behaviors/concerns about experience
  - e. Future – what next?
  - f. Guilt work if needed/some need to focus on causation
  - g. Family and friend's response (kids often wonder, "What can I do? How can I help?")
  - h. Identifying others that the students are concerned about (provides them with an opportunity to help, gives them a purpose in crisis, allows them to be part of a larger supportive community response.)

4. Avoid focusing on:
  - a. Narcissistic focus on suicidal thoughts, feelings, experiences, if the death was by suicide.
  - b. Constant talk about the actual death (morbid focusing)
  - c. Blame
5. Bring group to some closure the second day – avoid adding new members (may need to meet others on a one-to-one basis); probably will focus more on funeral and services.
6. May need to reconvene after funeral for an hour to refocus on grief/loss – bring group to some closure again and offer various **resources for on-going support**.
7. Remember throughout the course of group process, facilitators need to identify students with chronic problems around the issue of suicide/self-destructive behavior (regardless of the cause of the death) and to assess whether or not these students need to be separated from the group. If the students in question are identified as “chronic manipulative attempters” they must be removed from the group.
8. The counseling staff may want to consider the possibility of a “neighborhood group” in the evening to reach youngsters at all age levels (checking in with parent(s) to see if there is a need.)
9. Finally, we suggest viewing group work as a possibility for the **whole** system, K-12; death impacts the whole educational community, not just one branch.