



Becoming Skillful Comforters

Facilitated by

Karen Nicola M.A.

Grief Educator/Grief Coach

Speaker/Author/Blogger

Steve Nicola B.A.

Grief Educator/Grief Coach

WHAT NOT TO SAY

call me if you need anything

It's time to get over it/move on

I'm so sorry

It was for the best

You just need a distraction

IT JUST TAKES TIME

I know how you feel

At least you have other children

Be grateful that . . .

At least they aren't suffering

You can have another child

Stop living in the past

I remember when my cat died

She/he wouldn't want you to grieve

Look on the bright side

Is there anything I can do?

Principle: Avoid platitudes, diminishing the loss or distracting the grief emotions, and making it all about you.

© Comfort for the Day 2018

What to Say

What time is a good time for me to call?

I'm beginning to understand that "time" doesn't heal, but God does.

I am so sorry that you are going through this right now.

Please tell me something/more about your ___(wife)___.

Your sadness or pain doesn't frighten me. It is an honor to listen to you.

I have a little idea of what this is like for you. Please help me understand more.

I would like to help with the children. Here is an idea . . .

Would you like a hug?

Our world will miss the blessing your {daughter} would have given.

Your (son) was really special. I remember . . .

***What is your grief like
for you today?***

I'd like to help _____. What time would be best?

Principle 1: Acknowledge the death, pain, difficulty, etc.

Principle 2: Make it all about them.



WHAT THE GRIEVING NEED FROM US



1. *Condolence is an art that requires wisdom, tact, and courage. It means being honest about your own feelings, not trying to persuade your grieving friend to feel better, and being available to listen.* -Jon Spayde
2. So ... when someone you know is grieving -love them. Offer support where you can. Stay in touch. Nurture your connection with them. Reach out. Be understanding. Offer to listen. But don't tell them how to grieve. And don't make judgments. Your greatest gift to someone who is grieving is to make sure they know you care and that you're ready to listen. Encourage them to let you know how you can best help them -and then follow through.
@ 2014 Judy Brizendine <http://stunnedbygrief.com/stunned-by-grief/pause-think-twice-speak-someone-grieving/>
3. *"When your fear touches someone's pain, it becomes pity, when your love touches someone's pain, it becomes compassion."* - Stephen Levine
4. At some of the darkest moments in my life, some people I thought of as friends deserted me, some because they cared about me and it hurt them to see me in pain; others because I reminded them of their own vulnerability-and that was more than they could handle. But real friends overcame their discomfort and came to sit with me. If they had no words to make me feel better, they sat in silence (much better than saying, "You'll get over it" or "It's not so bad; others have it worse") and I loved them for it. Harold Kushner, *Living a Life that Matters*
5. HONEST LISTENING IS ONE OF THE BEST MEDICINES WE CAN OFFER THE DYING AND THE BEREAVED. Jean Cameron (dying of cancer)
6. *"The friend that can be silent with us in our moment of confusion or despair, who can stay with us in our hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing. . . not healing. . . not curing. . . that is a friend indeed."*
Henri Nouwen
7. ... but mostly it means I need you to remember the important day he was born and the day he died. You see my friend, I don't expect you to fix any of this. And really all I need is to know that his name can be mentioned without fear, without guilt, and without uncertainty. stillstandingmag.com/2016/09/28

Comfort Skills Inventory



Check each item that is something you would find yourself naturally doing for someone who is grieving.

Principles

- Acknowledge the death event, the loss, and the grieving process
- Be comfortable with the mourner's need to talk about the events surrounding the death
- Encourage freedom to heal in God's time and way
- Ask "Either/Or" questions to clarify most important needs of the bereaved
- Validate the positive influence of the deceased loved one
- Remember: TIME WITH THE BEREAVED IS ALL ABOUT THEM, NOT ABOUT YOU!
- Be willing to get bereavement training. Overcome your own fear of pain and be willing to enter into another's pain.
- Other _____

Tangibles

- Make phone calls on behalf of the family to extended family members or friends
- Help as needed to guide the bereaved through funeral arrangements and details
- Offer to write thank you notes on behalf of the bereaved
- Offer to drive for the first few days/weeks to run errands appointments, shopping, etc.
- Provide food (prolonged support) meals in disposable containers, fresh fruits & veggies, snack foods, groceries.
- Send cards for anniversary of the death and other significant dates
- Go on walks together or other outdoor activities
- Mow lawns, clean house, tidy the garage, do small home repairs, laundry, shine shoes etc.
- Spend time with the children~ take them to a park, on a walk, read stories, listen
- Offer assistance with legal matters, insurance, banking, etc.
- Help with sorting mail, paying bills, or writing thank you notes
- Take them to a concert, play or program
- Other Grief Walk _____

Support

- Regular phone calls of encouragement
- Just spend time together
- Share your memories and stories of the deceased loved one
- Provide a safe place (your home) for the family to mourn during the days and weeks after the death, including holidays and Sabbaths, etc.

- Pray with them
- Look at together or share pictures of the deceased loved one
- Stay in contact via social media, mail, email, phone calls ~ and don't expect a reply
- Visit and LISTEN without judgment
- Ask permission to hug or touch
- Hug, gentle touch on the shoulder, demonstrate positive human touch
- Send random thoughtful cards, letters, and notes
- Encourage grief support group attendance or pay for grief counseling or coaching
- If you notice a season of depression, encourage the bereaved to be awake and active during the day. Come alongside them to do this with gentle, yet persistent persuasion.
- Spend the night in their home if they are feeling afraid to be alone
- Check in with them in the evening to pray with them and read Scripture over the phone
- Visit the grave & leave a note in a ziplock bag (to keep safe from water damage) for the family to know you care
- Share music specific to loss, share books or artwork that would bring comfort & encouragement
- Other _____

Leadership

- Formulate a bereavement care survey to assess the most important needs at the time. Re-survey throughout the first year and adjust care plan as needed.
- Organize others with a schedule for comfort services such as; meals, correspondence, cleaning, driving, etc.
 - Read books and articles to stay current on grief issues and share what you read with others
 - Coordinate a monthly griever's dinner out
 - Other _____

Notes




Becoming Skillful Comforters

Workshop Summery

Natal

Definition: A rare native instinct

- N** Never about ourselves
- A** Ask for clarification
- T** Touch, or hold with permission
- A** Always about them
- L** Listen with your heart 

Be There

“The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of confusion or despair, who can stay with us in our hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing . . . not healing . . . not curing . . . that is a friend indeed.”

Henri Nouwen

Keep these Resources available: www.comfortfortheday.com
YouTube: [Karen Nicola](#)

Do the Caring Thing

“I need a friend who weeps with me, and when he or she speaks knows how to ask the right questions and listens from their heart. I need a friend who knows how to suggest assistance for my obvious and not so obvious needs, who doesn’t boss, or insist on their own way, and lets me choose. This is a true friend for my time of grief.” Karen Nicola

Write your summary and share it with a partner.
