

Tip sheet

Ten things you can do for a co-worker in grief



Tips to keep in mind

- Contact the manager and discuss who will let other co-workers know of the situation
- Attend the funeral, phone or visit your co-worker personally to extend your condolences
- Offer to make phone calls, drive, run errands, etc.
- When your co-worker returns to work, acknowledge their loss and grief. Don't wait for the right thing to say. The wrong thing is to say nothing
- Personalise what you say – for example, 'I remember how much I loved my brother. I'm so sorry about Ed's death.' Shared feelings communicate more than good advice
 - However, avoid judgements such as, 'You should...you shouldn't...' or cliches such as, 'You'll get over it in time' or 'I know how you feel'. Don't minimise or assume you comprehend the complexities or depth of another's loss
- If you're able, offer to share the person's workload. Sometimes the smallest gesture lightens the load
- Be there. Listen. Let your co-worker express their pain, anger, disbelief or guilt. Let them tell their story over
- After weeks or months have passed, don't be afraid to bring up the deceased. Chances are they're thinking of nothing else. Talking about their loved one in positive ways helps celebrate that person's life
- Remember your co-worker on special days such as holidays, birthdays or the anniversary of the loved one's death. Maybe send a card saying you're thinking of them or one that recounts a positive story of the deceased
- Touch communicates a great deal. If you're comfortable and it's appropriate and welcomed, a hug doesn't hurt.

Contact

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