



# "In Mourning Band™" Campaign

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[www.inmourningband.org](http://www.inmourningband.org)

Because Grief Is as Real as Love...

## Changing the Way Our Culture Mourns



### How to Help

#### Being a compassionate caregiver to a person "In Mourning"

The experience of the death of a loved one is one of life's most stressful events. The word, bereavement, literally means "to be deprived by death." To be a compassionate caregiver and friend, be gentle, kind, and patient. Give them permission to feel their sadness and to experience the depth of their loss for weeks, months, and even years after their loved ones death. Be present. Offer practical aid such as help with younger family members or children, meal making, and day-to-day tasks. Be sincere and listen. Don't rush their grief experience. If you feel they will benefit from services, encourage them to attend support groups and one-on-one counseling.

The best gift you can give a grieving person is your unconditional love and support. Don't use clichés to comfort them. No words can heal a mourner's grief. Just be present and show you truly care.

### What They May Feel

#### Feelings of grief are commensurate with the depth of love

Grief brings on a wide range of emotional responses. Many people feel an initial stage of numbness after first learning of the death. There is no real order to the grieving process, however, emotions that some may feel include: denial or disbelief, confusion, shock, anger or rage, sadness and depression, yearning, desperation and despair, guilt and shame, as well as physical symptoms such as headaches, appetite changes, and tiredness or lethargy. Individuals may withdraw from social settings and friends after the death experience. They may have frequent emotional outbursts. They may feel unable to normalize their day-to-day routine and it is likely that you will see many changes in the person over the coming months and years. Holidays, or trigger-events such as the anniversary of the death, may cause setbacks even years later. Providing long-term, compassionate and empathic support is crucial to help facilitate healing.

It is important to allow as much time as the person needs to heal. Rushing their journey will make them feel lonely and afraid.

### Children



#### Often Forgotten and Overlooked

For children, the death of a sibling, parent, grandparent, or friend can affect their sense of security, self-esteem, and it can de-center them. The family and the community can help children who are grieving. This type of support will enable the children to resume their lives more fully at home and at school. Parents, teachers, medical professionals, and community leaders all play an important role in the life of the grieving child. Avoid telling them that 'God' took their loved one. Avoid associating death with sleep or something 'lost.' Remember children are very literal. Allow them to participate in rituals such as funerals, memorial services, and candle lightings. Children at all ages should be offered the opportunity to say goodbye to their loved one. Adults should encourage children to ask questions. Do not discourage them from talking about their pain and be patient and very gentle. Try not to yell at, hit, or isolate children after the death. Children may appear to be "misbehaving" but they may actually be manifesting grief symptoms through such behavioral changes.

It is important to realize that even very young children mourn.

### Death Affects Us All



#### Ripples Move Outward and Touch Many

Death affects individuals and families, communities and organizations, institutions and societies. It is the one, most common human experience, traversing socio-economic groups, race, religion, language, and culture. The death of a loved one is not something to 'get over,' but rather, it is a long-lasting anguish that, if treated with loving compassion, becomes a part of a new sense of self and meaning.

It isn't something that just goes away:  
Death changes us forever.

Note: If you are concerned about someone you know who is mourning, contact your local crisis hotline.

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[www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org)  
PO Box 5333  
Peoria, Arizona 85385