

Transcript: Grief Kind Class #3 - What can you do to be Grief Kind?

What can you do to be Grief Kind?

In this class, we'll explore what you can do to be grief kind. Over the years, people have told me lots of things that they have found helpful, and of course, these are going to vary across different people because what one person finds helpful, another person doesn't. When somebody has said, actually, I don't really want to talk about it and they found it very helpful, one, that the person honoured that and didn't push to kind of get out, and secondly, to then follow up with a text message, it was just a text message every now and again to just ask how you're doing.

We asked people how their loved ones helped them

“So, one thing that really helped me during quite a difficult time was friends and family just being there on the phone. This was during COVID, so it wasn't really possible to see people in person for that kind of support.”

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“I lost my wife, Fiona, to cancer just over four years ago. The people who would text and say at the end of the text, ‘no need to reply unless you feel like it’, the people who would offer to set up something with me but say ‘if you don't feel like it on the day, it doesn't really matter’. Having that kind of permission is really, really helpful when you're raw from grief. “

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“I know a lot of my friends are very worried that if they mention my dad, I'll get upset. But the reality is that I'm thinking about him 24/7 anyway. So, the most helpful thing I find that people can do is to acknowledge that when we first see each other, it lets me know that I'm not on my own in those thoughts.”

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“I found it difficult at first being invited to weddings and parties and even for dinner with people on my own. So, it was a great comfort when I was asked to go with someone and I was able to take my daughter or my sister or a family friend or something, which made it much easier for me than going to places on my own.”

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“I think it's easy maybe to think that the grieving person is over it after maybe a couple of months, but they aren't in the main. And so, when you ask a year or so down the line, it's really meaningful. And I know that I still really appreciate it when people ask me how I'm doing.”

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“When my dad died, it was only the support of my wife, my sisters and my close friends that really, really helped me get through the tough times. It was really difficult. But I think when I look back, it was just knowing that they were there whenever I needed them.”

What you can do

Sometimes people have told me that they really find it important that you look at pictures together or that people don't shy away from looking at pictures together. Sometimes there's a temptation to maybe cover pictures up or not mention it, you know, maybe I shouldn't mention the name but it's actually important to mention pictures to mention that person's name because that name hasn't died.

Don't say, “oh, you know where I am, call me if you need me”, because it's actually quite hard to reach out when you're feeling vulnerable and to risk being turned away. It's much more helpful if people will keep reaching out and not be put off. So, for people to know that they can make an invitation, “Would you like to come around to lunch?” Get turned down, ‘No, thank you, I don't feel up to it’, but not be offended by that and try again. Offer again, keep being there, keep being there, keep trying.