

'Understanding' Within the 'Family' That Can Help

- When any family member needs space to be alone and quiet, it will be given.
- When any family member needs closeness, it will be given upon request or upon sensing that closeness is needed.
- Nobody needs to hide their sorrow or cry in their pillow. When tears come, let them flow.
- Periodically we will get together as a family to assess how we are adjusting to the loss. We will never take it for granted that we are doing well just because we aren't talking about it.
- We will make it a point to talk about the person who has died on holidays and anniversaries during the first year. We will expect sorrow on these days, but we will plan to do something meaningful to remember the person who has died.
- There may sometimes be a gradual building up of residual sorrow that affects family harmony in unpleasant ways. We will try to see what is behind these flare-ups and do what we can to re-establish family harmony.
- We understand that no one family member can meet all the needs of any other family member. We will not be afraid to lean on others during our intense grief. It is all right if we turn to people outside of the family for help.
- If one of us is touchy, we will try to remember that we have all been deeply injured by our loss. We are each bruised and hurting. The pain lingers even though it may not be openly discussed.
- We will not expect any one person in this family or be the "strong" one, who supports the rest of the family. Trying to be strong often postpones grief and adjustment.
- We understand that no family member is too young or too old to grieve. The young and the old need to talk over their feelings about the loss.
- Disposing of personal items belonging to the person who has died will be done slowly and with the feelings of all the family taken into consideration.
- We will not make any hasty decisions or moves during the first year of our grief, if we can avoid them.
- We will not be surprised or offended if a family member experiences a temporary loss of faith. Questioning is a normal part of trying to make sense out of what happened. We will listen to the questions, the doubts, and the anger without being judgmental.
- We understand that the world soon forgets about our loss. Within weeks or months, our friends are apt to act as if nothing ever happened. Outside support is withdrawn too soon; therefore, the family members need to support each other over the long haul.
- Some of us in the family will adjust sooner than others.