How Can I Support Someone in Grief?

"A joy shared is doubled; A grief shared is halved."

- Don't try to take away the pain. It is not possible. Perhaps your greatest gift is to be with someone in pain without trying to "fix" it. Offer a nonanxious and nonjudgmental presence.
- Don't expect the bereaved person to be same person as before. Part of the struggle of grief is to define a "new self."
- Avoid making assumptions about what the grieving person needs. Ask instead of tell. Avoid using cliches.
- Listen. Listen. And listen again. Repetition is natural for persons in grief. Learn to be comfortable with all emotions.
- Offer specific assistance grocery shopping, childcare, errands.
- Encourage and recall memories. Death ends a life, not a relationship. Don't avoid speaking about the deceased.
- Be patient. Recognize that grief involves physical, behavioral, and cognitive responses as well as emotional. A grieving person is more susceptible to illness during grief. Low energy, poor concentration, irritability, and disorganization are normal.
- Personal faith is frequently a major source of comfort during grief. An equally natural response is to question one's cherished beliefs or philosophy of life. Affirm both responses as healthy.
- Grief has no timetable. Be there! Not just today, but tomorrow, next month, a year from today, and special days.

Condolence is the art of giving courage -Monica Lehner-Kahn