Grief & Loss: Twelve Ways to Help

1. **Offer opportunities to talk** about death and loss as they experience it in everyday life.

2. **Include youth** in rituals whenever possible and appropriate.

3. **Share** your expressions of sadness and pain.

4. **Be available** to listen.

5. **Pay attention** to a youth’s behavior and let them know when you notice a change.

6. **Answer all questions** about death and loss as honestly as possible.

7. **Be willing to wonder** and explore answers to their questions.

8. **Face your own feelings** of grief.

9. **Do not isolate or insulate young people from grief.** Remember grief is normal.

10. **Continue to expect a young person to function.** Be firm, yet gentle and kind.

11. **Find help** for youth who need it. Refer to support groups or counseling as needed.

12. **Continue to be available** over time

Remember grief will be revisited throughout their lives. Reach out and continue to care, just as you are now!

Adapted from Laura Bray Harting, CSW (1995), The Center of Living with Loss
Finding the Right Words:

- I am sorry for your pain.
- I am sorry about ____’s death, and I’d like to help in any way I can.
- I am here for you whenever you need me.
- I can’t know how you feel, but I want to help you in any way I can.”

Expressions to Avoid:

- I understand/know how you feel.
- Move on - get over it.
- You must be over it by now.
- You’re doing such a wonderful job!
- It could be worse, you still have ....
- You’ll be strong because of this.
- It was G-d’s will.
- ________ is in a better place.