

Session 1: There is Wisdom in the Building

Discussion of strategies for staff and residents to support each other after a death.

Best Practices:

Actions that show support for others and yourself:

Residents:	Staff:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a quiet presence • Participate in shared activities • Let the bereaved know you care—call, send a card, etc. • Offer something specific to bring them (i.e., coffee) • Organize volunteers to visit (in pairs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your grief with someone you trust • Don't be afraid to ask for help (therapy, support groups, medication, etc.) • Perform self-care (eat right, get adequate sleep, exercise, etc.) • Be a good team member (be a listening ear, offer to complete tasks, exchange responsibilities, etc.)

How to show empathy for someone's loss:

Phrases to use:	Phrases to avoid:
"I am sorry for your loss"	"I know how you feel" or wording involving religion (i.e., "God wanted them" or "they are in a better place")

Other points of consideration:

- Any type of grief is valid (loss of pet, physical objects, etc.)
- All facilities have experienced colleagues that can help you through the grieving process
- Bereavement teams and sharing care plans are helpful

Grief Support Dos and Don'ts:



Help yourself and others

- Relationships are critical to our well-being.
- When someone dies, that connection can be a source of pain.
- Supporting grieving persons can help.
- These Do's and Don'ts are based on 60+ hours of conversation with persons living and working in long term care.
- Their advice comes from repeated experience with deaths and the dying.

Source: Alfa Bravo | Renderforest (Dr. Toni Miles)

✓ DOS	✗ DON'TS
✿ Reach out	✿ Be afraid of emotions
✿ Be a listening ear	✿ Say <i>I know how you feel</i> or <i>Get over it</i>
✿ Show care	✿ Fear naming the loss
✿ Attend memorials	✿ Judge their responses
✿ Walk the bereaved	✿ Rush the process

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways do we encourage our residents to ask for help when they are experiencing grief?
- Describe some actions we can take to show support to a bereaved resident? Family member? Coworker?
 - What words should we avoid when supporting the bereft? What words should we use to show support?
- Are we sensitive to the idea that grief can include the loss of a pet, treasures, (such as family heirlooms or keepsakes) the loss of abilities and ideas?
- Are we aware of the signs of distress among our team? How do we help each other through moments of distress?