

# Supporting Someone Who is Grieving the Loss of a Child

An excerpt from Myra Sack's "Showing Up" class presentation about how to support, sustain and connect with one another in an authentic way.



## Do's and Don'ts & The Power of Being with Pain

### Don't say:

- S/he is in a better place.
- Everything happens for a reason.
- It's time to move on, move forward.
- Your (child, spouse, parent, grandparent) wouldn't want you to be sad.
- It's not normal to hurt for this long.
- You can have other children.
- Don't think about it.
- Trust in God's plan.
- Just think happy thoughts.
- You have to get back to life.

### Do say:

- S/he is missed beyond words.
- I love you.
- What do you need to be okay today?
- I thought about (child, spouse, parent, grandparent) today when I saw/heard...
- I'm with you however you need, and I know that your needs will change.
- It is normal to feel this way.
- I'm thinking about you.
- Call anytime. I'll listen.
- Whatever comes up for you, I'm here.



### MYRA SACK

Myra Sack is a certified Compassionate Bereavement Care facilitator and is writing a memoir about her daughter Havi. A writer, coach, and activist, she is the mother of two daughters and one infant son and lives in Boston, MA with her family. Her oldest daughter, Havi, passed away on January 20, 2021 of Tay-Sachs disease.

## Supportive Actions in Grief

### ACTS OF EMOTIONAL CARING

- Emotionally sensitive communication
- Remembering the person who died
- Speaking his/her name
- Sharing memories
- Acknowledging important dates and holidays

### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Being present
- Allowing the expression of grief
- Listening
- Being available
- Devoting time
- Being open to grief emotions
- Not trying to fix or rush grief
- Refraining from unsolicited advice
- Timeless support

### INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

- Assistance with childcare, meals, financial support, yardwork, housekeeping, etc.
- Written notes and gifts

### SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Foster a sense of connection with like others
- Identify and recommend support groups
- Help to engage with extended communities (faith, school, neighborhood)

## In my own words, showing up is:

**A lot like love.** It's unconditional, and selfless, and while you can't always see it, you can feel it. It's not a one-time gesture, or even ever about an event itself. It's a consistent, ever-present **way of being** with people that makes them feel like they matter. And to feel like **we matter** in this world of 8 billion human beings is the greatest gift we can give to each other.