

“Accompanying the Grieving”

With Chaplain Maureen Cleverley

1. Be present with the grieving person’s pain. Do not attempt to take away or minimize their pain.

“Holding space means we are willing to walk alongside another person in whatever journey they’re on without judging, making them feel inadequate, trying to fix, or trying to impact the outcome. We open our hearts, offer unconditional support, and let go of judgement and control.”
-Heather Plett

2. Silence is golden: when you are at a loss for words, you can listen, stay connected by paying attention, and use open body language (don’t cross your arms.)
3. Bear witness. Put away phones and other electronic devices.
4. Listen with your heart (your emotions) in addition to your head (logic).
5. Ask open questions: for example, “what are you feeling now?” or “what’s on your heart?”
6. Avoid statements like “Your loved one is in a better place now” or “God needed him back.” If the grieving person states this, you can affirm their belief, but do not assert your own beliefs. Simply listen.
7. Be empathic to the variety of feelings grief creates in a person. Anger, regret, relief, sadness, hope, despair, etc... Grief is a grab bag of feelings that can change frequently, especially in the beginning. Stay in a caring and non-judgmental space.
8. Grief is heavy! Take care of yourself after you’ve accompanied a grieving person. Eat, rest, pray, take a walk, watch your favorite TV show- whatever brings calm and joy. Be sure to take time to refill your own cup once you’ve poured your love out in care of a grieving person.