

TRAUMA INTERVENTION PROGRAMS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY, INC.

Ways to Comfort a Grieving Parent

- Acknowledge the child's death by telling the parent(s) of your sadness for them and by expressing love and support and trying to provide comfort.
- Allow the parent(s) to express feelings without imposing your views or feelings about what is appropriate behavior. Avoid telling the parent(s) you know just how they feel.
- Allow the parent(s) to cry--it is appropriate to cry with them.
- Visit and talk with the family about the child who died; ask to see pictures or memories the family may have. Refer to the child by name.
- Extend gestures of concern such as bringing flowers or writing a personal note expressing your feelings, letting the parent(s) know of your sadness for them.
- Attend the child's funeral or memorial service.
- Offer to go with the parent(s) to the cemetery in the days and weeks after the funeral, or find other special ways to extend personal or sensitive gestures of concern.
- Remember anniversaries and special days.
- Donate to a specific memorial in honor of the child.
- Make practical and specific suggestions, such as offering to stop by at a convenient time, bringing a meal, purchasing a comforting book, offering to take the other children for a special outing, or treating the parent(s) to something special.
- Respect the dynamics of each person's grief. The often visible expressions of pain and confusion shown by the grieving parent(s) are normal. Grief is an ongoing and demanding process.
- Keep in mind that the parent(s) may not be able to ask for help or tell you what they need.