

# AFTER A SUICIDE OR DEATH: DO'S AND DON'TS

## For Family Members and Friends



**Do** let your genuine concern and caring show.

**Do** be available...to listen, to help with the bereaved persons, or whatever else seems needed at the time.

**Do** say you are sorry about what has happened to their loved one and about their pain.

**Do** encourage them to be patient with themselves, not to expect too much of themselves, and not to impose any "should" on themselves.

**Do** allow them to talk about the special, endearing qualities of the loved one they've lost.

**Do** give special attention to the loved one's relatives and friends at the funeral and in the months to come (They are hurt and confused and in need of attention).

**Do** reassure them that they did everything that they could and whatever else you know to be True and Positive.

**Don't** let your sense of helplessness keep you from reaching out to a bereaved person

**Don't** avoid them because you are uncomfortable (Being avoided by friends adds pain to an already intolerable painful experience)

**Don't** say you know how they feel. Even if you have lost a loved one yourself you probably don't know exactly how they feel

**Don't** say "You ought to be feeling better by now" or anything else which implies a judgment about their feelings.

**Don't** tell them what they should feel or do.

**Don't** change the subject when they mention their dead loved one.

**Don't** avoid mentioning the loved one's name out of fear of reminding them of their pain. (They haven't forgotten it.)

**Don't** try to find something positive i.e. A moral lesson, close family ties, etc about the loved ones death.