

Survivor's Guide

If you are a survivor:

- Set aside quiet time to think, pray, and listen to God. Ask God to help you deal with the loss you feel.
- Talk to friends and family members. Keeping quiet won't make the death less real or your feelings less intense.
- If sudden death has left you with "unfinished business," try writing a letter to the person who died. Try to "talk" to the person as you normally would have. The letter is the goodbye you didn't get a chance to say. Keep it in a safe place until you can comfortably destroy it.
- As you work through your feelings, remember that feelings are neither good nor bad. They just are. How you feel is how you feel.
- If it is extremely difficult to talk to friends, consider seeing a trained counselor or working with a peer counseling group. Ministers and Christian educators are often trained in grief counseling and many churches have licensed counselors on staff. Local mental health centers often sponsor special groups for teens. If a sister or brother has died, contact Compassionate

Friends, an organization of parents, grandparents, and siblings of children and young people who have died. If no local chapter is listed in your phone directory, write Compassionate Friends at P.O. Box 1347, Oak Brook, IL 60521, or call 312/323-5010.

- If a friend has died, write a note to his or her family. Sharing a special memory with them will help them and you. It doesn't matter if time has passed. You can be sure that they too are still recovering.

If you are the friend of a survivor:

- Let your concern and care show. If you don't know what to say, a hug will help both of you.
- Don't avoid your friend because you are uncomfortable. Be available. Listen, allowing your friend to express his or her feelings.
- Don't tell your friend how to feel.
- Be careful of making statements about God's will. It's more helpful to be with someone in their grief than to try to explain it away.
- Be patient. Recovery takes time. If your friend seems to be trying too hard, or acting as if nothing has happened, gently remind him or her to take as much time as necessary for "good grief."