



## **GRIEVING TIPS IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **When a Co-Worker Dies:**

- Know the company's bereavement policy
- Arrange for a company meeting or a company-wide notice
- Allow co-workers time off to attend the funeral
- Allow time and space for employees to grieve and share their feelings
- Contribute to a special cause in memory of the person
- Create an office memorial board or a scrapbook of memories to give to the family
- Support one another

### **When a Co-Worker is Seriously Ill**

- Respect the sick person's desire for privacy
- Call and visit the person from time to time
- Send cards, letters, emails, short office videos, food deliveries
- Acknowledge the possibility of anticipatory grief among co-workers

### **When a Co-Worker Is Grieving**

- Acknowledge the death with a note or flowers or donations
- Ask the person what you can do to help (be specific)
- Provide flexibility and help with time off or temporary re-distribution of work load
- Respect confidentiality
- Be patient, compassionate and available to listen
- If the bereaved person is not coping well, seek consultation or refer for counselling

In all circumstances be patient and understand that you cannot "fix" grief. The grieving process takes time. Each person grieves differently. Openness and mutual support are essentials for coping with loss and grief in the workplace.

## **Grieving Employees Want...**

- Someone to listen, not to advise
- Flexible leave time and workload
- Time and space to grieve
- Visits and calls from colleagues
- Specific offers of help
- Acknowledgment of the loss
- Opportunities to grieve together

Even those with no training in handling employees' bereavement can support someone who has suffered a loss:

\* Be compassionate. Your condolences don't need to be elaborate, just heartfelt.

\* Offer help. The grieving person will appreciate your picking up a work task temporarily or running an errand.

\* Cultivate your awareness of the grieving process. Signs that the grieving person may need professional help include weight loss, lapses in personal hygiene, references to suicide, increased absenteeism, and significant personality changes. In addition, you should keep an eye on the person who shows absolutely no emotion.

\* Become more flexible. Your company's bereavement policies may not account for extreme or unusual circumstances. It may be appropriate to extend leave time or to create a flex-time schedule for a while.

## **Need More Help?**

Hospices offer Grief support to individuals with either one-on- one or group programs. Grief Support Programs provide a safe, supportive and healing environment for bereaved individuals to process their grief in meaningful ways. We can support:

- Individuals who have experienced the death of a family member or significant other including a child, parent, spouse, friend or co-worker.
- individuals or families who have experienced the sudden death of a loved one through trauma or through suicide

**Hospice Georgina 905-722-9333 [www.hospicegeorgina.com](http://www.hospicegeorgina.com)**