

Grief Assistance Tips for First Responders

COPING WITH LOSS
DURING THE PANDEMIC

GRIEF
SPACE

Support Practices Adapted for this Challenging Era



www.InternationalGriefInstitute.com

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As emergency responders, you may be called on to assist those in the earliest stages of grief. Your early, effective actions can bring comfort during the grief journey.

WHILE ASSISTING FAMILIES

- Take care of yourself; you need to stay healthy to take care of others.
- Wear the prescribed personal protection equipment; this will feel like a barrier between you and the people you are helping, but it is keeping you and them safe.
- Establish a sense of safety; be gentle but direct in giving guidance or asking questions.
- Always be truthful; build trust through honest communication.
- Maintain structure as an antidote to chaos and confusion.
- Counter rumors with facts—share information to help reduce anxiety, reassure, guide, and assist with decisions. The fastest way to erode trust is to withhold information.
- Make only promises you can keep.
- Foster hope that as time passes, it won't always feel this raw.
- Have handy a simple list of online and telephone resources for grief support during the crisis.



WHAT TO SAY

You're often the first person to whom the grieving turn. Use these and your local resources to connect the survivors with others who can provide comfort and support.

[International Grief Institute](#)
[When You Lose Someone](#)
[Center for Loss & Life Transition](#)
[Grief.com](#)
[Open to Hope](#)
[Option B](#)
[Refuge in Grief](#)
[Soaring Spirits International](#)



REMEMBER

Your words and interactions with the grieving will have a lasting impact.

Grieving causes pain which easily turns to anger and even rage. Anger can manifest in violence, endangering you and others. Your words and your interactions with the grieving are more important now than ever.