

## NATURAL DISASTER AND MAJOR WEATHER EVENTS

# ASSISTING PEOPLE THROUGH GRIEF

### FIRST STAGE HANDLING OF AN AFFECTED PERSON:

1. Listen to the person (allow the person to vent without interruption, remain calm, speak in a calm and measured voice).
2. Be aware of your own feelings and manage them as best you can.
3. Acknowledge the person's problem or situation (be empathic, acknowledge emotions and the impact that is being expressed. Acknowledge points of view without necessarily agreeing with them).
4. Advise and explain the options available to them.
5. Try to involve the other person in deciding what options to take.
6. Confirm what actions have been agreed, or what actions will be taken.
7. Follow up in 1-2 days and check-in with how they're travelling (repeat steps 1-6 if necessary).

### AVOID ANY TEMPTATION TO:

- Argue
- Defend or justify
- Deny
- Give excuses
- Joke
- React to attack. Don't react, just change the subject to them
- Talk too much.

### ADDITIONAL DOS AND DON'TS

These are simply some practical suggestions that may be helpful in many situations:

#### DO

- Be friendly and compassionate, even if people are being difficult.
- Listen and hear what is being said.
- Acknowledge that each person's experience of grief and loss will be unique.
- Remember that nobody has to justify their feelings to you.
- Realise the person has suffered a loss, even if you don't perceive it as such.
- Encourage those who have a common grief to support one another if they can.
- Look after yourself and ensure your needs are also being met.
- Remember that many who give support immediately after a trauma may be delayed in working through their own grief.

#### DON'T

- Personalise knock-backs to your efforts to assist.
- Prevent the person from expressing their guilt or anger if they need to.



### LOOKING FOR SUPPORT?

Need some advice on how to support and assist someone who is dealing with grief? Converge International is here to help. You can speak with a counsellor from your Employee Assistance Program by calling **1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327)**.

### Find out more

 1300 our eap (1300 687 327)

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