



WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

The Eikhah Project 5777

How to Comfort

Discussion question

What should I say to someone who is ill or recently bereaved?

After a few minutes of suggestions, offer the following from Sheenah Hankin, Ph.D., who is a psychotherapist and author of *Complete Confidence*:

There are three simple rules that help you to talk to seriously ill and recently bereaved people in a helpful, comforting way.

One: Give no advice.

Two: Do not criticize.

Three: Do not entertain (cheer up) the person.

Your task is to comfort by being empathetic. Try to imagine how the person is feeling by saying “how are you” and listening to the response.

If they are scared, remember how that feels, and say that you truly understand. Almost all of us can remember how it feels to be scared.

If they are anxious, let them express their fears, then say, “I know how hard this is for you. I am just glad I am here.”

If they are angry, as fearful people often are, refuse to join with their blaming and complaining. Simply acknowledge their frustration.