



## **Social Media and Grief: To Post or Not to Post**

The use of the internet has truly impacted the way we communicate, with social media perhaps the most prevalent of all. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other forms of social media have become a means to share news of a loved one's death, offer condolences and memorialize the deceased.

Whether you are grieving or supporting someone newly bereaved, you may want to consider what you are going to post and what you will say, as a significantly larger audience will be privy to your words.

### ***If you are grieving...***

#### ***Have all of the immediate family and friends been notified?***

While social media can help avoid making numerous phone calls, it can be jarring to those closest to the deceased, to find out about their death via internet.

#### ***What details are you comfortable sharing?***

Sharing news of a death can open the door to many questions from your online community, which you may or may not be ready to answer. People experience different comfort levels in sharing details surrounding a death; you may want to consider what you want to share and post.

#### ***Creating a Memorial Page.***

A memorial page can be very healing and a way to feel connected to your loved one and your community of support. It can also be overwhelming as you try to make sense of the reality of the death and begin to process your grief. As you plan your memorial page, you may want to consider if the page is public. Will you limit it to friends and family or leave it open to the online community?

### ***If you are supporting someone who is grieving...***

#### ***How do you offer condolences?***

You may want to take extra care in word choice before posting condolences, as you are opening up your personal message to public opinion and comment. Rather than saying too much, you may want to follow up your post with a phone call to the family and friends, offering comfort and a space to talk if needed.

#### ***Creating a Memorial Page.***

Before creating a memorial page, you may want to see if the family and close friends are comfortable with this. While it can feel proactive and an offering of support, it can also be experienced as intrusive and overwhelming by those closest to the deceased.

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***Checking In.***

As times goes on, you may want to more actively reach out to your friend, as opposed to “checking in” electronically. Many people when grieving speak of feeling enormous support in the early days and weeks following a death. Right as the initial shock and numbness begin to wear off, however, most of that early support disappears. Someone grieving may also be less likely to reach out, feeling pressured to “be ok”, and fearful of burdening those close to them.

***Before you post...***

We encourage you to be mindful and aware of your language and word choice so that so that your message conveys your intended sentiments.

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