The Days and Weeks After

How long should close relatives of the deceased wait before resuming an active social life? The answer is up to the individual. Some people deal with grief by plunging into their regular activities, while others spend time with close friends but otherwise keep to themselves as they adjust to their loss. Some follow mourning rituals prescribed by their religion or cultural tradition.

Spouses

Widowers or widows may start to date when they feel ready, but should consider the feelings of in-laws, their children, and others close to them. One year is generally considered the appropriate "waiting period" before remarrying, but if close family member have no reservations about a shorter time, then there is no reason not to marry sooner.

Mourning Period in the Jewish Faith

Religious Jews restrict work, social, and recreational activities after the burial of a close relative--most assiduously during the first seven (or, for many Reform Jews, three) days of a monthlong mourning period. During this time, those observing this tradition generally remain at home and receive condolence calls. The restrictions are significantly relaxed during the next twenty-three days, but some remain in effect even then--and a few until a year after burial. If you want to extend a social invitation to a Jewish mourner or express your sympathy in person, it's best to ask for guidance from one of her relatives or close friends or, after the first week of

bereavement, the mourner herself.

Children

Many people are uncertain about whether children who have lost a parent should participate in their usual activities. The answer is yes, as much as they wish. Older children, however, may not feel up to going to purely social events for a period of time after the death of a parent.

Offering Condolences as Time Goes By

Be understanding of the changes a friend is going through in the weeks and months after the loss of a loved one. Don't take it personally if she seems moody or doesn't return phone calls right away. Do stay in touch.

The First Aniversary of The Death

Friends and relatives of the deceased often wonder whether they should make a gesture to one or more of the survivors on the first anniversary of the death. It's never wrong to show that you care about someone who has suffered a loss, but each person grieves differently. Let the person's state of mind and personality be your guide, judging whether a condolence would comfort or only serve as a sad reminder. In most cases, sympathy notes , a home-cooked meal, an offer to spend time together, or a telephone call would be very much appreciated.