



The Black Ribbon,

A

Symbol of Your Loss

The Black Ribbon Programs

were developed by:

Highlander Counselling and Mediation

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The Black Ribbon – A Symbol of Your Loss

When someone we love dies we are sent on a journey not traveled by others. Our grief is unique. We experience the numbness, the feeling of loss of reality. We embrace the reality of the death, the reality of our loss. We reconcile ourselves to a future without the person who has died. We experience all these feelings as we grieve. We join with others to tell the story of the person and the death. Mourning is a necessary process. We need to share our loss with others as a part of our healing.

In days past our culture provided symbols that we could use to show others that we had experienced a loss and tell them of our need for help in coping during our mourning. These symbols would tell others of our vulnerability. Family, friends and neighbors and other supporters would help us on our journey through our grief. They would visit our home. They would attend the funeral. They would bring food. They would sit with us. They would listen to us as we talked of our loss, of the person who had died. Death was a part of life. We supported each other.

In times past, one of the symbols that our society used was the black arm-band. Please accept this *black ribbon pin* as a substitute for the black arm-band.

You may decide to keep it as a touchstone or to wear it to tell others that someone who was important in your life has died. It may give you the opportunity to tell them that their assistance will help you on your journey through grief to healing. You may choose not to wear the pin, or to wear it for a day, a week, a month, whenever and for as long as you wish. You may wear it during those times that you feel vulnerable and when the support of others would help you.

If others ask about your pin, suggest that they visit the **Black Ribbon** website at www.bereavementsupport.net. They might find help in the *GriefWords* Library by reading “Helping a Friend Through Grief” or the “Mourner’s Bill of Rights”. Both are by Dr. Alan Wolfelt of the Center for Loss and Life Transition.

