

How to Help Someone Who Is Grieving

DO'S

- Do listen more than you talk.
- Do allow for silence.
- Do call or contact them when you say you will.
- Do refer to the deceased person by name.
- Do be genuine and caring.
- Do reach out and acknowledge their loss.
- Do allow the bereaved to express their feelings without interrupting or judging.
- Do let them tell their story. They may need to tell it again and again as they come to terms with what happened and how it affects them.
- Do encourage them to be patient with themselves and to adjust their expectations.
- Do ask about the funeral or memorial service if there was one.
- Do normalize the grieving process.
- Do ask about other family members and how they are coping with the loss.
- Do ask if there is anything you can do (if you mean it).
- Do listen if the person is questioning their faith or asking “why” questions.
- Do remember them on special occasions and give a call or send a card to let them know you are thinking about them.

DON'TS

- Don't dominate the conversation.
- Don't ask one question after another.
- Don't disappear.
- Don't use clichés:
 - “I know just how you feel.”
 - “At least you can have another child.”
 - “You're young-you'll find someone else.”
 - “This will bring your family closer.”
 - “He/she's in a better place.”
- Don't avoid them because *you* are uncomfortable with their situation/pain/loss.
- Don't tell them you've already heard this—or that you're tired of hearing their story.
- Don't expect them to be over it or to be back to normal for quite awhile.
- Don't change the subject when they talk about the person who died.
- Don't tell them they “should” be feeling better by now.
- Don't criticize their family's way of coping.
- Don't give advice, particularly medical or legal, unless you are asked and have expertise.
- Don't try to answer a question to which you don't have the answer.
- Don't try to take away their pain. You can't.
- Don't suggest that their loved one received inadequate care or should have gotten care sooner; this only increases guilt or doubt.