

Supporting Someone Who Is Grieving



You do not need to have the right words or take their grief away. Often, the most helpful thing is to stay present, listen and respond to what they need.



BE PRESENT, RATHER THAN FIX IT

Listen without needing to solve the grief. It is okay to acknowledge that you do not know what to say. Quiet company can also be supportive.



FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

Some people want to talk about the person or loss; others may not. Let them choose when to talk, what to share and whether they want company or space.



KEEP CHECKING IN

Support often reduces after the first few weeks, while grief continues. A simple message, remembering an important date or checking in later can mean a great deal.



OFFER SPECIFIC PRACTICAL HELP

Instead of only saying 'let me know if you need anything', offer something concrete: a meal, school pick-up, groceries, paperwork, a walk or company at an appointment.

HELPFUL TO REMEMBER

- Grief is individual - avoid comparing.
- Allow sadness, anger, numbness and other feelings.
- Use the person's name if the grieving person does.
- Make room for ordinary conversation and moments of enjoyment too.

TRY TO AVOID

- Rushing them to 'move on' or 'stay positive'.
- Explaining why the loss happened or searching for a silver lining.
- Assuming you know exactly how they feel.
- Taking withdrawal personally - while still gently staying connected.

WHEN MORE SUPPORT MAY BE NEEDED

If you are concerned about how the person is coping, gently encourage additional support from a GP, psychologist or another trusted health professional. If you are worried about their immediate safety, seek urgent help.

You do not need to make grief better to be supportive.

Being willing to stay alongside someone can be enough.