



Ways to Support Someone who is Grieving

- Recognize that it can be hard to make decisions and that the bereaved may change his or her mind about schedules or activities. Accept the need for flexibility and last-minute changes in plans.
- Allow for the expression of emotions. Listen, listen, listen. Be present. It may be important for the person to tell the story of the relationship, the illness and the death, and to do this more than once. Emotions are varied and complex in grief. Allowing someone to voice their anger, sadness, regret, guilt, fear, and emptiness - along with their good memories of the deceased - is a way to help them.
- Resist the impulse to give advice or to try to “fix” another’s grief. Grief is a process that cannot be rushed. People often feel very alone in their grief. Companionship someone through grief is one of the greatest gifts you can give.
- Offer concrete help. Provide a meal or eat with the bereaved if he or she is now eating alone because of the death. Offer to help with thank you notes, grocery shopping, mowing, and errands. Ask what you can do to help with day-to-day life.
- Give the gift of memory by sharing some favorite memories you have of the deceased. Give some photos or a memory book. Honor the memory of the deceased by making a donation in his/her name.
- Stay in touch over time. Realize that grief takes its own course and is unique for every person. Typically birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays are times when contacting the bereaved will be appreciated. Keep in touch by phone, text, email, Facebook, or in person.
- Encourage self-care. Accompany the bereaved for a walk, out for a meal, to a movie, and invite them to social events that are comfortable for them.