



TM

**How To Support
Someone Who Is Grieving**

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It is difficult to become part of another person's grieving process unless you are invited to become involved. You should also understand that you too may feel guilty or helpless when faced with the inevitability of death, or feel there is little you can do to comfort the bereaved person. This is a natural feeling.

There are definite ways that you can help during the different stages of grief:

- Be a supporter; you are there to be leaned upon
- Help with practical things – meals, funeral details, assisting with the many confusing tasks that follow death.
- Be a good listener.
- If the grieving person doesn't feel like talking, you can still offer comfort and support in silence.
- People need to talk about their loss.
- Accept your friend's need to vent emotions and repeat stories about his/her loved one.
- Be a friend.
- Encourage involvement in life affirming activities, i.e. social, hobbies or special interest groups.
- Few people can cope alone with the pain of bereavement
- They need to talk about their loss and share their pain. This is a normal part of the grieving process.
- However, if reactions become extreme, encourage professional help, and provide the support necessary to assist the bereaved to take this step toward help.

How Can I Be The Most Helpful?

Showing a willingness to listen is probably the most important thing you can do for a friend. You can be a comforting, safe place for someone who desperately needs to talk.

- Listen with non-judgmental compassion
- Understand that your friend will need time to deal with the loss
- Avoid clichés
- Talk about the person who died
- Offer practical assistance such as shopping, cooking, driving
- Find and offer information on resources, support groups, etc.
- Be aware of difficult times, like anniversaries and holidays.ⁱ

ⁱ Canadian Mental Health Association. (1993). Grieving. Canada: National Office.



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Support, Information, Referrals