

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO IS GRIEVING

Compassionate guidance for family, friends, and caregivers

Grief can leave a person feeling overwhelmed, isolated, and unsure of how to move through each day. You do not need special training or perfect words to be supportive. What often matters most is your willingness to remain present, listen without judgment, and continue showing care after the initial days of loss have passed.

WHAT THEY MAY BE EXPERIENCING

Grief can affect emotions, thoughts, energy, sleep, concentration, and everyday behavior. Reactions may change from one moment to the next.

- Sadness, anger, guilt, numbness, fear, or relief
- Forgetfulness, exhaustion, withdrawal, or difficulty making decisions
- A need to tell their story—or a need for quiet

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Offer steady support without trying to fix the grief or decide how the person should feel.

- Listen patiently and allow silence
- Offer specific help, such as a meal, errand, or ride
- Check in regularly—even months after the loss
- Respect their choices, boundaries, and pace

HELPFUL WORDS TO SAY

Simple, honest words usually feel more comforting than advice or explanations.

- “I am so sorry. I am here with you.”
- “I would love to hear about them.”
- “You do not have to respond. I just wanted you to know I am thinking of you.”
- “What would feel most helpful today?”

WORDS OR ACTIONS TO AVOID

Even well-intended comments can hurt when they minimize the loss or place expectations on grief.

- Avoid “Be strong,” “Everything happens for a reason,” or “At least...”
- Do not compare losses or pressure them to move forward
- Do not disappear because you are unsure what to say
- Avoid giving advice unless they ask for it

A GENTLE REMINDER

You cannot take away someone’s grief, but your compassionate presence can help them feel less alone as they learn to carry it.

You do not need perfect words. Your steady, compassionate presence matters.

