

# SUPPORTING SOMEONE DURING THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

*Compassionate guidance for family, friends, and caregivers*

The first few weeks after a death can feel unreal, exhausting, and overwhelming. A grieving person may be managing arrangements, visitors, paperwork, family needs, and intense emotions while functioning with very little energy. Gentle presence and specific practical help can reduce some of the pressure. Support should be dependable, respectful, and guided by what feels helpful to them.

## BE PRESENT WITHOUT PRESSURE

The person may want to talk, sit quietly, cry, repeat stories, or have time alone. Let them guide the moment.

- Listen without correcting, explaining, or offering solutions
- Allow silence and emotion without rushing
- Do not expect calls or messages to be returned
- Reassure them that you will continue to be available

## OFFER SPECIFIC HELP

Grief can make planning and decision-making difficult. Clear offers are easier to accept than open-ended questions.

- Bring a meal and ask about dietary needs first
- Pick up groceries, prescriptions, or household supplies
- Assist with pets, childcare, transportation, or errands
- Offer help with calls, mail, or necessary paperwork

## PROTECT THEIR ENERGY

Early grief can be physically and mentally exhausting. Help reduce demands rather than creating new ones.

- Ask before visiting and keep plans flexible
- Limit questions that require decisions
- Help communicate updates if they request it
- Respect their need to rest, cancel, or change their mind

## KEEP SHOWING UP

Support often fades after services end, just as the full reality of the loss begins to settle in.

- Schedule a reminder to check in again
- Repeat practical offers during the weeks ahead
- Remember that grief may intensify after visitors leave
- Continue saying their loved one's name and inviting memories

## A GENTLE REMINDER

*You do not need to take charge or take away the pain. Consistent, thoughtful support can help make the first weeks feel less lonely and overwhelming.*

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

