

# Helping Someone Who Is Grieving

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## PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.

It may be uncomfortable, but it can be of enormous help. Don't try to fix, minimize or solve anything.

## LISTEN.

Listen some more. And then listen even more. People may need to tell their story over and over as they process their grief and integrate this loss into their life.

## AVOID CLICHÉS, RELIGIOUS PLATITUDES OR EASY ANSWERS.

While common phrases can feel helpful to say, often they are not helpful and can feel minimizing or dismissive.

## BE SENSITIVE AND PATIENT.

Grief affects our minds, bodies and spirits. It takes time to learn to live in a "new normal."

## BE WILLING TO SHOW UP.

You don't need to say anything profound or earthshaking, there is no "right" thing to say. Often, your greatest help is your quiet presence and simple deeds.

## INITIATE CONTACT AND ACTIVITIES.

It is important to respect a person's privacy and give them time alone but they may not have the energy to structure their lives after a significant loss. It's helpful to have someone else initiate, and be okay if they say "no".

## TALK ABOUT THE PERSON WHO DIED.

You won't upset them or make them sad; they already are. Share your memories of the person who died, as you listen to their stories.

## FIND HUMOR.

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## WATCH FOR DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS.

Loss can lead some people into deep depressions, alcohol or drug use, or even thoughts of ending their own lives. Be a loving and protective advocate for a grieving person.

## LEARN ABOUT GRIEF.

The more you know, the better you will be able to help. You are welcome to attend any programs or workshops with HeartLight Center that could be helpful to you. More educational resources available on our website: [heartlightcenter.org](http://heartlightcenter.org).

### GRIEF REMINDERS:

- Ditch the script, be authentic.
- Know your strengths. If you are uncomfortable with strong emotions, offer to help in another way.
- Acknowledge the loss, you won't make someone more sad by talking about their feelings.
- Sometimes its ok not to say anything and just be quiet.
- People will remember how they *feel*, more than what was *said*.
- Everyone grieves at their own pace and in their own way – that doesn't mean that anything is "wrong" with them, or with you.
- Grief is a normal human experience, and it is a process – something to tend to.
- Grief is not something that people "get over" or that needs to be "fixed". Some days will simply be easier than others.
- Grief can be challenging to some relationships, but please remember that now, more than ever, people need caring and patient support of friends and family. Your true friendship, companionship, kindness and patience can mean more than you may ever know.



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