

# What Can I Say or Do When Someone is Grieving?

**You're not alone.  
We're here to support.**

There is no timeline for grief. Knowing there are supports and resources available can give hope as you move through your grief.

There are many ways you can support a person.



## Things You Can Say

- "I'm sorry you are going through this."
- "I know I don't know how this feels, but I am here for you."
- "You can talk to me about (name) whenever you want."
- "I've been thinking about you."
- Share a positive memory you had with their loved one.



## Things to Avoid Saying

### "I understand how you feel..."

You may have experienced a similar loss. However, a person's relationship and grief will be unique to them, no matter how many similarities there may be.

### "How are you feeling?"

Instead, wait for the person to share or describe what they are feeling/experiencing that day. You can then normalize their emotion, "Of course, you are feeling ... you're grieving".

### "You shouldn't feel..."

Grievors need the opportunity to process their emotions in a way and at a pace that is right for them. There is no right or wrong way for a person to feel after the death of a loved one.

### "This is a normal stage of grief"

There are similarities in grief experiences; however, healing isn't completed in steps. It is a lifelong process, and if a person feels there are specific steps when emotions reappear without warning, they may feel they "aren't grieving right" as they have not "mastered each stage".

### "They lived a long full life. It was their time to go."

No matter the individual's age, a griever will desire more time with their loved one.

When someone you are connected to is grieving, you may worry about saying or doing the "wrong" thing.

Your worry comes from a place of caring, empathy, and feeling you may accidentally increase a person's sadness and suffering. One thing to remember, no matter what, the grieving person has not forgotten the pain their loss has caused.

By reaching out through words or being present in silence, you are providing someone in the depth of grief an opportunity to express their grief outwardly, supporting their healing process.



### **“There was a larger plan for them. God had a plan for them.”**

The griever may feel anger toward their Higher Power. Their hopes and dreams for their loved one and themselves are now shattered.

### **“They are in a better place now”**

In a griever’s mind, the best place for a loved one to be is alive and with them.

### **“They are not suffering anymore”**

This may be true; their loved one is no longer in physical pain, but their death has caused pain and suffering for the griever.



## **Ways to Support**

### **Don’t let fear stop you from reaching out.**

Often, people will be surrounded by support the first few months following a death of a loved one and may be apprehensive about asking for more support or help after time has passed.

Remember, grief is a lifelong process, and there is no time limit on providing support. Reach out when needed, when you have thoughts about the bereaved or the deceased. Make notes and reach out leading up to holidays and on special (meaningful) days for the bereaved.

### **Be with the person in their grief.**

This does not mean you have to say or do anything specific; just be present with them. Allow space and time for the person to talk about their loved one and express emotions openly. Being with them does not mean correcting or fixing things, or trying to soothe the griever.

This form of support may feel uncomfortable as you are sitting in the other person’s discomfort. However, this type of support validates emotions, offers hope, and provides a place of safety for the griever to share.

### **Avoid problem solving and soothing (a person’s expressed emotions).**

When we see others in pain, we often want to “fix it” or “take it away”. It is difficult to witness someone hurting. However, in trying to take their pain away, you may unintentionally hinder their mourning process. Mourning is a crucial part of a person’s grief healing.



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