

Is There Anything I can do to Help?

Suggestions for Supporting Those Experiencing Grief

1. Say little.
2. Avoid clichés and easy answers. A simple “I’m sorry,” or “You’re in my thoughts,” is often enough.
3. Be yourself. Show your natural concern and sorrow in your own way and in your own words.
4. Accept silence.
5. Listen. Exercise good listening skills. Accept whatever feelings are expressed. Do not change the subject. Be as understanding as you can be.
6. Do not attempt to tell the bereaved how he or she feels.
7. Do not probe for details. Take your cues from the grieving person. Some people are very private while others will talk more about their situation. Respect the person's need to share or their need to remain quiet.
8. Allow the “working through” of grief. Understand that grief often takes time.
9. Simple understanding is enough. Acknowledge the loss in the person’s life, but don’t dwell on it.
10. The simple communication of caring may be the most important and helpful thing anyone can do.
11. A written expression of care (a card, e.g.) allows the recipient the freedom to choose when to read it, and reduces the likelihood of feeling like they are in the spotlight.