

# HELP A FRIEND (with Grief and Loss)

Grief is an emotion that occurs when we lose something or someone that was very important to us. Read the tips below to learn how to help a friend that might be experiencing grief and loss.



## Reach out to them

It can be hard to know what to say to a friend who is experiencing a loss, but it would still be helpful for you to let them know that you're thinking about them. Tell them that you're sorry to hear about their loss and that you're there if they need you for anything. You can do this in person, with a phone call, or a card.

You could also do a nice gesture for your friend and their family such as bringing them dinner one night or offering to help out with other things they may need.

## Ask what they need

If you're unsure how to be helpful, it is OK to ask them. You can say, "What can I do to be helpful to you right now?" Some people would just like someone to listen to them express their feelings. Your friend might want you to do an activity to make them feel better or they could just ask for a hug. If you're really not sure what your friend needs, ask them before trying anything.

## Be a good listener

When your friend is talking about their feelings, try to listen as best as you can. Give them your full attention and show them that you care about what they have to say. Listen so that you can understand what they're going through. Don't give them advice or say that you know *exactly* how they are feeling. Let them share what the experience is like for them.

## Give them time

Everyone experiences grief differently, so it might take your friend longer to start feeling better than it would take you. Try to remain supportive throughout the whole process. Check in with them every once in a while to see how they are doing. Just because they may not talk about it, doesn't mean that everything is OK. If they are still having trouble coping for a long time, it can be helpful to suggest that they talk to a counselor or a trusted adult about their feelings.