

Bereavement

How other people can help



HELLO

Do talk to me

Even if you don't know what to say. Knowing you are sorry is a good start.



Do give me space

Give me space to be as I am, tears and all. Don't try to discourage my tears and please be willing to cry with me too.



Do keep in touch

Keep phoning especially as weeks turn into months and years. Be available.



Do give support

Give practical support. I'm not able to cope with routine at the moment so providing meals, help at home and with my children is vital.



Don't avoid me

It hurts so much when you cross the road when you see me coming rather than be willing to face me.



Don't act differently

Don't worry about feeling 'awkward' – be normal, yourself, my friend – I am still the same person.



Don't wait for me

Don't wait to be asked for help - initially there is so much help I need with just about everything.

Overload me

Don't overload me with responsibilities. For a while it will be all I can cope with to get out of bed and get dressed.



For more information on bereavement support please visit:
www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/bereavement-support

Care
for the
Family

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Do talk about the person who has died

I love to hear your memories of him/her.



Do show sensitivity

Ring first – don't just show up at the door. Although sometimes it may be just the break I need – be prepared for me to say that I can't cope with company just now.



Do offer specific help

"I'll pick the children up on Friday, take them out, give them tea and bring them back at 6."

Do talk about every day things that matter as well.

I'm still interested in you and what is going on around me, but 'small talk' can seem very trivial.



Don't ignore the loss

Or avoid asking questions about the person who has died.



Don't find positives

Don't try to find something positive about the death of the person I'm grieving for.



Don't offer help then disappear

Don't phone and just say "let me know if I can help" and leave it at that.

Don't Disrespect my beliefs

If you have a faith, don't be super-spiritual and feel you have to defend God's case.



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Do listen

It can be more important than what you say. Sometimes I need to know that I am heard.



Do remember that there is no time limit on grief

It will go on long after others expect. Please walk that road with me.



Do still invite me to events and parties

But understand if sometimes I feel unable to go or have to leave early.



Do help with planning and suggestions for the funeral

You could spend months thinking of a wedding and just a few days for a funeral. The details are very important.



Don't think that death puts a ban on laughter

Remembering and enjoying the good times we had together is important and helps me to heal.



Don't come out with platitudes, trite answers or comments

Right now all I want is to have him/her back.



Don't expect me to be over it

I will never get over it, but I will adapt and find a way to adjust to life as it is from now on.



Don't avoid the issue publicly

In schools, churches etc.



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Do remember that appearances can be deceptive

I may look as if I'm coping okay, but inside I may be falling apart.



Do invite me out to coffee or lunch

Just to change the scene for a while.



Do be ready to listen

To all the jumble of emotions I may be feeling without being judgemental.



Do encourage me

To be kind to myself and not to push myself to meet other people's expectations of how I should be.



Do be aware that there will be times when I don't feel able to talk

But this doesn't mean I won't want to talk at another time.



Don't be unprepared for the truth

Don't ask me how I am if you only want to hear "I'm okay thank you."



Don't tell me that you've been too busy to phone or get in touch

Better to say "I didn't know what to say."



Don't try and give me answers

It is unlikely that you will have any that will satisfy me – just allow me to express all my fears, questions and doubts.

Don't measure the way I react

Or the emotions I express by your own expectations or experience. My grief is unique to me.



Don't feel you have to do something

Just be there.

