

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS SUFFERING FROM LOSS

Do let your genuine concern and caring show.

Do be available...to listen or to help with whatever else seems needed at the time.

Do say you are sorry about what happened and about their pain.

Do allow them to express as much unhappiness as they are feeling at the moment and are willing to share.

Do encourage them to be patient with themselves, not to expect too much of themselves and not to impose any 'shoulds' on themselves.

Do allow them to talk about their loss as much and as often as they want to.

Do talk about the special, endearing qualities of whom they have lost.

Do reassure them that they did everything they could.



Don't let your sense of helplessness keep you from reaching out.

Do not avoid them because you are uncomfortable (being avoided by friends adds pain to an already painful experience).

Do not say you know how they feel. (Unless you've experienced exactly their loss yourself you probably don't know how they feel)

Don't say "you ought to be feeling better now" or anything else that implies a judgement about their feelings.

Don't tell them what they should feel or do.

Don't change the subject when they mention their loss.

Don't avoid mentioning their loss out of fear of reminding them of their pain (they haven't forgotten it).

Don't try to find something positive about the loss.

Don't point out that at least they have their...

Don't suggest they should be grateful for....

Don't make any comments that suggest their loss was their fault (there will be enough feelings of doubt and guilt without any help from their friends).

You might want to think twice before you say:

*They had a good innings.
They've gone to a better place.
Life is a journey.
Death comes to all of us.*

You might want to think twice before you say:

*Now is the time for closure.
I know what you are going through.
Put on a brave face.
Just take one day at a time.
At least they died doing what they love*