



Providing good grief support for close friends

1. Be present and available - be aware that feelings of abandonment are usually present; try to be sure that you don't unintentionally contribute to these feelings.
2. Take the initiative in making contact; understand that your friend might have difficulty doing so; try to help her tell you what she needs and wants.
3. Be aware that a grieving person might feel she needs to hide her feelings because she is worried that others can't deal with the emotions; encourage her not to do that with you. Let her know its ok to cry or be scared, or angry, that you won't judge.
4. Encourage your bereaved friend to ask for help; ask her what you can do; if she doesn't know, make suggestions - help with errands, go with you on a walk, drive you somewhere, just spend some quiet time together - ask what she wants.
5. Don't expect reciprocity during acute grief; try to understand that your bereaved friend might not be able to meet expectations and demands as usual.
6. Listen closely; share knowledge and advice sensitively and honestly if requested; be willing to sit in silence, squeeze your friend's hand or give them a hug.
7. Help with problem solving, in a spirit of partnership, not as an authority; be honest when you are uncertain about what will be helpful; share this with your bereaved friend in a respectful way.
8. Let your bereaved friend lean on you, especially in ways that are not so obvious.
9. Be respectful of the mourning process and patient with its progress; have faith in this person.
10. Remember the deceased and talk about this person.

11. Look for ways to promote positive feelings in the present and hope for the future; don't feel discouraged by the natural sadness that infuses these feelings.
12. Show respect for your friend's need for independence and solitude while making clear your strong commitment to being available and responsive.
13. Make it clear you are interested in staying in touch for the long haul; make it clear that you know there are certain days of the year that are especially hard and that you want to help with those.
14. Try to be aware of your own feelings about what you want from your bereaved friend that she can't give or do right now; don't try to push these feelings away; do try to find other ways to get your own needs met.