

How can you help a friend in need?

Someone you know has experienced the death of a loved one. You want to help, but you aren't sure how. What do you say? What do you do? How can you help a grieving friend?

Do Say:

“I’m sad to hear that…”

(your dad died, you are having a hard time, etc.)

“If you want to talk about what happened, I’m here to listen.”

“I can sit with you even if you don’t feel like talking.”

“Tell me about what’s going on.”

(Have genuine interest and be willing to listen.)

“I can’t imagine how hard this must be for you.”

“I’m not sure what to say, but I’m here if you need a friend.”

“A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.”

—Walter Winchell

Avoid Saying:

“I’m sorry”

(This can sound like you are apologizing instead of expressing sorrow.)

“I know how you feel.”

(Even if you have experienced a loss or a difficult time, each person’s experience is unique.)

“You shouldn’t feel that way.”

(Feelings aren’t right or wrong and can’t be simply turned off.)

“Try not to think about it.”

Clichés like “Time heals all wounds.” or “You’ll be OK.”

(These can seem like you are dismissing your friend’s feelings.)

“It’s time to put it behind you.”

