

How other people can help

How you can help me – things I wish you knew

Do	Don't
Do talk to me – even if you don't know what to say. Knowing you are sorry is a good start.	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.
Do 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.	Don't worry about feeling 'awkward' – be normal, yourself, my friend – I am still the same person.
Do talk about the person who has died. I love to hear your memories of him/her.	Don't ignore the loss, or avoid asking questions about the person who has died.
Do keep in touch; keep phoning especially as weeks turn into months and years. Be available.	Don't wait to be asked for help – initially there is so much help I need with just about everything.
Do listen – it can be more important than what you say. Sometimes I need to know that I am heard.	Don't come out with platitudes, trite answers or comments. Right now all I want is to have him/her back.
Do 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 overload me with responsibilities – for a while it will be all I can cope with to get out of bed and get dressed.
Do offer specific help – <i>"I'll pick the children up on Friday, take them out, give them tea and bring them back at 6."</i>	Don't phone and just say "let me know if I can help" and leave it at that.
Do still 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.	If you have a faith, don't be super-spiritual and feel you have to defend God's case.
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 feel you have to do something - just be there.
Do invite me out to coffee or lunch – just to change the scene for a while.	Don't tell me that you've been too busy to phone or get in touch. Better to say <i>"I didn't know what to say."</i>
Do remember that appearances can be deceptive – I may look as if I'm coping okay, but inside I may be falling apart.	Don't ask me how I am if you only want to hear <i>"I'm okay thank you."</i> Be prepared for the truth.
Do remember that there is no time limit on grief – it will go on long after others expect. Please walk that road with me.	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.
Do still invite me to events and parties, but understand if sometimes I feel unable to go or have to leave early.	Don't avoid the issue publicly – in schools, churches etc.
Do be ready to listen to all the jumble of emotions I may be feeling without being judgemental.	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.
Do encourage me to be kind to myself and not to push myself to meet other people's expectations of how I should be.	Don't measure the way I react and the emotions I express by your own expectations or experience. My grief is unique to me.

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