

## 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 the person they've lost.

**DON'T** let your own sense of helplessness keep you from reaching out.

**DON'T** avoid them because you are uncomfortable (being avoided by friends adds pain to an already painful experience.)

**DON'T** say that you "know how they feel". (Unless you've experienced their loss yourself you probably don't know how they feel.)

**DON'T** say "you ought to be feeling better by now" or anything else that implies a judgment about their feelings.

**DON'T** tell them what they should feel or do. **DON'T** change the subject when they mention their loss or their loved one.

**DON'T** avoid mentioning their loss out of fear of reminding them of their pain (You can be sure they haven't forgotten it.)

**DON'T** try to find something positive (e.g. a moral lesson, closer family ties, etc.) about the loss.

**DON'T** point out “at least they have their other ...”

**DON'T** say they “can always have another ...”

**DON'T** suggest that they “should be grateful for their so-and-so...”

**DON'T** make any comments which in any way suggest that their loss was their fault (there will be enough feelings of doubt and guilt without any help from their friends).