

## HOW YOU CAN HELP ME

Please talk about my loved one, even though they are gone. It is more comforting to cry than to pretend that they never existed. I need to talk about them, and I need to do it over and over.

Be patient with my agitation. Nothing feels secure in my world. Get comfortable with my crying. Sadness hits me in waves, and I never know when my tears may flow. Just sit with me in silence and hold my hand- you do not need to say anything at all, for words will not ease the pain.

Don't abandon me with the excuse that you don't want to upset me. You can't catch my grief. My world is painful, and when you are too afraid to call me or visit or say anything, you isolate me at a time when I most need to be cared about. If you don't know what to say, just come over, give me a hug or touch my arm, and gently say, "I'm sorry." You can even say, "I just don't know what to say, but I care, and want you to know that."

Just because I look good does not mean that I feel good. Ask me how I feel only if you really have time to find out.

I am not strong. I'm just numb. When you tell me I am strong, I feel that you don't see me.

I will not recover. This is not a cold or the flu. I'm not sick. I'm grieving and that's different. My grieving may only begin 6 months after my loved one's death. Don't think that I will be over it in a year. For I am not only grieving his death, but also the person I was when I was with him, the life that we shared, the plans we had for watching our children and grandchildren grow, the places we will never get to go together, and the hopes and dreams that will never come true. My whole world has crumbled and I will never be the same.

I will not always be grieving as intensely, but I will never forget my loved one and rather than recover, I want to incorporate their life and love into the rest of my life. They are a part of me and always will be, and sometimes I will remember them with joy and other times with a tear. Both are okay.

I don't have to accept the death. Yes, I have to understand that it has happened and it is real, but there are some things in life that are just not acceptable.

I feel even more lost and alone when you tell me what I should be doing. I feel badly enough that my loved one is dead, so please don't make it worse by telling me I'm not doing this right.

Please don't remind me that I have other children to tend to. What makes you think people are replaceable? They aren't.

I don't even understand what you mean when you say, "You've got to get on with your life." My life is going on, I've been forced to take on many new responsibilities and roles. It may not look

the way you think it should. This will take time and I will never be my old self again. So please, just love me as I am today, and know that with your love and support, the joy will slowly return to my life. But I will never forget and there will always be times that I cry.

I need to know that you care about me. I need to feel your touch, your hugs. I need you to just be with me, and I need to be with you. I need to know you believe in me and in my ability to get through my grief in my own way, and in my own time.

Please don't say, "Call me if you need anything." I'll never call you because I have no idea what I need. Trying to figure out what you could do for me takes more energy than I have. So, in advance, let me give you some ideas:

- (a) Bring food or a movie over to watch together.
- (b) Send me a card on special holidays, special dates, and/or the anniversary of my loved one's death. And, please, be sure to mention my loved one's name. You can't make me cry. The tears are here and I will love you for giving me the opportunity to shed them because someone cared enough about me to reach out on this difficult day.
- (c) Ask me more than once to join you at a movie or lunch or dinner. I may say no at first or even for a while, but please don't give up on me because somewhere down the line, I may be ready, and if you've given up then I really will be alone.
- (d) Understand how difficult it is for me to be surrounded by couples, to walk into events alone, to go home alone, to feel out of place in the same situations where I used to feel so comfortable.

Please don't judge me now - or think that I'm behaving strangely. Remember I'm grieving. I may even be in shock. I am afraid. I may feel deep rage. I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt, I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before and one that can't be imagined by anyone who has not walked in my shoes.

Don't worry if you think I'm getting better and then suddenly I seem to slip backward. Grief makes me behave this way at times. And please don't tell me you know how I feel, or that it's time for me to get on with my life. What I need now is time to grieve.

Most of all thank you for being my friend. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for caring. Thank you for helping, for understanding. Thank you for praying for me.

And remember in the days of years ahead, after your loss - when you need me as I have needed you - I will understand. And then I will come and be with you.

Taken and modified from a post on the internet: [www.youngwindow.org](http://www.youngwindow.org)