

# DO THIS NOT THAT

## HOW TO HELP A GRIEVING FRIEND

While there is no one perfect way to respond or to support someone you care about, here are some good ground rules.

### DON'T

#### **DON'T COMPARE GRIEFS**

No one else has experienced their grief.

#### **DON'T FACT CHECK OR CORRECT**

Especially in early grief, facts and timelines can be confused.

#### **DON'T MINIMIZE**

Even if you might think their grief is out of proportion to the situation.

#### **DON'T GIVE COMPLIMENTS**

When someone is in pain, they don't need to be reminded how wonderful they are.

#### **DON'T BE A CHEERLEADER.**

When things are dark, it's OK to be dark.

#### **DON'T TALK ABOUT "LATER"**

Right now, in this present moment, that future is irrelevant.

#### **DON'T EVANGELIZE**

When something has worked for you, it's tempting to prescribe it for others.

#### **DON'T START WITH SOLUTIONS**

In most cases, people need to feel heard, not be "fixed."

### DO

### INSTEAD TRY

#### **ASK QUESTIONS**

You can connect by showing curiosity about their experience.

#### **RESPECT THEIR EXPERIENCE**

It's not important who's "more" correct.

#### **REMEMBER THIS GRIEF IS THEIRS**

Grief belongs to the griever. Your opinions are irrelevant.

#### **TRUST YOUR FRIEND**

All the things you love about the person will help them through this experience.

#### **MIRROR THEIR REALITY**

When they say, "This sucks," say, "Yes, it does."

#### **STAY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT**

Or if the person is talking about the past, join them there.

#### **TRUST THEIR SELF-CARE**

They know themselves best. What works for you may not be for them.

#### **GET CONSENT**

Before you offer advice or strategies.

# SHOW UP. LISTEN. DON'T FIX.

## ABOVE ALL, SHOW YOUR LOVE.

Be willing to stand beside the gaping hole that has opened in your friend's life, without flinching or turning away. Your steadiness of presence is the absolute best thing you can give.



## REFUGE IN GRIEF

Emotionally Intelligent Grief Support  
[www.refugeingrief.com](http://www.refugeingrief.com)