

The Do's and Don'ts of Consoling a Griever

Do

1. **Be there to listen to them** talk about whatever they need to talk about or express including crying. Let them express their feelings. Don't try to wipe their tears away. It is good to let the expression of sadness come out even if it makes you feel sad or uncomfortable or even makes you cry. It is a natural part of the grieving process.
2. **If you want to send a gift other than food**, consider sending them a Good Grief Care Package. This is a very professionally done package that contains "quiet moment cards" written by bereavement specialists about the initial emotions of grief, a journal, and a CD with gentle music and a guided meditation. The package comes with or without an orchid and you can find it at this bereavement center's web site and on Amazon. (www.goodgriefcenter.com). Another good gift option is a small daily grieving meditation reader such as *Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations* by Martha Whitmore Hickman.
3. **Provide them some referrals to grief counselors** in your area or join a 13 week [Griefshare](#) grief support group offered at many churches that provides a structured group approach of understanding the grief journey through moderated group discussion, a personal workbook, and weekly videos by grief experts who have also experienced various losses. This support group is for all kinds of losses and they offer a DVD for children that can be given to the adults in the meeting for their children to view at home.
4. **Encourage parents that have lost a child to get involved with [Compassionate Friends](#)**, a national organization with local chapters to support the grieving after the death of a child.
5. **Encourage children who have lost a grandparent, parent or sibling** to get involved with [Rainbows](#), an international nonprofit organization that provides free support for children who are grieving a loss.
6. **If they are comfortable online, suggest they join a grief online support group (moderated or monitored is best) or post on message boards with other grievers**, such as [Griefnet](#), [Beyond Indigo](#), [AARP Grief and Loss Message Boards](#), [Grief Support Services](#), [WidowNet](#), [Sharegrief](#) or [Yahoo Groups](#) along with talking with a grief counselor. *Use caution and withhold sensitive personal information in online conversations. Do not post information about your surviving children if they are under the age of eighteen, such as name, place of residence, school and activities.*

6. **Suggest that grievors keep 3 x 5 index cards in their purse or nearby** to write down things that others can do for them. That way they will have the cards available for others when they are asked all the time and won't have to think of something on the spot.

Don't

1. **Don't rush them through their grief or make them feel like they should be over it within a certain period of time.** Everyone goes through grief differently and the process has no specified end point for everyone.
2. **Don't force them to go out if they don't feel like it.** Sometimes being out in the world in the initial stages after loss can "trigger" reminders of their acute loss. The journey of grief is a rollercoaster of emotions every day and some days can be much more difficult than others.
3. **Don't expect them to be the same as their old self for awhile.** Grief has both a mental and physical aspect to it that are very unpredictable. Be tolerant and supportive of your friend as they go through the mysterious journey of their own personal grief.
4. **Don't expect your friend to experience grief as you had in the past.** Everyone experiences grief very differently. Let them grieve their unique personal relationship to their loved one as they need to.
5. **Don't force them to make big decisions too quickly.** Loss is a major change and forcing any other changes too soon usually results in regret later.

Jamieson Haverkamp, author of the 2009 Silver Recipient of the [Mom's Choice Awards](#) and the 2008 [Writer's Digest Magazine's](#) award-winning book *Mom Minus Dad: The Essential Resource Guide for Busy Adults with a Newly Widowed Parent*, the only resource guide available for adults with a newly widowed parent that covers 10 major parent loss issues and lists and describes more than 500 useful resources. Visit: www.momminusdad.com for a FREE report "Top Ten Tips for Busy Adults with a Newly Widowed Parent"