How do you talk to someone who is grieving? Providing good support for your close friends is very important whether it is immediately after your friend has a loss, or on the anniversary of their loved one’s death. Below are some ways to help your friend cope with grief:

1. Be present and aware that they may have feelings of being abandoned. Try to be sure that you don’t add to these feelings by mistake.

2. Take the initiative in making contact. Your friend might have difficulty doing that. Try to help them tell you what they need and want.

3. Be aware that a grieving person might feel they need to hide their feelings because of worry that others can’t deal with them. Let them know it’s ok to cry or be scared, or be angry. You won’t judge them.

4. Encourage your grieving friend to ask for help. Spend some quiet time together – ask about what they need.

5. Don’t expect exchanges during grief. Try to understand that your friend might not be able to make plans as usual.

6. Listen closely and honestly if requested. Be willing to sit in silence, squeeze your friend’s hand or give them a hug.

7. Help with problem solving. Be honest when you are uncertain about what will be helpful. Share this with your friend in a honest way.

8. Let your bereaved friend lean on you, especially in ways that are not so clear.

9. Be respectful and patient with the mourning process. It may take some time.

10. Remember the deceased and talk about this person with your friend.

11. Look for ways to promote positive feelings. Don’t feel discouraged by the natural sadness that happens with these feelings.

12. Show respect for your friend’s need for independence and loneliness while making clear you are committed to being available and responsive.

13. Make it clear you are interested in staying in touch for a long time. That you know there are certain days of the year that are especially hard and that you want to help with those.

14. Try to be aware of your own feelings about what you want from your grieving friend. (Things they that they can’t give or do right now). Try to find other ways to get your own needs met.

Some friends may want to talk about the person who died; others don’t want to share their feelings at all. Because responses to grief vary, it’s important never to think you know what someone may or may not be experiencing. Make it clear you are there for them if, and when, they want to talk.
What could you say or do for a friend who just lost a pet?

What could you say or do for someone whose grandma passed away?

What could you say or do for someone that just found out they have cancer?

Write a prayer that shows caring and sharing for someone experiencing grief.