



## For Teens: How to Help When a Friend is Grieving

Grieving teens do not necessarily need professional help, but they do need friends. Here are eleven suggestions for how you can help when a friend is grieving.

1. **Be there.** Grieving friends may need support and presence more than advice.
2. **Initiate and anticipate.** Grieving friends often cannot tell you what they want and need – they may not know. Suggest times you'll be with them. Tell them ways you want to help.
3. **Listen.** Listening without judgment or interruption can be your most important gift.
4. **Be yourself.** Show your natural concern and sorrow in your own way and in your own words.
5. **Avoid clichés and easy answers.** "I'm sorry" or "I'm here for you" may be best.
6. **Silence is golden.** Sometimes there are no words for grief. Being with someone in silence can show your friend that you trust him or her.
7. **Accept the expression of all feelings.** Grief has many intense feelings. Getting feelings outside the body relieves pressure from within.
8. **Learn about the grief process.** Learning about grief can help you not feel so helpless. You can share what you learn with your friend.
9. **Be patient.** Allow the person to grieve at their own pace. Grief takes time and there is no known right way or timetable for it.
10. **If needed, help your friend find support and encouragement.** This may be from other friends or from counselors or other adults.
11. **Lend hope.** A grievous loss is difficult to bear. Your belief in your friend's ability to heal and grow may be just the lifeline he or she needs to get through the pain of grief.

### **Mental Health Support Contact Numbers:**

If your child or family is looking for mental health support, please call North Marin Community Services for a confidential phone assessment: (415) 892-1643, ext 239 (Se habla Español). All services are offered Monday-Friday, 10am-8pm, by appointment. Counseling services are available at NMCS' main facility (680 Wilson Avenue) and at the Novato Wellness Center (1767 Grant Avenue). Counseling Services are available in English and Spanish, provided by licensed Marriage & Family Therapists (MFT), and Post Master MFT interns and trainees. Affordable \$30 per session fee. Visit [www.northmarincs.org](http://www.northmarincs.org) for further information.

If you or a family member has an **immediate mental health crisis**, please call **Psychiatric Emergency:** (415) 499-6666. Find more programs in the Bay Area. Call 211 or (800) 273-6222 for free, confidential service in over 150 languages. Thank you.