

# Supporting a Grieving Caregiver

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To support a caregiver who is grieving, ask how you can best help, and listen for what they seem to need. Express your concern for how the illness is affecting them personally. Even if you have been a caregiver yourself, don't say you know what they are going through. Empathize, by saying, "I am so very sorry," but don't say you understand. Each situation is unique and each person responds in ways that are uniquely their own. Even though you may have been a caregiver yourself, you cannot understand this situation from this person's perspective. Be willing to listen, to learn, to look for ways in which you can support and be helpful.

When caregiving ends, it is normal to feel both bereaved and relieved, but caregivers often feel guilty about any feelings of relief they may experience. Remind them that these feelings are normal and common. Caring for a loved one can be exhausting work, but when caregiving ends, time often seems endless. Offer to help grieving caregivers fill their day with meaningful activities. Help them get back into life at a pace that is acceptable to them. Caregivers often haven't had enough sleep, nor have they eaten well, so encourage a grieving caregiver to obtain adequate rest and nutrition.