



Children's  
Bereavement +  
Center



Lift From Loss

## Connecting in the Silence of Grief

The silence that comes with losing a loved one can be overwhelming and uncomfortable for many. Not just those who experienced the loss, but family and friends attempting to provide support during grief. It is natural to want to support grievers through actions and soothing words when experiencing challenging emotions. Many changes come after a loss, and many grievers appreciate a proactive and engaging support system. Connecting with another in silence can also be a powerful means of support.

How then can we connect with those grieving a loss in silence? Here are some recommendations to keep in mind as you seek to support those suffering.

**Many grievers may not be aware of their emotions or needs after a loss.** The changes that occur can be destabilizing for many, making it challenging to sit with the feelings of loss. These changes can make it confusing when attempting to identify their own needs, especially immediately after a loved one dies. Questions such as "how are you feeling?", "what can I do for you?", and "what do you need right now?" are helpful, but at the same time, may increase negative emotions when there is no clear response. Simply stating "I am here" or "I am available to listen when you are ready" in combination with sitting in silence with them makes you available without being too invasive. This strategy can also be effective with grieving children and teens as they may have difficulty verbalizing their thoughts and feelings.

**Engaging in a silent activity together can also be a great way to connect with grievers.** There is a beauty in the stillness shared with another. Connecting with others through an activity such as drawing, cooking, reading, and other activities without verbal communication can be equally as supportive. Keeping in mind that support looks different to everyone, exploring creative ways to be in silence together can help grievers, primarily children, process their emotions through these means.

**Working towards feeling comfortable with others' grief expressions through active listening increases feelings of support in grievers.** It is natural to want to provide solutions when presented with a problem. Problem-solving has a place and time when supporting others. An essential part of that support is engaging in empathic listening without the impulse to provide a solution. First, this may mean reflecting on your limitations in listening to potentially challenging emotions from others. The desire to provide support is a beautiful thing that can also be energy draining. If you find yourself in the right mental and emotional space to listen to others' grief emotions, embrace the moments of silence and allow yourself to listen more than you speak.



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Listening more opens the conversation allowing grievers to express themselves in ways they feel comfortable.

Supporting grieving children, family and friends can be multifaceted in its approach. Embracing silent moments is one aspect of this. Silence is a great tool that allows others to process their loss and connect within themselves, even in the presence of others. Take these tips into consideration as you support others through their grief journey.

For additional resources, visit our website at [www.childbereavement.org](http://www.childbereavement.org). To register for our free virtual grief support groups, call us at (888) 988-5438 or e-mail [intake@childbereavement.org](mailto:intake@childbereavement.org).



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