

# Connecting with a Suicide Loss Survivor: What You Can Do to Help



## Listen



- Be ready, open, and willing to have tough conversations
  - + Know that it may take time - keep checking in
- Offer your full attention
  - + Focus on listening by asking open-ended questions
- Understand the loss survivor's choices and emotions from their point of view rather than your own



## Validate



- Resist the desire to fix, reframe, or advise
  - + Try paraphrasing what you have heard in your own words
- There is no timeline on grief
  - + Avoid the pull to say that "things will get better"
- Everyone experiences suicide loss differently - what is helpful to you, may not be the same for someone else



## Support



- **Ask what the loss survivor needs help with and assist with tangible, supportive tasks**
  - + Bring prepared meals
  - + Grocery shop for them
  - + Walk their dogs
- **Relieve some pressure by helping the loss survivor navigate the support resources available to them**
  - + Provide suicide loss resources
  - + Help schedule appointments
- **Keep checking in months and years after the loss**
  - + Holidays
  - + Life events (e.g., wedding, new baby, promotion)
  - + Birthday of the person who died
  - + Loss anniversaries



## Honor



- **Show the loss survivor that you remember the person who died**
  - + Reach out
  - + Share memories
  - + Proactively remember important dates
- **Suggest ways to honor the memory of the person who died**
  - + Regularly meet at their favorite place
  - + Create a memorial in their honor
  - + Participate in a memorial walk
- **Remind the loss survivor you continue to value the life of the person who has died and that they will never be forgotten**

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