

HOW TO SUPPORT WITHOUT BURNING OUT

You can care deeply without carrying it all.

- Supporting someone in grief is about:
- Being present
- Not absorbing their pain as your own

YOUR ROLE

Be a companion, not the container

- Walk beside them—you don't have to hold their grief
- Witness their pain without taking it on
- You don't need to "feel it the same way" to be supportive

EMPATHY VS. OVER-IDENTIFICATION

Healthy empathy:

- "I see your pain and I care."

Over-identification:

- Feeling responsible for their emotions
- Taking their grief home with you

Reminder:

This is theirs, not mine—but I can still care.

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Boundaries allow you to keep showing up

It's okay to:

- Take breaks after heavy conversations
- Not respond immediately every time
- Say: "I'll check in with you tomorrow"

Boundaries are not cold—they are sustainable

After supporting someone, take a moment to reset:

Take a few deep breaths

Step outside or change environments

Stretch or release tension

Name what you're feeling: "That was heavy"

Acknowledge the weight—don't carry it forward

WHAT TO SAY / WHAT NOT TO SAY

WHAT TO SAY

Simple, honest, present:

I'm so sorry.
I'm here with you.
I don't have the right words, but I care.
This must be really hard.
Tell me about them.
I'm thinking about you.

WHAT NOT TO SAY

Avoid minimizing or fixing:
Everything happens for a reason
They're in a better place
At least... (anything)
You should be feeling better by now
Stay strong
I know exactly how you feel

WHAT TO DO

Actions matter just as much as words:
Show up (and follow up)
Offer specific help
"I'll bring dinner Thursday"
"Can I run errands for you?"
Sit in silence if needed
Remember anniversaries & important dates
Continue support after the initial loss

WHAT TO AVOID DOING

Disappearing after the first few weeks
Waiting for them to ask for help
Changing the subject to avoid discomfort
Trying to fix or solve their grief

REMEMBER

Grief doesn't need fixing—it needs witnessing
Presence > perfection
It's okay to not have the right words
Showing up imperfectly is better than not showing up at all