

# 3 Ways to Support a Grieving Partner



By Linda Guma

Coping with the loss of a loved one is undoubtedly very painful. It may cause us to simultaneously experience rage, sadness, despair, and disbelief. This emotional suffering is known as grief, and it's our natural response to loss. This week in the United States, we celebrate Patriot's Day, which is dedicated to the victims who were killed during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It's a day marked with loss for many in our country, and it's important for us to remember those who perished on that day, especially this year, since it is the tenth anniversary of that tragic event.

But with remembrance comes emotional turmoil. Experiencing loss can definitely be tough to deal with personally, but when you're in a relationship, you also have to be supportive if this happens to your partner. If your mate loses a loved one, you have to know how to be there for him or her. You may feel like there's nothing you can do to help relieve your partner of their misery, but there are ways you can be supportive. Here are three immediate ways to help them:

**1. Be present:**Avoidance is not going to expedite the grieving process. It'll only feel like a second loss for your mourning partner if you pull away. It may be frightening to see your loved one suffering, but you can't pretend it's not happening. Grieving is necessary for healing the pain and moving forward. Acknowledge the devastation of the bereaved, and let your significant other know that you are there for them by expressing your sorrow and support. Choose your expressions carefully. For example, use phrases like, "I'm so sorry," or "I care." Don't say things like, "I know how you feel," or "It's not that bad," which won't be helpful and will only reflect a lack of understanding.

**2. Be patient:**There's no such thing as a set timeline for grief. Some people may cry every day for five years, while others may do all their mourning at once. While you want to give your partner hope, don't tell him or her that the sense of loss will be over soon. Be prepared to stand by for as long as it will take. Be patient and encourage your partner to be patient.

**3. Be encouraging:**While it's necessary to go through the mourning process in order to heal emotional wounds, it's also important not to let it take over your lives. Spend time with your partner outdoors and get some exercise. Ask them to join you for a jog in the park or for a game of tennis. It may not be a solution to the problem, but the endorphins produced by physical activity will help relieve some tension and frustration.

**How can you help your partner through the mourning process?  
Share your ideas below.**