

Helping A Senior Cope With The Loss Of A Loved One



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Losing a spouse or significant other is one of the most difficult times a person can go through, and it's a hard situation to know how to navigate, for both the survivor and friends or family. There are so many things to think about and consider, including making final arrangements and possibly downsizing a home that has suddenly become too expensive. The stress and grief can lead to sadness, depression, and even suicide.

That's why it's important to help a senior who has just lost a loved one get through this trying time in the healthiest way possible. Being [mindful](#) of their feelings while finding the best ways to help them cope with their feelings is the first step; you can also help sort out the logistics of creating a new life without their loved one.

Here are some of the best ways to help a senior who is [grieving](#).

Cut down stress

When someone is going through a hard time, we often say, "Let me know if there's anything I can do for you." Yet it's hard for a person who is grieving for their partner to even know where to begin, let alone how to ask for help getting through it. Instead of leaving an open invitation, offer specific ways to help that will reduce stress and anxiety as much as possible. You might ask if you can come over and do the dishes, mow the lawn, or do the grocery shopping. These may

seem like small tasks, but anything you can do for your loved one that reduces the load on their shoulders will be of great help in cutting stress.

Find support

It can be difficult to know when to step in and offer help, especially if you're wary of making things harder for your loved one, but it can't hurt to do some research and find some support groups or grief counselors in the area. Your loved one may not be ready yet to attend a session in one of these groups, but knowing they have the option is a huge step and will help them move forward when they're ready.

Depression can set in at anytime after such a big loss, and many people don't even realize that it's causing them pain until they're fully immersed in it. Symptoms include sleeping too much or too little, changes in appetite, withdrawing from friends and family, mood swings, and substance abuse, but there are many facets to this mood disorder that may require professional help. If you suspect your loved one is abusing a substance due to depression, read on [here](#) to help them find a way back.

Encourage them not to make big changes

For some seniors, it's not an option; losing a loved one might mean [downsizing](#) in a timely manner due to an inability to afford the current living situation, or perhaps living inside all those memories is too much to bear. If that's the case, it's important to do all you can to help your loved one get through this difficult transition. However, if it's not necessary right away, encourage them to wait a little while before making a decision. A big change on top of a big change can lead to stress and depression, as it can be hard for the individual to cope with.

Get them moving

[Daily exercise](#) and a good diet are key when a person experiences a loss, as they can help improve mood and keep us healthy. Encourage your loved one to get moving by offering to come over and go for walks; if they have a pet, use this as motivation. If not, suggest they look into getting a small dog or cat. Animals can be extremely beneficial after the loss of a loved one as they provide comfort, companionship, and unconditional love.

Remember that this time is difficult for everyone involved, so take into account the fact that your loved one may have other friends and family who want to help. Open a conversation about the best ways to keep things running smoothly.