



URGENT MEDIA RELEASE

HOW TO SUPPORT THE BEREAVED WHILE YOU ARE IN LOCKDOWN

As Covid-19 continues to grip our country and the world and many of us remain in Lockdown, people across the globe are having to cope with losing a loved one, and instead of having family and friends surround and support them in person, they are faced with isolation and loneliness.

Our charity, The Mariposa Trust and myself are being overwhelmed with support requests as people are crying out for help. We are also having many ask us, how they can support family and friends through grief at this time, so I wanted to share some tips.

I will start by saying if you feel scared to offer a hand to the heartbroken that is normal, please don't beat yourself up about it. I am a grief specialist, and at times I am even at a loss to know what to say, but the key is, even if you have no words, you show up! Now showing up right now looks different to normal, there isn't an option to visit people, or to even accompany them on a walk, so how can we offer excellent support from the confines of our homes? Here's how:

- 1, Pick up the phone and speak to the bereaved, or even better use a platform like FaceTime where you can see each other. When you are grieving, you need family and friends to rally around you, to listen to heart cries and to make you feel heard and understood. Don't just call once, call at least once a day, perhaps twice – your voice may be the difference between someone feeling hopeful and hopeless.
2. Don't offer platitudes – You can't take away their pain, so don't try. Just provide empathy and compassion – In 'The Baby Loss Guide' and 'Beyond Goodbye', I included a whole chapter of advice on what to say, and just as importantly what not to say, so read those if in doubt.
3. Send a card or letter. Anything that can show support and love is a winner at this time.
- 4, Send them daily texts of support, so they know you are often thinking of them.
5. Send a support book or a practical gift. It is so hard to access practical or emotional support right now, so if you can send a book that offers compassion or a practical gift like a prepared meal, that will mean so much.
6. Remember that even bereaved people want to embrace joy. Humour can be a lifeline to people when their world is filled with sadness. So send them things that can make them smile, with a message saying when you feel able to smile, here is a gem.
7. Do research for them, so they don't need to. Offer them details of charities or support lines just in case they want support from a third party. The last thing the bereaved want to do is to have to search the internet for help, so it can be so helpful to be given a list.

8. Offer support to the whole family, as it is very rare that a loss touches only one person. People often focus their support on one individual, and it's vital to offer empathy and compassion to everyone who may be hurting.

9. Offer practical assistance from afar. Can you make telephone calls or arrangements on their behalf? Ask if you can do anything for them, however large or small – any burden you can take off their shoulders could be such a blessing.

10. If the family have children, think about putting together an activity pack for them to help keep them amused, or send them board games or DVDs.

The bottom line is be kind, thoughtful, compassionate and consider what you would want in that situation. I promise you your relationship will be even stronger on the other side of this if you catch their tears from afar.

Zoe Clark-Coates BChA is a best-selling author and expert on grief and loss, is the founder and CEO of the Mariposa Trust, a TV Host, broadcaster, campaigner, international speaker and Government Advisor, currently chairing the governments 'National Pregnancy Loss Review.'

More information on the Mariposa Trust can be found at www.sayinggoodbye.org, and all press enquiries should be sent to press@sayinggoodbye.org.