



the how-to guide for

SUPPORTING THOSE SUFFERING



THERE IS NO ONE PERFECT WAY

Trust them. Walk alongside them. They know what will help them through the experience, what works best for them, what they need in that moment. It is not the time for leading or directing their struggle.

VALIDATION IS KEY

It says I see you, I hear you, I care about you. People tend to skip over the true reality of the situation, which is, this hurts for that person – no matter where it stands on someone's hierarchy of suffering.

When they say "this is painful," say "yes, it is."



DISCOVER THE GIFT OF SILENCE

There's no need to fill every painful moment with words. In fact. . .

"YOU ARE NOT ALONE"

With their consent, offer some specific and practical support or help that shows they are not alone and kind find help. Become familiar with resources you can recommend, such as the Wilmington College 24-hour Peer Support Line at 937-356-9778

Perhaps being with is far more significant than words or actions. Above all, love.



**BEING HELPFUL
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TAKING AWAY OR
FIXING THE PAIN**

Keep this in mind:

A person's pain is valid. People don't need to be fixed, they need to be supported. Resist the natural tendency to make things right and to offer solutions. When things are not OK, it's okay to not be OK.

**SHOWING KINDNESS
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IMPOSING
ORDER AND LOGIC**

Keep this in mind:

Try as they might, people make pain worse when they try to gloss it over, make it go away, give easy answers, or pretty it up with positivity. If your sentence includes "if only" or "at least" you probably are offering the wrong support.



WHEN PEOPLE ARE DEEPLY HEARD, THEY HEAL

Giving your friend a safe, confidential place to tell their story of suffering aloud gives them the space to question it, to examine it, to protest it. And, finally, to tend to it.

EMBRACE THE PAIN PARADOX

The Pain Paradox is that people are to stay present in their pain, to avoid less, and to experience more. Rather than erase or escape or hide or deny pain and suffering, we might tend to it as though it is healthy and normal, as though it is in need of compassionate care.

Because it is.

Call or Text the confidential SAFE Peer Support Line at 937.356.9778 for resources and to be connected to support