

Guidance from Child Bereavement UK on supporting someone you know after their baby has died

When someone you know is bereaved of a baby, your instinct is to reach out to them. However, the fear of saying or doing the wrong thing may prevent you from being supportive which can increase feelings of isolation experienced by many grieving families.

This Baby Loss Awareness Week, Child Bereavement UK shares ways you can be supportive to someone you know who is experiencing the devastation of baby loss.

Acknowledge their loss: The single most important thing you can do to help someone who has been bereaved of a baby is to acknowledge what has happened. You might say: 'I am so sorry to hear about your baby', or even: 'I'm so sorry. I just don't know what to say'. If you don't see the family in person, consider writing a card or sending a message; using their baby's name if you know it can be a thoughtful thing to do.

Listen: A very special thing to do for a friend bereaved of a baby is to take time to listen. Try not to say, 'I know how you feel' as everyone's experience is unique, even if you have been through something similar. Simply acknowledge their feelings and listen and be led by them if they're not yet ready to talk about their baby.

Offer practical support: Consider offering practical help like preparing a meal or helping care for other children in the family. It can be difficult to ask for support when you're overwhelmed by grief so it helps to be specific with your offer if you can. You might say: 'I'm going to the supermarket this afternoon – can I pick anything up for you?'

Keep in touch: There's often a lot of support around when someone is first bereaved, but this can reduce as time passes. Try to keep in touch on a regular basis, even if it's just to send a text or to suggest you meet for coffee.

Look after yourself: Spending time with someone who is grieving often puts us in touch with our own losses. It's important that you get support so that you are able, in turn, to help your friend, relative or colleague.

For more support, guidance and information on supporting a bereaved friend or colleague, contact Child Bereavement UK's Helpline on 0800 02 888 40 or visit www.childbereavementuk.org

