



Tips for supporting family, friends and colleagues

After a major event many people in our community need care, support and assistance from others. If someone you know has been involved it can be difficult at times to know how to best support them during this time.

The following tips will assist you to provide your support in a respectful and valuable way:

- Be there for them even if you don't know what to say. Simply spending time with the person may be the most helpful thing you can do.
- Allow people to cry, even if you are embarrassed by such displays of emotion.
- Listen carefully if they decide to talk and try not to direct the conversation yourself.
- Offer your assistance and a listening ear, even if they have not asked for help.
- Make sure they will not spend the first night (or few nights) after the event in an empty house or alone.
- Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, caring for the family, minding children and cooking.
- Reassure them that they are safe if this is an issue.
- Give them some private time if you are sure they are coping.
- Don't take their anger or other feelings and emotions personally.
- Try to avoid clichés like “you're lucky it wasn't worse” or “I know how you feel” in an effort to console. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred, and you want to understand and assist them.
- Don't make assumptions about how they should behave.
- Sometimes touch can be very reassuring, but always offer beforehand (verbally or by gesture). Ask them if they need a hug.