

ADHD & Death

Support Person Guide

Having support after a loss makes a huge difference. Remember there isn't a right or wrong way to support someone. In a lot of ways, emotional support is like hunger, if you bring their favorite meal, and they are full, it won't taste as good. Oftentimes, challenging times and grief are like a constant hunger, so anything you offer will be helpful. Just remember to keep showing up in small ways and making it easy for the person to say no or not even respond.

“The reality of grief is far different from what others see from the outside. There is pain in this world that you can't be cheered out of. You don't need solutions. You don't need to move on from your grief. You need someone to see your grief, to acknowledge it. You need someone to hold your hands while you stand there in blinking horror, staring at the hole that was your life. Some things cannot be fixed. They can only be carried.”

— Megan Devine

**“Friendship improves happiness,
and abates misery,
by doubling our joys,
and dividing our grief.”**

-Marcus Cicero

Coordinating Immediate Support

Identify a Point Person.	Point person will create a group email, group texts and websites for anyone who wants to help.
Offload Daily Tasks	<p>Using a platform streamlines support and allows you to do other things.</p> <p>https://www.supportnow.org/ - This site allows a friend or family member to coordinate a wide range of supports.</p> <p>https://www.caringbridge.org/ -Co-Author available and integrates mealtrain, GoFundme & grocery delivery.</p>
Types of Support Needed	<p>Childcare: Keeping things consistent for kids is important. Having a sign-up for childcare and kid transport to/from school & activities can be helpful.</p> <p>Cleaners/Organizers: Options for people to pick up, do dishes or other cleaning tasks. Check if this is ok to let people in the house weekly.</p> <p>Make it easy: Drop off paper plates, disposable cutlery & Kleenex. Bring a whiteboard to mark what items are in the fridge for them to eat. Cutting down on dishes makes a difference.</p> <p>Communication: Ask if you should inform friends, family, work of the death. This task often feels overwhelming and leaves a person isolated. You can alert any faith and non-faith communities they belong to.</p>
Legal/Executor	<p>Identify if your ADHD loved one will be in charge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closing out their loved one's estate or are next of kin. ● Next of kin responsibilities to start on death certificate. <p>Use a program to streamline checklist and action items if they are in charge of the estate (or send them to the family member that is).</p> <p>Lantern-Allows for collaborators and offers a grief guide.</p> <p>Cake & Empathy offer free checklists and guides.</p>
RSD Tips	<p>Point person reduces the amount of “no” an ADHD might hear & reduces the chance of feeling rejected or “too much.”</p> <p>If you say no directly to the ADHDer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind them that you are glad they asked and hope they do again. ● Offer to find someone else to do the task. ● Remind them they are important to you.

Executive Function Support

Gentle Reminders	<p>Grief is disorienting and oftentimes it is hard to prioritize tasks. Gentle reminders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● eat, shower, and take space when needed. ● take things off their plate like work and other obligations. ● offer help with financial decisions (especially if they have to take time off unpaid). ● use the support that is offered.
Prioritizing & Breaking Down Tasks	<p>Prioritizing what tasks are most important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Magic ToDo - GoblinTools: AI tool to break tasks down. ● Print out action items and put it where an ADHD will see it or email it. ● Use checklists and timelines mentioned above if they are responsible for the legal aspects of the death. ● Send text reminders on any important action items they have to do. ● Offer to do what you can (oftentimes, the next of kin has to be the contact person for death). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can offer to call and hand the phone to the person when needed to notify an agency/company about the death.
Ongoing Support	<p>Check in on what is needed monthly to coordinate support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Household supplies like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Toothpaste, Kleenex, shampoo, toilet paper, paper towels <p>Normally there is an outpouring of support in the beginning and then drops off. Grief and tasks are ongoing that first year and continuous support is needed.</p>
Support for legal/financial costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Dropbox or a shared photo album to put receipts for the costs if there are financials to keep track of. ● Create a box to put receipts in a place close to the entranceway. ● Shared calendar of dates to help remind the person or coordinate someone to go with them for emotional support.
Planning the Memorial	<p>Lantern has checklists to help plan the memorial/funeral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer support to take on tasks or body double while they are planning. ● Look at the checklists to stay on top of tasks with deadlines. ● Remind them that memorial planning is extremely hard.
Body Doubling	<p>Just being physically present can help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completing tasks. ○ Daily tasks like eating, physical movement, brushing teeth. ○ Making phone calls about the death.

Emotional Support

Check-ins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get specific: Use this guide to see helpful phrases and how to support someone who is grieving. ● Remind them they do not have to respond. ● Let them know you are thinking of them. ● Write down any important dates and check in on them. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Birthdays, death and other anniversaries, holidays, Mother's/Father's Day ○ Put dates in your calendar with a yearly reminder.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Validating their experience (do not fix or change). ● Reminding them they can feel all the feelings, including anger or relief. ● Identifying grief groups in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Griefshare to help you look for places. ○ Look for therapists that specialize in grief & offer groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check insurance benefits and availability of therapists. ● Offer to go with them to a support group. ● Ask if they are asking for help or just want to express their thoughts before offering solutions. ● Normalizing complicated relationships and complicated grief when challenges come up. No one's journey is the same and family members often cope differently. ● Make sure you have enough support too. Caring for the caregivers is important and can take a toll on your mental health.
ADHD & Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Often feel emotions intensely, including grief. ● Out of sight, out of mind. They might feel guilty if/when they "forget." ● Can go into supporting everyone else, using their skill of being good in a crisis.

Know ADHD Risks

Risky behaviors	ADHDers are more prone to binge eating, abusing substances, binge drinking, and risky behaviors when under stress. If they have had these coping mechanisms in the past or present, ask them specifically about those behaviors without judgment.
Support:	<p>Helpful tools when talking about risky or self-harming behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let them know that they are important to you, and you care about them. ● Compassionately checking in on coping, acknowledging that there is no judgment in coping strategies. ● Let them know if you are concerned. ● Offer support listed in the support section above.

Self-Care Reminders

(Caretaking and grief will take more out of you than you will expect.)

Allow others to take care of you although it might feel unnatural or uncomfortable.

Keep up with your therapy appointments, doctor visits, medication, eating, and exercising.

Get outside for “green time” to allow your mind to rest.

Drink water. Crying is dehydrating.

Identify and remind yourself of what you value most in your life. Then allow yourself time to live these and let go of things that add less value.

Remind yourself that being “productive” can come at a cost to your mental and physical health. Our bodies and brains can oscillate from constant action to inaction.

A helpful metaphor for many is to think of the grief of doing tasks from a hospital bed. While physically we can move, mentally and emotionally we are unable to.

[How grief and loss affect your brain, and why it takes time to adapt : Shots - Health News : NPR](#)

Journal. Megan Devine’s *How to Carry What Can’t be Fixed: A Journal for Grief* has prompts.