



Practical Assistance Ideas for Colleagues



When someone we know has suffered the loss of a loved one, we instinctively want to reach out and help in any way that we can. When we are reaching out to offer support, there are a few things to keep in mind about what it's like in the grief process, particularly early on. In the midst of grief, most individuals find it very difficult to make decisions or ask for any help. This is why the statement, *"let me know if there is anything I can do,"* generally goes unanswered. Grieving people often don't know what to ask for or how to ask for it. Decision making is highly problematic during the early days of bereavement. It is better to provide concrete offers of help such as, *"I'm going to Costco, are you short of anything I can grab for you?"* Or, *"I'm free this afternoon, would you like me to come over and watch the kids so you can have some time for yourself?"* It is also helpful to offer specific choices, so the person doesn't feel overwhelmed, *"I'm picking up a restaurant gift card, do you prefer restaurant A or B?"*

There are also many ways to provide support for someone in bereavement. If you and your colleagues are looking for ways to support a co-worker who has lost a loved one, here are some practical ideas to draw from. When reviewing this list of support options, you will first want to consider the relationship you have with your colleague, and second, do a bit of homework to find out the actual needs of the individual as each person's situation is unique.

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| 1 | Help with funeral planning – this may include help organizing, providing food, rides, music, set up, clean up, lodging for family coming in, etc. | 12 | Childcare |
| 2 | Fundraising to defray funeral costs for those in financial difficulty | 13 | Regular check-ins |
| 3 | Donations to a charity on behalf of lost loved ones | 14 | Providing rides/transportation |
| 4 | Providing food or gift cards for restaurants and groceries | 15 | Gas vouchers |
| 5 | Providing lunch items easy for parents to pack for their school aged children | 16 | Flowers or shrubs for the garden |
| 6 | Help with car maintenance | 17 | Memorial gifts |
| 7 | Help with yard maintenance | 18 | Sending pictures and videos you have of their loved one |
| 8 | Running errands | 19 | Help doing banking/bill paying |
| 9 | Providing house cleaning services, or gift cards for same | 20 | Household maintenance |
| 10 | Clearing snow from driveway | 21 | Information on grief support groups or counselling services |
| 11 | Dog walking | 22 | Financial planning assistance |