

Ways To Help Someone Going Through A Divorce/ Break Up

Things you Should & Should Not Say

I'm so sorry to hear that - 'I'm sorry' seems an inadequate way to express empathy, but it's a good place to start.

"I'm here to help you take the steps to get through this." Divorces are not easy and can feel very lonely. Broken hearts, trust, hurt feelings, etc. need time to heal. Let the person you care about know that each and every step – big or small – you are by their side. That will make them feel better.

Whatever you're feeling is perfectly okay* Angry? Devastated? Relieved? Excited for the future? There's not going to be one emotion all of the time, but divorce has a unusual and complicated mix of 'finally

I've been there. (But only if you have been!)

Have you got people you can talk to? If you ever need a listening ear. But it's too painful to talk about in depth with most people. In fact, talking about it superficially is really hard work. There's probably only a few people we can bear to speak to currently. So chances are they don't want to talk about it

I can recommend a counsellor if you'd like one, although I know it's not for everyone. It doesn't necessarily work for everyone. But a recommendation is definitely handy.

How's work? It's so nice to talk about something different! I didn't find work to be a comfort that took my mind of things; my colleagues, yes, the job, no. Others finds work to be a solace and a refuge from the turmoil. Either way, thank you for suggesting a different topic of conversation

Hug him/her. People going through a divorce need to need to be touched physically. Yes, men too. Think about how powerful a hug really is. You are embracing someone who really, really needs love.

Would you like a hug? I'm talking about a hug when you walk in the door, or in the evening, or just when you're feeling down, which is now a lot of the time. Offer your friend or colleague a hug. The best hugs were (and still are) the people who hug you for ages, and only let you go once you want to. Have you seen the statement that a 20 second hug releases endorphins? Give it a go – heaven knows your friend could probably use some happy hormones too.

Would you like to go... to the cinema? For a walk? Out to dinner? Going alone to these places can feel very strange, and even though one day it might feel fine to go it alone, at the moment it doesn't.

Here, have some food. This could have been Number 1. Everyone has to eat, even when they don't want to. Divorce can be incredibly lonely, and it's physically exhausting. Cooking a meal for one holds no appeal. Drop off some healthy (and unhealthy) food that they can't be bothered to make themselves and keep them functioning until the day they invite you for dinner instead.

Come round and eat some food. (Feel free to eat then leave, or sit on our sofa and cry.) Eating at a social activity, therefore eating alone would often be more about an obligation to survive than an

enjoyable experience. Sharing a meal with friends who don't mind you crying over the spaghetti – those are good friends.

Invite him/her to have coffee or a beer or go for a walk or a jog. Newly separated people are lonely people. They are sort of lost, in a daze, perhaps. They need interaction with friends. Even a half hour a day is helpful

You are attractive. Compliment your friend and boost their self esteem that, truth be told, is probably pretty low.

I love you. Chances are this hasn't been heard in a while either. It warms the heart.

God loves you. God doesn't want to condemn you – He's all about redemption and forgiveness. So don't judge actions that may have gone on, just accept the people involved, just as He has accepted us.

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I'm praying for you. Chances are, they haven't stopped praying and if they weren't praying before, they may well be now. Challenging times tend to be the moments we either throw ourselves on the mercy and magnificence of God, or shy away and retreat into thinking we can do it ourselves

Divorce must be so hard. It is. Thank you for acknowledging that and recognizing how hard it is. It's exhausting.

Take care of you right now. Some people going through a divorce worry about what friends, family and especially their kids if there are children involved are feeling. It is completely okay and appropriate for a person going through a divorce to take some "me" time. Sometimes people need that encouragement to know that it's ok to do so.

I'm always up at... 4am with my crying baby. 1am because I don't go to bed till the early hours. The middle of the night can be horrible. Everyone's asleep and the **loneliness** of the situation is magnified in hours of darkness, I'm not sure why. So if you're regularly awake at an unusual hour, tell your friend.

I know you are hurting and heartbroken right now. Do not try to fix this person or tell them it's going to be ok. One of the best things we can do as human beings is acknowledge someone else's feelings. The person you care about just needs to hear that you get it, you see it and you appreciate what they are going through.

It won't always be like this. Sometimes it takes other people to help you see the truth in a dark situation.

Don't try to give advice. To tell a divorced person what they should be doing/ thinking is absolutely ridiculous. Examples: Don't date right now. You need to be by yourself. You need time to heal. If I were divorced, I would never, ever get married again. Stuff like that.

Write him/her a letter of encouragement. Even if you aren't good with words on paper, a card or a letter is extremely meaningful to someone going through a divorce. If you can't think of what to say, just say, "I'm thinking of you. Please reach out if you ever want to talk or go for a walk or for a drink or

dinner.” Also, you can steal an inspirational poem and speech from one of your heroes—maybe someone famous and quote them.

Assure him/her that confiding in you is OK. I think it is very comforting when someone assures me he/she isn’t going to run all over town and tell everyone what I divulge to them.

Do not exclude him/her from couple’s nights. How can you tell the difference between true friends and acquaintances? True friends still invite you out on couple’s nights. They could care less if you are solo or there with a platonic friend or even if you bring a girlfriend.

Don’t say anything stupid. Other stupid things people say: “It wasn’t meant to be.” “He’s an asshole.” “Kids are resilient.” If you don’t know what to say, don’t say anything. People appreciate silence, i.e. peace.

Don’t badmouth his/her ex. Trust me, they will do all the badmouthing. You just sit there and listen. Offer support like, “That must be so frustrating.” Or “I’m so sorry you had to deal with that. It must have been very difficult.”

Offer to babysit his/her kids if they need “me” time. That is a huge gift to a newly separated person, who might just want to sit in a room and watch American Ninja Warriors, or sleep or go for a much needed jog. Keep offering and tell them not to feel guilty for one second for leaving their kids for an hour!

Be honest if you must. It isn’t easy to do, but if you see some bad behavior, or the person is doing something that you strongly feel is a bad idea, inappropriate, unethical, etc. speak up. That’s what friends do. I do want to bring up something else. If your loved one becomes distant or cold or says something mean to you, let it slide and don’t take it personally. People going through a divorce are not themselves. Forgive and forget, and let them know you are here for him or her.

Remember that a breakup is not the same as a divorce. "Don't compare a breakup to a friend's divorce" "Don't compare a breakup to a friend's divorce. People who date for a long time and then break up can go through very intense heartbreak and they're trying to relate, but it just isn't comparable to divorce where you have to wade through all the legalities of leaving your spouse.

Respect their privacy. Don't press, don't ask them to delve into reasons. Take your cues from the person." "*Never assume you know why someone is getting a divorce*, even if they're a close friend. Some have dark secrets they keep hidden behind closed doors. Don't pry and don't judge. Just be supportive and offer to listen. If they want to, they'll tell you what brought them to that decision." —

Make sure they know you aren't judging them. "There may be tears; don't embarrass him — he's probably embarrassed enough already."

Help them establish a new normal

Know that they might not be interested in dating for a while. Everyone moves at their own pace, and some people aren't ready to move on yet.

Don't tear their ex down in your effort to build them up. Hold off on the very unhelpful 'he/she was no good' line of advice.

Let them talk. "EVERY person who undergoes a divorce goes through a patch where he or she just CANNOT shut up about it. This will be your friend at their most miserable and unattractive. Yes, he's know he's boring you and that it's unseemly to display the dirty laundry. But he/she won't be able to stop themselves.

Let them rant. Don't cut her off, don't interrupt. This may take all evening (or probably several evenings). It's your friend's storytelling time, not yours. This isn't fun, but your friend is probably going to be fun-impaired for a little while anyway. Things will improve after they start getting laid again.

Don't talk about them behind their back. "Just don't gossip about it with other friends and people in the community, even if they ask, 'What's going on with ____ and ____?' because the version of 'the story' you as a close friend might have gotten may be different from the one they're going to tell, like, someone from your yoga class or church.

Avoid placing blame. Reminded them that it was not 100 percent anyone's fault. They both played a part. Don't try to take on all the blame for the end of that marriage and it takes me a long time to realize that both are at fault.