

Helping A Friend

When someone we care about is hurting it is often difficult to know what to do. At the Center for Counseling, we are often contacted by students struggling with how to help a friend. Keeping in mind that every situation is unique, here are some general ideas that are applicable in any situation.

Pray. This may seem obvious, but often when we are in the middle of everyday situations, we forget that we have a heavenly Father who is intimately interested in all of us. Pray for your friend. Pray with your friend if they ask you to.

Listen. Most of the time when someone is hurting what they really need is someone who will actively listen and try to understand. Sometimes just listening provides your friend with an opportunity to organize their confusing thoughts and emotions which moves them closer to discovering their own answers.

Be Compassionate. Friends who are hurting need compassion not admonishment. People who were damaged were drawn to Jesus not because He chastised them but because He communicated grace and compassion.

Learn. Knowledge and information are powerful tools when trying to help a friend. Try to understand a little more of what your friend is dealing with.

Be Wise. Don't presume that you know exactly what your friend is struggling with. Situations are often similar and there is value for people who are hurting to know that they aren't alone and that people have gotten through similar pain, but in the midst of hurting a friend needs to know that you are with them in their pain, not reflecting on the injuries of your past.

Ask For Help. It never hurts to ask questions when trying to help a friend. The Center for Counseling is available to talk with you and help you sort out what steps to take next. Ask your friend what they need from you. Often it might be something quite simple that you would not have thought of.

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