

A Sibling or Friend

Meals, adventures, inside jokes, holiday traditions, a history together, plans for the future—all things you share with the people you spend your time with, be they siblings or friends. And when death parts you from the people you are close to, it can leave an enormous hole in your life and heart.



When a close friend or sibling dies, the rhythm and texture of one's life may change. The person who was in the next room, or perhaps just a phone call away, is no longer there. The disruption and grief that follow such a death are often underestimated by others. Bereaved siblings and friends may feel particularly lonely and unsupported as they grieve the loss of someone who was such a big part of their life.

If you are grieving the death of a sibling or good friend, we hope the following will be supportive. And if you are supporting a child who is grieving, please see our page on supporting a grieving child.

Your Loss Matters

Many siblings and friends share that they feel forgotten, as their grief may not always be acknowledged or tended to while a family responds to such a profound loss. But your grief matters, and your relationship with this person matters. It is understandable if you might not want to share your pain with your parents and others who are also deeply grieving. Even so, your grief deserves attention. If you have a person in your life with whom you can be honest, consider opening up to them.

Taking Care of Yourself

After a significant loss such as the death of a good friend or sibling, your grief might affect you emotionally, physically, cognitively, and more. You might struggle to keep up at work or in school. You might feel lost, exhausted, and emotionally all over the place. This is all normal. Seek out the support you need, whether that be practical help from those around you, professional support to process your loss, or support from others who are grieving similar losses. Visit Evermore's Grief Support Directory to discover support groups and communities of bereaved siblings and friends.

Additionally, when someone we are close to dies, we often bump into the spaces where they should normally be—at the family dinner table, a holiday celebration, or a regular Saturday activity. Take extra care to be gentle with yourself in these situations.

How Things May Change

When a sibling or close friend dies, you might feel a new kind of responsibility in your family or friend circle that adds to the weight of what you are carrying. Sometimes this can come with a great deal of pressure. A death can bring significant changes to a surviving sibling's role in the family—a shift toward caregiving for aging parents or young children, or even changes in expectations and possibilities for the future. These changes can add to the layers of loss and disruption, and call for additional processing and support.

Be on the Lookout for Warning Signs

For bereaved siblings and friends, grief can show up in many ways, including social, academic, or professional struggles, depression, and risk-taking behaviors. It's natural to struggle after a significant loss, but it's important to notice when things might be moving in an unhealthy direction and to reach out to someone who can help you cope—whether that's a professional, a friend, or a loved one.