

Supporting a Friend through a Break-up

We've all been there. Your friend is heartbroken. You care about your friend. You want to be there for your friend. You also might, just possibly, be feeling a teensy little bit frustrated with your friend. Here are some tips to help you navigate your friend's breakup and hopefully emerge with the friendship (and your sanity) intact.



LISTEN - It's one of the most helpful and important things you can do for your friend. Just listen, nod, and let your friend know that you hear what they are saying and that you understand. It's so simple and yet so often we don't do it!

DON'T LECTURE, PREACH, OR GIVE ADVICE (UNLESS SHE ASKS FOR IT) - It's a trap for both of you because you end up having the same conversation over and over again. Letting them go over the same thing more or less on their own 2 or 3 times without a lot of input from you is actually more healing for your friend. And although it may seem challenging at first to just sit and listen, eventually it ends up being less draining for you, too.

REACH OUT just to say hi and that you're thinking of them with calls, texts, emails, etc. The feeling of loss of contact and communication can be one of the hardest parts of a rough breakup -- remind your friend that someone really cares.

DON'T compare the current situation with one of yours from the past. Let your friend have his/her moment. After some time has gone by and wounds are less fresh, you can swap war stories.

SET BOUNDARIES and take care of yourself. Yes, it's helpful to listen, but it's also okay to take breaks and set limits. Ask if you can call back later if you need some time off. If it's feeling like all you do is talk about the breakup for hours on end, suggest that you spend a specific amount of time talking about it (let's say 15 minutes) and during that time your friend will have your complete and undivided attention. After that you both agree to change the subject. Tell your friend that psychologists recommend this as a way of honoring feelings while not letting the breakup take over one's life.

DON'T forget to have fun together. Just like the breakup shouldn't take over your friend's life, it shouldn't hijack your friendship either. Make sure you spend some time doing things you both enjoy, while letting your friend know that you'll still be there when they are feeling sad. Otherwise your friend may stay stuck in "woe is me" mode because they are afraid that if you see them acting okay for a while you won't let them be sad ever again. **Let your friend know that you understand they can have good AND bad days**, and that you're there to share both.

VALIDATE your friend emotions. Let your friend know that these emotions and feelings are normal and expected.

DON'T go overboard with trashing the ex. Don't get angrier about the ex than your friend does, don't bring up any personal complains you've been holding against the ex, and avoid specific insults or criticisms about the ex, including appearance, personality, etc. These are the ones that tend to come back to haunt you. On the off chance that your friend ends up getting back together with the ex, you don't want your negative, unflattering comment floating out there.

ACT as a voice of reason and save your friend when he/she is about to do something crazy. See if you can confiscate your friend's phone if you're headed out for "forget him!" activity, and hide the car keys if your friend is talking about driving over to confront their ex about a new love interest (yikes!). Tell your friend that you would definitely want them to do the same for you if you were in this position. If your friend is really set on doing something you think is a bad idea, instead of continuing to argue about it just ask them to give it a 24-hour waiting period.

This information is from:

- The BreakUp Coach

From: <http://breakup-coach.com/advice/friend-zone/dos-and-donts-of-helping/>