

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE DURING DISTRESS

Supporting someone in distress can feel overwhelming. These steps can help you stay grounded and offer care in the moment. Here are some simple ways to help in the moment:

1. Stay calm and steady

Speak gently and keep your voice even.

Give the person space while staying nearby if they want company.

Reduce noise, bright lights, and interruptions.

2. Help them ground

Invite them to notice their surroundings.

Offer a simple grounding item like a cool cloth or textured object.

Gently remind them of where they are and that they are safe.

3. Offer simple options

Ask:

“Do you want quiet or company?”

“Would a drink of water help?”

Do you want to sit or walk for a minute?"

Give only one or two choices at a time.

4. Support calming strategies

Breathe slowly together.

Suggest a short walk, gentle stretch, or sitting in a quieter space.

Play calming sounds or soft music if they like that.

5. Validate and reassure

Listen without arguing or trying to convince.

Say things like "I'm here with you" or "You're not alone."

6. Keep things simple and present

Speak in short sentences.

Allow time for them to respond.

Focus on the next small step only.

7. Know when to get more help

If risk of harm is present, call or text 9-8-8 for immediate support, or use local crisis services.

Go to the emergency department or call 911 for urgent medical or safety concerns.