

*Conversation Tips (originally shared on [coachingforhealth.org](https://coachingforhealth.org) during the COVID-19 pandemic; please feel free to use and adapt to your situation)*

## How to support someone going through bereavement

This is a large question so we're going to focus specifically on the support we can provide in our conversations. And we're going to divide this into two:

- Emotional support
- Signposting support

### Providing emotional support

In times of loss, we can feel overwhelmed by our feelings and one of the most powerful gifts anyone can give us is the gift of high-quality listening. Just holding space for someone at a difficult time can help with emotional catharsis and the ongoing process of grieving.

We also need to be aware that the conversation may bring up feelings for ourselves as practitioners. We may know the person who has passed away and need to make sure we get the support we need.

It may be important to set parameters on the conversation to make sure you also respect your boundaries as a practitioner. This can be done at the Topic stage of TGROW. It may be useful to be clear about our role, explaining the support we can and can't provide, and any time restrictions we may have (if they exist). Obviously this needs to be done as sensitively as possible and it doesn't necessarily need to be done at the start of the conversation.

An example of Contracting on Time towards the end of a conversation (probably after you've provided a summary of what the person has said to demonstrate you were listening) – ***'I'm really sorry, we're coming to the end of our conversation, is there anything specific you'd like to focus on before we finish?'***

### Signposting support

If you feel that further support for the individual would be helpful, and it's available, you may want to recommend it using the Challenge Sandwich.

## Set it up

- empathic statement
- ask permission
- shared value

## Deliver content

- using subjective language
- rule, procedures, evidence

## Check validity

- e.g. "...what do you think?"

### 1. Set it up

Building rapport through the following stages (you don't need to do all of them):

- Empathise/acknowledge – ***'I hear that this is a very difficult time'*** (here we acknowledge/validate their emotional state - so please adapt to your patient)
- Ask permission – ***'Do you mind if I share something that's occurred to me that might be helpful?'*** (Here we wait for the 'yes', or some acknowledgement, to make sure the individual has given themselves permission to hear you).
- Shared value – ***'Because I really want to make sure you get the support you need right now.'*** (Here we're looking for a value that you both/all share, something you all care about).

### 2. Deliver content/your message

Here we have a choice to use either Subjective Language, or A Rule/Procedure (if it exists). Here it could be Subjective Language (the following is an example):

- ***'I've heard a number of people in this kind of situation find the \_\_\_\_\_ service very helpful.'*** (and here you outline the particular benefits and why it might be useful for that individual).

### 3. Check Validity

Checking how this lands with someone:

- ***'What do you think?'*** OR ***'What are your thoughts about this?'***