

# How to talk to someone who is grieving

## What to Say

### Caring Language

Things you may say to someone you know very well and/or you knew the person who died:

- "I know how close you were to (name) and how much this must hurt. I am keeping you and (name) close to my heart."
- "I heard so much about how wonderful your mother was..."
- "We love you and we will miss (name of person)."
- "I love you and (name of person) and I will miss him/her."
- "I will miss (name of person). I remember when..."

Things you may say to someone you work with who you do not know well:

- "My condolences on your loss."
- "I am sorry you are having to go through this."
- "I am sorry this is such a difficult time for you."

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## Supportive Language

Things you may say to reflect your support for a person:

- "I wanted to check in with you and see how you are doing today."
- "What can we all do to help you at work?"
- "It is good to see you today. How are you doing?"
- "I was thinking about you and wanted to see how you are doing today."

Sincere expressions of wanting to be helpful or support a person go a long way toward creating a safe, supportive environment.

## What Not to Say

### Dismissive Language

Any phrase that starts with the following words:

#### At least...

- "At least you can have more children."
- "At least you can get married again someday."
- "At least you had 50 good years with him or her."
- "At least they are in a better place."
- "At least they are out of pain."
- "At least you don't have to watch them suffer any more."

#### I understand...

- "I understand just how you feel."
- "I understand, my (child, wife, sister, etc.) died too."
- "I understand, my pet died last year, and it was very hard on me."

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## Advice Giving Language

Avoid any phrases that begin with the following words...

#### You Should...

- "You should go talk to someone. I heard this is helpful."
- "You should exercise or take walks; I did this after my mom died and it helped me a lot."

Also, avoid offering advice through questions, like:

Have you ever thought about... "taking walks," "going to see a counselor," "talking to someone."