

What to Say to Someone Who is Grieving*



When someone experiences a loss, many of us want to help—but we worry about saying the wrong thing. The truth is that you don't need the perfect words. You simply need to show up with compassion and presence.

Helpful Things to Say

- ✓ "I'm so sorry."
- ✓ "I'm thinking about you."
- ✓ "I don't know what to say, but I care about you."
- ✓ "Tell me about them."
- ✓ "What has this been like for you?"
- ✓ "I remember when..."
- ✓ "I'm here to listen."
- ✓ "You don't have to go through this alone."
- ✓ "I'm holding you in my thoughts."
- ✓ "It's okay to feel however you're feeling."

Helpful Things to Do

- ✓ Deliver a meal.
 - ✓ Send a card.
 - ✓ Offer childcare.
 - ✓ Walk the dog.
 - ✓ Pick up groceries.
 - ✓ Attend the visitation or funeral.
 - ✓ Continue checking in after the services.
 - ✓ Remember important dates and anniversaries.
 - ✓ Offer specific help instead of general offers.
- Instead of:
"Let me know if you need anything."
Try:
"I'm bringing dinner on Thursday."
"Can I mow your lawn this weekend?"
"I'd love to pick up groceries for you."

Things to Avoid

- ✗ "Everything happens for a reason."
- ✗ "They're in a better place."
- ✗ "At least they're no longer suffering."
- ✗ "Be strong."
- ✗ "You'll get over it."
- ✗ "I know exactly how you feel."
- ✗ "Time heals all wounds."
- ✗ "At least..."

(Almost any sentence that begins with "at least" can unintentionally minimize someone's grief.)

Most Importantly

- You do not need to fix grief.
- You do not need to have the perfect words.
- Your presence often matters more than your advice.
- Showing up, listening, remembering, and caring can make a lasting difference.



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Creating spaces where people feel seen,
heard, and connected through life's transitions.

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*grief can be experienced with many different types of loss, not just loss of life. The examples provided here can be used and amended to fit many different situations