

What NOT to Say to Someone Who's Grieving

While offering support to someone who is grieving, word choice matters. Here are things to avoid saying:

1

"I know how you feel."

Grief's highly personal and everyone experiences it differently. Avoid assuming you understand someone's emotions as well as they do.

2

"It's time to move on."

Grieving has no set timeline, so suggesting a specific timeframe can invalidate someone's feelings. Allow the person who's grieving to grieve at their own pace.

3

"At least they lived a long life."

Minimizing someone's loss by focusing on the duration of someone's life can dismiss the depth of the grieving person's emotions.

4

"Everything happens for a reason."

Clichés like this may not offer comfort and can come across as dismissive of the pain someone is experiencing.

5

"They are in a better place."

While well-intentioned, saying this might not provide comfort, especially if the grieving person is struggling with the loss.

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6

"I understand how you feel... my pet/friend/family member died."

Comparing losses might unintentionally downplay the significance of the grieving person's experience.

7

"It's God's plan."

Bringing religion into the conversation may not be helpful if the grieving person doesn't share your views.

8

"They wouldn't want you to be sad."

Encouraging someone not to grieve can make them feel guilty about their natural emotions.

9

"Let me know if you need anything."

While well-intentioned, this puts the burden on the grieving person to reach out. Instead, offer specific help, like bringing a meal or running errands

10

Avoiding the topic altogether.

Ignoring someone's loss or pretending it didn't happen might make the grieving person feel isolated. Share your condolences and be open to talking about their loved one.

In difficult times, offering empathy, a listening ear, and useful help can often speak louder than words.

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