

# WORDS MATTER



## Suggestions for supporting those who grieve.

*When you care about someone who is grieving, knowing what to say or how to respond to a myriad of emotional situations can be challenging. Being unsure about how to express your own feelings of loss and/or your concern for the grieving person is normal. One of the most important things to know about speaking to a grieving person is that your love and concern matter. There is no solution to the problem of a person being dead. Allowing a grieving person this reality is a huge gift and often requires no words at all, just loving acceptance and the willingness to walk with a grieving person as they do the work of integrating the death of their person into their lives.*

## Valuable Words and Actions

- Acknowledge the pain, don't minimize or look for the silver lining. "I am sorry you are in so much pain."
- Listen without trying to fix a problem. No words needed.
- Remind them of your support and that you are available to listen. "If you feel like talking, you can call me."
- If you knew the person who has died, share your own memories and ask them about theirs.
- Offer advice only when requested.
- Be present through pain/difficult emotions.  
"I will sit with you for as long as you need."
- Expect and welcome crying, laughing, expressions of disbelief, sadness and silence in any combination.

## Phrases that may wound, unintentionally.



Remember that even if these phrases are true for you, the grieving person may not benefit from hearing them.

## How Can I Help?



**Listen attentively.**



**Offer practical help based on your expertise and availability.**



**Love heals.  
Love generously.**

- Everything happens for a reason.
- God needed another angel.
- You will find a new partner.
- Your person wouldn't want you to be sad.
- Your person would not approve of (fill in the blank).
- You have to take those pictures down and stop living in the past.
- Why aren't you dating?
- Wow, you must have received a lot of life insurance.
- If my partner died I'd get in the grave, too.
- Did you know he was going to kill himself?
- She's at peace now.
- I know exactly how you feel because my (brother, sister, grandmother, beloved pet) died.
- I wish my ex were dead.
- I'm glad to see you're moving on.