



GRIEF LITERACY

Compassionate Condolences

Supportive Options:

- “What a [heartbreak, shock, tragedy, deep loss],” followed by invitational silence.
- “I wish I had the right words—just please know I care.”
- “I can’t claim to know exactly how you feel or what you’re going through, but I’m here to listen.”
- “You and your loved one are in my [thoughts, prayers, heart].”
- “Would you like to/Can I share a favorite memory of...?”
- Offer a hug or a hand to hold.
- Place your hand over your heart as a caring gesture.
- Offer to help with a specific task, like groceries or dependent care.
- Simply be with the person and continue to reach out.

What to Avoid:

- Minimizing: “At least [your person lived a long life, is out of pain, isn’t suffering anymore].”
- Attributing meaning: “Everything happens for a reason,” or “They’re in a better place.”
- Questioning: “Aren’t you over it yet?” or “Haven’t you moved on?”
- Making assumptions: “I know how you feel,” or “I know how painful this loss is.”
- Providing solutions: “You can get pregnant again/get another pet.”
- Providing reasons: “He did what he came here to do, and it was his time,” or “She was such a good person, [higher power, realm of afterlife] called her home.”
- Providing direction: “You should...,” “I would...,” or “Be strong/positive.”