

# Say This, Not That

What to say and not say when talking with those who are grieving and hurting

## SAY THIS

"It feels hard because it is hard."

"I don't know what to say, but I care about you, and I'm not going anywhere."

"Would it help if I [specific task]?"

"It's okay to feel however you feel," or  
"It makes sense that you feel [emotion]."

"I wish things were different. I wish you weren't going through this."

"What memory of your person do you keep coming back to? What brings you comfort or makes you laugh when you think of them?"

"I want to hear about [their person/the hard situation], if you feel comfortable sharing."

"I know this is really hard. I hear you."

"Is it helpful to just hang out or is this a time where you want to talk about it?"

"I'm so sorry that you've had to be so resilient."

## NOT THAT

"Everything happens for a reason."

"I know exactly how you feel."

"They're in a better place,"  
"Heaven gained another angel," or  
"God needed them in heaven."

"You need to stay strong," or  
"They wouldn't want you to be sad."

"At least..." statements:  
• "At least they lived a long life."  
• "At least you can still walk"

"You'll get over it with time" or putting a timeline on their grief and pain.

Trying to force them to find the silver lining:  
• "You should be grateful for what you had"  
• "On the brightside..."

"God doesn't give you more than you can handle."

"I can't imagine what I would do if that happened to me" and making it about you

"What you should do is... [gives unsolicited advice]"

