

Making Life Better

Let's Talk About Sympathy

by Jim McCann

(NAPS)—When someone you know loses a friend or family member, it's not easy deciding when and how best to respond. You may find yourself unsure of



Expressing sympathy doesn't have to be scary.

what to say or do. Sometimes, a simple phrase such as "I'm sorry for your loss" can be extraordinarily meaningful. Here are six more helpful tips on how to approach someone who is grieving:

Listen

Allowing a grieving person to express how he or she feels can be a huge help. Try to listen without offering advice or interrupting. Letting people share memories and talk about their loved one can be a part of the healing process.

Be Specific When Offering Help

Make a specific commitment to being with the person who needs you. Offering assistance with day-to-day matters can be very comforting but be sure to offer something specific, such as "I'm coming over with groceries on Saturday." That way, you're offering help without placing the burden on the grieving person to figure out what to bring and when.

Navigate Social Media Appropriately

When acknowledging the news of a loss, stick with the communication medium through which you initially received the information. If the news came by phone, return the call. If you learned about the death through social media, it is appropriate to reply on social media; just be sure to keep your message brief on public pages. More-detailed expressions of sympathy should be conveyed in private posts.

Be Patient

It is normal for people who are grieving to experience a range of emotions. It takes time to heal, so be patient and allow them to grieve at their own pace.



Help your loved ones heal by giving them time to talk and share memories.

Send a Card

Show your concern and support by sending a card. You can even put your own personal message inside.

Don't Minimize Their Pain

It is important to keep the focus on the grieving person. Resist the urge to share stories of times when you've lost a loved one. Let your friend or family member share his or her own stories and memories and listen.



1-800-Flowers.com developed a sympathy advice and etiquette online resource guide.

To further help, 1-800-Flowers.com has created an online sympathy hub for tips and advice, directly from experts, on how best to express sympathy and condolences. Topics include Appropriate Sympathy Etiquette Across Different Religions, How to Write a Eulogy, How to Create a Memory Garden and How to Cope With Grief Around the Holidays.

This is a resource for people in their time of need and making their experience a little easier to manage. The goal is for people to have a greater understanding of how to help their friends, family and co-workers in coping with a loss.

Learn More

For further information, visit www.1800flowers.com/sympathyadvice.