



Good Words for Grieving

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Practical Ways to Support a Grieving Workforce

Specific ways employees can support bereaved coworkers

- Things to say:
 - "How are you doing?"
 - "I'm sorry for your loss."
 - "I'm here to listen if you want to talk."
 - "How can I (or the team) help as you come back to work?"
- Expect and accept tears as natural and normal.
- Use the deceased person's name in your conversation.
- Provide time to listen to your coworker's story because it's a story of love. Be okay hearing the story more than once.
- Know that grieving coworkers may be downcast and sad. They may need help reorienting to the work. Try to keep open lines of communication with them and with managers.

Specific things that managers can do to support bereaved employees

- Ask: "How are you? How can we support you in this challenging time?"
- Educate management and Human Resources personnel by bringing in a grief specialist
- Educate workers and teams about how to help each other in times of grief.
- When an employee dies, acknowledge that a loss has occurred privately to the affected team and to the broader organization.
- When an employee's family member dies, acknowledge the loss to the affected employee and then to the broader organization, as appropriate.
- Develop as flexible a bereavement leave policy as possible.
- Be flexible with allowing time off at holidays to let people experience their grief.
- Use sensitivity when cleaning out, reshaping, and reusing a deceased employee's workspace.
- Host a corporate memorial service if appropriate to the organization's culture. Be aware of setting achievable expectations through memorializing actions. For example, create photo montage of deceased workers or consider a charitable contribution or another tangible gift (e.g., sending flowers, planting a tree in the names of those who died in 2021).