

Here are some suggestions on things that we can do and say to help promote a culture of support and reduction of stigma:

<u><b>Not to Say</b></u>	→	<u><b>Things to Say</b></u>
<b>Grief/Loss:</b>		
• They are in a better place now	→	My favorite memory of them is....
• Everything happens for a reason	→	They will be missed.
• Be strong/Stay Strong	→	We all need help at times like this, I am here for you
• I know exactly how you feel	→	I am here for you.
• There is a reason for everything	→	I wish I had the right words to say
• Time will heal all wounds	→	I'm so sorry you're hurting like this.
• It's God's plan	→	I wish I had the right words, just know I care
• Anything starting with "At least..."	→	I'm not sure what to say right now, I am sorry.
<b>Depression:</b>		
• Smile	→	It sounds like things are really hard right now
• You don't seem sad	→	I'm here to listen
• Everyone gets stressed out	→	I'm sorry that you are struggling.
• Just fake it until you make it	→	I'm not sure what to say right now, but thank you for trusting me with what is going on.
• Suicide is selfish	→	I love you and you are not alone.
• You have so much to live for	→	Tell me more about how you feel
• Promise me you won't	→	It sounds as though you are really hurting
<b>Anxiety:</b>		
• Calm down	→	I'm here for you. Would you like to take a walk?
• Don't think about it	→	I can see you're really worried
• Just breathe	→	I'll stay with you
• Don't think about it	→	I don't know what exactly that is like for you, but I'd love to try and understand.
<b>General:</b>		
• I understand	→	Thank you for sharing this with me so that I can understand more about what you're going through.
• I know how you feel	→	How can I help you during this time?
• It's okay; it's going to be okay	→	I'm sorry that you're hurting.
• It's not a big deal	→	I'm here for you. Let's figure out together what will help you.
• Have you tried ( <i>fill in the blanks</i> )	→	Can I bring you dinner this week?
• It could be worse	→	I know it took a lot of courage to tell me this, thank you.
• Count your blessings	→	Can I keep you company today?
• You should pray more	→	Do you want me to check in on you?
• Have you been reading your Bible?	→	Asking for help is always okay.

## **Framing Our Language:** Being mindful of the words we use that can help reduce stigma!

### Mental Health:

- He/She is bipolar; He/She is depressed → They have bipolar or They are living with bipolar; They have depression or they are living with depression
- He/she is psychotic → He/she hears voices
  - *Why: This reflects that this is an individual and a human – and their conditions do NOT define them. They have a diagnosis but are not solely their diagnosis*

### Developmental Disabilities:

- He is autistic → He has autism
- She is confined to a wheelchair → She uses a wheelchair
- He's disabled → They have a disability
  - *Why: This reflects that this is an individual and a human – and their conditions do NOT define them. They have a diagnosis but are not solely their diagnosis*

### Substance Use:

- “Druggie” or “Alcoholic” or “Addict” → They are addicted to substances or they have an addiction
  - *Why: This reflects that this is an individual and a human – and their conditions do NOT define them. They have a diagnosis but are not solely their diagnosis*
- He's clean or sober → He is in long term recovery
- He suffers from ... → He lives with or is diagnosed with

### Suicide:

- Committed suicide → Died from suicide; ended their life
  - *Why: The word committed implies it's a sin or a crime*
- Successful/Unsuccessful suicide attempt → Died by suicide or survived a suicide
  - *Why: The notion of successful frames suicide as an achievement of something that is tragic*
- They are suicidal → They are thinking about suicidal
  - *Why: We don't want to define someone by their experience with suicide*