



# The Language for Recovery

**W**hen discovering that a loved one, whether a friend, a family member or a coworker has been diagnosed with breast cancer, feeling awkward about your response and not knowing what to say is a common human response. Here are five things you should say to a cancer patient, and (just as importantly) five things NOT to say.

## Things To Say:

### **"I'M SORRY THIS IS HAPPENING TO YOU..."**

Shows her that you understand that she is going through a serious ordeal...

### **"LIFE CAN REALLY BE UNFAIR SOMETIMES..."**

Shows your friend that you realize that this is a life changing situation...

### **"ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, ANYTHING YOU NEED, I AM HERE FOR YOU..."**

Shows that you genuinely want to help her out...

### **"I'M HERE TO LISTEN TO ANYTHING YOU SAY, BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT, THAT'S ALSO FINE."**

Shows her that you understand that this is also a private matter, and some people might not always want to share their thoughts and feelings about the situation.

### **"I LOVE YOU..."**

No explanation needed!

## Things NOT to Say:

### **"YOU POOR THING..."**

Cancer patients need compassion, not pity. The word thing will objectify your friend and do nothing more.

### **"WHAT'S YOUR PROGNOSIS?"**

Medical terms like prognosis will only make the cancer patient think of how much time they have left to live.

### **"IF YOU NEED HELP PLEASE LET ME KNOW."**

Your friend wants your help without her having to ask...

### **"MY (INSERT NAME HERE) DIED OF BREAST CANCER."**

Cancer patients need to hear encouraging and positive stories, never negative ones. They need to feel hope.

### **"AT LEAST YOU CAUGHT IT EARLY."**

Or at least anything. Your friend needs to know that you acknowledge that this disease is serious and that you are taking it seriously as well. **U**