

# How not to talk to someone who's grieving

**SABIL SADAT ZAHIR**

Finding the right things to say to a grieving friend or loved one can be tricky at times. Sometimes people might find it hard to properly console the other person, and may end up saying things which are counterintuitive. We all want to help the people we care about, but it is important to know how to properly be there for them.

Here is a list of things I believe people should avoid, when speaking to a grieving person.

## Reminding them of the good things they have

People often unknowingly equate gratefulness to happiness. Even a grieving person can be grateful, but that does not mean they will also be happy. It is difficult for such an individual to simply "look on the bright side", as in their state of grief the good things pale in comparison to the bad. They need to be allowed to process their emotions first if they are to appreciate the good things they do have.

## Comparing grief

Telling the person how other people suffer more or have "bigger problems" will not make them feel better and only serves to invalidate their feelings. Likewise, bringing up one's own issues without properly acknowledging the grieving person's problems falls in the same boat. Different people handle grief differently, the person needs to know that their problems are not lesser than others and they need to be acknowledged.

## Reminding them of their responsibilities

Sometimes people may suggest a grieving person to simply "harden up" and focus on their work instead of thinking about what is making them sad. Reminding someone of all the work they need to get done will make the person feel even more burdened or pressurised. Furthermore, trying to work while ignoring the problem may worsen things even further.

## Telling them it is part of "God's plan"

Faith is an important aspect of most people's lives, and this suggestion can have varying effects based on the grieving person's beliefs. It could make them optimistic that God has good things in store for them in the future, or it might make them feel as if it is their fate to suffer and that they have no control over it. Even worse, it could lead them to feel like they are doing something wrong and are being punished for it.

Often, any of the aforementioned points may lead to a person feeling responsible for the horrible things that may have happened to them. Thus, the easiest suggestion when it comes to helping a grieving person is that you should just treat them the way you would want to be treated if the roles were reversed. Tell them what they would like to hear, instead of telling them what you think is right. Sometimes grieving people need a safe space where they can express themselves and feel reassured. Even if you cannot find the right words, simply being present for them and listening to them helps every time.

*Sabil spends most of his time trying to stay as hopeful as possible. You can contact him at [sabilsadat616@gmail.com](mailto:sabilsadat616@gmail.com)*

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# Proposed two-semester system in private universities plunge students into uncertainty

**MASHIYAT NAYEEM**

Earlier this year, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued a directive for private universities of the country to switch to a 6-month semester system by mid-2022. While this was alarming for many, the authorities concerned assured that the process was still in the works and that students would be duly notified well before the implementation. Now, unofficial announcements from private universities have suddenly wreaked havoc by stating that the new system will be in motion from January 2023, sparking fresh outcries from the students.

Despite reassurances from faculty members that new calendars and syllabuses have been developed keeping everything in mind, speculation still runs rampant among students. The lack of any indication of the new framework has plunged students into uncertainty as they are unable to plan for the future.

"Foreign universities usually require applications to be sent a whole academic year prior to enrollment. I was ready to start applying for grad school as I was set to graduate within a year under the trimester system. But with the new system, it will probably take longer. Now I don't know when I can plan for higher education," stated Abrar Anwar\*, a student from Independent University Bangladesh.

Many students mirrored similar sentiments, especially those at the brink of graduating. With only a single or a few courses left, these students will be set back by months in entering into the job market or transitioning into their post-graduate life.

"We did not even receive any unofficial message from the faculties about any changes to the system. We are still in the dark. However, judging by the upcoming

semester's academic calendar, it seems as if it's going to be a 6-month semester," claimed Ahmed Arif\*, a student from BRAC University.

A common misconception is that the 6-month semester system will only be applicable for newly enrolled students. Given the amount of resources and the sheer number of existing students that private universities already have, it is practically impossible to run two different systems concurrently.

Moreover, it is also unclear whether the syllabus will be revised to fit more content and reduce the number of total courses overall. If they are, then it also begs the question, what is going to happen to existing students who want to retake an old course? For engineering students, another source for concern is the fate of capstone projects, which span across multiple semesters and each part is prerequisite to the next.

The fate of the mandatory internship required to graduate is also in question—whether the duration will be 3 months or 6 months, or whether students will be able to undertake it during summer break as is the case in foreign countries.

One of the biggest advantages private universities have over their public counterparts is the smooth operation of the academic calendar without any session jams, largely due to enrollments thrice a year. If these universities admit a greater number of students to make up for the lost term, the only thing that is certain is the race to grab one of the very limited seats in a required course.

*\*Names have been changed to maintain privacy*

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