



SUGGESTIONS FOR **WHAT TO SAY** WHEN A COLLEAGUE'S POSITION HAS BEEN ELIMINATED:

"I AM SO SORRY."

This simple statement is often all that is necessary. It denotes that you are thinking of them and offering a portion of yourself to them in the midst of a difficult time.

"I JUST HEARD. I AM SO SORRY. WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK?"

Depending on the person and timing, they may or may not want to dredge up the memory. Give them the option to talk AND don't be offended if they say no to your offer.

"I AM SO SORRY. I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU HAVE GIVEN TO BETHEL OVER THE YEARS. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING/FEELING?"

This statement denotes empathy and offers space for them to talk. Again, they may not want to talk and that's ok.

"I AM SO SORRY. WHAT DO YOU NEED RIGHT NOW?"

Again, this statement shows you are there for them AND it lets the person say anything from "nothing" to "I need space" to "I need a coffee, can we talk?"

"HOW CAN I HELP?"

This simple statement communicates so much: you're there for them, you're willing to invest time and energy, and they are not alone.

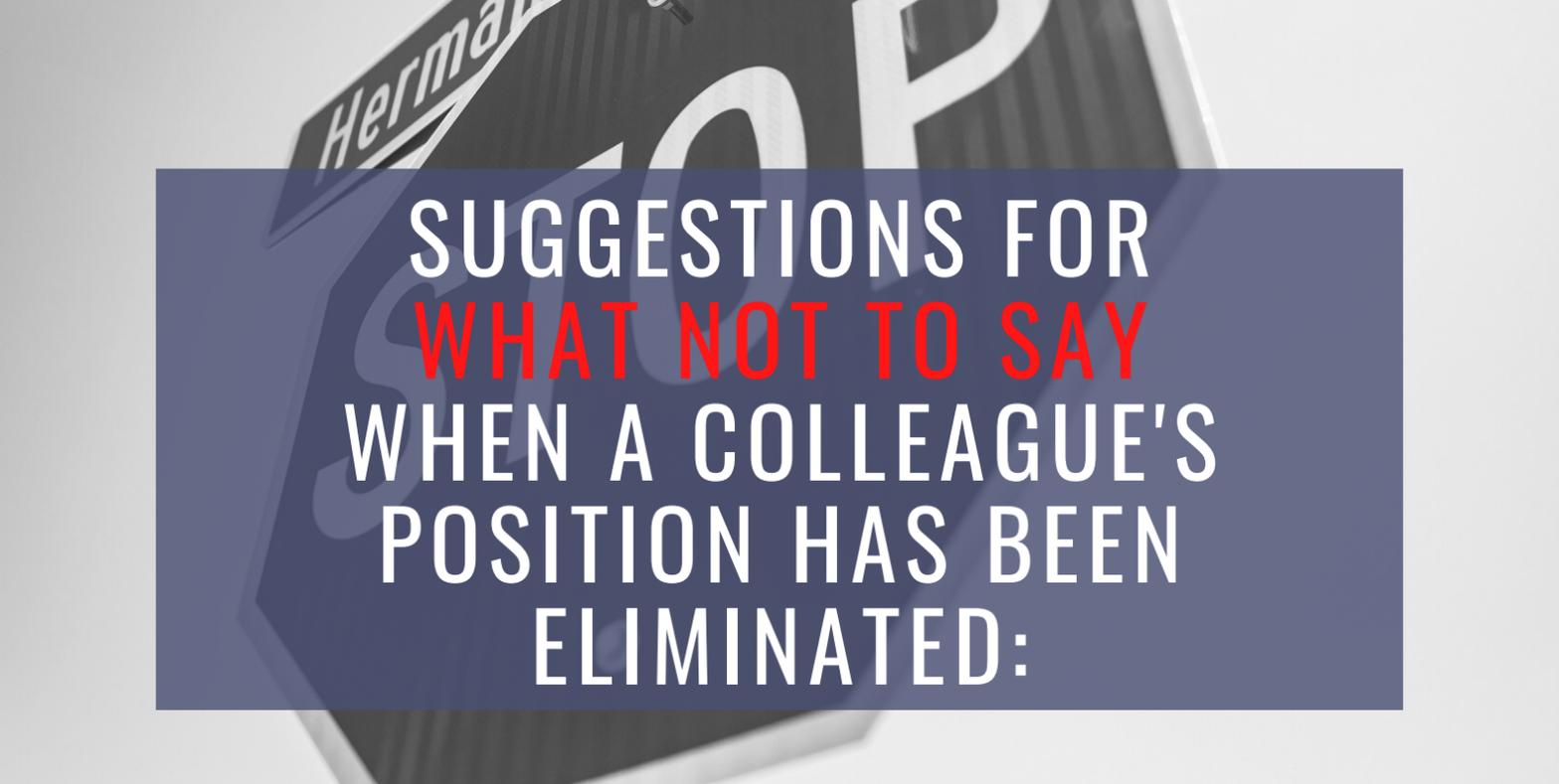
They may say 'I don't need anything right now', but you've communicated your willingness to be 'in the thick of it' with them. Follow up with "If anything changes, I'm here."

The key is to communicate that you see them and you are ready to be with them if needed. One of the many awful things of having one's position eliminated is that it can feel lonely and awkward if no one at work acknowledges what just happened nor asks how they are doing.

However, the opposite is also true. It can be overwhelming if 20 people offer the person a chance to talk over coffee. If you are not that close with the person you are reaching out to, consider sending an email (or better yet, a hand written card) using one of the above statements.

One final thing:

Watch that you don't become offended if they brush you off. Remember, you are there for them not the other way around.



SUGGESTIONS FOR **WHAT NOT TO SAY** WHEN A COLLEAGUE'S POSITION HAS BEEN ELIMINATED:

"GOD HAS A PLAN"

or "Everything happens for a reason"
These are incredibly unhelpful statements and lead to perplexing theological ideas while in the midst of a crisis.

"YOU'RE SO LUCKY. I WISH IT WERE ME!"

This statement minimizes the complexity and challenge of what the person is going through and makes the conversation about you. Likely the person just eliminated will think:
"Yeah! I wish it was you, too!"

"DON'T WORRY! YOU'LL FIND NEW JOB!"

Telling someone not to worry when their source of income (and sense of stability) has been eliminated is not helpful. You may mean to affirm their competencies and abilities however, this is not the time nor the way to do that.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE BETHEL DID THIS TO YOU!"

This statement invites rage and encourages the person to find fault with Bethel. Especially since this was a planned reduction in workforce, inciting the person to anger may not help anyone.

"THINGS COULD BE WORSE"

Really?!
Someone whose position has just been eliminated will not necessarily be able to 'see the bright side' in this moment.

The key is this:
Don't resort to simple statements or ideas.
Position elimination is a complex situation with many layers.
Don't minimize the situation by using trite or pithy statements.