



The dos and don'ts of talking to the laid-off

Keep the person positive and looking to what could happen in future

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Holly G. Green, owner of management consulting firm The Human Factor, offers some dos and don'ts for talking with unemployed friends and family.

Dos

- Do demonstrate sincere interest and openly acknowledge how tough it must be. "I am so sorry to hear that. I know what a tough time this must be for you."
- Do encourage your friend to talk about what they want to do next. This focuses on the future versus the past and helps them get clarity as well. "What do you think would be some great roles for you that might even be a little different from what you were doing before?"
- Do offer specific support and assistance, because often the recently laid-off employee does not know what to do next. "Can I review your resume, forward it to others that might be aware of what you are looking for, introduce you to recruiters, include you in networking events?"
- Do follow up within a week to check in with them. Often someone's social network is made up primarily of people they work with. When laid off, this is part of what can create a lonely and demoralizing experience.
- Do schedule a time to get together. This fills some of the social needs that were previously met by co-workers and also sets a timeframe for getting a resume drafted or anything else you offered to help with.

Don'ts

- Don't get caught up in gossip or bad-mouthing the previous employer. This only brings back the negative energy and emotions of a tough situation.
- Don't pretend like it never happened.
- Don't say: "Everything will be fine or this could be the best thing that ever happened to you." These types of comments are trite and insensitive — things may not work out well.
- Don't encourage filing a lawsuit unless there is real cause.
- Don't assume your laid-off friend doesn't want to be included in social events with former co-workers.

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