



Tips for Talking with someone who's Grieving

DO:

Acknowledge the situation. For example, if you know you're calling someone who has lost a loved one you could say something as simple as: "I heard that your sister passed away"

Express your concern. For example: "I'm sorry to hear that this happened to you."

Let the bereaved talk about how their loved one died. People who are grieving may need to tell the story over and over again, sometimes in minute detail. Be patient.

Be genuine in your communication. Don't try to minimize their loss, provide simplistic solutions, or offer unsolicited advice.

Be willing to sit in silence. Don't press if the grieving person doesn't feel like talking.

Things to avoid saying to someone who's grieving

- **"It's part of God's plan."** This phrase can make people angry and they often respond with, "What plan? Nobody told me about any plan."
- **"Look at what you have to be thankful for."** They know they have things to be thankful for, but right now they are not important.
- **"He's in a better place now."** The bereaved may or may not believe this. Keep your beliefs to yourself unless asked.
- **"This is behind you now; it's time to get on with your life."** Sometimes the bereaved are resistant to getting on with because they feel this means "forgetting" their loved one. Besides, moving on is much easier said than done. Grief has a mind of its own and works at its own pace.
- **Statements that begin with "You should" or "You will."** These statements are too directive. Instead you could begin your comments with: "Have you thought about..." or "You might try..."

Source: *American Hospice Foundation*