Communicating With The Bereaved Parent

Communicating with the *Bereaved*

Don'ts 👎
- Advice
- Cheer-up
- Assume
- Reassure
- Argue
- Minimize

- Ask Non-judgmental Questions
- Validate /empathy
- Support/silence
- Clarify
- Give information
- Use feeling focused statements

Do's 👍

ELNEC- 2003

Don't give advice *– You should get out more. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Why don't you just. . .*

Don't try to happy them up *– Now, now don't cry. Where's that optimism you always have?*

Don't assume *– It's better now, at least she is at peace. I know how you feel.*

Don't reassure *– God never gives us more than we can handle. Don' worry, it'll be fine.*

Don't argue *– How can you say that? It's wrong to blame anyone.*

Don't minimize *– It could always be worse. You're young; you can always have another baby.*

Do ask non-judgmental questions *– What are your thoughts about. . . ?*

Do validate *– You have a right to feel however you feel about that. You've been through a lot.*

Do support *– I'm here if you want to talk (silence).*

Do clarify *– I'm not sure I understand, tell me more.*

Do give information/explanations *– Generally that medication is used for . . . Infant/child CPR is offered at . . .*

Use feeling focused statements *– You are still feeling the disappointment. Tell me more about how you are feeling.*

(ELNEC, 2003)

REMEMBER

- There are no degrees of difficulty in loss. All loss is important to the person experiencing it.
- Families have physical, emotional, and spiritual needs throughout the continuum of grief.
  - We can help with practical matters, emotional support, and validation of informed choices caregivers made based on their values and needs.

Peaceful Outcomes are grounded in: Meaning, Competency and Support

- Meaning – a lesson to be learned, a purpose, a religious or cultural belief that offers insight into suffering.
- Competency – informed decision making, care for the child with confidence, able to keep the child comfortable, being a partner with other team members in whatever way fits best.
- Support- viable informal and formal supportive systems. I have a sounding board with someone who is objective and non-judgmental. I have help with the day to day practical needs and demands.

Take care of yourself and support your colleagues. This is challenging work.