

# Helpful Thoughts When Talking to Bereaved Parents

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**DO** let your genuine concern and caring show.

**DO** say you are sorry about what has happened to their child, and about their pain.

**DO** allow them to express as much grief as they are feeling at the moment and are willing to share.

**DO** encourage them to be patient with themselves, not to expect too much of themselves and not to impose any 'shoulds' on themselves.

**DO** talk about the special endearing qualities of the child.

**DO** reassure them that they did everything they could, and that the medical care the child received was the best, or whatever you know to be positive about the care given to their child.

**DON'T** let your own sense of helplessness keep you from reaching out to a bereaved parent.

**DON'T** avoid them because you are uncomfortable (being avoided adds to an already painful experience).

**DON'T** change the subject when they mention their dead child.

**DON'T** avoid mentioning the child's name out of fear of reminding them of their pain (they haven't forgotten it).

**DON'T** point out that at least they have other children (children cannot replace each other).

**DON'T** say that they can always have another child (even if they wanted to, and could, another child could never replace the child they have lost).