

# Communicating with a Family Experiencing a Pregnancy Loss

Although you can't take away the pain of a loss, you can provide a family with much needed comfort and support, and help them feel less isolated and alone. The most important thing you can do is simply be a supportive and caring presence while they travel their own grief journey.

*If you have said something hurtful, simply acknowledge it and say you're sorry.*

Helpful Phrases	Hurtful Phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I'm sorry." or "I'm sorry we are meeting under these circumstances."</li> <li>● "I'm sorry this is happening to you."</li> <li>● "Tell me about your baby." or "Will you tell me about your baby?"</li> <li>● "I'm so sad for your loss."</li> <li>● "It's okay to feel what you're feeling."</li> <li>● "It's okay to cry."</li> <li>● "Take all the time you need."</li> <li>● "I will answer all of your questions, or find someone who can."</li> <li>● "It's not your fault."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Phrases that begin with "At least..."</li> <li>● "Everything happens for a reason."</li> <li>● "You aren't given more in life than you can handle."</li> <li>● "You're young. You can have more children."</li> <li>● "Everything will be okay."</li> <li>● "Your child is in a better place."</li> <li>● "Be grateful it happened early on."</li> <li>● "It's better you miscarried because this fetus was probably abnormal."</li> <li>● "I don't know why this is so hard for you."</li> </ul>
Helpful Actions	Hurtful Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mirror the language the family uses to refer to their loss.</li> <li>● Listen with compassion.</li> <li>● Ask questions with sensitivity.</li> <li>● Acknowledge and normalize their feelings.</li> <li>● Answer questions honestly, with kindness and compassion.</li> <li>● Offer small gestures of kindness (blanket, meal, phone call, menstrual pad).</li> <li>● Offer to contact a loved one or other support person.</li> <li>● Ask if they have a faith or cultural tradition that is comforting to them.</li> <li>● Treat the baby's remains with dignity and respect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Doing nothing.</li> <li>● Avoiding the person.</li> <li>● Offering unsolicited advice or platitudes.</li> <li>● Assuming a person believes in a certain faith.</li> <li>● Assuming you know how a person is feeling.</li> <li>● Assuming a person will know what is happening or what to do next.</li> <li>● Avoiding giving information in a timely manner.</li> <li>● Missing the chance to connect a person to supports or referrals.</li> <li>● Using medical jargon.</li> </ul>



PREGNANCY AND  
INFANT LOSS NETWORK