### What to Say or Do after a Death: Tips for Supporting Mourners

It can be very difficult to know what to say to someone who has just experienced a death. This death could be a family member, friend, co-worker or even a pet. It is best to let the person know you are thinking of them and are there to listen. The following provides a list of helpful things to say and do for a mourner as well as what not to say.

**Key Points**: This is NOT about the comforter’s feelings, but those of the mourner(s). The most important thing to remember is focus on the mourner(s) and don’t assume anything.

**What to Say**

* I am here for you and want to listen when you are ready
* I heard. (This gives an open ended opportunity for the person to talk)
* I would like to help with… (e.g., picking up kids, food shopping, meals, etc. – be specific)
* I’m here if you want to talk, cry or just sit quietly
* I’m sorry that (person’s name) died
* Take all the time you need
* Thank you for sharing your feelings
* Would it be ok if I called you later in the week?
* Would you like to talk about it?
* You are in my thoughts

**What to Do**

* Ask about the person’s life
* Bring a meal for the grieving person and family
* Remember to check in with the person who is grieving
* Share a personal story about the person who died
* Use the person’s name

**What Not to Say**

* At least you have other children or can have other children
* Be strong
* Call me when I can help
* Death was a blessing
* God needs him/her more than you do
* God works in mysterious ways
* He or she had a good life
* He or she is out of pain
* I can’t handle what happened
* I couldn’t do it
* I don’t know how you can handle it
* I know how you feel
* I know someone who had…
* It all happens for the best
* It is not up to us to question God’s plans
* It was for the best
* It was God’s will
* It’s time to put this behind you and move on
* Now you are the man of the house
* Something good will come out of this
* There is always a reason things happen
* When are you going to get a new pet?
* You can always remarry
* You have your whole life ahead of you
* You’re still young