

PROVIDING A COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

DO'S

DO actively listen & validate the persons' experiences and feelings

- Make eye contact and avoid distractions.
- Place all your focus on the person
- Allow for silences, don't rush to fill them
- Resist judgement, comparison or interpreting it in your own way
- Avoid rushing to 'fix' things and giving advice
- Ask open questions such as "How are you feeling?"
- Summarise and reflect back what the person has said

DO allow space for the person to talk

DO be empathetic, compassionate and validate the person's experiences and feelings e.g. "I am so sorry, what has happened is awful and I can't even begin to imagine what you must be going through".

DO be clear and informative e.g. explain what happens next and why you are following certain processes

DO be gentle and help people to explore options for support where appropriate: "Have you any questions?" "What can I/we do to help?"

DO follow up and check-in

DO ask questions about the person who has died i.e. "How would you like me to refer to them?" "Would you like to talk about them?" "About their suicide?" "Can you tell me what they were like?"

DO have an inclusive approach and offer support to the wider friends/family circle if you can



DON'TS

DON'T be cold, harsh or regimented when interacting with recently bereaved people

DON'T forget about the wider family / circle of the person who died by suicide

DON'T deliver potentially upsetting information without privacy or checking to ensure appropriateness, & whether right time/space

DON'T make comparisons about suicide bereavement to bereavement generally.

DON'T assume you know what the bereaved person is experiencing or feeling

DON'T make assumptions about grief and the 'right' length of time

DON'T use language that may further traumatise the bereaved person or share unnecessary information

DON'T forget this is often a 'life shattering' and 'catastrophic' event in a bereaved person/family's life