

Top Tips for BEING PRESENT with bereaved parents



Listen

Parents need to form a narrative around the death and helping them to feel heard is one of the most powerful things you can do.

Acknowledge, and don't avoid

I am so sorry that [child's name] died, rather than changing subject



Validate

Whatever they are feeling, e.g "it is understandable that you..."

Use the child's name

Share memories if you knew the child, and ask about them if you didn't: "tell me about..."

Ask if they would like to share memories, or photos.

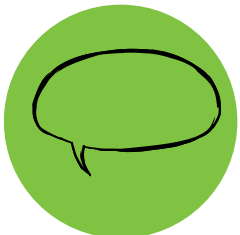


Be human

It's OK to show your own emotion - parents appreciate this - as long as you are not overcome by that emotion.

Allow expression of distressing emotion

One of the most challenging things we can do is sit with distressing emotions as they show up.



Use families own language

Use the words 'dead' or 'died' in conjunction with families own language.. Avoid introducing your own metaphors

Avoid using "at least"



Signpost

Gently to further support "Would it be helpful to...?"

Sometimes words are not needed, and simply being there, showing you care, and listening, is enough.