

## Things Not to Say to Your Grief Clients or Grieving Friends and Family:

Jill Johnson-Young, LCSW

### Kids:

Use of words that are not clear about death

**No:** God needed another angel  
Their loved one is always watching them  
Good people die young  
They wanted to go home  
They will be waiting for you  
Linking the death to the child's behavior  
There was some kind of plan that included their loved one dying  
They are in a better place  
You need to be strong  
Don't cry and make your adults sad

**DO:** They loved you and if they had a choice they would not have died  
You can always talk to them  
It's nice if they come to visit you  
You do not have to visit the cemetery/walk up to the casket/be part of the funeral  
There was nothing they could do to stop them from dying  
It's okay, and normal, to cry when someone dies

### Adults:

- *Time heals all wounds*
- *You need to put this behind you.*
- *Grief lasts forever*
- *Everything happens for a reason*
- *It was not meant to be.*
- *Why didn't you\_\_\_\_\_ (in regard to the illness or manner of death)*
- *I thought you would be more upset.*
- *He brought this on himself.*
- *Everything happens for a reason.*
- *It is not good to visit the grave so often.*
- *Others have it worse than you.*
- *Are you over her yet? She's been gone a long time.*
- *You must be strong.*
- *You know that he cannot get into heaven until you accept his death.*
- *Why are you still crying?*
- *She wouldn't want you to be so sad.*
- *If you separate his ashes, he will never get to heaven.*
- *You are still young; you can always remarry.*
- *You never really got to know the baby.*
- *At least the other twin lived.*

- *God wanted him more than you.*
- *Heaven needed another angel.*
- *God will never give you more than you can handle.*
- *I know just how you feel.*
- *Don't let the children see your sadness.*
- *You do have other children.*
- *At least she lived a long life, many people die young*
- *He is in a better place*
- *She brought this on herself*
- *There is a reason for everything*
- *Aren't you over him yet, he has been dead for awhile now*
- *You can have another child still. She was such a good person*
- *God wanted her to be with him I know how you feel*
- *She did what she came here to do and it was her time to go*
- *Be strong*
- *You can always have another baby*
- *You are young enough to remarry*
- *God needed another angel*
- *They went to sleep*
- *They wanted to go live with God*
- *I lost my\_\_\_\_\_ too. Let me tell you what helped.*
- *Be glad they are out of pain.*
- *Everything happens for a reason*
- *He ended his life tot spare you pain*
- *It's time to get rid of their stuff*
- *Dating means you don't miss them*
- *He's in a better place*
- *Just be happy he's not in pain anymore.*
- *You'll get married again*
- *"You can always have other children"*
- *At least you have your other children.*
- *for you to get yourself together.*
- *I'm sure it will all be better soon.*
- *God's plans are always the best.*
- *It must have been what He intended.*
- *Don't cry in front of the children.*
- *How are you doing?*
- *They're in a better place.*
- *Please let me know if there's anything I can do for you.*
- *You can always...*

***What you can and should say to adults:***

- *I wish I'd been there- I was uncomfortable with someone dying*
- *I will bring you dinner on XX night.*

- *Let me come over and (do your lawn, bring you groceries, take care of your laundry)*
- *I am here for you. You don't have to talk. I will just be here for you.*
- *I hope the service was what you wanted/needed*
- *I will always remember XXX about your loved one.*
- *You did everything you could with what you knew*
- *They knew how much you loved them*
- *Let me just sit with you*





*When Gene Kelly's wife Jeanne Coyne died, Gene withdrew from everyone and shut himself up in a back room of his house. One night, there was a knock at the kitchen door. When Gene didn't answer, the caller kept knocking. "There's nobody home," said Gene. "I know. That's why I came to be with you." When Gene opened the door, it was Fred Astaire. He'd brought sodas and sandwiches. The two of them sat together all night long, without saying a word. Several years earlier, when Fred's wife had died, Gene had done the same thing.*

*(Fred Kelly, Gene's brother told this story to the Arizona Daily Star.)*