Things Not to Say to Your Grief Clients or Grieving Friends and Family:
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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 to 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 hat 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.)