

## *Communicating with Families Experiencing a Pregnancy Loss*

DOs and DON'Ts of Communicating with Families Experiencing a Pregnancy Loss	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What to Say</b></p> <p>“I’m sorry”</p> <p>“I wish things would have ended differently”</p> <p>“I don’t know what to say”</p> <p>“I feel sad” or “I am sad for you”</p> <p>“How are you doing will all of this?”</p> <p>“Tell me how you feel”</p> <p>“Tell me more, I’d like to know”</p> <p>“Can you tell me what happened today?”</p> <p>“What is going on right now?”</p> <p>“What is the hardest part for you right now?”</p> <p>“What can I do for you?”</p> <p>“This isn’t what you expected...”</p> <p>“I’m here and I want to listen”</p> <p>“Do you have any questions?”</p> <p>“We can talk again later”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What Not to Say</b></p> <p>“This happened for the best”</p> <p>“It could be worse”</p> <p>“You can have more children”</p> <p>“Time will heal”</p> <p>“You have an angel in heaven”</p> <p>“It’s good your baby died before you got to know him/ her well”</p> <p>“It was not meant to be”</p> <p>“Over time you will forget your baby”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What to Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the patients’ loss</li> <li>• Listen to the patients and families</li> <li>• Answer questions honestly</li> <li>• Allow time for discussion and support</li> <li>• Be comfortable showing emotions</li> <li>• Be comfortable touching the baby</li> <li>• Use simple and straightforward language</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What Not to Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not avoid questions</li> <li>• Do not argue with patients and their families</li> <li>• Do not forget to support partners/ relatives</li> <li>• Do not use medical jargon</li> <li>• Do not call the baby a “fetus” or “it”</li> </ul>
<p>Adapted from van Aerde J, Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS). Guidelines for health care professionals supporting families experiencing a perinatal loss. Paediatr Child Health. 2001 Sep;6(7):469–90.<sup>11</sup></p>	

For more information, please refer to the complete report by visiting our website:  
<http://www.pcmch.on.ca>



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