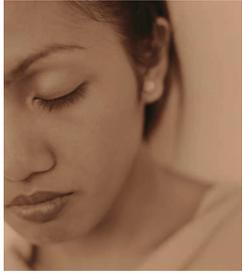


Don't *Sympathize*



Don't tell me that you "know how I feel" unless you have also lost a child. You won't understand my pain, so I probably won't talk about it. Instead, please ask me how I am doing today, how I feel.

Don't *Abandon Me*

If we used to have coffee every Saturday morning, let's still have coffee. I may reject your invitation, but please keep asking, because eventually I will say yes.

Let Me *Cry*

My heart is breaking and the pain is beyond words. Sometimes I just need to cry. Don't say anything, because you can't make it better...just let me grieve when my loss and emotions overwhelm me.



Don't Ask Me To *Call* If I Need Anything

I probably won't call. I probably won't even know what I need or have the energy to pick up a phone. But I would love to hear from you every now and again.

This brochure was created in memory of **Joshua Samuel Hughes, who was tragically killed at the young age of 21 in an automobile accident.**



His mother, **Cindy Hughes** founded the **J.O.S.H. Foundation (Joining Others Seeking Healing)** to provide support to parents and families who have lost a child (any age and in any manner).

The **J.O.S.H. Foundation** is currently working on a project to bring an "Angel of Hope" Memorial Garden to Maryland. To help support our mission, or to find more resources for grieving parents, please visit our website at www.joshfoundation.org.



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Dos and Don'ts

For Friends of
Bereaved Parents

☰ Hold me, touch me, tell me you care. Bear with me through the uncharted territory that is my grief.

Do Allow *Alone Time*



There are going to be times when I need to be alone, just to search within myself to find hope. I am a new person now.

Just *Listen Quietly*

Take the time to listen without comment or judgment when I talk about how my child's death has changed me.

Do Offer To *Help Me*

Call or visit me, bring a meal that I can heat up for my family, take my other children out, go grocery shopping for me, clean, walk the dog...all of the normal, everyday things that most take for granted, but that I don't have the energy or mindset to do.



Don't *Avoid Me*

The social isolation becomes the secondary wound of a survivor. Be patient and loving.

Don't Take It *Personally*

If I don't call you as often, or I cancel our plans, don't take it personally. I won't be a good friend right now because I will be moody, I will cry at the drop of a dime, and I will change my mind about everything. Accept my "unreasonable" outbursts. That have nothing to do with you and I still need your friendship.

Don't Try To *Fix Me*



Don't tell me,
"Everything will be okay"
"They are in a better place"
"Sometimes, things happen for a reason"
These phrases will not make the pain I feel any less debilitating.

You Can *Talk To Me Like a Person*

If you knew my child, don't be afraid to talk about him. You can't say anything wrong, because the worst has already happened.

If you didn't know my child, talk to me like you would talk to any of your friends. I am still a normal person.

Realize This Is A *Lifetime Change*



Don't tell me that I need to "Get over it," or "Get on with my life." No matter how much time I spent with my child in our life, and no matter how he died or why, he will never cease to have existed. I will always love and miss him.

Don't Try To *Replace My Child*

Don't remind me how lucky I am to have my other children or that I can try to have another child soon. There is not, nor will there ever be, a replacement for the child I lost.

Do *Remember Me*

Years down the road, many will act like my child never existed. That will never happen for me. Each anniversary of his death will be as hard as the first. If you send me a "Thinking of You" card on the anniversary, it will remind me that I have your love and support, even over time.

