



Delta Gamma

1873

Collegiate Tragedy Response Procedure

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PERTINENT DEFINITIONS TO PROCEDURE

Decision Group:

The Decision Group is comprised of the collegiate chapter's Collegiate Development Specialist (CDS), Regional Collegiate Specialist (RCS), Regional Director (RD), as well as the Director: Chapter Advancement, Director: Standards and the Director of Member Services. This group convenes via conference call or email to proceed through this procedure.

Note: the RCS may be substituted throughout this procedure for the chapter's Council Appointed Coordinator (CAC) or New Chapter Coordinator (NCC), if applicable. RD may be substituted throughout this procedure for the Director: New Chapter Development

Recent Alumna:

For the purposes of this procedure, a recent alumna is defined as an alumna who left her collegiate chapter within the past four years, and therefore may have personal relationships with the current collegiate members of that given chapter.

Tragedy:

Webster's Dictionary defines tragedy as: "[A] very bad event that causes great sadness and often involves someone's death" or "a very sad, unfortunate, or upsetting situation: something that causes strong feelings of sadness or regret."

With this base definition, the Tragedy Response Working Group identified the following types of tragedies that can impact a chapter, campus, or the Fraternity as a whole.

- Individual Tragedy includes but is not limited to: chronic/terminal illness diagnosis, serious injury, death, or crime (hazing, assault, robbery, violence, etc.) against a collegiate new member/member or recent alumna.
- Chapter Tragedy includes but is not limited to: injury or death (accidental or criminal) of more than one collegiate new member/member, recent alumna, chapter employee, or a chapter housing incident (accidental fire, natural disaster, riot, terrorism, arson), regardless of whether or not the housing/meeting space is owned by the chapter, the University, or a third party.
- Campus Tragedy includes but is not limited to: injury or death (accidental or criminal) of more than one student, faculty or campus representative on campus, crime affecting more than one student on campus (hazing, mass violence, robberies, assaults, etc.), fire, natural disaster, terrorism, or riot.

When one of these types of tragedies occurs and Delta Gamma members are affected, it is the Fraternity's responsibility to work with the University/Fraternity Sorority Life Adviser (FSA) to respond accordingly and provide organized, timely, and likely, ongoing support to those members.

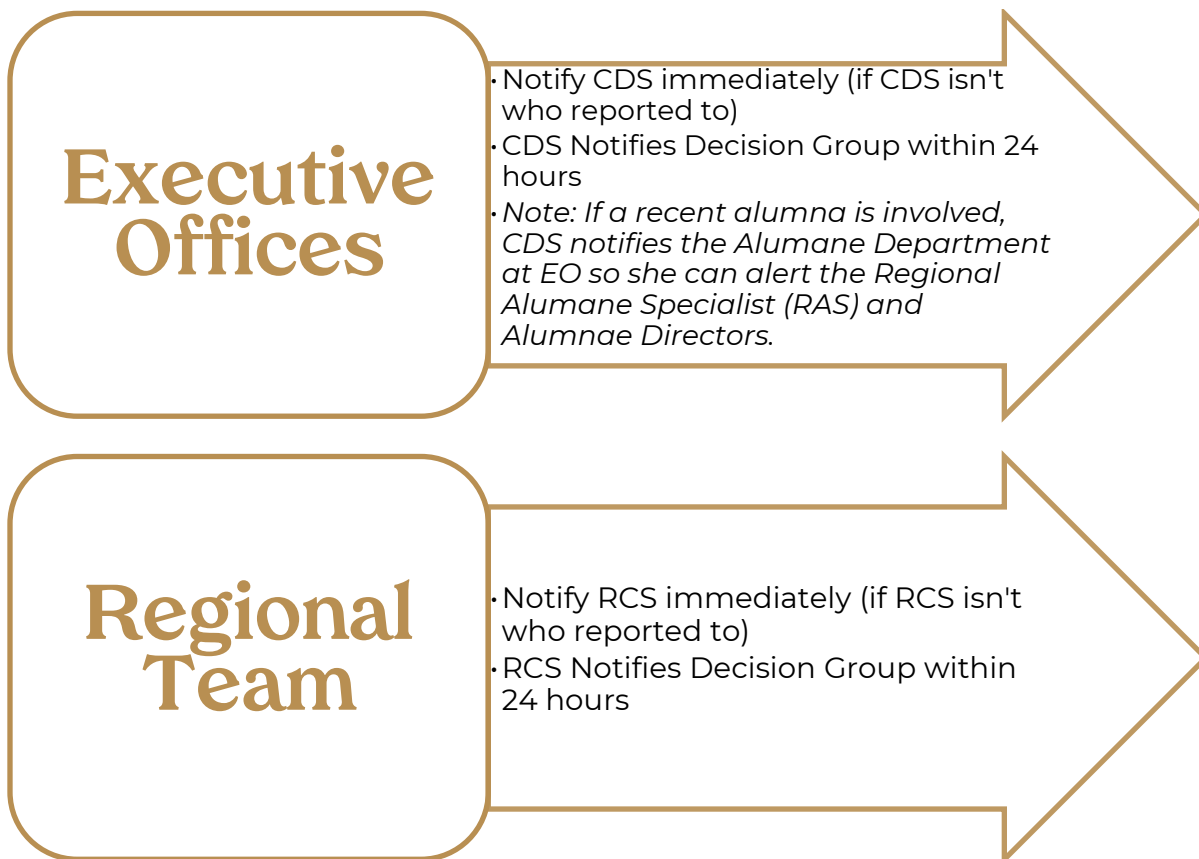
Thus, the Collegiate Chapter Tragedy Response Procedures were developed to provide collegiate chapters, advisers, and alumnae with organized, guided responses to tragic incidents and to ensure that all Delta Gammas affected by a tragedy receive and/or have access to appropriate support for their needs.

Note: While sexual assaults are definitely tragedies, the complexity and sensitivity of sexual assault warrants being addressed via a separate resource developed by the Fraternity's partnership with One Student.

Relevant Policies:

- Crisis Management Procedures, Section 6: [Collegiate Chapter Officers Manual](#)
- [Crisis Communication Policy](#)
- Memorial Ceremony Options, [Rituals Handbook](#)

POSSIBLE TRAGEDY REPORTED TO

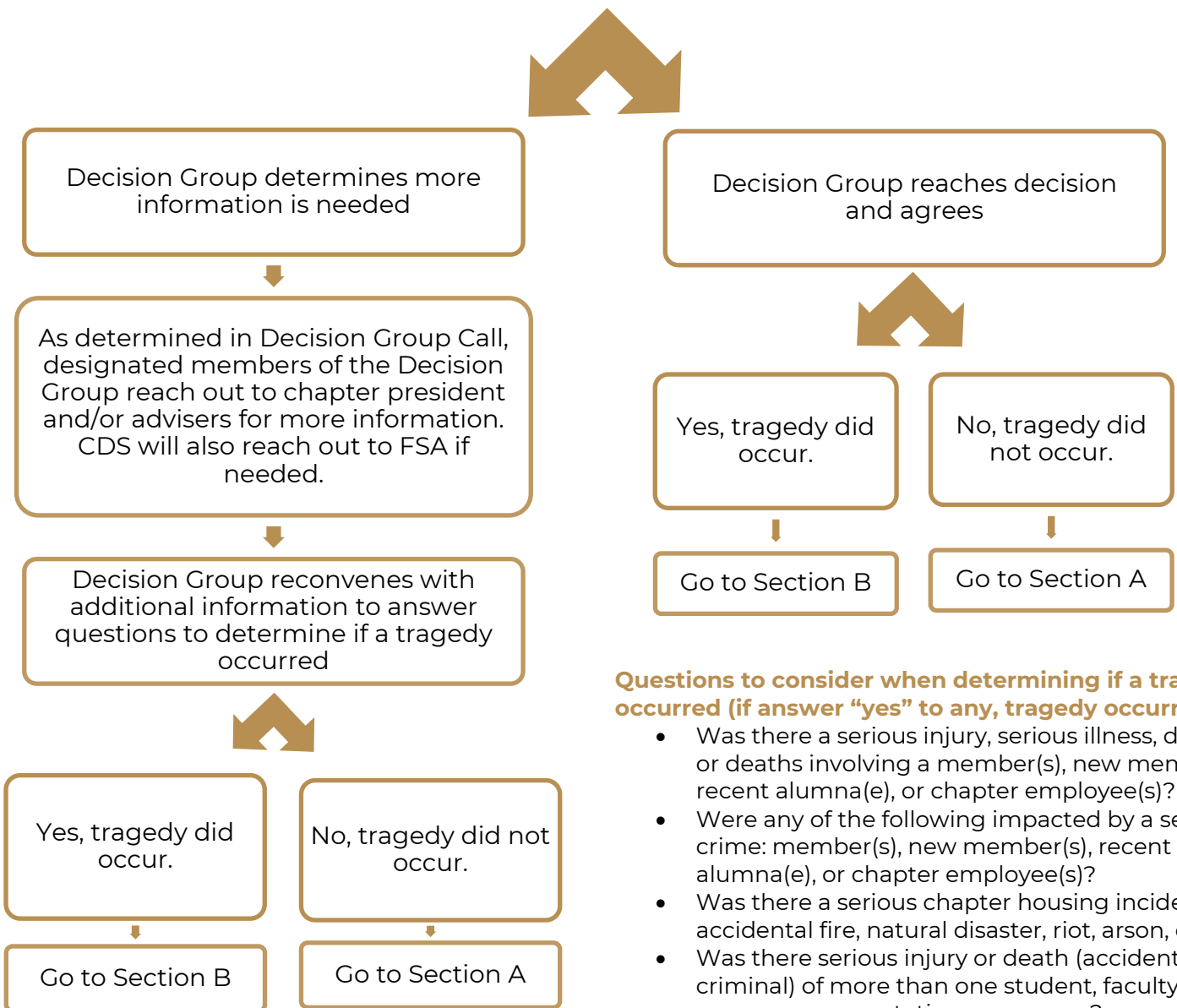


NOTES FOR ENTIRE PROCEDURE

- The CDS, RCS and RD provide chapter-specific guidance and perspective, while the Director of Member Services, Director: Standards and Director: Chapter Advancement provide consistency and consultation, as they participate in ALL Decision Group calls.
- The CDS will send an email to any member of the Decision Group with updates as decisions are made by the majority of the Decision Group, if they were not present/unable to attend the call.
- The CDS will also provide information to other key stakeholders as outlined in the Crisis Communication Procedure so all appropriate parties remain informed of any pertinent developments.
- The CDS will also provide information to the FSA/University point of contact, if deemed appropriate, so all relevant parties remain informed of any pertinent developments.

TRAGEDY RESPONSE PROCEDURE - DETERMINING WHETHER A TRAGEDY OCCURRED

Within 24 hours CDS, RCS & RD, in conjunction with the Director: Chapter Advancement, Director: Standards and Director of Member Services (referred to as Decision Group) work to determine if the occurrence is a tragedy based on the questions below and follow one of the following routes:



SECTION A – A TRAGEDY DID NOT OCCUR

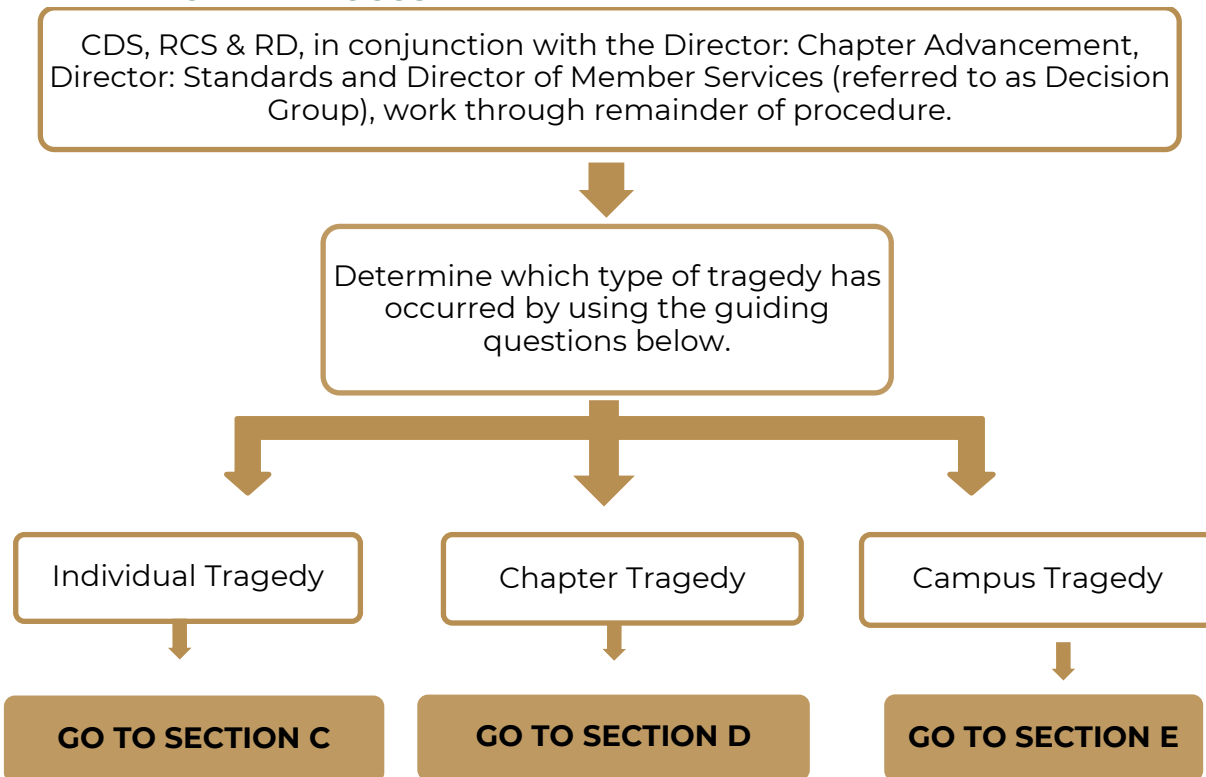
CDS

- Track outcome of Decision Group call via emailed Call Summary
- Follow up with FSA (if applicable/appropriate)

RCS

- Track Honor Board's progress (if applicable)
- Collaborate with RD and other appropriate regional team members to support the chapter following the occurrence that led to the call

SECTION B - A TRAGEDY DID OCCUR



Questions to consider when determining if an *Individual Tragedy* occurred (if answer “yes” to any, *Individual Tragedy* occurred):

- Was there a serious injury, death, or chronic/terminal illness involving a collegian, new member, or recent alumna?
- Were any of the following impacted by a serious crime: a collegian, new member, or recent alumna?
- Was there an occurrence involving a collegian, new member, or recent alumna that the Decision Group feels is an Individual Tragedy?

Questions to consider when determining if a *Chapter Tragedy* occurred (if answer “yes” to any, *Chapter Tragedy* occurred):

- Were there injuries or deaths of more than one collegian, new members, or recent alumnae?
- Was there a serious injury, death, or chronic/terminal illness involving a chapter employee?
- Were any of the following impacted by a serious crime: more than one collegian, more than one new member, or more than one recent alumna?
- Was there a serious chapter housing incident (i.e., accidental fire, natural disaster, riot, terrorism, robbery, etc.)?
- Was there an occurrence involving more than one collegian, new member, or recent alumna that the Decision Group feels is a Chapter Tragedy?

Questions to consider when determining if a *Campus Tragedy* occurred (if answer “yes” to any, *Campus Tragedy* occurred):

- Were there injuries or deaths of more than one student, faculty members, or campus representatives?
- Was more than one student impacted by a criminal act (mass violence, hazing, campus violence, terrorism, etc.)?
- Was more than one student impacted by a disaster (natural disaster, riot, fire, etc.)?
- Was there an occurrence involving members of the campus community that the Decision Group feels is a Campus Tragedy?

SECTION C - INDIVIDUAL TRAGEDY OCCURRED

1. CDS, RCS & RD, in conjunction with the Director: Chapter Advancement, Director: Standards and Director of Member Services (referred to as Decision Group), work through remainder of procedure.
2. The Decision Group decides upon a nuanced support plan in response to the Individual Tragedy. They should consider each of the following support options:

In-Person Meeting

- Meeting in person may help reduce the amount of panic or gossip related to the tragedy.
- This should only occur if the meeting can be led by someone with an appropriate disposition and skill set for discussing such issues.
- Only facts should be presented, including campus resources.
- This may not always be appropriate if the tragedy is of a sensitive nature.
- Should a visit be made by a Fraternity official?

Identify Resources

- CDS should check for the Campus Resource Worksheet on file and share with the chapter president.
- Community resources or on-campus counseling services may be contacted and made available to members.

Personal Outreach

- Should parents or families or specific members be called by the Executive Director?
- Should cards or flowers be sent by the Regional Team or EO?
- Please note that in the case of a death, card or flowers or donations are predetermined by Council protocol.
- Other arrangements to consider may be funeral attendance, meal coordination for families, etc.

Communication Plan

- Collaborate with the Marketing & Communications team at EO to determine which audiences should receive communication about the given tragedy. Audiences to consider include chapter members, parents, local alumnae, alumnae of that chapter, general press release and social media posts.

3. Once a custom support plan has been agreed upon, proceed to [Section F: On-Going Support](#). Following the call, CDS sends a Call Summary to the Decision Group to be distributed.

SECTION D - CHAPTER TRAGEDY OCCURRED

1. CDS, RCS and RD, in conjunction with the Director: Chapter Advancement, Director: Standards and Director of Member Services (referred to as Decision Group), work through remainder of procedure.
2. The Decision Group decides upon a nuanced support plan in response to the Chapter Tragedy. They should consider each of the following support options:

In-Person Meeting

- Meeting in person may help reduce the amount of panic or gossip related to the tragedy.
- This should only occur if the meeting can be led by someone with an appropriate disposition and skill set for discussing such issues.
- Only facts should be presented, including campus resources.
- This may not always be appropriate if the tragedy is of a sensitive nature.
- Should a visit be made by a Fraternity official?

Identify Resources

- CDS should check for the Campus Resource Worksheet on file and share with the chapter president.
- Community resources or on-campus counseling services may be contacted and made available to members.

Personal Outreach

- Should parents or families or specific members be called by the Executive Director?
- Should cards or flowers be sent by the Regional Team or EO?
- Please note that in the case of a death, card or flowers or donations are predetermined by Council protocol.
- Other arrangements to consider may be funeral attendance, meal coordination for families, etc.

Communication Plan

- Collaborate with the Marketing & Communications team at EO to determine which audiences should receive communication about the given tragedy. Audiences to consider include chapter members, parents, local alumnae, alumnae of that chapter, general press release, and social media posts.

Alternative Housing

- If the chapter facility is uninhabitable, the CDS will work with the Office of Housing to create a solution (temporary housing, relocation, etc.) in conjunction with the local House Corporation Board (HCB) and Regional Housing Specialist (RHS.)

3. Once a custom support plan has been agreed upon, proceed to [Section F: On-Going Support](#). Following the call, CDS sends a Call Summary to the Decision Group

SECTION E - CAMPUS TRAGEDY OCCURRED

1. CDS, RCS and RD, in conjunction with the Director: Chapter Advancement, Director: Standards and Director of Member Services (referred to as Decision Group), work through remainder of procedure.
2. The Decision Group decides upon a nuanced support plan in response to the Campus Tragedy. They should consider each of the following support options:

In-Person Meeting

- Meeting in person may help reduce the amount of panic or gossip related to the tragedy.
- This should only occur if the meeting can be led by someone with an appropriate disposition and skill set for discussing such issues.
- Only facts should be presented, including campus resources.
- This may not always be appropriate if the tragedy is of a sensitive nature.
- Should a visit be made by a Fraternity official?

Identify Resources

- CDS should check for the Campus Resource Worksheet on file and share with the chapter president.
- Community resources or on-campus counseling services may be contacted and made available to members.
- Following a Campus Tragedy, a University response plan is likely. Consider collaborating with the FSA to utilize and support this plan.

Personal Outreach

- Should parents or families or specific members be called by the Executive Director?
- Should cards or flowers be sent by the Regional Team or EO?
- Please note that in the case of a death, card or flowers or donations are predetermined by Council protocol.
- Other arrangements to consider may be funeral attendance, meal coordination for families, etc.

Communication Plan

- Collaborate with the Marketing & Communications team at EO to determine which audiences should receive communication about the given tragedy.
- Audiences to consider include chapter members, parents, local alumnae, alumnae of that chapter, FSA/University, general press release and social media posts.

3. Once a custom support plan has been agreed upon, proceed to [Section F: On-Going Support](#). Following the call, CDS sends a Call Summary to the Decision Group to be distributed.

SECTION F - ON-GOING SUPPORT

Please reference Section G for tips on how to appropriately provide on-going support.



One (1) week out from date of tragedy: the CDS or RCS should decide which of them will check in with the ATC and relevant collegiate officers to let them know they are in everyone's thoughts and to remind them of available resources.



One (1) month out from date of tragedy: the CDS and RCS should decide which of them will check in with the ATC and relevant collegiate officers, not to bring the incident back up, but to do a "pulse and morale check" to see how the chapter and individual members are responding.



Three (3) months out from date of tragedy: the CDS and RCS should decide which of them will conduct another pulse and morale check.



Six (6) months out from date of tragedy, unless into end of the school year, the RCS and CDS should decide which of them will conduct a final pulse and morale check.



Note: Special consideration should be given to anniversaries or other triggers of the tragedy, such as the birthday of deceased members, new school year, recruitment, etc. It is at those times that the chapter or some members may experience a return of grief and helplessness. Accordingly, resources and assistance should be provided to them to allow continued healing. The advisory team chairman (ATC) and RCS will make a determination if such support is needed and determine the appropriate course of action (i.e. flowers, remembrance service, counselors available at a chapter meeting, etc.)

SECTION G - TIPS FOR PROVIDING ON-GOING SUPPORT

Tips for conducting a pulse and morale check:

- Accept and acknowledge all feelings. Let the grieving person know that it's okay to be emotional, to get angry, or to break down. Do not try to reason with them over how they should or shouldn't feel. They should feel free to express their feelings without fear of judgment, argument, or criticism.
- Be willing to sit in silence. Do not press if the grieving person doesn't feel like talking or doesn't respond to outreach. You can offer comfort and support with your silent presence and kind outreach. If meeting in person and you cannot think of something to say, just offer eye contact, a squeeze of the hand, or a reassuring hug.
- Let them talk about how their loved one died, if applicable. People who are grieving may need to tell the story over and over again, sometimes in minute detail. Be patient. Repeating the story is a way of processing and accepting the death. With each retelling, the pain lessens.
- Offer comfort and reassurance without minimizing the loss. Tell them that what they are feeling is okay. If you've gone through a similar loss, share your own experience if you thought it would help. However, don't give unsolicited advice, claim to "know" what the person is feeling, or compare your grief to theirs. The goal is merely to be present, be supportive, and to ensure they know what resources are at their disposal. Offer help on their terms by asking what would be most helpful to them, don't assume you know what they need.

Comments to avoid:

- "I know how you feel." One can never know how another may feel following a tragedy. You could, instead, ask them to tell you how they feel.
- "It's part of God's plan." or "Everything happens for a reason." This phrase can make people angry, and they often respond with, "What plan? Nobody told me about any plan." This may also unintentionally discriminate against or offend them.
- "Look at what you have to be thankful for." They know they have things to be thankful for, but right now that's not important.
- "She's in a better place now." They may or may not believe this. Keep your beliefs to yourself unless asked.
- "This is behind you now; it's time to move on." Sometimes the grieving are resistant to getting on with regular life because they feel this means "forgetting" their loved one or the tragedy that occurred. In addition, moving on is easier said than done. Grief has a mind of its own and works at its own pace.
- Statements that begin with "You should" or "You will." These statements are too directive and imply you think you have a solution to their pain. The goal of outreach is not to provide a solution; it's to provide support and to ensure they know what resources are at their disposal.

Adapted from Source: *American Hospice Foundation*