GLOBAL GRIEF NETWORK | LEARNER TOOLS

Conversation Guide: Talking With Family

Conversation Guide | Sharing needs, differences, and decisions



About this page: Families often grieve the same loss in very different ways. This guide helps you plan a conversation about what you need, how you are doing, or a decision you face together.

Before the conversation

- Choose a time when no one is rushed, and a place where people can sit comfortably.
- Decide on one main thing you want to say or ask. One clear topic usually goes further than many.
- Expect differences. One person may want to talk; another may want to stay busy. Neither is grieving wrong.

Words you might use

"I have been missing Mom a lot this week. Could we talk for a few minutes about how we are all doing?"

"I notice we grieve differently. I am not asking you to grieve my way. I would like us to understand each other."

"Something that would help me right now is _____. Is that something you could do?"

"I am not ready to decide about the house yet. Can we set a time to talk about it next month?"

If it gets hard

- Take a pause: "I need a few minutes. Can we come back to this?"
- Speak for yourself using "I" statements rather than "you always" or "you never."
- It is okay to end a conversation and try again another day.

My plan

Who I want to talk with

When and where

The main thing I want to say or ask

What I am worried might happen, and how I could respond

After the conversation: what went well, and what I want to try next time

> **In immediate danger: call 911. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** call or text **988** (US). Elsewhere, use your local emergency number and crisis line.

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