Saying goodbye to a loved one can be difficult and everyone’s grief journey is different. Our role is to offer support and resources to meet the needs of each donor family member.

**During early discussions of loved one’s prognosis:**
- Give family members time to process this news and grasp the reality of the prognosis.
- Give them time in the early moments in regards to making significant end-of-life decisions, funeral plans, etc.
- Simply be present and available to answer questions.
- Give family members permission to move at their own pace.
- And remember, numbness and shock are a natural part of grief and will help the family to come to terms with their loss.

**Shock and disbelief may at times lead to confusion or inability to concentrate.**
- Use clear and simple language. Allow for periods of silence.
- Repeat information as necessary.
- Be patient.

**Meeting the needs of a donor family may include:**
- When possible, offering food and drink to the family.
- Give family members permission to:
  - Spend time with the person who died.
  - Spend time alone.
  - Take an active role in patient care (i.e. touching their loved one, brushing their hair, participating in ‘tangible rituals’).
  - Create final memories (i.e. holding, reading to or lying with their loved one, taking handprints, clipping a lock of hair, etc.).
- Offering a supportive presence.
- Offering choices and options in their loved one’s end-of-life care.

**Supportive Language:**
- I am here to help in anyway I can.
- Is there anyone I can call for you?
- Would you like to speak with a clergy person?
- This is really difficult.
- If I am giving you too much information at once, just tell me.
- I am truly sorry you are going through this.
- Is there anything you need?
- The staff and I are here to help you.

Adapted from Caring for Donor Families Before During and After by R. Maloney and A. Wolfelt (2010)