



## Tips for Front Office Staff

A simple acronym that can help direct difficult conversations is VETS - Validate, encourage truth, support coping

- **Validation** - validate the emotions that you are hearing whether that's sadness or fear, let the person be heard, you could use phrases like: "I am so sad to hear this as well," "It can be scary when we hear about things like this."
- **Encourage truth** - an essential part of crisis response is to help contain misinformation, there may be rumors or speculation when a death happens and people often want to fill in unclear details with their own story. It's important to kindly correct misinformation as it comes up by sticking to the facts that you *do* know. Also, it's always okay to say something like "we don't know what happened or why it happened" as it's often true.
- **Support Coping** - It's good to encourage a positive outlet for grief or anxiety. You can remind people of GoFundMe accounts, or invite them to bring cards for the family to the office and find a way for individuals to find positive ways to support and connect with others on the healing journey.

Altogether, an example of this would be "This is so sad and I was also shocked when I heard about this death as well. We don't know what happened or exactly why. We are going to be collecting cards for the family here in the main office if you'd like to drop one off."