

6. Come prepared with information about where the body is and what arrangements are to be made regarding the release of the body.
7. Be ready with information about funeral arrangements.
8. Above all, do not be afraid to show emotion. And do not fear the emotion or lack of it in the family hearing the news for the first time.
9. If you can, leave a card with your name and contact number on it. Families often have questions to ask after they have absorbed the news.
10. Repeat your message in clear words and tone.
11. Don't form opinions or be critical — eg. — "What was a four-year-old doing playing on the road anyway?" Parents feel guilty enough at surviving. No one likes to be the bearer of bad news and your position is one we don't envy.

Perhaps my personal account will help make this task less awkward. My family and I are most grateful to the two men who came to our door that awful day nine years ago. They did the best they could and helped us as much as possible.

I wish again I could thank them personally. Many times, I have thought of them and remembered their concern, their compassion and their good manners.

*The author, who wishes to remain anonymous, has become actively in-*

*involved with Bereaved Families of Ontario, an organization of families who have lost a child through death.*

*This organization is prepared to help families ease the pain of losing a child to illness, accident, murder or suicide. It is a non-denominational and does not charge a fee for services.*

*The agency offers a non-judgemental atmosphere where parents and siblings can meet in groups and talk about their feelings around the death of their child/sister/brother.*

*Families are helped to understand the feelings that evolve around grief and loss and how to deal with those feelings in an appropriate fashion.*

*Only someone who has experienced this kind of loss can truly understand and that is why all counsellors are volunteer bereaved parents who have been carefully selected and trained and are supervised by professionals.*

*Bereaved Families also feels an obligation to help educate the community about parental loss and parental grief. The director is a bereaved parent and can offer assistance to families as well as support educational programs for organizations.*

*Since the inception of the organization, an OPP officer has served as a member of the Board of Directors. The current officer is Insp. Ken Turriff, career management branch.*

*For further information or referral, please call Bereaved Families of Ontario 416-440-0290.*