* Assess the meaning of the loss for each child. Pay close attention to those who have experienced other recent deaths of losses or to those who have emotional problems.

* Encourage children to ask questions about loss and death. Acknowledge that you don't have all the answers. Often there is more comfort from an honest "I don't know", than from an attempt at explanations that don't sound credible. Treat questions with respect and a willingness to help the child find his or her own answers.

* Focus on the strengths and supports the children have to get the help they need:
  - the support that comes from sharing feelings of grief or fear with others.
  - the child's support network, such as other family members, significant adults, teachers, counselors, and friends. Have each child think of someone he/she can go to for support.
  - the child's individual strengths that provide self-support.

* Talk about the natural healing process. "Over time the pain of missing (Name) won't hurt so much. That's the way it should be. It doesn't mean that you loved (Name) any less."

* Validate the child's feelings. In a crisis, people need to know that the intense sadness, confusion, anger, fear, etc. is a normal reaction to the stress of their loss. Statements such as "It must really hurt...", "I can really hear your pain...", and "It sounds like you're feeling..." can be helpful.

* Expect unusual "sensory" experiences. Over the six months following the loss, children (and adults) will often experience unusual visual, auditory, or tactile sensations. These misperceptions are more common at bedtime or when waking. Reassure the child. If you have questions about these symptoms, consult a mental health professional.

* Understand that children move through the grieving process in different ways. There is no one "correct" way for people to move through the grieving process.

* It is helpful to channel feelings into appropriate expressions of concern. It may be comforting to children to feel they have participated in some activity to express their feelings and to reach out to grieving families affected by the crisis.