

## Family Support

1. Give frequent updates to family on patient's condition
2. Advocate for family to get questions answered by physicians
3. Consult social services/chaplain/case manager for family support
4. Provide and encourage conversations in the family's preferred language
5. Invite family to participate in bedside care (i.e. washing face, lotion to hands)
6. Encourage personal items in rooms (i.e. music, pictures, blanket)
7. Ask family what is most important to them at this time:
  - Spiritual care/religious rituals
  - Family meetings with healthcare team
  - Access to the patient
  - Basic needs (work, child care, transportation)
  - Unmet urgent family healthcare needs
8. Show you care:
  - Ask questions about the patient
  - Use the patient's name
  - Assess family's understanding of patient's condition

Iowa Donor Network's **Donor Family Care Team** offers support, resources, and updates to meet the needs of each donor family. They companion each family as they navigate their grief journey, never forgetting the impact the decision to say 'yes' has had on those in need of life-enhancing and life-saving gifts.

If you would like more information on Donor Family Care, you can contact your donation representative at **800-831-4131**.

## Supportive Language:

*"He/she has suffered a severe injury, but we are doing everything possible to help him/her recover."*

*"Our team of experts is offering him/her the highest level of care possible."*

*"Our commitment is to care for him/her as we would care for our own family."*

*"Nothing could prepare you for this. I am here to help."*

*"We will take good care of him/her if you need to leave the hospital for awhile."*

## Companioning:

A term coined by Alan Wolfelt, "Companioning" captures a type of counseling relationship. In a time of grief, caregivers can "companion" a grieving person to support them through this difficult journey. Below are some companioning characteristics:

- Companioning is about walking alongside; it is not about leading or being led.
- Companioning is about bearing witness to the struggles of others; it is not about judging or directing those struggles.
- Companioning is about being present to another person's pain; it is not about taking away or relieving the pain.
- Companioning is about discovering the gifts of sacred silence; it is not about filling every painful moment with talk.
- Companioning is about being still; it is not about frantic movement forward.