

Primary objectives of the first phone call with a family following a student death

Practical One-Pager

Show calmness and openness

- Be empathic.
- Check that they have time to talk.
- Talk slowly.
- Use short sentences.
- Be prepared to sit with the silence.
- Be open to discussing their son or daughter, or what happened, in as much detail as the family member wants.

Establish three key details

- 1 Who, in the family, is the main point of contact.
- 2 The best email address and phone number to use.
- 3 That you are the point of contact for the University.

Important: Whenever possible, ensure that the University point of contact stays the same.

As the University's point of contact, you should ideally provide a mobile number (for calls and texts), or at least a direct dial number, so it is easy for the family member to keep in touch.

Convey your role

Make sure that you convey that:

- You are here to help and support the family.
- You are here to answer any questions they have at any point in the coming weeks.
- You are available and willing to meet with the family face-to-face.

Important: In this first call, you should not try to get into the detail of the practical support the University is ready to offer, unless the family ask. You can follow up later with the details.

For now, just mention the types of support you can provide, e.g., travel costs, flights and accommodation.

After the call, follow up with the family straightaway by sending an email which confirms all the key points of your conversation.

For a short video expanding on this Practical One-Pager visit plinthhouse.com/firstcall

This content is taken from our one-day training course for higher education institutions and other student-facing organisations - *Coordinating Actions and Providing Support Following a Student Death*.

Contact us and find out more the different types of training we provide at plinthhouse.com

