

# Ten Components of Explaining Brain Death

1

*Assess Staff / Family / Situation Dynamics  
& design appropriate communication plan*

2

*Provide small amounts of "up-to-date" information*

3

*Minimize the number of staff who talk to families about brain death*

4

*Choose words carefully  
Simple language vs. clinical language*

5

*Use the word "dead"  
Provide the "date/time of death"*

6

*Use visual aids (CT, x-rays etc.)*

7

*Provide family w/opportunity to observe neuro exam and give them time to ask questions*

8

*Check for family understanding  
Don't talk to patient once death is declared*

9

*Use "active listening", parroting and paraphrasing*

10

*Recognize their understanding: may require repeat and multiple explanations*