Faith Considerations When Delivering a Trauma Notification

A trauma victim's spiritual beliefs can be transformed after a traumatic event. These beliefs and practices can be a great source of resilience. Conversely, a person's faith may be challenged after a traumatic event.

General Guidelines

- Practices and beliefs that center on death and grief are varied and can greatly influence important decisions regarding loved ones.

- Research religious considerations of the family if you are aware of them before you meet.

- Just as the U.S. is culturally diverse there is religious diversity, as well.

- Be prepared to provide DN in a culturally and faithful competent manner is critical. Some death and burial customs are predicated by the victims' belief system.

- Avoid religious phrases or euphemisms such as, "It was God's will".

Difference between spirituality and religion:

According to the Chopra Center:

Religion: By definition, *religion* is a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

Spirituality: *Spirituality*, on the other hand, connotes an experience of connection to something larger than you.

Questions to ask yourself:

- ❑ How should I dress?
- ❑ Are there rules about wearing certain colors?
- ❑ Are there gender norms within the religion?
- ❑ Are there religious considerations about autopsies?
    - ❑ If so, communicate these to the Medical Examiner or Coroner.
- ❑ Is there a specified timeframe for burial?
- ❑ Are there mourning customs?

Resources:

Funeral Help Center:
https://www.funeralhelpcenter.com

Lord, J., Hook, M., English, S.J., Alkhateeb, S. (2008). Spiritually sensitive caregiving: A multi-faith handbook. Burnsville, NC: Compassion Press

Matlins, S. M., Magida, A.J. (2015). How to be a perfect stranger: The essential religious etiquette handbook (6th edition). Woodstock, Vermont: SkyLight Paths Publishing.

These resources may be helpful, but please note that the FBI does not endorse these organizations.