



# Fostering Dialogue: Recipients & Donor Families

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Possible  
communication  
between recipient  
and donor  
discussed  
throughout  
transplant process



Things to  
think about  
before  
direct  
contact with  
donor  
family

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PERSONAL QUESTIONS

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EXPECTATIONS

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HEALING FROM LOSS

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MINDS CHANGE

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH YOUR DONOR FAMILY

On occasion, recipients and donor families choose to move beyond anonymous communication to sharing of personal contact information. In these cases, our role at Intermountain Donor Services is to be a neutral party and to act as a helpful facilitator. Direct contact between donor families and recipients are always about human relationships and communication.

Most recipients have an image of what the donor family will be like. Sometimes recipients have found it to be just as they imagined. Other times, they realize after having direct contact with the donor family, their image was not the reality. As with all relationships, they can be richly rewarding, difficult, or most likely a combination of both.

*We have listed some benefits/concerns to think about prior to sharing contact information:*

- Have the opportunity to personally express sympathy for the donor family.
- Have the opportunity to tell or show how the gift has made a difference in your life.
- Have the opportunity to learn more about your donor in a direct and personal way.
- Simplifying the process of contact with the donor family.
- The donor family may ask personal questions about your illness, or your lifestyle.
- The donor family may change their mind and feel they are not ready to meet you.
- There may be different religious, cultural, racial, social or educational differences between you and the donor family.
- The donor family may still be having a difficult time with their loss.
- The donor family may want to pursue a closer relationship than you would like.
- What to say if the donor family believes that their loved one lives on in you.
- The donor family may not want to have the same amount of contact as you would like, or eventually lose contact with you.
- The donor family may be enduring financial hardship.

# The Connection

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Observe body  
language & non-verbal  
communication

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Processing



"I always wanted  
a big family...and  
now I have one."

