

*Comfort During Crisis*



**Emergency  
Chaplains**

# Emergency Chaplains



Dear Friend,

This letter comes to you on a very difficult day in your life. It also comes with my personal expression of sympathy for your loss.

Although I do not know all the circumstances of your loss, grief has also touched my life. Therefore, this letter is written with a sense of sharing in the emotional pain that the death of a loved one brings.

The information included in this booklet is provided to aid you with the difficult tasks ahead. You will find important phone numbers and helpful tips in the literature enclosed.

If there is any way that Emergency Chaplains can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to phone us at (919) 280-8908

With deepest sympathy,

*Ralph*

Ralph Thompson

Executive Director

**PO Box 14762 | Durham, NC | 27709-4762**  
**919.280.8908 | [Ralph@echap.org](mailto:Ralph@echap.org) | [www.echap.org](http://www.echap.org)**

# ***“What Do I Do Now?”***

## **Basic information for survivors**

### **1. Some things you may need to do in the next few hours:**

Notify Family and Friends

Contact a Funeral Home

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\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location of belongings:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **3. Location of the Remains of the Deceased**

\_\_\_\_\_

### **4. Do not go to the Medical Examiner’s Office.** *(see next page)*

You can obtain copies of the death certificate from the funeral home.

*[It takes varying amounts of time to obtain death certificates, medical records and autopsy and police reports. Ask officials when you can expect them.]*

### **5. For information on obtaining a report** from the investigating agency call:

**Durham Police Department (919) 560-4427**

**Durham County Sheriff: (919) 560-0897**

**NC State Highway Patrol: (919) 560-6868**

Agency report number, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Medical Examiner's Office Information**

The following information is provided to assist you in making necessary arrangements for the deceased. The exact order of events may vary in certain cases.

1. The deceased may have been taken to the North Carolina Medical Examiner's office in Raleigh, North Carolina for examination to determine the cause of death of your loved one.
2. Call the funeral home of your choice to inform them of the death and your desire to use their services. The funeral director will contact the Medical Examiner's office.
3. If you have a question, you can phone the Medical Examiner's office at 1-800-672-7024.

### ***Do not go to the Medical Examiner's office.***

4. The Medical Examiner's office is open between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
5. The Medical Examiner will normally take 24 to 48 hours before releasing the body.
6. The Medical Examiner will call your funeral home to transport the body when he has completed the examination.
7. Your funeral director will make an appointment with you to come into their office to make funeral arrangements.

**If we can be of further service to you, please call  
Emergency Chaplains at 919-475-2228.**

## Sample Letters

### To Deceased's Employer

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This letter is to inform you that my (husband, wife, etc.) died on (month, day, year).

I would appreciate information on fringe benefits, such as group life insurance coverage, pension funds, accrued vacation or sick pay, disability pay, terminal pay allowance, gratuity payments, unpaid commissions, credit union balance, service recognition awards, etc.

Please send a list of documents you require and any necessary forms to be completed.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

(Your full name - typed)

(Your address – typed)

(Your telephone number – typed)

### To Creditors

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This letter is to inform you that my (husband, wife, etc.) died on (month, day, year).

I wish to inquire whether (his/her) loan was covered by a credit life insurance plan offered by your organization.

Please send a list of documents and/or information necessary to file a claim. I will appreciate a response at your first convenience.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

(Your full name - typed)

(Your address – typed)

(Your telephone number – typed)

# Grief Reactions

Experiencing the pain of grief may include physical, emotional and behavioral reactions. It is helpful to acknowledge and work through the grief responses. Some common grief reactions are listed below.

## Emotional Reactions

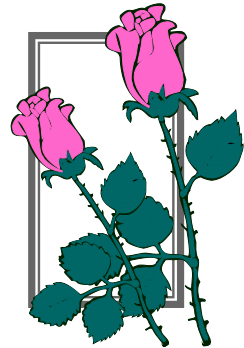
Numbness and Shock  
Disbelief and Denial  
Sadness  
Guilt  
Yearning  
Despair  
Hopelessness  
Helplessness  
Feeling of being lost  
Anger  
Bitterness

## Physical Reactions

Deep sighing  
Weakness and fatigue  
Rapid heartbeat  
Increased blood pressure  
Decrease in activity  
Muscular tension  
Decreased resistance to illness  
Weight and appetite change  
Neglect of self  
Increased sensory awareness

## Behavioral Reactions

- Blaming others
- Apathetic regarding activities
- Preoccupied
- CRYING
- Seeking solitude
- Seeking forgiveness
- Detached from surroundings
- Disoriented to time and places
- Withdrawn from friends and activities
- Unable to concentrate



Being able to identify some common reactions allows you to know that what is happening to you is considered normal for people in grief. One of our chaplains should be able to assist you with information regarding local support groups and bereavement counselors. You can contact a Chaplain by calling Emergency Chaplains at (919) 280-8908.

## **A Word of Caution**

### **Secure Your Home**

It is common for friends and neighbors to ask what they can do for you in a time of need. Perhaps asking someone to “house sit” or keep an eye on your property during the hours of the funeral ceremonies would be a good suggestion.

### **Beware of Fraud**

Every year, survivors become vulnerable to those who prey on the suffering of others. The most vulnerable are individuals who are not accustomed to handling their own financial affairs.

There are people who will search the obituary pages of newspapers to find unsuspecting targets. Some of the fraud schemes involve someone promising to deliver a product or service. Others offer to inspect your home and then invent a problem that needs immediate and costly repair.

A good rule of thumb is to never do business with anyone before checking his or her reputation with the local Better Business Bureau.

## **How Do I Choose A Funeral Home?**

**Reputation** – Many families prefer to use a funeral home they are familiar with. Perhaps you have visited a funeral home and felt comfortable with the surroundings or staff.

**Location** – Is it important that the funeral home is close to your home or other family members?

**Price** – Federal law requires that all price information concerning funeral goods and services to be available by phone. You may also obtain price information in written form upon request.

## **Making Funeral Arrangements**

The following items will assist you in making funeral arrangements. If some items are not available, your Funeral Director may be able to help you in obtaining them.

**Vital Records** – An important part of the arrangement process is the recording of vital personal data that will form the official record of death. The items listed below are required for the completion of a death certificate.

- ✓ Deceased's full legal name
- ✓ Deceased's address
- ✓ Deceased's social security number
- ✓ Deceased's date of birth
- ✓ Deceased's place of birth
- ✓ Deceased's father's name
- ✓ Deceased's mother's maiden name
- ✓ Deceased's usual Occupation
- ✓ Deceased's highest level of education

**Veteran's Benefits** — In order to apply for these benefits you will need Veterans Administration identification, such as discharge papers, military service number or identification card. This information is required if it is desired for the burial to include military honors.

**Insurance Policies** — If the deceased person made pre-arrangements, purchased one or more burial policies, and/or had life insurance policies you should take them to the meeting with the Funeral Director.



**Newspaper Notices** — The Funeral Director should notify local papers as well as papers in other cities. It may be helpful to list the survivors on a piece of paper. There is a section in this booklet that will aid you in gathering this information. The newspapers are interested in the activities of individuals. A list of clubs, organizations, church membership, etc., will be helpful.

**Clothing** — Families often ask about clothing. It is the policy of most funeral homes to completely dress all bodies, including undergarments. It will be helpful if you bring the clothing to the meeting with the Funeral Director. The type of clothing is usually optional and often reflects the individual's taste.

**Jewelry and other items** — It is a common practice to have the deceased wear jewelry that was meaningful to them or the family during the visitation. It is also common to place certain items in the casket that were particularly meaningful to the deceased, such as stuffed animals or meaningful family pictures. Make sure you clarify with the Funeral Director which items are to be removed before the burial and which items are to be left.

**Photograph** — A recent photograph of the deceased can be of great help to the funeral director. The same photo may be used for the obituary. Be aware that many newspapers charge to print photos.

**Cemetery Deed** — If the deceased person had already purchased a plot in a local cemetery, you should make sure you know where the deed to the plot is. This will be needed at the Cemetery Office when you make arrangements for the opening and closing of the grave. It will also help the Funeral Director in coordinating the services with the cemetery.

**Use this space to record any details  
needed in preparing for the funeral**

Names of immediate family members who have already died:

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Names of surviving parents, if any:

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Names of any surviving children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, or great-great-grandchildren, along with their spouse's names:

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Names of surviving brothers and sisters, if any — along with their spouse's names:

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## **Questions to think about when preparing the eulogy:**

- 1.** What one adjective would you use to describe him or her?  
Why?
- 2.** Did he/she have any particular loves or hobbies?
- 3.** Did he/she enjoy any particular songs? Poems? Bible passages?
- 4.** If you could name one value or lesson he/she most wanted to teach the next generation, what would it be?
- 5.** What one achievement or accomplishment would make his/her eyes light up when you mentioned it?
- 6.** What were some of his/her favorite phrases or sayings?
- 7.** Did he/she ever put anything up on the wall—a picture or motto that expresses who he/she was?
- 8.** Did he/she have any nicknames? What was the story behind the nickname?
- 9.** Was there a cause or a movement that he/she felt deeply about and supported with his/her time and resources?
- 10.** If he/she could have the pastor say one thing during the funeral, what do you think it would be?
- 11.** Why do you think this world is a little different because of him/her?
- 12.** What do you want people to know most about him/her?

## Other Important Details

- ◆ **Contact the bank** - especially if there are joint accounts.
- ◆ **Obtain death certificates** - these are available from the funeral home. They are often necessary for insurance and many other legal purposes. A minimum of six certified copies is often suggested.
- ◆ **Check current bills** - utilities, phone, loans, credit cards, etc.
- ◆ **Locate titles of ownership** – auto, property, etc.
- ◆ **You may want to contact an attorney** – settling an estate can be a complex affair, especially if there is no will.
- ◆ **Check employee benefits** – notify employer of the death to secure any available death benefits.
- ◆ **Civil Service** – government employees may be eligible for benefits.
- ◆ **Contact Social Security** – secure death benefits. You should contact the Social Security department at (800) 772-1213 or online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) for more information on what is required.
- ◆ **Check memberships** – some groups offer group life insurance.
- ◆ **Gather insurance policies** – remember to check credit cards and loans for credit life policies.
- ◆ **Automobile insurance** – if the death is the result of an automobile crash, it may be possible to file a claim for incurred medical fees, vehicle damage or other benefits.
- ◆ **Veterans benefits** – If the deceased person is a veteran, you should contact the Veterans Administration Regional Office Federal Building, 251 N. Main St. Winston Salem, NC 27155 Telephone: (800) 827-1000. You can find more information about them online at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/winstonsalem/>.

## Lifestyle Tips For People In Grief

- ✓ Discipline yourself to eat regularly, even if you feel as if you cannot eat as much as usual.
  - ✓ Eat a balanced diet.
  - ✓ Avoid sweets and fatty foods.
  - ✓ Drink 8 - 10 glasses of water per day.
  - ✓ Schedule 20 to 30 minutes of vigorous exercise daily. CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN ABOUT APPROPRIATE EXERCISE FOR YOUR AGE AND CONDITION.
  - ✓ Concentrate on deep breathing in the open air.
  - ✓ Concentrate on keeping good posture.
  - ✓ Try to catch a nap during the day.
  - ✓ Avoid alcoholic beverages altogether. Alcohol is a depressant.
  - ✓ Avoid caffeine - hot or cold. This stimulates you and then lets you down.
  - ✓ Avoid solitary TV watching.
  - ✓ Keep regular hours.
  - ✓ Keep a balance between work, relationship and aloneness.
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# Durham Area Funeral Homes and Services

Burthey Funeral Services.....	919-682-0327
Clements Funeral Service .....	919-286-1224
Cremation Society of the Carolinas.....	919-571-3300
Ellis D. Jones and Sons.....	919-688-1323
Fisher Funeral Parlor .....	919-682-3276
Hall-Wynne Funeral Service .....	919-688-6387
Hanes Funeral Service .....	919-598-9968
Holloway Memorial Funeral Home .....	919-598-8496
Hudson Funeral Home.....	919-596-8269
Professional Mortuary Service .....	919-286-2576
Quality Mortuary and Cremation.....	919-598-1416
Scarborough and Hargett Funeral Home.....	919-682-1171

## Military Notification Through Red Cross

Red Cross Emergency Communications Center.....877-272-7337



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919.399.9468 | Office@EChap.org | www.EChap.org

# GRIEF SHARE



## HOW GRIEF SHARE WORKS

It may be hard for you to feel optimistic about the future right now. If you've lost a spouse, child, family member or friend, you've probably found there are not many people who understand the deep hurt you feel.

This can be a confusing time when you feel isolated and have many questions about things you've never faced before.

GriefShare groups meet weekly to help you face these challenges and move toward rebuilding your life.

For more information and to find a group near you:

[www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

Or call Emergency Chaplains at (919) 399-9468