



Ebenezer Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Grief and Recovery

Prepared and Presented

By

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(Several professionals and persons who are in the grief process or have gone through the process have contributed graciously to making this presentation a reality. Their valuable input has proven to be very valuable to this document and report.)

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This document is designed to prepare the reader for the inevitable time; when death comes.

Some deaths are expected, based on age or sickness. Others come suddenly and leave you stunned.

This presentation will help to guide you through the processes of death, however it may come.

When death comes, there are many decisions that are to be made. There are some very important things that you should know before making any decisions. This is a crucial time when many mistakes are made, even in the midst of shock, and can be very costly. For example:

- a. Is the decedent an organ donor**
- b. Does the decedent have any final wishes about a funeral, a memorial, the place, (home, church, funeral chapel or graveside) or cremation?**
- c. Regarding cremation, neither the Bible nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church has any disposition on this matter. This is entirely a family's personal decision, and it may be a desire of the decedent or a financial one. (Finances will be discussed in great detail later on page 4)**

- 1. The news of death leaves you going through these stages:**
 - a. In Denial***
 - b. Angry***
 - c. Bargaining***
 - d. Depression***
 - e. Acceptance***
 - f. Numb**
 - g. In Shock**
 - h. Confused**
 - i. Sad**

j. Guilty

*Suggested reading-Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Death and dying. 1969

2. Decisions to make at the Hospital:
 - a. Choosing a Funeral home. What to consider?
 - b. To do or not to do an autopsy. Sometimes the family will not have a choice.
 - c. Papers to sign
 - d. Is the decedent an organ donor?
 - e. Cremation or not

3. Breaking the news to young children:
 - a. How much or how little to share
 - b. When and how to break the news will differ on the circumstances and the age of the children.

4. Decisions to make at home:
 - a. Funeral to plan:

Date: (based on availability of church, Pastor, out of town family arriving, etc.),

Place: (there are four basic places where a funeral is conducted: the home of the deceased, the church, at the funeral home, or at the graveside,
 - b. Time of funeral:
 - c. Contact family and close friends. If the volume of phone calls and arrangements becomes overwhelming, do not hesitate to ask for assistance from someone close to you
 - d. Papers to find
 - e. People to call
 - f. Shopping for the Funeral
 - g. Contacting the job of the deceased
 - h. Finding out what benefits are due to the family

- i. When you will be required to return: keys, badges etc. to the employer
 - j. If you will be required to clean out the: Office, desk, locker, or place where the deceased worked; be sure to take someone with you, because this can be very painful.
5. When you meet with the Funeral Director:
 - a. As painful as this meeting is, this is a business transaction
 - b. Make decisions with your head, and not with your heart
 - c. Count the cost (according to the Wisconsin-based National Funeral Directors Association, the average cost is around \$6,500.)
 - d. Know that you don't have to buy everything from the funeral home. By law you can buy the casket online and have it shipped to the funeral home, (Called a donated casket) That is the biggest ticket item next to the grave plot..
 - e. Find out how many limousines come with the basic package, and the cost of each additional limousine.
 - f. Get an itemized statement of cost from the funeral home.
 - g. Remember you will have to live after the funeral is over!
6. Establishments to contact:
 - a. If you do not have an attorney, contact your banks concerning any existing accounts
 - b. Notify creditors and credit card companies
 - c. Contact your job
 - d. Inform them of the death, and request time off. Find out how much paid time is allotted for funerals. If you need more time ask.

- e. Be honest and open with your supervisor about how much time you will need. If you need more time-ask. Employers are usually very kind at these difficult times
 - f. Contacting Social Security to secure death benefits.
 - a) Make an appointment to see a Social Security advisor.
 - b) Don't just show up, because you may waste a lot of time waiting to be seen.
 - c) Don't go alone!
 - d) If you must go to your deceased place of employment, for whatever reason, please don't go alone!
7. What to do if the Burial will be local:
- a. Choosing a Cemetery
 - b. Ascertain if you already have a plot
 - c. The cost varies from place to place
 - d. Things to consider: vault, open grave, location in cemetery
8. What to do if the Burial will be overseas:
- a. Arranging to ship the body
 - b. Cost of shipping
 - c. What you need to do
 - d. What the Funeral Director will take care of
9. What to do on the day of the funeral:
- a. Arrange for someone to stay close to you, to make last minute decisions and assignments.
 - b. Have someone stay at your home for security.
 - c. Arrange for someone to stay with you for a few days.
 - d. Don't try to mask your emotions: Reach out for help and be honest with your friends and family about what you need from them during this difficult time. You may prefer to be alone sometimes or you may need help with

household responsibilities; don't be afraid to ask for exactly what you need

- e. Be sure to eat a meal
- f. You, along with the funeral director and Pastor, are in charge of the Funeral service. How long or how short to keep it, based on your emotions, at the moment. The officiating minister will always check with the family before the service begins to be sure that they are ready for the service to begin, and for any last minute changes.
- g. Avoid the last minute requests, from well meaning individuals, to participate on the program

10. What to do if you have difficulty:

- a. Eating
- b. Sleeping
- c. Making decisions
- d. Thinking clearly
- e. Thoughts of suicide
- f. Reach out for help and be honest with your Pastor, friends and family about what you need from them during this difficult time. You may prefer to be alone sometimes or you may need help with household responsibilities; don't be afraid to ask for exactly what you need
- g. Your Pastor has, or should have, a network of trained professionals who stand ready to assist

11. Important personal information that you need to know and have.

- a. Do we have a joint account?
- b. What bank do we use?
- c. Is my name on the account?
- d. Do we have a single or dual signature?
- e. Does the decedent have a life insurance policy?

- f. Does my job provide death benefits?
- g. With whom did the decedent have insurance?
- h. Where do we bank?
- i. Where are these important documents?
- j. Know the Social security number of your spouse, children and grandchildren
- k. Does the decedent have a valid will?
- l. Where is the will?
- m. Who is the trustee/executor of the will?
- n. Is the decedent an organ donor?

12. How to communicate with a person in grief?

- a. Remain calm and non-judgmental
- b. Encourage people to talk about their loss
- c. Mention the deceased by name
- d. Make several short visits
- e. Be willing to listen, especially in the evening
- f. Let them cry and express their emotions
- g. Minister to the whole family, but don't let them latch on in an unhealthy manner
- h. If the bereaved wants to talk about their loss, don't change the subject to a lighter topic
- i. Don't say that you know how they feel even if you have suffered loss. Each loss is different
- j. Don't be afraid to gently touch them in an appropriate manner. Hugs are especially appreciated!
- k. Silence is okay! You don't have to talk
- l. They appreciate the comfort of your presence
- m. Don't tell the bereaved how good they look to avoid talking about how bad they feel

Grief Management:

Share your feelings with others. Find good listeners who will understand that your feelings are normal responses to your grief. It is good to remember and speak of the life of your loved one. Share and treasure your memories with family and friends.

Maintain hope. Be patient with yourself. Your sorrow may diminish slowly. You will survive, although there may be times when you feel that you will not. You can find healing and hope for the future if you are patient with yourself and remember that, although you will never be the same again, you will be able to be happy again.

As you grieve, you may find that you feel tired or even worn out. You may experience physical symptoms such as aches and pains, weight loss, weight gain or heart palpitations. Listen to your body and take care of yourself. It may be difficult for you to eat and sleep, but it's important to rest and take care of yourself the best you can

Give Yourself a Break

Try not to expect too much of yourself right away. It may be hard to work, take care of the kids, or focus on projects for a while. Give yourself more time than usual to get things done, since you may be distracted. Take time for yourself. Do some things that you enjoy. Go for a ride in the country. Read. It may feel like nothing brings you joy. But know that time really does help. Avoid
Common Traps

When a loved one dies, you often don't experience the grief of loss just once. You're likely to relive your grief on the anniversary of your loved one's death and on special days throughout the year, such as a birthday or religious holiday. Even memorial celebrations

for strangers who died in catastrophes, conflicts or disasters can trigger the familiar pain and sadness of a loss.

Talking to children about death

- Trying to be sensitive to children's desires to communicate when they are ready must be a priority.
- Maintaining an openness that encourages children's attempts to communicate.
- Listening to and accepting children's feelings.
- Offering children honest explanations when we are obviously upset.
- Answering questions in simple language appropriate for their age.
- Trying to find brief, simple, and age appropriate answers to children's questions; understandable answers which do not overwhelm them with too many words.
- Perhaps most difficult of all, communicating about death involves examining our own feelings and beliefs so that we can talk to our children naturally when opportunities arise

Pre-planning Guide

New York State Pre-Plan

Planning ahead can make all the difference.

Preplanning Checklist:

For many, it feels like there's an overwhelming amount of things to think about! But in all honesty, taking control of the important things in life just feels good; you know it's the right thing to do for you, and your family.

Prepare

Laying the foundation for a well thought out plan for you or a loved one takes a bit of time, but, it's worth every moment spent. After all, you're setting the stage for a more relaxed and enjoyable life, because you'll have the peace-of-mind preparedness brings. Here's what to do to get started:

- Prepare a contact list of individuals who should be notified in a medical emergency or death.
- Write an obituary or simply jot down information you would like included in an obituary. Be sure to pass it around the family to be sure no one is excluded!
- The contact details for the funeral home you designate to care for you
- Pallbearers, music, flowers, scripture or other readings
- Charity to receive donations in lieu of flowers, if donations are preferred
- Select the speakers and the eulogies that you would want to represent you.
- Decide what organizations or church will benefit from memorial donations in your name.

You can also contact your Pastor for additional information. He/She will be pleased to answer any questions you may have or refer you to experts in the respective fields.