



The Trauma Intervention Program

RESOURCE GUIDE

Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc. (TIP)

Greater Portland, Maine Chapter

(207) 619-1175

www.tipgreaterportland.org

Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc. is a group of specially trained, certified, and screened volunteers who provide emotional and practical support to survivors of traumatic events and their families in the first few hours following a tragedy. TIP volunteers are officially called to crisis scenes by officers, deputies, firefighters, and hospital emergency room personnel.

Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc., is a national non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Services are provided to survivors and their families free of charge and are made possible by donations from local governments, hospitals, businesses, and individuals.

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE GREATER PORTLAND AREA

24/7 Community Resource Locator

211 Maine Support Services	https://211maine.org/	211
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Aging & Elder Services

Aging Excellence	https://www.seniorsonthego.com/office/portland	(207) 771-0991
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Portland, City of, Office of Elder Affairs	https://www.portlandmaine.gov/293/Elder-Services	(207) 541-6620
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Southern Maine Agency on Aging	https://www.smaaa.org/	(207) 396-6500
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AIDS/HIV

Frannie Peabody Center	https://www.peabodycenter.org/	(207) 774-6877
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GPH Ryan White Program	https://tinyurl.com/gphrwp	(207) 874-2141
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Airlines Serving Portland Jetport

American Airlines	https://www.aa.com/homePage.do	(800) 433-7300
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Breeze Airways	https://www.flybreeze.com/home	online only
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Delta	https://www.delta.com/	(800) 221-1212
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Frontier Airlines	https://www.flyfrontier.com/	online only
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JetBlue	https://www.jetblue.com	(800) 538-2583
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Southwest Airlines	https://www.southwest.com/	(800) 435-9792
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Sun Country Airlines	https://www.suncountry.com/	(651) 905-2737
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United Airlines	https://www.united.com/en/us	(800) 864-8331
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Animals – Lost Pets, Shelters, Boarding, & Emergency Veterinarians

Animal Control		contact local police
Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland	https://arlgp.org/	(207) 854-9771
Camp Bow Wow Dog Boarding	https://www.campbowwow.com/portland/	(207) 541-9247
Cat Doctor, The	https://catdocmaine.com/	(207) 874-2287
HART Cat Shelter	https://hartofme.org/	(207) 829-4116
Happy Tails Dog Boarding	https://happytailsportland.com/	(207) 797-2488
Portland Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Care	https://www.pvesc.com/emergency-care-page/	(207) 878-3121

Bereavement & Mental Health Services

Support For Children – Loss Of A Parent, Caregiver Or Sibling

Center for Grieving Children	https://www.cgcmaine.org/	(207) 775-5216
Children’s Experience Camp	https://experiencecamps.org/camp	(833) 226-7385
Directory of Children’s Behavioral Health Providers	https://tinyurl.com/childproviders	(207) 624-7900

Support For Parents - Loss Of A Child

Compassionate Friends of Portland, The	https://tinyurl.com/compassionatefriends	(207) 200-3651
First Candle Grief Line	https://firstcandle.org/	(800) 221-7437
Madeline’s Mission	https://madelinemission.org/	Online only

Bereavement & Mental Health Services (continued)		
Support For Children – Loss Of A Parent, Caregiver Or Sibling		
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Beth Rovnak	https://afsp.org/	(207) 233-3069
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Desiree Lawrence	https://afsp.org/	(207) 653-4627
Maine Behavioral Healthcare	https://tinyurl.com/mainebhhealth	(207) 874-1030
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	https://988lifeline.org/	988
Survivors of Suicide of Family Members or Friends (Maine Medical Center)	https://www.mainehealth.org/maine-medical-center/patients-visitors/support-groups-health-information	Robert Myers: (207) 409-6226
Anxiety, Depression, Eating Disorders, Self-Harm, Gun Violence		
Crisis Services Phone Line (Maine Department of Health and Human Services)	https://heretohelpmaine.com/	(888) 568-1112
Crisis Text Line	https://www.crisistextline.org/	Text HOME to: 741-741
National Alliance for Mental Illness/NAMI)	https://namimaine.org/helpline/aine/	(800) 464-5767
Peer-to-Peer Intentional Warm Line	https://tinyurl.com/sweetserp2p	(866) 771-9276
Spring Harbor Hospital	https://www.mainehealth.org/spring-harbor-hospital	(207) 761-2200
Support & Recovery Services (Catholic Charities Maine)	https://www.ccmaine.org/support-recovery	(207) 871-7431

Bus, Train, & Boat		
Amtrak Downeaster (train)	https://amtrakdowneaster.com/	(800) 872-7245
Casco Bay Lines (island ferry)	https://www.cascobaylines.com/	(207) 774-7871
Concord Coach Lines (bus)	https://concordcoachlines.com/stop/portland-maine/	(800) 639-3317
Greyhound Lines (bus)	https://www.greyhound.com/	(800) 231-2222
Greater Portland Metro (bus)	https://gpmetro.org/	(207) 774-0351
Portland Sea Taxi (water taxi)	http://portlandseataxi.com/	(207) 879-2562
South Portland Bus Service	https://southportland.org/departments/bus-transportation/	(207) 767-5556
Trailways (bus)	https://trailways.com/	(800) 858-8555

Car Rentals		
Alamo Rent a Car	https://www.alamo.com/en/home.html	(844) 370-3979
Avis Rent a Car	https://www.avis.com/en/locations/us/me/	(207) 874-7500
Budget Rent a Car	https://www.budget.com/	(207) 874-7521
Dollar Car Rental	https://www.dollar.com/	(866) 434-2226
Enterprise Rent-A-Car	https://www.enterprise.com/en/home.html	(855) 266-9565
Hertz	https://www.hertz.com/	(207) 774-6391
National Car Rental	https://www.nationalcar.com/	(840) 370-3978

Childcare		
Childcare Choices	https://search.childcarechoices.me	(207) 780-4851

Cleanup & Restoration of Properties		
Bio Decon	http://www.biodecontaminationme.com/	(207) 767-1359
ServiceMaster Cleaning	https://www.smcarpetcleaning.com/	(207) 539 4452
ServPro of Portland	https://www.servpro.com/?gad=1	(207) 772-5032
Valor Technical Cleaning	https://valortechnicalcleaning.com/maine-crime-scene-cleanup/	(855) 476-4911

Clothes		
Children's Closet (First Congregational Church)	https://fccucc.org/serve/childrens-closet/	(207) 799-3361
Goodwill of Northern New England	https://goodwillnne.org/locations/	(207) 741-2056
Salvation Army	https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/northern-new-england/portland/	(207) 774-4172
Still a Good Cause Thrift Shop	https://www.facebook.com/p/Still-A-Good-Cause-100057848221439/	(207) 772-4903

Crime Victims' Services		
Crime Victims' Compensation Program (Maine Attorney General)	https://www.maine.gov/ag/crime/victims_compensation/	(207) 624-7882
Victim & Witness Advocate Program (Portland Police)	https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1205/Special-Services	(207) 874-8519
Victim Assistance (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)	https://madd.org/maine/	(877) 623-3435
Victim Services (Maine Department of Corrections)	https://www.maine.gov/corrections/victimservices	(207) 287-4385

Deaf Services		
Disability Rights Maine	https://drme.org/deaf-services	(800) 452-1948
Maine Association of the Deaf	https://www.facebook.com/mainassociationofthedeaf/	Online only
Maine Behavioral Healthcare	https://tinyurl.com/mbhcd deafser vs	(844) 292-0111
Maine Education Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	https://www.mecdhh.org/	(207) 781-3165
Pine Tree Society	https://tinyurl.com/signlanginter p	(207) 443-3341

Disaster Management Services		
Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency (CEEMA)	https://tinyurl.com/cumberlandc ema	(207) 892-6785

Domestic Violence		
Caring Unlimited	https://www.caring-unlimited.org/	(800) 239-7298
Elder Abuse & Neglect Reporting	https://tinurl.com/ElderAbuseReporting	(800) 624-8404
Finding Our Voices	https://findingourvoices.net/	Online only
Her Safety Net (Immigrant/Refugee Victims of DV)	https://hersafetynet.org/	(207) 513-9000
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence	https://www.mcedv.org/get-help/	(866) 834-4357
National Domestic Violence Hotline	https://www.thehotline.org/	(800) 799-7233
Through These Doors	https://www.throughthesedoors.org/	(800) 537-6066

Financial Emergencies		
American Consumer Credit Counseling	https://www.consumercredit.com	(866) 464-5245
Relief & Hope Services (Catholic Charities Maine)	https://www.ccmaine.org/parish-social-ministry/relief-hope-services	(207) 523-2770

Food		
Cumberland Community Food Pantry	https://www.cumberlandmaine.com/community-food-pantry	(207) 232-5258
Falmouth Food Pantry	https://www.falmouthservicecenter.org/food-pantry-at-fsc	(207) 632-2687
First Baptist Church Food Pantry	https://www.firstbaptistportland.org/food-pantry	(207) 773-3123
Food Shares (Root Cellar, The)	https://www.therootcellar.org/neighborhood-food-shares	(207) 774-3197

Food resources continued on the next page

Food (continued)		
Gorham Food Pantry	https://www.gorhamfoodpantry.org/	(207) 222-4351
My Place Teen Center	https://myplaceteencenter.org/	(207) 854-2800
Preble Street Mobile Food Pantry	https://tinyurl.com/preblemobilefoodpantry	(207) 775-0026
Project Feed	https://www.projectfeed.org/	(207) 761-3920
St. Luke's Food Pantry	https://stlukesportland.org/our-events/st-lukes-food-pantry/	(207) 776-3525
St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen	https://www.svdpmc.org/	(207) 772-1113
Sacred Heart / St. Dominic Food Pantry	https://portlandcatholic.org/sh-sd-food-pantry	(207) 773-7746
Sally's Choice Food Pantry	https://tinyurl.com/sallyschoice	(207) 774-4172
Scarborough Food Pantry	https://scarboroughfoodpantry.weebly.com/	(207) 883-2342
South Portland Food Cupboard	http://southportlandfoodcupboard.org/	(207) 874-0379
Stroudwater Food Pantry	https://stroudwaterfoodpantry.com/	(207) 200-5985
Stroudwater Christian Church	https://stroudwater.org/events/	(207) 772-2193
Vineyard Church of Greater Portland	https://vineyardportland.org/events/	(207) 854-8339
Wayside Community Meals	https://waysidemaine.org/community-meals	(207) 775-4939
Westbrook Food Pantry	http://westbrookfoodpantry.org/	(207) 591-8147

Food resources continued on the next page

Food (continued)		
White Memorial Seventh-Day Adventist Food Pantry	https://whitememorialme.adventistchurch.org	(207) 797-4414
Windham Food Pantry	https://tinyurl.com/windhamfoodpantry	(207) 892-1931
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Maine	https://www.opportunityalliance.org/wic	(207) 553-5800

Funeral Homes & Cremation Services		
Advantage Funeral & Cremation Services	https://tinyurl.com/advantagefuneralcremation	(207) 899-4605
A.T. Hutchins Funeral and Cremation Services	https://www.athutchins.com/	(207) 878-3246
Conroy-Tully Walker Funeral Homes	https://conroytullywalker.com/	(207) 773-6511
Cremation of Southern Maine	https://www.southernmainecremation.com/	(207) 907-7318
Dolby, Blaise, & Segee Funeral Chapels	https://www.dolbyblaissegee.com/	(207) 892-6342
Funeral Alternatives	https://www.funeralalternatives.net/	(866) 761-0945
Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maine	https://www.fcmaine.net/	(207) 558-1699
Hobbs Funeral Home - South Portland	https://www.hobbsfuneralhome.com/	(207) 799-4472
Hobbs Funeral Home - Scarborough	https://www.hobbsfuneralhome.com/	(207) 883-5599
Jones, Rich, and Barnes Funeral Home	https://tinyurl.com/jonesrichbarnesfuneral	(207) 775-3763
Last Things – Maine Home Funerals	https://www.lastthings.net/	(207) 213-0390
Lindquist Funeral Home	https://tinyurl.com/lindquistfuneralyarmouth	(207) 846-4011
Portland Jewish Funeral Home	https://www.portlandjewishfuneralhome.org/	(207) 774-3733

Hospitals		
Maine Medical Center Switchboard	https://www.mainehealth.org/maine-medical-center	(207) 662-0111
Maine Medical Center Emergency Med. Dept.	https://www.mainehealth.org/maine-medical-center	(207) 662-2381
Northern Light Mercy Hospital Switchboard	https://northernlighthealth.org/mercy-hospital	(207) 879-3000
Northern Light Mercy Hospital Emergency Care	https://northernlighthealth.org/mercy-hospital	(207) 879-3265

Hotels/Accommodations While Loved Ones Receive Medical Treatment At Maine Medical Center		
Brackett House	https://tinyurl.com/bracketthousenearmmc	(207) 662-2848
Chadwick, The	https://www.thechadwick.com/	(207) 774-5141
Francis, The	https://thefrancismaine.com/	(207) 772-7485
Gary's House		(207) 535-1320
Holiday Inn Portland-By the Bay	https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/reservation	(888) 465-4329
Hyatt Place Portland – Old Port	https://tinyurl.com/hyattoldport	(207) 775-1000
Inn at St. John	https://www.innatstjohn.com/	(800) 636-9127
La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham Portland	https://tinyurl.com/quintaportland	(888) 312-2399
Portland Harbor Hotel	https://www.portlandharborhotel.com/	(207) 775-9090
Press Hotel, Autograph Collection, The	https://tinyurl.com/presshotelcongressst	(207) 808-8800
Residence Inn Portland Downtown	https://tinyurl.com/resinnportlanddt	(207) 761-1660
Ronald McDonald House Portland (for families of pediatric patients)	https://rmhmaine.org/portland-house/	(207) 780-6282
Westin Portland Harborview, The	https://tinyurl.com/westinportlandhv	(207) 775-5411

Hotels/Accommodations Near Portland Jetport		
Clarion Hotel Airport	https://tinyurl.com/clarionairport	(207) 774-5611
Comfort Inn Airport	https://tinyurl.com/comfortinnairport	(207) 945-1898
Courtyard Portland Airport	https://tinyurl.com/courtyardportlandairport	(207) 253-5005
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel	https://tinyurl.com/doubletreeportlandme	(207) 775-6161
Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Maine	https://tinyurl.com/embassysuitesport	(207) 775-2200
Fairfield Inn Portland Maine Mall	https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/pwmpm-fairfield-inn-portland-maine-mall/events/	(207) 883-0300
Hampton Inn Portland-Airport	https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/pwmmehx-hampton-portland-airport/	(207) 773-4400
Hilton Garden Inn Portland Airport	https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/pwmpagi-hilton-garden-inn-portland-airport/	(207) 828-1117
Holiday Inn Express & Suites	https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/south-portland/pwmex/hoteldetail	(207) 775-3900
Home2 Suites by Hilton Portland Airport ME	https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/pwmhtht-home2-suites-portland-airport-me/	(207) 517-3636
Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks	https://tinyurl.com/sheratonsableoaks	(207) 871-8000
Residence Inn	https://tinyurl.com/residenceinncarb	(207) 883-0400
Tru By Hilton Portland Airport Area	https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/pwrruru-tru-portland-airport-area/	(207) 221-3131

Housing & Shelters		
Bayside Anchor Apartments (Portland Housing Authority)	https://www.porthouse.org/367/Bayside-Anchor	(207) 773-4753
Fair Tide	https://www.fairtide.org/	(207) 439-6376
Florence House for Women	https://tinyurl.com/florencehousesewomen	(207) 699-4392
Homeless Services Center	https://tinyurl.com/plndhsc	(207) 482-5131
Joe Kreisler Teen Shelter (Preble Street)	https://tinyurl.com/joekreislerenshelter	(207) 775-0026

Interpreters		
Directory of Interpreters	https://211maine.org/interpreters/	211
Interpret Maine	https://interpretmaine.com/	(207) 210-1412
Language Partners	https://thelanguagepartners.com/	(207) 523-2700

Laundry		
2nd Wednesday of each month (Trinity Episcopal Church)	https://www.trinitychurchportland.org/outreach	(207) 772-7421

Legal Services		
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project	https://ilapmaine.org/	(207) 780-1593
Maine Legal Services for the Elderly	https://mainelse.org/	(800) 750-5353
Maine Lawyer Referral Service	https://mainebar.communitylawyer/	(800) 860-1460
Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project	https://www.vlp.org/	(800) 442-4293
Pine Tree Legal Assistance	https://www.ptla.org/	(207) 774-8211

Personal Care Products – Diapers & Oral Healthcare Products		
Catholic Charities Maine	https://www.ccmaine.org/	(207) 781-8550
Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine	https://www.mainejewish.org/diaperbank/	(207) 772-1959

St. Elizabeth's Essentials Pantry	https://stelizabethsmaine.org/what-we-do/	(207) 780-1593
Poison Control		
Northern New England Poison Center	https://www.nnepc.org/	(800) 222-1222

Police Departments		
EMERGENCY ONLY - all locations	https://www.911.gov/calling-911/	911
Cape Elizabeth Police	https://www.capeelizabeth.com/departments/Police	(207) 767-3323
Cumberland (town) Police	https://tinyurl.com/cumberlandpol	(207) 829-2210
Cumberland County Sheriff	https://www.cumberlandso.org/	(207) 774-1444
Falmouth Police	https://tinyurl.com/flmthpol	(207) 781-2300
Gorham Police	https://www.gorham-me.org/police-department	(207) 839-5581
Maine State Police – Troop B	https://www.maine.gov/dps/msp/about/find-local-troop/troop-b	(207) 624-7076
Portland Police	https://www.portlandmaine.gov/436/Police	(207) 874-8479
Scarborough Police	https://www.scarboroughmaine.org/departments/police	(207) 883-6361
South Portland Police	https://tinyurl.com/soportlndpol	(207) 874-8575
Westbrook Police	https://tinyurl.com/wbrookpolice	(207) 854-0644
Windham Police	https://tinyurl.com/wndhmpol	(207) 892-2525
Yarmouth Police	https://tinyurl.com/yrmthpol	(207) 846-3333

Pregnancy		
ABBA, Women's Choice	https://abbapregnancychoice.org/	(207) 253-5555

Refugees / New Americans		
Catholic Charities Maine, Refugee Services	https://www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services	(207) 871-7437
Hope Acts	https://hopeacts.org/	(207) 228-1140
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project	https://ilapmaine.org/	(207) 780-1593

New Mainers Resource Center	https://nmrcmaine.org/	(207) 874-8155
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Rent, Utilities, Fuel & Medicine		
American Red Cross of Northern New England	https://www.redcross.org/local/me-nh-vt/get-help.html	(855) 891-7325
Cumberland General Assistance	https://tinyurl.com/clandga	(207) 829-5559 x1195
Falmouth General Assistance	https://tinyurl.com/fmouthga	(207) 699-5344
Gorham General Assistance	https://tinyurl.com/gorhamga	(207) 892-1906
Portland Free Pantry	https://www.portlandfreepantry.com/	Online only
Portland General Assistance	https://www.portlandmaine.gov/657/General-Assistance	(207) 482-5122
Scarborough General Assistance	https://tinyurl.com/sboroughga	(207) 450-5621
South Portland General Assistance	https://tinyurl.com/sportga	(207) 767-7617
Westbrook General Assistance	https://www.westbrookmaine.com/194/General-Assistance	(207) 591-7015
Windham General Assistance	https://www.windhammaine.us/154/Social-Services	(207) 892-1906

Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking		
National Sexual Assault Hotline	https://www.rainn.org/	(800) 656-4673
National Human Trafficking Hotline	https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/contact	(888) 373-7888
Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Services	https://tinyurl.com/prebleats	(207) 775-0026
Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine	https://sarsonline.org/	(800) 871-7741

Spiritual Care – Non-Denominational		
Maine Medical Center Spiritual Care	https://tinyurl.com/mmcspiritua	(207) 662-2352
Spiritual Care Services of Maine	https://www.scsmaine.org/	(207) 261-5200

Substance Abuse/Addiction		
Casco Bay Recovery	https://cascobayrecovery.com/	(844) 956-3520
Catholic Charities Maine Behavioral Health Network	https://www.ccmaine.org/substance-use-disorder-treatment	(207) 775-5671
Crossroads	https://crossroadsme.org/	(877) 978-1667
DayOne	https://tinyurl.com/day1subst	(207) 893-0386
Friendship House	http://www.friendshiphouses.org/	(207) 767-7403
Milestone Recovery	https://milestone-recovery.org/	(207) 775-4790
Narcotics Anonymous of Maine	https://namaine.org/	(833) 436-6166
Pine Tree Recovery Center	https://tinyurl.com/ptreerecv	(888) 693-1751
Portland Recovery Community Center	https://portlandrecovery.org/	(207) 553-2575

Taxis		
Modivcare (non-emergency medical transport)	https://www.modivcare.com/facilities/me/	(855) 608-5178
Regional Transportation Program (non-emergency medical transport)	https://www.rtprides.org/	(207) 774-2666
207 Taxi	https://www.207taxi.com/	(207) 774-2255

Veterans' Services		
Military Funeral Honors	https://tinyurl.com/milithonors	(207) 620-6870
Portland Bureau of Veterans' Services	https://tinyurl.com/ptlandbvs	(207) 822-2391
Portland Vet Center (VA)	https://tinyurl.com/plndvetctr	(207) 780-3584
Vet2Vet Maine	https://vet2vetmaine.org/	(207) 579-4024
Veterans Crisis Text Line	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/	838-255
Veterans Crisis Hotline (phone)	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/	988 x1

Visual Impairment		
Iris Network, The	https://www.theiris.org/	(207) 774-6273

STEPS TO TAKE WHEN A DEATH OCCURS

When a loved one dies, it is an understandably stressful time. It can be even more stressful and/or traumatic trying to remember all the details that must be taken care of after a person's death. If you are responsible for handling the affairs of your loved one's death, there are several things to consider.

- **Notify** family and close friends as well as any employers.
- Handle the care of any **dependents** and/or pets. This first responsibility may be the most important one. Usually, the person who died ("the decedent") made some arrangement for the care of a dependent spouse or children. You or others may need to take them home temporarily if they cannot continue living in the decedent's home. Decedents frequently overlook the care of pets upon their death. Go to the house as soon as possible to check their condition. Find a good home for them even if it is temporary. The Estate can pay expenses related to dependents and pets so keep good records of all expenditures for them. If there are pets at home arrange for their care.
- **Secure and monitor** the home. Keep an eye on the decedent's home, answer phone messages, collect mail, discard food, and water plants. If you do not live near the decedent's home, ask a friend or relative to handle this task. If necessary, change the locks. Some people place lights on timers or take other steps to make the home appear as if it is still lived in.
- Make **funeral arrangements**, keeping in mind that the Will or Advance Health Care Directive may contain instructions regarding custody of the body, other post-mortem decisions, and service arrangements. Also, keep in mind that there may be a pre-paid funeral plan in place.
- If your loved one was a **veteran**, you may be able to get assistance with the funeral, burial plot, or other benefits. For information on benefits call the Veterans Administration at 800-827-1000. Also, the phone number for your local Veterans Agency is usually listed under Town Offices. You will need a copy of your loved one's discharge papers. The National Archives website gives information on how to obtain service records or talk to a local funeral home: <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>
- Prepare an **obituary** for publication in local news outlets.
- Obtain certified copies of the **Death Certificate**. You will likely need 10-15 certified copies for various purposes, including filing for probate, dealing with any financial institutions, and dealing with insurance companies.
- Locate the original **Will**. Likely places to locate these documents include safe deposit boxes (these boxes can be opened to search for Wills), safes at home, desk drawers, file cabinets, or the office of the attorney who drafted the Will.

- Locate **other documents** that will help identify what assets are in the estate. This can include previous years' tax returns (particularly the schedules filed with these returns), checkbooks/registers of checking transactions, deeds and other property records, insurance documents, and statements from financial institutions.
- Locate **professionals** with knowledge of your loved one's affairs, including their attorney, accountant, and financial advisor. These professionals may have a detailed understanding of the assets in the estate, and you may end up working with them to probate the estate and to pay taxes due the federal and state governments.
- **Newspapers and Mail.** The newspaper subscription should be discontinued if no one else resides at the home of the deceased. The post office should be directed to forward all of the decedent's mail to the personal representative, especially if there is no surviving spouse. Newspapers or mail piling up at a decedent's residence is an invitation to criminals. Have mail forwarded to whoever is responsible for your loved one's bills.
- **Banks.** If there are bank accounts on which someone is a "surviving owner", (the account may read "POD" or "TOD" or joint owners with "JTWRROS", for right of survivorship) a death certificate needs to be provided to the bank so that the surviving owner can now take ownership. Otherwise, access to the accounts may be blocked until someone is appointed as an official agent on behalf of the estate.
- Contact the **health insurance** company or employer regarding terminating coverage for the deceased while continuing coverage for others covered through the policy.
- Call the decedent's last **employer** if he or she was working or received pension or health insurance benefits from the employer. Request information about the amount of benefits, the successor beneficiary of those benefits, and any pay due. Ask whether there was a life insurance policy through the employer. If the company provides life insurance, ask for an IRS Form 712 and the beneficiaries of the policy.
- Cancel any unnecessary **utilities/services** to the home if it will be unoccupied. While a home should be heated to maintain its value, you can likely cancel services like the phone, cable, and internet.
- If the home has an outstanding **mortgage**, you should notify the mortgage provider. If your loved one was a renter, notify the landlord and make arrangements to move out to reduce rental expenses.
- Notify various financial institutions of the death, including **credit card companies**, which will prevent fraudulent charges. This also includes banks,

where you will eventually close out accounts (try to understand if any accounts are automatically paying bills before closing out these accounts). You will also want to notify any **pension providers**, as there may be death benefits due to beneficiaries, and **life insurance companies**, as there may also be life insurance benefits due. Arrange to change **stocks and bonds** into your name. Your bank or stockbroker will have the forms.

- If there are any **vehicles** titled to the departed, you will also need to contact the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles to retitle these vehicles.
- **Disposing of Personal Items and Clothing.** Although one of the most heartbreaking tasks, when a loved one dies, as soon as emotionally possible, every effort should be made to dispose of items that will no longer be used by the survivors. This is the duty and legal right of the personal representative. The timing of this is handled differently from person to person. If too soon, it may prevent survivors from having adequate time to grieve, while if it takes too long, it may seriously delay the ending of the grieving process, acting as a very painful and constant reminder of the person's death. No items should be moved, sold, given away or otherwise disposed of until it is clear that they have not been identified in the person's Will or Trust as items to be distributed as a part of the estate. Only the legal beneficiary of those items is entitled to decide about their disposal.
- If your loved one was receiving **Social Security** benefits, notify your local Social Security office of the death, since these benefits will stop. Overpayments will result in a difficult process of repayment. If you are a surviving spouse, ask about your eligibility for increased benefits. Also, check on benefits that any minor children may be entitled to receive.
- Speak with an attorney who practices **probate administration**. Not all estates need to or should go through the probate process, depending on the size of the estate and how assets are held. An attorney, however, can advise those responsible for administering an estate as to their duties, what should be done to maximize the value of the estate, and how to avoid costly mistakes in administration.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE FUNERAL HOME

The first thing that the funeral home manager will do is to provide you with a **general price list**. They will then guide you through the entire arrangement process, explaining how to create a memorable personal celebration of your loved one's life. This is not a one-way conversation. **Please share your ideas and desires**. They are the foundation of the funeral arrangement process.

The process may include, but is not limited to:

- Preparing and filling out the official death certificate
- Scheduling the location, date, and time of services or events
- Selecting a casket, urn, or other items
- Preparing the obituary notice
- Scheduling vehicles
- Scheduling pallbearers

You may also sign necessary authorizations or make arrangements to have them signed by the appropriate family member.

Bring photos, a favorite song, or other memorabilia so you and your funeral arranger can better discuss how you want your loved one to be remembered.

CHOICES AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Funerals are for the living. If the deceased wished for direct cremation, but the family needs a viewing, the family can have a viewing. Also, a full-service funeral can be switched to a cremation and vice versa.

If the deceased left a Will, it may state an individual's wishes for the disposition of the body, or it may say that the person named as Personal Representative (called an Executor in some other states) will be responsible for making that decision. If there is no Will, the deceased's next of kin (spouse, adult child, parent, sibling in that order) is responsible for making that decision. A Power of Attorney (POA) given during someone's life is not valid after death.

If you are the next of kin or named as the Personal Representative in the will of someone who has died, you will need to make various decisions. There is no right or wrong choice. You should choose what best suits your family, considering the wishes of the person who has died. You will need to select a funeral home and choose between burial and cremation. Area funeral homes are listed in this guide. It is wise to inquire about prices – they do vary.

Organ Donation is a time-sensitive decision at the time of death. The hospital will arrange for you to discuss the possibility of donation with an expert in this area. A person's organs may be donated for transplant or a person's body may be donated to an organization that accepts these gifts, such as a medical school or medical research facility. These organizations will need you to answer many questions so they can

determine if a donation is possible, and this process will take place at what is likely to be an emotionally difficult time for you. Among the questions you should ask, because the circumstances vary from organization to organization, are whether there will be any costs to the family associated with the donation and how long until the cremated remains are returned to the family (the usual range is from 3 weeks to 3 years).

Burial or Cremation usually takes place within a week of death but in some cases, it may be longer than that. The law requires that a body be refrigerated within 24 hours after death. Embalming is not required by law but may be included in certain funeral home services and is required when a body is transported by airplane or buried in an above-ground mausoleum. Some funeral homes are limited by their license as to what services they provide.

Burial most often takes place in a traditional cemetery. Maine also now has two cemeteries that offer burial in a natural setting. The body may not be embalmed, and the container must be biodegradable. Under certain circumstances, Maine law permits burial on private property. (If you are considering this option, it is important to first consult with your local town/city office about restrictions and required permits.)

COPING AFTER A TRAGEDY – DEALING WITH LOSS

Loss from a tragedy or traumatic event can take many forms. It might involve the loss of a loved one, a home, or a pet. It could involve a life-changing injury or illness. It might involve a loss of a sense of safety and security when a crime has been committed. Although our information generally reflects on the death of a loved one, your emotional responses and the recommendations regarding your health and well-being apply to all categories of traumatic loss.

- **The first response to your loss may be emotional shock.** You may feel numb and like the situation is unreal. You may have moments of disbelief that your loved one is really gone. Others may want you to quickly “accept reality and get on with your life.” Don’t be hurried. There is no timetable. Accepting the reality of your loss is usually a slow and gradual process.
- **Be involved in burial and funeral planning.** Take the time to explore the many options available to you. Plan a service that is meaningful and special to you and your family. There are no hard and fast rules.
- **Delay major decisions** until you have recovered from the initial turmoil following a death.
- **Accept your feelings.** You may find yourself experiencing a “roller coaster” of feelings for weeks and months after the loss. Don’t try to escape these feelings. They are normal. Going through these emotions is a part of the healing process. These emotions might include:

- ✓ **Anger.** You may blame yourself, a family member, or the deceased for the loss.
 - ✓ **Guilt.** “If I had only...”
 - ✓ **Depression.** You may feel unable to perform even the basic daily tasks. You may feel “Why bother?”.
- **Keep a journal.** It may help to write down how you are feeling. Rereading it can help you see the healing that is taking place.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Try to maintain a quiet and safe routine. Eat regular healthy meals, take your medications, and make sure to get enough exercise and sleep.
- **Seek Help from others.**
 - ✓ **Friends and Family.** Talking to those outside of the immediate family may help you express your feelings without blaming those closest to you.
 - ✓ **Professional Help.** Seek professional help if despair and worthlessness persist, if your family relationships are deteriorating, or if you continue to blame yourself for what happened.
 - ✓ **Support Groups.** There are support groups where you can receive support from others who have lost a loved one in similar circumstances.
- **Nurture yourself.** Daily, do something for yourself. Exercise can be very helpful. Maintain simple routines.
- **Hope and Healing.** It may take time and work, but you can survive a terrible loss. You will always have memories of the loss of a loved one, but you can live your life in the future with joy and perhaps with a new understanding and purpose.

COMMON REACTIONS FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC EVENT

It is not uncommon for people who have been closely involved in a crisis or traumatic situation to experience unusual emotional detachment to cope and function. Some other typical reactions might include:

- ✓ Irritability or anger
- ✓ Preoccupation with the event and one's role in it
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Guilt
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Emotional "numbness"
- ✓ Silence/Withdrawal
- ✓ Sleep disturbances/nightmares
- ✓ Change in personal work habits
- ✓ Poor Concentration
- ✓ Difficulty in making decisions
- ✓ Memory problems
- ✓ Difficulty with details
- ✓ Overeating or insufficient eating
- ✓ Self-medicating

DEALING WITH YOUR EMOTIONS – RESOLVING GRIEF

- Accept all the feelings you are having as normal reactions to an extraordinary event. You are not "crazy". You are reacting normally to a "crazy" event. Be patient with yourself. It takes time to recover emotionally from a traumatic event.
- Accept the fact that you survived a traumatic event and accept the feelings that result. Remember, others may not validate your feelings. In fact, they may minimize your experience by saying things like "You were only a witness," "You were really lucky, or "It's been two weeks, why are you still bothered?".
- Avoid alcohol, drugs, or overeating to cope. These behaviors will only make matters worse.
- Maintain normalcy. Go about your daily routines and take care of business.
- Attempt to understand what happened by getting the facts.
- Talk about the event and write about it.

- Combat any guilt you might have by:
 - ✓ Accepting your sense of guilt as normal.
 - ✓ Talking to others about your role and their role during the event; you are probably not alone in your reaction to this event.
 - ✓ Realize you were a survivor yourself and not a trained rescuer.
 - ✓ Recognize what you “did right”
 - ✓ Recognize the extenuating circumstances related to the event, such as the suddenness or the danger.
- Help others in your family or group.
- Reach out to support those who are particularly traumatized. Take time to talk, and to reminisce.
- Respect each other’s way of coping. Don’t victimize them by judging their individual coping style. Let the “grievers” grieve and all the “doers” do.
- Bereavement groups provide an opportunity to share grief with others who have experienced a similar loss.

If the healing process becomes too overwhelming, seek professional help.

HELPING CHILDREN GRIEVE

- Tell children the truth about what happened, using language they can understand at their age. Answer their questions straightforwardly. They often sense when you are not telling them important information. Let children participate in the family’s sorrow and grieving rituals. It is an important part of the learning process. Protect the child from imagined guilt, such as, “I was bad – it was my fault.” Provide much love and reassurance, especially that you and others will still protect and love them.
- Reassure the child that they will be taken care of, loved, and cherished as before. The greatest fear of the bereaved child is that of being abandoned and deserted.
- Touch, hold, and hug the child. Non-verbal communication is the most powerful and direct way of telling the child that you care.
- Explain to the child that the loved one did not intend to die nor did the person want to die. The child needs to be assured that their loved one did not intentionally desert the child.
- Explain that was not the child’s fault that the loved one died. Young children often believe that they possess magical powers, and through the powers of

such thoughts, the child may believe that they brought about their loved one's death. The child may need help to relieve this burden of guilt.

- Adults should use the word “died” when explaining the situation to children. Otherwise, children might expect the deceased to return.
- Encourage the child to ask questions about anything that is on their mind. Do this on many occasions.
- Answer the child's questions simply, directly, and honestly. Children are quick to sense deceptions and may come to distrust adults.
- Allow the child the option of participating in the funeral. Describe the proceedings in detail beforehand. The funeral has an important cultural, religious, and therapeutic function for the family, and the child is a member of that family. Excluding them may make them feel abandoned.
- Be tolerant. It is normal for a child to express his or her feelings and thoughts.
- It is OK to let children see your tears and to cry with them in a shared experience.

HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH DEATH BY SUICIDE

In dealing with children, when the trauma involves suicide, the following suggestions may be helpful:

- It is important to be honest with your children. Give the correct information in a loving, compassionate way.
- The explanation should be clear and direct. Be careful not to over-explain.
- Listen carefully. Answer their questions truthfully and be consistent in telling the truth about suicide.
- Talk about the deceased family member.
- Discuss better ways than suicide to handle problems.
- Tell all your children – even the younger ones.
- Encourage children to share their grief with those at home and with trusted persons outside the family.
- Teach your children to be selective about who they tell the story of the suicide.
- You can help your children grieve by letting them see your tears, by crying with them, and by letting them know that it's okay to be upset.

- Have a positive attitude toward your children.
- Be aware of your children’s possible feelings of guilt. Assure that that it wasn’t their fault.
- Children need to know that suicide is an individual matter. Even if family members do it, they can still choose not to.
- Children may experience all of the many emotions and phrases of grief.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILIES DEALING WITH DEATH BY SUICIDE

It is important to sit down together to talk, cry, rage, feel guilty and even to be silent. Communication is the key to survival in the aftermath of suicide. At the same time, there should be respect for each person’s individual way of handling grief. Some family members will grieve privately, others openly, and others a combination of these two styles. In many ways, each family member must grieve alone. Here are some suggestions to help with family grief.

- Pay attention to your family members when you’re with them. Let them know that you love them.
- Be sensitive to how other family members feel.
- Listen to what is meant as well as what is being said.
- Accept the other person and what they say.
- Don’t give each other the silent treatment. This has many negative effects.
- Sit back and actively listen. Let other family members have an opportunity to talk.
- Be sure to hug and touch each other at every opportunity.
- If depression, grief, or problems in your family are getting out of control, seek the advice of a counselor.
- Recognize that anniversaries, birthdays, and special holidays will be difficult for the family and each member of the family.
- Remember you can’t help anyone if you are falling apart. Do what you can do, get help for what you can’t do, and trust that your life will improve.
- Studies show that a bereaved person’s self-esteem is extremely low. Survivors should work on their image of themselves and help each family member to think and feel good about themselves.

If there is a suicide note, discuss as a family what to do with it. If you think it will only bring you pain, then you may choose to have a private burning and release its contents.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

Does the Medical Examiner need permission to conduct an autopsy?

No. The law specifically gives the Medical Examiner authority to conduct whatever investigation is deemed necessary to determine the cause and manner of death in cases that are within the scope of the statute. However, religious, or other objections raised by the next-of-kin will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Medical Examiner is respectful of the wishes of the family and, in some cases, may be able to accommodate them.

Is an autopsy always necessary?

No. The Medical Examiner will decide whether one is necessary after gathering some initial information concerning the death. An autopsy may not be required when adequate history exists to document the illness or injury leading to the death.

Should an autopsy be deemed necessary, however, the deceased will be transported to the Medical Examiner in Augusta. In most cases, information gathered from an autopsy will not only establish the cause and manner of death but may also assist in the grieving process, uncover familial (genetic) diseases, provide evidence for settlement of death benefits, and aid in adjudication of criminal cases.

How is the deceased transported to the Medical Examiner?

Local funeral homes provide transportation service at State expense. If you have already chosen a local funeral home, they will be contacted first. In some cases, the Medical Examiner may do the transport.

Do I need to come to the OCME to make identification?

No. Typically, identification is made at the place of death by a friend or family member, or by comparison with a photo identification. In rare cases, a family member or close friend may be required to view photographs of the deceased to confirm identification.

Can the deceased be viewed at the Medical Examiner's office?

No. Unfortunately, the Medical Examiner does not have the facility or the staff to accommodate viewing requests. The deceased may be viewed in a more appropriate environment, such as a licensed funeral home or crematorium.

Who pays for an autopsy that is required by the state?

All autopsy expenses, including transport of the body to and from the Medical Examiner, are borne by the state. There are no charges to the family for autopsies required by the state. However, if a family requests an elective autopsy, the family is expected to pay for that service.

What happens to the deceased after the autopsy?

If you are not from Maine, you may wish to select a local funeral home from your hometown to assist you. They will contact a Maine funeral home and work together to meet your family's needs.

How long will the deceased stay at the Medical Examiner's Office?

In most cases, the deceased can be released to a funeral home immediately following the autopsy, usually within 24 to 48 hours of arrival at the Medical Examiner's Office. However, the deceased may remain longer to make the necessary funeral arrangements.

What happens to personal property?

When an autopsy will not be performed, personal property on the deceased at the time of death is normally removed and released to the family or law enforcement. If an autopsy is performed, personal property will be transported to the Medical Examiner's office along with the deceased and are typically released with the deceased to the funeral home following the autopsy. In certain instances, involving potential criminal conduct the personal effects may be considered "evidence" and are turned over to the investigating law enforcement agency.

How can I obtain an autopsy report?

Following autopsy, a final report will not be available until all diagnostic testing is complete. Typically, this requires several weeks; in some cases, it may be a month or longer. Autopsy reports, except in cases of homicides, may be requested by the next of kin. Under Maine law, the next-of-kin is defined as a partner, adult child, parent, or adult sibling (in order of priority). Requests for reports can be faxed or mailed to the Medical Examiner and should include the following information: (1) The name of the deceased (2) The date of death (3) The requestor's full name, address, and relationship to the deceased. All reports are mailed by the Medical Examiner and cannot be faxed.

How much does the autopsy report cost?

There is no charge to next-of-kin for an autopsy report.

Who grants permission for organ or tissue donation?

Only the next-of-kin can grant permission to the organ procurement agency for organ or tissue donation. In rare instances, to protect certain forensic evidence, the Medical Examiner may have to disallow certain aspects of the organ or tissue procurement procedure.

Why do I need to wait 2 days for cremation?

Due to the irreversible nature of cremation, Maine law requires a 48-hour waiting period from the time of death until cremation can occur. Before a cremation can occur, the deceased must be examined by a Medical Examiner. The examination is

arranged by the funeral home or crematory. A Medical Examiner fee for this approval is currently \$25.00.

I need a copy of the completed death certificate. What should I do?

Contact the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Vital Records at the following telephone number: 207-287-3181. Or go to the official website: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/vital-records/index.shtml>

The death certificate I received indicates that the case is Pending. I need a Cause of Death for the insurance. What should I do?

Contact the office. A staff member will help you determine the best way to satisfy the insurance company. Sometimes a telephone call will allow them to process the case. If they need the final cause of death, it may take a few months for all the reports to be available and the case completed. If we have a formal request from the insurance company, we will send them the reports as soon as they are available.

Office of Chief Medical Examiner
37 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Phone: (207) 624-7180
FAX: (207) 624-7178
Email: chief-medical.examiner@maine.gov

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

If you have been involved in an incident of public interest, you may encounter the media; however, you do **NOT** have an obligation to speak with them. You can choose whether you want to share the details and/or your feelings with the public. **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT BY THE MEDIA. IN PARTICULAR, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

- Say no to an interview, a photo or video, or an anonymous interview.
- If you choose to be interviewed, specify the time and place.
- Request a particular reporter or refuse to talk with a particular reporter even though you have spoken with others.
- Release a written statement instead of an interview.
- Refuse to answer questions (because they make you uncomfortable or you think they are inappropriate, or for no reason at all).
- Know before being interviewed what the angle of the story is going to be.
- Ask to review any quotation of you before it is printed.

- Demand that inaccurate reporting be retracted or reported.
- Demand that inappropriate photographs or footage not be released.

EMOTIONAL FIRST AID

Helping the Emotionally Injured After a Tragedy

Reach out Physically

- Position yourself at the survivor’s side and at their level.
- Touch – unless the survivor pulls away.
- Use a soft voice.
- Use the survivor’s name.

Reach out Emotionally

- Ask the survivor how they are feeling
- Acknowledge the survivor’s experience
- Don’t minimize the survivor’s experience (i.e., “You will be ok.”)

Don’t overlook the quiet survivors. Many survivors after a tragic event are stunned and may appear unaffected. Remember that many people can be affected by a tragic event, such as witnesses, rescuers, children, or friends who come later.

- Don’t overlook these “invisible survivors.”
- When you suspect someone is affected by a tragic event, reach out with caring and curiosity – “How are you?”

Protect the survivor from making impulsive decisions. Most major decisions can wait until the survivor is thinking clearly.

- Protect the survivor from being victimized by others who may not have the best interest of the survivor in mind.
- Provide for the survivor’s physical needs – food, medicine, water, warmth, and a safe place.

Reassure. Many survivors have an urgent need for information after a tragic event – “What happened?”; “Why?” – Assist the survivor in getting the information they need. The survivor may need an Information Advocate.

- Survivors often blame themselves for the crisis event. Help those who feel guilty gain perspective by asking them to tell you the “whole story”.
- Try to gently point out to the survivor what he did right before, during, and after the tragic event.

Organize. Survivors are often paralyzed after a tragic event and often lose their capacity to deal with all of the new demands created by the tragedy. Assist the

survivor in developing a simple plan. Suggest – “Let’s focus on what needs to be done now.”

Reinforce the actions the survivor is taking or wants to take to emotionally survive the tragic event. The survivor will struggle to find something or someone to hold onto in the first few hours. You may need to “clear the way” so that the survivor can do what they want to do.

Summary: In the first few hours after a tragic event, the survivor is often surrounded by people who have “a job to do” or who have opinions about what the survivor should or shouldn’t do. The primary goal of the person providing Emotional First Aid is to enable the survivor to have their wishes, values, and beliefs and NOT what others think should be done.

- Do not “over care” or do too much for the survivor. Remember that the primary psychological challenge for the survivor is to be encouraged to make decisions and act on their own behalf.
- Finally, a broken heart cannot be “fixed.” Don’t try. A caring presence is what you can offer someone who is emotionally devastated. Just being there is very powerful and will be experienced by the survivor as very helpful.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY AND NOT SAY?

It is usually helpful to say:

- I’m so sorry.
- What happened?
- This must be very difficult for you.
- Can you share with me how you are feeling?
- It’s OK to feel...

It is NOT usually helpful to say:

- I know how you feel.
- Don’t cry. It’s okay.
- Calm down.
- You don’t want to do that.
- It will be better tomorrow.
- Don’t feel...
- It’s God’s will.
- They will never hurt again.
- They are better off.
- Had they lived; they would never be the same.

- They're happier in heaven.
- You will have another child to replace this one.
- You will get married again.
- It's time to get on with your life.
- Time heals all wounds.
- Life goes on.
- It was part of God's plan.
- It is divine to forgive.
- I just don't know how you are so strong.
- I don't know what I would have done if it had been me.
- Call me if you need me.

HOW YOU CAN HELP LATER

There is much you can do to help in the days and weeks that follow a traumatic loss. The following suggestions demonstrate the kinds of attitudes, words, and acts that are truly helpful.

The importance of such help can hardly be overstated. Bereavement can be a life-threatening condition, and your support may make a vital difference in the mourner's eventual recovery.

Perhaps you do not feel qualified to help. You may feel uncomfortable and awkward. Such feelings are normal – don't let them keep you away. If you really care for your bereaved friend or relative, if you can enter a little into their grief, then you are qualified to help. In fact, simply communicating the feeling of caring is probably the most important and helpful thing anyone can do.

- **Get in touch.** Place a phone call and speak either to the mourner or to someone close and ask when you can visit and how you might help. Even if much time has passed, it's never too late to express your concern.
- **Say little on an early visit.** In the initial period (before the funeral), your brief embrace, your press of the hand, and your few words of affection and feeling may be all that is needed.
- **Avoid clichés and easy answers.** "He is out of pain" and "Aren't you lucky that..." are not likely to help. A simple "I'm sorry" is better.
- **Be yourself.** Show your natural concern and sorrow in your own way and your own words.
- **Keep in touch. Be available. Be there.** If you are a close friend or relative, your presence might be needed from the beginning. Later, when close family may be less available, a friend's visit and phone call can be very helpful.

- Attend to practical matters. Find out if you are needed to answer the phone, usher in callers, prepare meals, clean the house, care for the children, watch the pets, etc. This kind of help lifts burdens and creates a bond. It might be needed well beyond the initial period, especially for the widowed.
- Encourage others to visit or help. Usually, one visit will overcome a friend's discomfort and allow them to contribute further support. You might even be able to schedule some visitors so that everyone does not come at once in the beginning and fails to come at all later on.
- Accept silence. If the mourner doesn't feel like talking, don't force conversation. Silence is better than aimless chatter. The mourner should be allowed to lead.
- Be a good listener. When suffering spills over in words you can do the thing the bereaved needs above all else at that time - you can listen. Are they emotional? Accept that. Do they cry? Accept that too. Accept whatever feelings are expressed. Do not rebuke. Do not change the subject. Be as understanding as you can be.
- Do not attempt to tell the bereaved how they feel. You can ask (without probing) but you cannot know, except as you are told. Everyone, bereaved or not, resents an attempt to describe their feelings. To say, for example, "You must feel relieved now that he is out of pain," is presumptuous. Even to say, "I know just how you feel," is questionable. Learn from the mourner, do not instruct.
- Do not probe for details about the death. If the survivor offers information listen with understanding.
- Comfort children in the family. Do not assume that a seemingly calm child is not sorrowful. If you can, be a friend to whom feelings can be confided and with whom tears can be shed. In most cases, children should be left in the home and not shielded from others' grieving.
- Avoid talking to others about trivial things in the presence of the recently bereaved. Prolonged discussion of sports, weather, or the stock market, for example, is resented even if done purposely to distract the mourner.
- Allow the "working through" of grief. Do not whisk away clothing or hide pictures. Do not criticize seemingly morbid behavior. Young people may repeatedly visit the site of the fatal accident. A widow may sleep with her husband's pajamas as a pillow. A young child may wear their dead sibling's clothing.
- Personal letters or notes can be very helpful. If you find an appropriate sympathy card you might add a personal note that shares your love for, and memories of the one who died. Your note or letter might be read and cherished many times.

- Encourage the postponement of major decisions. Whatever can wait should wait until after the period of intense grief.
- In time, gently draw the mourner into quiet outside activity. They may lose the initiative to go out on their own.
- When the mourner returns to social activity, treat them as a normal person. Avoid pity - it destroys self-respect. Simple understanding is enough.
- Acknowledge the loss, the change in the mourner's life, but don't dwell on it.
- Be aware of needed progress through grief. If the mourner seems unable to resolve anger or guilt, for example, you might consider a consultation with a member of the clergy or another trained counselor.

A final thought: Helping must be more than following a few rules. Especially if the bereavement is devastating and you are close to the bereaved, you may have to give more time, more care, and more of yourself than you imagined. You will have to perceive the special needs of your friend and creatively attempt to meet those needs. Such commitment and effort may even save a life. At the least, you will know the satisfaction of being truly and deeply helpful.

Notes About This Directory

* **Legal disclaimer:** Inclusion in this directory does not imply endorsement nor does exclusion imply disapproval of any organization. Every effort has been made to supply complete and accurate information; however, the Trauma Intervention Program makes no representation with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaims any implied responsibility for the accuracy of any information provided. The Trauma Intervention Program shall in no event be liable for any loss or damage.

This resource guide was updated and associated files were designed by Stephen, a TIP Greater Portland volunteer.

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We Appreciate Your Feedback

We value your feedback. Whether you want to tell us about a positive experience you had with our organization, or you have constructive criticism for us, we promise to take what you say very seriously. Your comments will help us continually improve the service we offer to our community.

To submit feedback, go to
<https://www.tipgreaterportland.org/feedback.php>

If you would like to become a corporate or individual financial partner with TIP or provide a donation in memory of a loved one, please get in touch with us via email at: pam@tipgreaterportland.org or phone us at (207) 619-1175

TIP of Greater Portland is an affiliate of
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The logo consists of the letters 'TIP' in a large, red, serif font. The 'T' and 'I' are connected at the top, and the 'P' is slightly larger and positioned to the right.

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