

# TIP

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### **Trauma Intervention Program of Greater Portland**

Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc. (TIP) 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 victims and their families free of charge and are made possible by donations from local governments, hospitals, businesses, and individuals.

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

(207) 619-1175

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Name and ID# of TIP Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hospital and Doctor Names & Phone:**

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**Emergency Personnel Involved:**

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**Important Phone Numbers:**

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**Notes:**

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# EMOTIONAL FIRST AID

## Helping the Emotionally Injured After a Tragedy

### Reach out Physically

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

### Reach out Emotionally

- Ask the victim how they are feeling
- Acknowledge the victim's experience
- Don't minimize the victim's experience (i.e., "You will be ok.")

**Don't overlook the quiet victims.** Many victims 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 victims."
- When you suspect someone is affected by a tragic event, reach out with caring and curiosity – "How are you?"

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

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

**Reassure.** Many victims have an urgent need for information after a tragic event – "What happened?"; "Why?" – Assist the victim in getting the information they need. The victim may need an Information Advocate.

- Victims often blame themselves for the crisis event. Help a guilty victim gain perspective by asking them to tell you the "whole story."
- Try to gently point out to the victim what he did right before, during and after the tragic event.

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

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

**Summary:** In the first few hours after a tragic event, the victim is often surrounded by people who have “a job to do” or who have opinions about what the victim should or shouldn’t do. The primary goal of the person providing Emotional First Aid is to enable the victim 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 victim. Remember that the primary psychological challenge for the victim is to be encouraged to make decisions and take action 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 victim 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, the simple communication of the feeling of caring is probably the most important 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, 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 in 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, incidentally, children should be left in the home and not shielded from grieving of others.
- 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 other 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, 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.

## COPING AFTER A TRAGEDY – DEALING WITH LOSS

Loss from a tragedy of 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 wellbeing 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.** On a daily basis, do something for yourself. Exercise can be very helpful. Maintain simple routines.
- **Hope and Healing.** I 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 involve in a crisis or traumatic situation to experience unusual emotional detachment in order 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

## 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” even. Be patient with yourself. It takes time to recover emotionally from a traumatic event.
- Accept the fact that you have been a victim 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,” or “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 victim 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” to 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, in language they can understand for their age. Answer their questions in a straightforward manner. They often sense when you are not telling them important information. Let children participate in the family sorrow and in 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 relive this burden of guilt.
- 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 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 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 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 you 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 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.



## 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 be interviewed anonymously.
- 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.

## 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?***

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.

### ***How much does the autopsy report cost?***

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

### ***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, the 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, the 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; partner, adult child, parent, 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.

***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 web site:

<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

## CHOICES AT THE TIME OF DEATH

If the deceased left a Will, it may state an individual's wishes for 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.

There is a range of services provided by funeral homes; the most frequently used are listed on a checklist at the bottom of the next page. 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.)

## 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.

## STEPS TO TAKE WHEN A DEATH OCCURS

When a loved one passes away, 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.

- Handle the care of any dependents. 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 planning for 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 may pay expenses related to dependents and pets, so keep good records of all expenditures for them.
- Notify family and close friends as well as any employers.
- Secure and monitor the home. Answer phone messages, collect mail and newspapers, discard food that may spoil, and water plants. Depending on the circumstances, some people place lights on timers or take other steps to make the home appear that it is still lived in. If you do not live near the decedent's home, ask a friend or relative to handle this task. If necessary, change the locks.
- 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 at:

<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.

- 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.
- Locate the original Will. Likely places to locate these documents include safe deposit boxes (these boxes can be opened to search for Wills), safe at home, desk drawers, file cabinets, or the office of the attorney who drafted the Will.
- 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.
- 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.
- Employer: 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.
- Health Insurance Company: Contact the health insurance company or employer regarding terminating coverage for the deceased while continuing coverage for others covered through the policy.
- Social Security: 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.
- Banks. If there are bank accounts on which someone is a “surviving owner”, (the account may read “POD” or “TOD” or joint owners with “JTWROS”, 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. Try to understand if any accounts are automatically paying bills before an account is closed.



- Credit Card Companies: Notify credit card companies, which will prevent fraudulent charges.
- Brokerage Firms: Contact Brokerage or Investment Firms. There may be beneficiaries that can take ownership of the accounts.
- Pension Provider: Notify any pension providers, as there may be death benefits due to beneficiaries.
- Life Insurance Company: Notify the life insurance company, as there may also be life insurance benefits due.
- Mortgage Company: If the home has an outstanding mortgage, you should notify the mortgage provider.
- Landlord: If your loved one was a renter, notify the landlord and make arrangements to move out to reduce rental expenses.
- 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 whomever is responsible for your loved one's bills.
- Utilities: Cancel 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.
- Vehicles: 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.
- No items should be moved, sold, given away or otherwise disposed 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 make the decision as to their disposal.
- 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 those items which 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.

***Community Resources in the Greater Portland Area***

**\*Please Note:** 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 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.

***General Help and Information Lines***

211 Maine Support Services Directory

Dial 211

***AIDS/HIV***

Peabody Center

(207) 774-6877

Greater Portland Health

(207) 874-2141

HIV / AIDS Hotline

(800) 851-2437

***Animal Shelters & Boarding***

Animal Refuge League

(207) 854-9771

HART Cat Shelter

(207) 829-4116

Happy Tails Dog Boarding

(207) 797-2488

Camp Bow Wow Dog Boarding

(207) 541-9247

Cat Doctor - Boarding

(207) 874-2287

***Bereavement & Grief Support***

<b><i>Support for Children: Loss of a Parent, Caregiver or Sibling</i></b>	
Center for Grieving Children	(207) 775-5216
Experience Camp ( <i>free overnight summer camp experience for grieving children in Maine</i> )	campers@experiencecamps.org

<b><i>Support for Parents – Loss of a Child</i></b>	
First Candle (SIDS) Grief Line	(800) 221-7437
Madeline’s Mission – Loss of a Child	info@madelinemission.org
The Compassionate Friend - Loss of a Child	tcfofportlandme@gmail.com

<b><i>Support for Adults – Loss of a Spouse or Loved One</i></b>	
Hospice of Southern Maine	(207) 289-3651 (866) 621-7600

<b><i>Suicide Support Groups</i></b>	
Suicide Survivors Support Group - MMC	(207) 662-4226

<b><i>Cleaning and Securing Properties</i></b>	
Bio Decon	(207) 767-1359
ServiceMaster Trauma Cleaning	(207) 539-4452
ServPro of Portland	(207) 772-5032

<b><i>Crisis Hotlines</i></b>	
Maine Crisis Line	(888) 568-1112
Veterans Crisis Hotline	(800) 273-8255

<b><i>Domestic Violence</i></b>	
National Domestic Violence Hotline	(800) 799-7233
Through These Doors – Portland Area	(800) 537-6066

<b><i>Elder Services</i></b>	
Portland Elder Services	(207) 774-2623
Aging Excellence	(207) 771-0991

<b><i>Emergency Supplies &amp; General Assistance</i></b>	
American Red Cross of Southern Maine	(207) 874-1192
Salvation Army	(207) 774-4172
Cape Elizabeth General Assistance	(207) 799-7665
Cumberland General Assistance	(207) 829-5559
Falmouth General Assistance	(207) 553-5937
Gorham/Windham/Scarborough General Assistance	(207) 892-1906
Portland General Assistance	(207) 775-7911
South Portland General Assistance	(207) 767-7617
Westbrook General Assistance	(207) 591-7015

<b><i>Financial Counseling</i></b>	
American Consumer Credit Counseling	(800) 769-3571

<b><i>Funeral Information &amp; Funeral Homes</i></b>	
Funeral Consumers Alliance	(872) 760-4563
Last Things – Maine Home Funerals	(207) 873-7854
Advantage Funeral & Cremation	(207) 899-4605
A.T. Hutchins	(207) 878-3246
Conroy-Tully Walker	(207) 773-6511
Dolby Funeral Chapels	(207) 892-6342
Hobbs Funeral Home - South Portland	(207) 799-4472
Hobbs Funeral Home - Scarborough	(207) 883-5599
Jewish Funeral Home	(207) 774-3733
Jones, Rich, and Barnes	(207) 775-3763
Lindquist Funeral Home	(207) 846-4011

<b><i>Hospitals</i></b>	
<b>Maine Medical Center</b>	<b>22 Bramhall Street, Portland</b>
Switchboard	(207) 662-0111
Emergency Department	(207) 662-2381
<b>Northern Light Mercy Hospital</b>	<b>175 Fore River Parkway, Portland</b>
Switchboard	(207) 879-3000
Emergency Department	(207) 879-3265

<b><i>Interpreters</i></b>	
Maine 211: Interpreter Directory by Language	Dial 211
Catholic Charities Language Partners	(207) 523-2700
Interpret Maine	(207) 210-1412

<b><i>Legal Services</i></b>	
Pine Tree Legal Assistance	(207) 774-8211
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project	(207) 780-1593
Legal Services for the Elderly	(800) 750-5353
Volunteer Lawyers Project	(800) 442-4293
Lawyer Referrals	(800) 860-1460

<b><i>Mental Health Services</i></b>	
Spring Harbor Hospital	(207) 761-2200
Maine Crisis Line	(888) 568-1112
MH Peer to Peer Warm Line	(866) 771-9276
Behavioral Health Helpline	(207) 221-8110
NAMI Teen Text Line	(207) 622-5767
NAMI MH Helpline	(800) 464-5767

<b><i>Poison Control</i></b>	
Northern New England Poison Center	(800) 222-1222

<b><i>Police Departments</i></b>	
EMERGENCY ONLY - all locations	<b>911</b>
Cape Elizabeth	(207) 767-3323
Cumberland (town)	(207) 829-2210
Cumberland County Sheriff	(207) 774-5939
Falmouth	(207) 781-2300
Gorham	(207) 839-5581
Maine State Police – Troop B	(207) 624-7076
Portland	(207) 874-8479
Scarborough	(207) 883-6361
South Portland	(207) 799-5511
Westbrook	(207) 854-2531
Windham	(207) 892-2525
Yarmouth	(207) 846-3333

<b><i>Refugees / New Americans</i></b>	
New Mainer Resource Center	(207) 874-8155
Asylum Seekers Assistance	(207) 228-1140
Catholic Charities	(207) 871-7437
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project	(207) 780-1593

<b><i>Sexual Assault</i></b>	
Sexual Assault Helpline – Southern Maine	(800) 871-7741
Immigrants - Gender Based Violence Support	(207) 753-0061

<b><i>Shelters – Emergency Housing</i></b>	
Domestic Violence Shelter (Mothers & Children)	(207) 842-6880
Milestone Recovery (Men Only – Substance Use)	(207) 775-4790
Oxford Street Shelter	(207) 761-2072
Florence House (Women)	(207) 775-0026
Homeless Family Shelter (Portland)	(207) 772-8339
Friendship House (Men in Recovery)	(207) 767-7403

<b><i>Spiritual Care – Non-Denominational</i></b>	
Maine Medical Center Spiritual Care	(207) 662-2352
Spiritual Care Services of Maine	(207) 200-1426

<b><i>Substance Abuse</i></b>	
Pine Tree Recovery Center	(877) 596-0044
Casco Bay Recovery	(844) 956-3520

<b><i>Veterans’ Services</i></b>	
Portland Vet Center	(207) 780-3584
Maine Veteran’s Services	(207) 822-2391
Vet to Vet Maine	(207) 579-4024
Vet Suicide Hotline	(800) 273-8255
Maine Veterans Funeral Military Honors	(207) 626-7822

<b><i>Victims’ Services</i></b>	
Maine Victim’s Compensation Program	(207) 624-7882
Maine Department of Corrections Victim Services	(207) 287-4385
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Victim Services	(877) MADD-HELP
Portland Police Victim/Witness Advocate	(207) 874-8519

<b><i>Visual Impairment</i></b>	
The Iris Network	(207) 774-6273



## RESOURCES FOR VISITORS TO THE AREA

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<b><i>AIRLINES SERVING PORTLAND JETPORT</i></b>		
American Airlines	(800) 433-7300	<a href="http://www.aa.com/">http://www.aa.com/</a>
Cape Air	(800) 227-3247	<a href="http://capeair.com/">http://capeair.com/</a>
Delta	(800) 221-1212	<a href="http://www.delta.com/">http://www.delta.com/</a>
Elite Airways	(877) 393-2510	<a href="http://www.eliteairways.com/">http://www.eliteairways.com/</a>
Frontier Airlines	(801) 401-9000	<a href="http://www.flyfrontier.com/">http://www.flyfrontier.com/</a>
Jet Blue	(800) 538-2583	<a href="http://www.jetblue.com/">http://www.jetblue.com/</a>
Southwest	(800) 435-9792	<a href="http://www.southwest.com/">http://www.southwest.com/</a>
Sun Country Airlines	(651) 905-2737	<a href="https://suncountry.com/">https://suncountry.com/</a>
United Airlines	(800) 864-8331	<a href="http://www.united.com/">http://www.united.com/</a>

<b><i>BUS AND TRAIN LINES</i></b>		
Amtrak Downeaster	(800) 872-7245	<a href="https://amtrakdowneaster.com/">https://amtrakdowneaster.com/</a>
Greyhound Bus Services	(800) 231-2222	<a href="https://www.greyhound.com/en">https://www.greyhound.com/en</a>
Concord Coach Lines	(800) 639-3317	<a href="https://concordcoachlines.com/">https://concordcoachlines.com/</a>
Trailways	(800) 858 8555	<a href="https://trailways.com/">https://trailways.com/</a>

<b><i>TAXIS</i></b>		
ABC Taxi	(207) 772-8685	
ASAP Taxi	(207) 791-2727	
207 Taxi	(207) 774-2255	

<b>CAR RENTALS</b>		
Alamo	(207) 775-0855	
Avis	(207) 874-7501	
Budget	(207) 874-7501	
Dollar	(207) 756-8846	
Enterprise	(207) 615-0030	
Hertz	(207) 774-4544	
National	(207) 773-0036	

<b>HOTELS NEAR MAINE MEDICAL CENTER</b>		
The Francis	(207) 772-7485	
Inn at St Johns	(800) 636-9127	
La Quinta	(866) 238-4218	
Holiday Inn by the Bay	(207) 775-2311	
Residence Inn	(207) 761-1660	
Chadwick Bed & Breakfast	(207) 774-5141	
Brackett House	(207) 662-2848	

<b>HOTELS NEAR PORTLAND JETPORT</b>		
Embassy Suites	(866) 238-4218	
Hilton Garden Inn	(207) 828-1117	
Clarion Airport Hotel	(207) 774-5611	
Comfort Inn Portland Airport	(207) 775-0409	
Tru By Hilton Portland Airport	(207) 221-3131	
Home2Suites	(207) 517-3636	
Holiday Inn Express	(207) 775-3900	



## *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 contact us at: [pam@tipgreaterportland.org](mailto:pam@tipgreaterportland.org).*

TIP of Greater Portland is an affiliate of

**Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc.**

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

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

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