



Next Steps

Dear family member,

On behalf of the entire staff at Hoag Hospital, we wish to express our regrets and sympathy for the loss of your loved one. Because this is a painful time and one that is difficult to prepare for, we have compiled a list of resources and information that might be helpful to you during this time.

The first section is to provide you with information about the complex decisions, which you and your family will be faced with in the days and weeks to come. The second section will discuss the emotions you and your family may experience as you go through the next steps of coping with your loss.

We understand making decisions can be difficult, Hoag offers resources to assist you, including support groups, social services and spiritual care. Please feel free to contact Hoag Palliative Care at (949) 764-8585 with any questions or concerns that you may have about your emotional well-being or next steps.

In deepest sympathy,

Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian

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Next steps

Please contact Hoag Decedent Affairs office at (949) 764-3633 within 48 hours to inform them of the name and phone number of your mortuary/crematory selection. This allows the mortuary time to prepare the necessary documents required by Hoag to meet state regulations.

If you know which mortuary/crematory you will be using, please call them immediately to report the death. A release generated by the mortuary/crematory will need to be signed by the next of kin before the body can be released into the mortuary/crematory's care. A release can also be signed at the hospital if mortuary/crematory is known at the time of death.

Hoag resources

To report mortuary information (949) 764-3633
Hoag Hospital Decedent Affairs

For bereavement support (949) 764-8585
Hoag Palliative Care

To collect belongings & valuables Newport Beach (949) 764-1464
Hoag Hospital Security

Irvine
(949) 279-8031

Hoag Patient Relations Newport Beach (949) 764-8220

Irvine
(949) 764-8220

Hoag Social Services Newport Beach (949) 764-8225

Irvine
(949) 517-3436

Orange County Resources

For additional death certificates (714) 834-2500
Department of Health Services

Coroner (714) 647-7400

Social Services (714) 834-8899

Things to take care of now

The following is a checklist of things to complete at this time:

- Notify relatives and friends
- Select a mortuary
 - Notify clergy regarding the funeral or memorial services
 - Visit two to three funeral homes before making a decision
 - Work with the mortuary and the clergy in planning details of your loved one's service
- Obtain death certificates (provided by mortuary)
 - This document is necessary for many of the following steps

Other things to think about after the funeral or memorial service:

The following suggestions may be helpful in your selection process. A list of local mortuaries is included with this booklet. If you are not from the local area and need assistance in contacting local clergy, please contact Spiritual Care at (949) 764-8358.

- Notify lawyer and personal representative
- Notify insurance companies including automobile insurance (for immediate cancellation and refund of premium)
- Check carefully all life and casualty policies and death benefits (check also on income for survivor's of these benefits) including:
 - Social Security
 - Veterans Administration
 - Fraternal organizations
 - Credit union
 - Trade union
- If your loved one was living alone, notify utilities, post office, and newspaper subscriptions
- Check and verify existing debts, mortgages, and installment payments. If there will be a delay in payments, notify creditors before payments are due
- Prepare a list of people to receive acknowledgments, such as written notes or printed acknowledgments

Selecting a mortuary

Choose a funeral home and director that you feel comfortable with – you have a choice. You do not have to select the first person you contact. It is recommended that you visit two to three funeral homes before you make a decision. There is no right or wrong way to conduct a funeral or memorial service. The mortuary you select should be supportive of your needs and your choices. Ask about costs and accommodations for special requests.

The following suggestions may be helpful in your selection process. A list of local mortuaries is included with this booklet. If you are not from the local area and need assistance in contacting local clergy, please contact Spiritual Care at (949) 764-8358.

You may also wish to contact your clergy to recommend a mortuary and for information on specific religious aspects to consider when making the arrangements.

Other things to look for in a funeral home

- Get a recommendation from a family member or close friend
- Location might be a consideration; to provide opportunities for family and friends to visit the funeral home
- Visit the funeral home, meet with funeral director and staff and evaluate the facility
- View funeral merchandise such as casket, burial container/vault or urn
- Ask about additional resources such as support groups

Funeral costs

Funeral homes are required by law to provide a price list at the time of the initial consultation. The costs can be divided into three sections: Professional services, merchandise and cash advance items.

Professional services

These charges are for the use of the service provider's time, equipment and facilities. The professional services may include removal of your loved one from the place of death, obtaining the completed death certificate (signed and filed with the county), embalming, the use of automotive equipment, the facility and staff for visitations and the funeral ceremony. A basic minimum service charge is also listed on the general price list.

Merchandise

California law requires that the service provider collect sales tax on the merchandise portion of the funeral expenses. These items may include casket, cremation urn, burial vault, flowers, memorial or prayer cards and a registry book. The casket is often a large portion of the total cost and ranges in price from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. A casket/urn can also be purchased separately from an independent retailer. It is not required to purchase the casket/urn from the mortuary or funeral home.

Cash advance items

These items are things purchased on your family's behalf and may include gratuity to the clergy, newspaper obituary notices, certified copies of the death certificate, cemetery interment expenses and motorcycle escorts for the funeral procession.

Mortuary & Burial Services

Dignity Memorial Network Search locates funeral, cremation, and cemetery services by location.
dignitymemorial.com

CM Costa Mesa	LB Long Beach
GG Garden Grove	LH Laguna Hills
HB Huntington Beach	MV Mission Viejo
LA Los Angeles	SA Santa Ana

Cremation

Aaron Cremation San Bernardino	(800) 303-3610
Accord Cremation & Burial Brea	(800) 843-0995
Cremation Society of Orange Coast GG	(800) 678-0669
Cremation Society of Laguna LH	(888) 991-1120
Generations Cremation San Pedro	(888) 827-8213
Neptune Society CM	(949) 646-7431
Omega Society Orange	(714) 202-2883
Stricklin/Snively Mortuary LB	(562) 426-3365

Mortuaries (may offer cremation)

Brown Colonial Mortuary SA	(714) 542-3949
Diamond & Shannon Mortuary HB	(714) 537-1038
Fairhaven Memorial Park MV	(949) 380-8911

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Brown Colonial Mortuary SA	(714) 542-3949
Diamond & Shannon Mortuary HB	(714) 537-1038
Fairhaven Memorial Park MV	(949) 380-8911
Fairhaven Memorial Park SA	(714) 633-1442
Forest Lawn Mortuary Cypress	(888) 204-3131
Funeraria Del Angel Anaheim FKA Pierce Brothers, Anaheim	(714) 828-6440
Harbor Lawn-Mt. Olive Mortuary CM	(714) 540-5554
Heritage-Dilday Memorial Services HB	(714) 842-2400
Hilgenfeld Mortuary Anaheim	(714) 535-4105
Luyben Dilday Mortuary LB	(562) 425-6401
McCormick & Son LH	(949) 768-0933
McKenzie Mortuary LB	(562) 961-9301

Natural Grace Funerals & Cremations CM	(949) 600-7688
O'Connor Mortuary Irvine	(949) 296-1010
O'Connor Mortuary LH	(949) 581-4300
Rose Hills Memorial Whittier	(562) 699-0921
Saddleback Chapel Mortuary Tustin	(714) 544-1450
Shannon Family Mortuary Orange	(714) 771-1000
Westminster Memorial Westminster	(714) 893-2421

Spanish Speaking/Central America transport

Funeraria Del Angel Anaheim	(714) 828-6440
Family Mortuary SA	(714) 953 9045
Funeraria Del Angel Montebello	(323) 728-2133
Funeraria Del Angel, Lincoln Heights LA	(323) 221-2652
Guerra Gutierrez Mortuaries LA	(323) 722-1900

Asian-American

California (Kaju) Mortuary	(562) 622-9393
Fukui Mortuary LA	(213) 626-0441
Sunnyside Creamtion & Funeral GG	(714) 521-1011
Universal Chung Wah Funeral Directors Alhambra	(626) 726-6497

Islamic

Melrose Abbey & Mortuary Anaheim	(714) 634-1981
Rose Hills Memorial Park Whittier	(562) 699-0921
Westminster Memorial Park Westminster	(626) 726-6497

Jewish

Chevra Kadisha Mortuary West Hollywood	(323) 654-8415
Heritage Memorial Services HB	(714) 842-2400
Hillside Memorial LA	(310) 641-0707
Home of Peace Memorial LA	(323) 261-6135
Mt. Sinai Memorial LA	(323) 464-6000

Burial services & burial financial assistance

Social Security Administration Burial Fund (cremation only)	(800) 772-1213
LA County Medical Examiner-Coroner	(323) 343-0512
OC Social Services Agency – General Relief (cremation only)	(800) 281-9799
Coroner SA	(714) 647-7400
Veterans Affairs benefits assistance	(800) 827-1000
Veterans Service OC office	(714) 480-6555

Burial services, other

Coroner SA (call for unclaimed bodies)	(714) 647-7400
Death certificates (OC Clerk-Recorder) SA	(714) 834-2500
One Legacy tissue donations	(800) 338-6112
Science Care - Organ/Tissue Donations	(800) 417-3747
UCI Willed Body Program	(949) 824-6061
UCLA Donated Body Program	(310) 794-0372

General information about death benefits

General Relief burial and cremation funds

If there are no funds for burial or cremation, the family should apply for General Relief through the Orange County Social Services Agency. To be eligible, you must be a U.S. citizen or a documented non-citizen, reside in Orange County, and meet certain income and property requirements as well as other criteria.

There are three different ways to apply.

(See ssa.ocgov.com/cash-calfresh/how-apply/how-apply-general-relief)

1. Apply in person at select social Services Agency office locations.
(See ssa.ocgov.com/about-us/office-locations/office-location-list)
2. Apply by phone by calling the SSA Call Center at (800) 281-9799. Call center hours: weekdays from 6:30 AM – 8 PM and Saturdays from 7 AM – 4:30 PM.
3. Apply online at mybenefitscalwin.org

Please note not all mortuaries accept the General Relief payment. Please make sure the mortuary of your choice accepts General Relief. If needed, the General Relief office will advise you of participating mortuaries.

Social Security

If the deceased had worked and paid into Social Security, the spouse may be eligible for a death benefit supplement to help with funeral expenses. This is only payable to a surviving spouse. Be prepared to provide a death certificate, Social Security number and employment history, if available. For more information about these benefits, contact Social Security at (800) 772-1213 or visit socialsecurity.gov.

Veterans benefits

Families of honorably discharged veterans of the United States armed forces are eligible for certain funeral and burial benefits. The benefits include a large presentation flag, a basic burial allowance, transportation costs, memorial table allowance, insurance and other additional state and local benefits. The funeral director at the mortuary can help determine eligibility. Be prepared to provide the deceased's rank, serial number, branch of service, dates of service and discharge papers. In

addition, you will need a copy of the death certificate, and if applicable, marriage certificate, divorce papers and children's birth certificates.

Veterans Affairs information line: (800) 827-1000 or (310) 478-3711.

Social Security benefits

Applying for survivor's benefits

If you believe that you may be eligible for Social Security survivor's benefits, you should apply promptly after the beneficiary's death. The application can be filed at any Social Security office; for locations, please call (800) 772-1213. In some cases, benefits will be paid from the time you apply and not from the time of the worker's death.

The application process may proceed faster if you have certain information at the start; however, do not delay simply because all of the required information is not available. The Social Security office can start the application process and advise you on submitting additional evidence.

Some of the documentation needed to support an application for survivor's benefits includes

- Proof of death – either from a funeral home or death certificate
- Your Social Security number, as well as the deceased worker's
- Your birth certificate
- Your marriage certificate, if you are a widow
- Your divorce papers, if you are applying as a divorced widow or widower
- Dependent children's Social Security numbers if available
- Deceased worker's W-2 forms or federal self-employment tax return for the most recent year

The name of your bank and your account number (if requesting direct deposit) so benefits can be deposited directly into your account.

For specific criteria on eligibility for survivor's benefits, please contact Social Security at (800) 772-1213 or visit socialsecurity.gov.

Coping with your loss

Characteristics of grief

Because grief can be so painful and seem overwhelming, you may wonder if your grieving experience is normal. When a death takes place in your life, you may experience a wide range of emotional characteristics. Many people report feeling an initial stage of numbness after first learning of a death of a loved one, but there is no real order to the grieving process. After suffering the loss of a loved one, you may experience the following.

Emotional characteristics

- Depression, sadness or feeling isolated and separated from others
- Feeling anger towards God or others whose lives seem happier than yours
- Sudden changes in mood, crying at unexpected times
- A yearning for life as it used to be, before experiencing loss
- Feeling apathetic with loss of interest in usual activities
- An upsurge of emotional distress at special occasions (e.g., anniversary dates and birthdays)

Physical characteristics

- Loss of or increased appetite, upset stomach or digestive problems, weight loss or gain
- Tightness in the throat, insomnia, muscle weakness, headaches and/or dizziness; if these symptoms persist, please consult with your physician

Behavioral characteristics

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep; vivid dreams of your loved one or an absence of dreaming
- Replaying memories of the last days, weeks, hours; sensing the presence of your loved one sometimes expecting him or her to return
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions; starting something then forgetting about it
- A constant urge to fill the days with activities and/or busy work
- Decreased desire to socialize, lowered self-esteem
- Lowered or no interest in sexual activity

The cycle of grief

The cycle of grief is a series of natural, normal responses. It is important to give yourself enough time to cry and talk with people about your experience. Sometimes there is a tendency to escape from your grief with alcohol or drugs. This way of responding to pain is not helpful because it delays the grieving process rather than resolving it. If you are concerned about how you are handling your grief or need someone to talk to, please call Hoag Palliative Care to speak with a bereavement specialist at (949) 764-8585.

Grief cannot be hurried – it takes a great deal of time. The death of your loved one is considered the most stressful, life-changing situation. Despite efforts to think of other things, you may find it difficult to shift your mind from thoughts about the loss of your loved one. This is not unusual and with time should not be a distraction.

The following are stages of grief that are commonly experienced after the loss of a loved one. You may not experience all of these, and you may not experience them in this order. However, it is important to realize that these feelings are natural and with time will heal.

Shock

You may experience a feeling of shock or numbness after a loss. It may be expressed by saying things like, “I feel numb,” or displaying no tears or emotion. Often there is a period of denial. Gradually you may become aware of what has happened and able to express your emotions.

Some people never go through a prolonged stage of shock. They are able to express their emotions immediately.

Emotional release

At some point you will begin to feel the pain of your loss. You may feel anger towards the messenger who delivered the bad news – the physician, nurse, minister or God. You may catch yourself responding with a great deal of anger to situations that previously would not have bothered you at all. These feelings can be surprising and very uncomfortable.

There may be feelings of hurt or hostility toward family members who do not, or for various reasons cannot, provide the emotional support you may have expected from them.

Do not suppress your anger, sadness or fear – it is normal. Suppressed feelings often surface later in unhealthy ways. Shared feelings are a gift and bring closeness to all involved. However, it is important that you understand to direct your anger toward what you are really angry at: the loss of someone you love.

Guilt

There is almost always some sense of guilt in grief. You may think of the many things that you could have done. You accuse yourself of negligence or there was some unresolved anger with you and your loved one. It is important to note that no two people can live together without some sort of hurt being done. This is part of life and does not warrant your guilt. These emotions may develop in the grieving process. Guilt is normal and should pass with time.

Depression and withdrawal

You may experience feelings of total despair, unbearable loneliness and hopelessness—nothing seems worthwhile. These feelings may be even more intense for those who live alone or who have little family. These feelings are normal and should also pass with time.

You may find yourself withdrawn from social relationships. Your daily routines may be disrupted as well. Life seems like a bad dream. This is normal and will take some effort to overcome, but the results are worthwhile.

Relationships and adjusting

After time, effort, airing of feelings and a lot of love, you will readjust to your environment, re-establish old relationships and begin to form new ones.

This comes gradually, the memories are still there, the love is still there, but the wound begins to heal. You begin experiencing life again. It's hard to believe now, but you will feel better. By experiencing deep emotion and accepting it, you will grow in warmth, depth, understanding and wisdom.

Symptoms of physical and emotional distress

These distresses may come in waves, some lasting from 20 minutes to an hour. The most common physical distresses are:

- Sleeplessness
- Tightness in the throat; a choking feeling with shortness of breath
- A need to sigh
- An empty hollow feeling in your stomach; digestive symptoms and poor appetite (e.g., your food tastes bland)

These distresses are also closely associated with the physical distresses. The most common emotional distresses are:

- A slight sense of unreality
- Feelings of emotional distance from people, as though no one really cares or understands • People may appear shadowy or small
- There are feelings of panic, thoughts of self-destruction, or the desire to run away
- These emotions may make you feel irrational, but this is actually normal.

Dealing with your grief

Experiencing the loss of a loved one is a difficult experience; however, surrendering to your grieving experience will bring comfort and solace. Instead of denying or medicating the pain, realize that this hurt is needed in order for you to heal. This will allow for you to become stronger in the process. Here are some ways to cope with the loss of your loved one. thoughts about the loss of your loved one. This is not unusual and with time should not be a distraction.

Relationships

Resume old and new relationships. To lessen your pain and loneliness, admit to yourself and your family when you need help. Accept other's help and give them specific chores to help you. Allow family and friends to share in your grief. Talk to family and friends about your loved one and share your feelings and allow them to share your grief. You may want to call someone who can raise your spirits.

Stay healthy

Plan something active everyday such as biking, jogging, walking, aerobics or yoga. Even a walk around the block can be helpful. Remember to drink eight glasses of liquids (water, juice, tea) per day. It is important to keep your body hydrated to avoid headaches and/or lower back pain caused by dehydration. You should eat a well-balanced diet that includes a variety of nutritional foods such as dairy, vegetables, fruits, nuts and whole grains. Try to avoid foods high in fat.

It is also important to resume normal sleep patterns even if you are unable to sleep and to avoid increased work activity. When grieving, your body becomes at risk for life-threatening diseases. You may want to schedule a physical exam about four months after your loss.

Decision making

Try to avoid making life-changing decisions, instead wait 12 months then decide. Try not to move, change jobs or relationships while grieving. Because your coping mechanisms are decreased, try to avoid long trips. You do not have to put away your loved one's clothing and personal items until you are ready, this will come in time.

Support

You may want to attend a bereavement support group, where others experiencing grief can also give you support. If you wish to renew your faith and hope, contact your clergy.

Being creative

Start a journal or diary of your thoughts. You may want to write a letter to your deceased loved one; make a list of things you are grateful for; write down things that help you relax, then arrange to do those things.

In dealing with your grief, allow an opportunity to reflect on the good times; relive an experience in your life that made you happy; plan activities to honor and remember your loved one; support an organization that was important to your loved one.

Commonly shared feelings

“Sometimes I feel that I am doing contradictory things.”

In grief, you will be torn between the past and the future. Though you know that you must move forward, you find yourself looking back. As a result, you may be experiencing contradictory feelings for some time. This is normal.

“At times I feel isolated. What should I do about this feeling?”

In general, if you have a healthy regard for yourself and strong feelings of independence, this feeling of isolation will disappear after a while. At the beginning, it may take an effort to socialize, but the rewards are worth the effort.

“I get angry now more than I ever did before, even with those I love. What should I do about this?”

Anger is the most easily expressed human emotion, more easily expressed than doubt, fear or guilt. Therefore, anger is a normal reaction after the death of your loved one. Anger can be healthy when it is directed toward what you are really angry about, in this case, the loss of your loved one. You may feel anger towards family members, friends, in-laws, physicians, clergymen or even God. You should try to focus your anger on what really makes you angry. Extreme anger should not be turned inward and repressed.

“I did nothing to cause the death of my loved one, yet I feel guilty. There are many things that I could have done, but I did not do. Will this feeling of guilt go away?”

Yes. There is a feeling of incompleteness following a death. You want more of the relationship that you enjoyed. There are often things you believe you could have done to make things turn out differently. In general, you should believe this in fact, is the case. You made the best decision you could with the information at hand. These feelings of guilt and remorse will pass in time.

“I have problems making up my mind on what to do. I seem to be indecisive. What should I do?”

It is normal to have difficulties making decisions. You have been doing things jointly for so long and now you must decide alone which choices to make. Try to make decisions on small matters first, for example, food, clothing and so forth, and gradually go to larger matters. You will surprise yourself at what you are able to decide.

“Is it normal to think of suicide?”

Often suicide appears to be the only way out of an intolerable situation. You may believe that this is a way to return to your loved one. Occasional thoughts of suicide should not be a source of concern. As a new lifestyle has developed, these thoughts vanish. However, if you are concerned that these are thoughts you may act upon, please seek professional help immediately.

“I have been crying often since the loss of my loved one. Does crying really help?”

Crying is normal and healthy and should not in any way cause shame. Crying is more likely to help if done in the presence of others. It will help you to understand the depth of your feelings. Crying should not be discouraged, but it alone is not enough to overcome grief. Furthermore, no one should be forced to cry if they do not wish to do so.

Helping a child cope with grief

Expressions of grief

Talking with children about death must be geared to their developmental level and sensitive to their capacity to understand the situation. Children will be aware of the reactions of the adults around them. These reactions can actually shape how the child will respond to the tragedy. The range of emotions may include:

- **Emotional Shock and often and apparent lack of feelings.** This can serve to help the child detach from the pain of the situation.
- **Regressive, or immature, behaviors** such as difficulty separating from adult caregivers, needing to be rocked or held, wanting to sleep in a parent's bed or difficulty completing age-appropriate tasks (i.e., bed wetting, language regression).
- **Acting-out behavior** that reflects the child's feelings of fear, anger or frustration. This behavior may allow the child to feel that they are exerting control over the situation.
- **Repeating the same questions over and over**, often because the information is so hard to believe and accept.

Helping children cope with death

- Explain what “dead” means. Keep it as simple as possible. You can say “the body stopped working.” Avoid saying the person “went to sleep” or “went

- away” as this may create fear about sleeping and/or hope that the person might return.
- Tell the truth. Be honest and try to be specific; do not distort the truth. Honesty about an illness process can help calm the child's fears by reassuring them that a cold is different from cancer.
- Allow children to tell their story and be a good listener. Tell the child that it is okay to cry, feel angry or sad.
- Allow children to see you or other adults express emotions. Be aware of your own need to grieve and allow the children to see that the grief process affects you as well. This will help to normalize tears, talking about feelings and expressing emotions.
- Let children know that you really want to understand how they are feeling and what they need to get through the grieving process. Give them time and space to come to you with any thoughts, feelings and concerns.
- Don't assume that a child understands information just based on his age; every child is different.
- Give each child information about loss and death that is appropriate to their age and developmental level. Allow the child to ask questions to obtain further details as they desire rather than giving too much information initially.
- Grieving is a process and will vary with each child. It is important to allow each child time to grieve in whatever way works best for that child. Pressure for the child to resume “normal” activities can prompt additional problems.
- Encourage children to ask questions about loss and death.
- There is no correct way to grieve. Grieving is hard work, understand that it is complicated and different for every person.
- Engage long-lasting support resources for children to lean on over time. Relatives and friends, bereavement groups where they can meet other children in similar circumstances, religious advisors or mental health professionals can be of help during this difficult time.

Should a child attend a funeral?

Yes, if the child wants to and is old enough to understand the event.

- Prepare the child and let them know what to expect.
- Describe the environment (will the service be in a place or worship, or at graveside). If the body will be on view, explain that and allow the child to decide whether to approach the body.
- Explain that you (or others) may be crying during the

service. Let the child know that it is okay to cry and express feelings but also that it is okay if they don't cry.

- Give the child a choice. Do not force a child to attend a memorial service. Make sure you try to understand what the concerns are so that you can help to address fears, questions or thoughts.

Memorial ideas

- Have the child write a letter to express feelings and thoughts to the person who has died. Tuck the letter into the casket or grave, or offer for the child to keep it.
- Have younger children draw pictures to express their emotions.
- Hold a special ceremony: say a prayer, light a candle, plant a tree or flowers.
- Make a scrapbook or photo album for the child to keep.

Visible reactions of children include

- Anxiety attacks or separation anxiety
- Bed-wetting, nightmares
- Death phobias
- Running away
- Stuttering
- Suicide attempts
- Upsurge of aggressiveness, sudden outbursts of fear, and/or hatred of his or her mother

Please seek professional advice if any of these reactions or behaviors become evident. You should contact a physician, social worker, school counselor or psychiatrist.

For more information regarding support groups for children/teens who have experienced a loss, contact a Hoag Palliative Care bereavement specialist at (949) 764-8585.

Age group	Understanding of illness	Possible reactions or behaviors	Helpful parental responses
Infants and toddlers	May perceive that adults are sad but have no understanding of the meaning of death.	Likely none. May change sleeping, eating, toileting habits. Will pick up on grief of adults around them.	Stick to usual routines and schedules. Stay physically close to help the child feel safe.
Preschoolers	May see death as reversible. May have magical thinking about death and causes of death.	Picks up on non-verbal communication. May think that they can “wish” the person back. Usually functions well on a day to day basis.	Use age-appropriate books to explain. Use simple terms to explain death, “Grandma’s body doesn’t work anymore.” Make sure that the child knows that they did not cause the death. Allow child to ask questions before providing details related to the topic of death.
Early elementary school (5 – 9)	Have some understanding that death is final and that certain situations can result in death. Death is perceived as something that happens to others.	May see death as a “monster” that takes someone away. Still some magical thinking but understands death is final. May over-generalize about death. May develop an interest in the causes of death.	May need more details about how the person died. Encourage child to ask questions and reassure them that you will be there for them.
Middle School (10 – 13)	Cognitive understanding of death and the finality but not able to grasp all abstract concepts related to death/dying. May ask for more detail about what happened. Concerns about ritual, burial.	May experience variety of emotions including acting out and self-injurious behaviors to express anger. May become irritable, sad, tearful, complain of headaches, stomachaches. May have separation anxiety. May have poor grades, poor concentration, withdrawal.	Use books to explain illness, treatment and potential outcomes. Reassure them that they did nothing to cause the illness. Take time to listen and let them know that their feelings are important. Let them know that it is okay to show emotions by showing yours. Let them know how they can help. Address issues of possible death even if child does not bring it up.
High school (14 – adulthood)	Able to fully grasp the meaning of death. May view death as inevitable. May question the meaning of life. Thinks like an adult.	May seek out friends and family for comfort. May feel guilt, anger or responsibility for the death. Unsure of how to handle emotions publicly or privately.	Encourage them to talk about their feelings. Teens may feel that it is easier to talk to friends or adults outside of the family. Guide through grief process and help identify coping skills. Provide privacy as needed but set appropriate limits. Provide plenty of verbal and physical expressions of love. Talk about role changes in the family if appropriate.

Resources for coping with grief

The following is a list of selected readings, which may assist you during your healing process. Some readings may speak to you more than others. For additional resources, you may consult with your clergy, librarian or local bookstore.

Grief, loss, and bereavement

The Mourning Handbook: The Most Comprehensive Resource Offering Practical and Compassionate Advice on Coping With all Aspects of Death & Dying

By Helen Fitzgerald

From preparing for the death of a loved one, to taking care of practical matters, to dealing with overwhelming emotions, this most comprehensive guide to grieving is based on the author's experiences as a grief counselor, with discussions on the issues people face before, during and after the death of a friend or family member.

Music I No Longer Heard: The Early Death of a Parent

By Leslie Simon and Han Johnson Drantell

Fragments of oral history are presented by people between the ages of 19 to 87, who survived the loss of a parent(s) at an early age. This work includes reflections on the many ways the interviewees (and the authors) have recognized and dealt with the effects of their losses.

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After the Darkest Hour the Sun Will Shine Again: A Parent's Guide to Coping With the Loss of a Child

By Elizabeth Mehren

An inspiring guide to coping with the loss of a child combines the author's own story with the experiences and wisdom of others who have gone through this tragedy.

Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief

By David Kessler

In this groundbreaking new work, David Kessler – an expert on grief and the coauthor with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross of the iconic *On Grief and Grieving* – journeys

beyond the classic five stages to discover a sixth stage: meaning.

Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy

By Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant

The book features stories of people who recovered from personal and professional hardship, including illness, injury, divorce, job loss, sexual assault and imprisonment. These people did more than recover – many of them became stronger.

How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies

By Therese Rando, PhD

Mourning the death of a loved one is a process everyone will go through at one time or another.

But whether the death is sudden or anticipated, few of us are prepared for it or for the grief it brings. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, each person's response to loss will be different. Now in this compassionate, comprehensive guide, Therese A. Rando, PhD, bereavement specialist and author of *Loss and Anticipatory Grief*, leads you gently through the painful but necessary process of grieving and helps you find the best way.

Beyond Grief: A Guide for Recovering from the Death of a Loved One

By Carol Staudacher

This book discusses the conditions of grief, understanding coping, surviving specific types of loss (eg, loss of a spouse, parent, child, accidental death and suicide) and getting and giving help.

The Courage to Grieve

By Judy Tatelbaum

This book touches on all the aspects of grief and resolution, including important ideas on self-help, avenues to complete unfinished business and guidelines on letting go. This manuscript of wisdom and love reminds us that every ending is also a new beginning.

The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce and Other Losses

By John W. James

Based on a proven process and now extensively revised, *The Grief Recovery Handbook* gives grievers the specific actions they need to work through their loss and create a richer, fuller life.

When Bad Things Happen to Good People

By Harold S. Kushner

Harold Kushner, a Jewish Rabbi facing his own child's fatal illness, deftly guides us through the inadequacies of the traditional answers to the problem of evil, then provides a uniquely practical and compassionate answer that has appealed to millions of readers across all religious creeds. A distinguished clergyman offers advice to people of all faiths on how to come to terms with suffering and loss and explains how a belief in God can help readers to experience comfort and understanding.

Angel Catcher

By Kathy and Amy Eldon

Following the death of their son and brother, Kathy and Amy designed a journal that guides one through the grieving process. It is an active way to remember, through guided journaling, your loved one through words, pictures, photography and other keepsakes.

Children and teens

Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals

By Earl A. Grollman

A comprehensive guide to helping children and adolescents cope with the emotional, religious, social and physical aspects of a loved one's death. Topics range from how adolescents grieve differently from adults to concrete ways to help children cope.

When a Loved One Dies: A Family Guide to Helping Children Cope

By The American Cancer Society 800-ACS-2345

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf

By Leo F. Buscaglia

This story is a warm, wonderfully wise and stirringly simple story about a leaf named Freddie – how Freddie and his companion's leaves change with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow. This story is good for children 3 – 7 years of age.

Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child

By Earl A. Grollman

Whether war, a natural disaster or a serious illness of a loved one or pet, many children must face the reality of death much sooner than their parents would like. This

book is designed to help parents and children talk about this difficult time.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

By Judith Viorst

The author succinctly and honestly handles both the emotions stemming from the loss of a beloved pet and the questions about the finality of death, which naturally arise in such a situation.

What's Heaven?

By Maria Shriver

Borne from actual questions asked by her own daughters, journalist Maria Shriver's *What's Heaven?* is a gentle narrative of conversations that pass between a mother and a young daughter in the days immediately following the death of the children's special great-grandmother.

Badger's Parting Gifts

By Susan Varley

All the woodland creatures love old Badger, who is their confidant, advisor and friend. When he dies, they are overwhelmed by their loss. Then, they begin to remember. Told simply, directly and honestly, this uplifting story is of tremendous value to both children and their parents. call (949) 736-6101.

Bereavement services

Bereavement Program

The Bereavement Program at Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian provides support, education and guidance for people in our community throughout the grieving process. Through sharing similar experiences, group members will give and receive emotional support and have the opportunity to connect with others in the community.

Oncology Bereavement Support Group

A grief support group for participants over the age of 18, supporting those that have lost a loved one to cancer. Registration is required. This group is offered free of charge to the community. For more information, please call (949) 722-6237.

Grief Recovery Series

Join us for an 8-week series that provides a safe environment for you to look at your old beliefs about dealing with loss, which losses have affected your life and take actions that will lead you to complete unresolved emotions that may still be causing you pain. Evaluation by a group leader is required prior to registration. This group has a small materials fee associated with registration. For more information, please call (949) 722-6237.

Women's Grief Support Group

A general grief support group for women over the age of 18, offering support to those who have lost a loved one. Registration is not required. The group is offered free of charge to the community. For more information , please call (949) 736-6101.

Men's Grief Support Group

A general grief support group for men over the age of 18, offering support to those who have lost a loved one. Registration is not required. The group is offered free of charge to the community. For more information , please call (949) 736-6101.

LGBTQ Grief Support Group

A general grief support group for the LGBTQ community, anyone over the age of 18, offering support to those who have lost a loved one. Registration is not required. The group is offered free of charge to the community. For more information , please call (949) 736-6101.

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