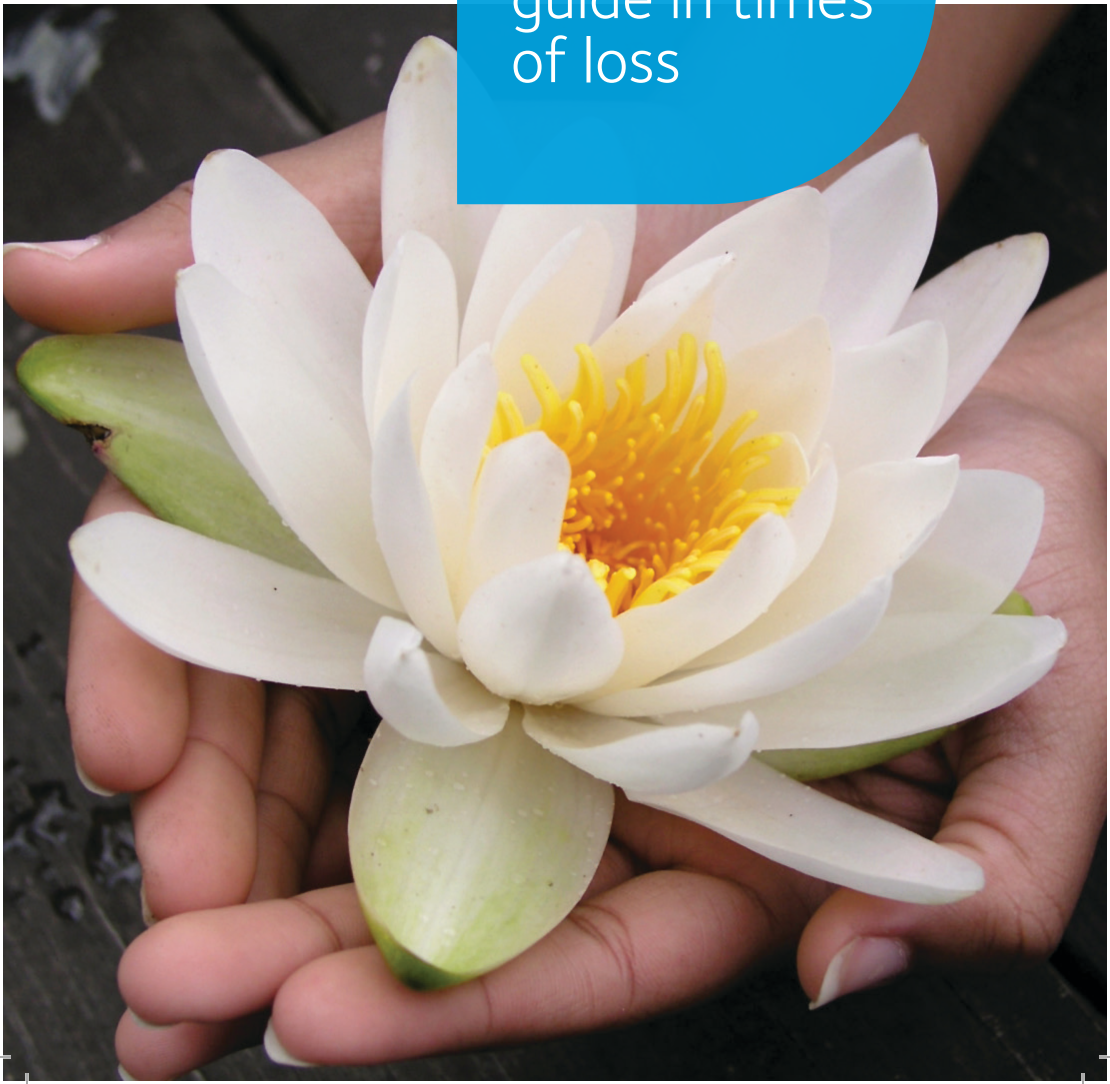
Adventist Health

LIVING THROUGH GRIEF

A bereavement guide in times of loss



Our mission

Living God's love by inspiring health, wholeness and hope.

Our vision

Compelled by mission to live God's love by inspiring health, wholeness and hope, we will transform the health experience of our communities by improving physical, mental and spiritual health; enhancing interactions and making care more accessible and affordable.

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Dear family and friends

We at Adventist Health Simi Valley are saddened by the loss of your loved one and understand that the journey ahead may be filled with a mix of emotions as you grieve.

This bereavement guide serves as a resource to many of the technical aspects that lie ahead and aims to help ease administrative matters.

Should you need further support or information for grief support groups, you may contact the Mission and Spiritual Care Department at 805-955-6030.

May you and your family feel comforted and loved during this time of loss.

Sincerely,

Taylor Laurie

Taylor Laurie

Director, Mission & Spiritual Care

Bereavement checklist

At Adventist Health Simi Valley, we are committed to helping you through this difficult time. In doing so, we developed a step-by-step checklist which you may find useful as a reminder of what needs to be done and who needs to be informed after a loved one has died.

This information is just a guide, and not everything on this list will apply in every case. Some of the items on this notification list will need to be done by the executor of the deceased person's estate and others can be done by family or friends.

- ☐ Accountan, tax preparer or IRS, to find out whether an estate tax return or final income tax return should be filed
- ☐ Agencies providing care (social services, home care services, meals-on-wheels, daycare centers)
- ☐ Building and property insurance companies to ensure continued coverage, especially if property is left unoccupied
- ☐ Clubs, organizations and social groups to cancel memberships
- ☐ Websites, to cancel accounts (online banking, etc.)
- ☐ Child support services
- ☐ Credit card companies
- ☐ Websites to cancel accounts (online banking, etc.)
- ☐ Debtors (mortgage, utilities, auto, cellphone, etc.)
- ☐ Department of Motor Vehicles to cancel driver’s license
- ☐ Educational establishments
- ☐ Employer regarding outstanding employee benefits, employee retirement plan, etc.
- ☐ Health professionals to cancel any outstanding medical, dental, podiatry or other health-related appointments
- ☐ Property management company
- ☐ Housing benefit
- ☐ Insurance companies (life, travel, rent, car, etc.)

- ☐ Library services
- ☐ Local police department, if deceased held a firearms license for work and/or recreational purposes
- ☐ Mortgage provider
- ☐ Passport and/or visa agency
- ☐ Pension provider (if other than employer)
- ☐ Post office
- ☐ Social Security, Veterans Affairs, Employment Development Department, Medicaid, Medicare and any other agency from which the deceased received benefits to stop payment and ask about applicable survivor benefits
- ☐ TV and internet provider
- ☐ Utility companies (electricity, gas, water, telephone) to arrange transfer of account details if necessary

Items you may need while contacting these agencies may include:

- ☐ Deceased's social security number
- ☐ Date of birth
- ☐ Address
- ☐ Proof of death
- ☐ Funeral home contact information.

Counseling and grief support

Grief is experienced differently and varies by what the relationship was between the grieving and the deceased. Adventist Health Simi Valley offers a variety of resources, including religious and spiritual support, social services and grief counseling. Please do not hesitate to request support during this difficult process.

Our Mission and Spiritual Care team offers support for all faiths along with spiritual and emotional needs. You can reach us by calling 805-955-6030, or tell your nurse that you would like to meet with a chaplain.

Our social workers provide resources and support for patients and their families. To connect with a social worker, please call 805-955-6840, or tell your nurse you would like to meet with a social worker.

Valuables and personal belongings

Adventist Health Simi Valley supports a safe and secure environment for patients and their belongings. As such, valuables are inventoried when the patient is admitted. Items are either placed in the patient's room in the drawer or cabinet, or stored in the hospital's safe if they are valuable items, such as the patient's wallet, money, jewelry, handheld games, tablets, etc.

In some instances, clothing or personal belongings may be disposed of because they are too soiled to be safely cleaned or laundered.

If there is no family present to claim the patient's items, they will be held with Security for up to 30 days and then disposed if unclaimed.

To collect your deceased family member's valuables, contact Security at 805-955-6166. Please provide:

- Patient's name
- Patient's date of birth
- Your phone number and relationship to the patient

This information is required to claim these items. The family member must also sign the valuables list with the listed items of the deceased.

Autopsy

An autopsy cannot be performed unless authorized by the deceased's next of kin. An autopsy is a medical and scientific procedure intended to establish the cause of death and to determine the medical and scientific reasons for death. Each autopsy contributes to the knowledge and understanding of medicine and may benefit persons still alive. Thus, an autopsy allows someone to contribute to future generations.

When a person dies, management of their remains is handled by their next of kin. California law recognizes the following people, in descending order of priority, to be a person's next of kin: Spouse (if not divorced), children, grandchildren, parents, siblings (in agreement). A healthcare proxy ends when a person dies and the hospital turns to a patient's family for instructions. If an autopsy is requested, the doctor will ask you for written permission to perform one. The doctor will be assisted by an administrator who works with the decedent affairs office.

An autopsy is a surgical procedure that requires incisions into the patient's body. It will not affect your loved one having an open casket viewing.

To receive a copy of the autopsy report or medical records, contact Health Information Management at 818-409-8171, option 4.

Death certificate

A death certificate is a legal form the certifying physician, the hospital and the funeral home complete when someone has died. The physician records the name of the deceased, cause of death, the date and time of death and his or her name and medical license number.

The funeral home completes the death certificate with the address, education, occupation, social security number and the details of the deceased's final resting place. The funeral home with whom you have made arrangements for is responsible for providing the family with the death certificate.

Once filed at the County Recorder's Office, the death certificate can also be obtained at the:

Hall of Administration – Main Plaza
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93309-1260
805-654-2290

California Department of Public Health
Vital Records – MS 5103
P.O. Box 997410
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410
916-445-2684
cdph.ca.gov
CA Relay: 711/1-877-632-9095

Social Security Office
Visit: ssa.gov for the latest information and nearest location to you.

Funeral homes

Below is a partial list of local funeral homes near Adventist Health Simi Valley and the communities we serve. The businesses listed below are not endorsed by Adventist Health Simi Valley, nor do we have a partnership with them. Please contact them directly for pricing.

Local mortuaries & funeral homes

Rose Family Funeral Home 4444 Cochran St. Simi Valley, CA 93063	805-581-3800
Reardon Mortuary – Simi Valley 2636 Sycamore Drive Simi Valley, CA 93065	805-526-6677
Perez Family Funeral Home 887 Patriot Drive, Suite H Moorpark, CA 93021	805-876-0019

Cremation services

Neptune Society 4312 Woodman Ave. 3rd Sherman Oaks, CA 91423	818-946-2022
SoCal Cremation 16742 Stagg St., Suite 103 Van Nuys, CA 91406	877-790-9455
Valley of Peace Cremation & Burial 100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd. Thousand Oaks, CA 91360	805-230-2297

Other arrangements

Research for Life A Whole Body Donation Organization 41743 Enterprise Circle North, Suite 104 Temecula, CA 92590	951-719-3334
Science Care Whole Body Donor Program	800-417-3747

Funeral home guidelines

Once the funeral home has been contacted, they will transfer the deceased from Adventist Health Simi Valley to the funeral home. This must be done within four business days.

The funeral director will contact and meet with the next of kin and other appropriate family members to make funeral arrangements and complete necessary paperwork. Please bring the following documents to the meeting to assist in the process:

- Deceased's full name
- Deceased's social security number
- Deceased's parent's names
- Occupation
- Life insurance policies

The funeral home will then work with medical records if items are missing or incomplete. Every funeral home varies on arrangements they provide.

Documentation

Here is a short list of some of the documents you may need to be familiar with:

- Certified copy of death certificate
- Statement of goods and services
- Contract for services and merchandise relating to the disposition of the deceased by the funeral home
- Permission for autopsy
- Release authorization signed by next of kin, authorizing the funeral home to make the transfer of the deceased

Planning a service

Gathering for a service can be a bridge to healing for many. It allows us to acknowledge our loss and share precious memories together while also providing an opportunity to give and receive comfort from others.

The service can be anything from a traditional funeral to a spontaneous gathering organized by a few people. Many people express their desire to create a gathering that is intentionally focused on celebrating the life of their loved one rather than dwelling on the loss. Keep in mind that the best services are those that create and support a healing atmosphere.

- Choose a mortuary with consideration of burial or cremation.
- Decide on a time and place of funeral or memorial service(s), if one is desired. If you prefer, explore other ways to honor and remember your loved one.
- Make a list of immediate family, close friends and coworkers. Contact, or designate someone to contact, each by phone.
- Prepare a list of distant persons to be notified by mail or electronically.
- Write an obituary. Include age, place of birth, cause of death, occupation, college degrees, memberships held, military service, outstanding work and a list of survivors in the immediate family. Include the time and place of the services. Funeral homes can be a great help during this process.
- If flowers are to be omitted, decide on an appropriate organization or project to which memorial gifts may be made and include it in the obituary listing.

Financial and government resources

Should you find yourself in a situation requiring assistance, the following organizations may be able to assist.

Federal Assistance
Social Security Administration
1-800-772-1213
Survivor benefits vary; call to check eligibility.

Veterans Affairs
1-800-952-5626
The deceased must have served in the U.S. Military. Survivor benefits vary; call to check eligibility.

Employer benefits
If your loved one was still employed, you will need to inform his or her employer immediately. Ask about the deceased's benefits and any pay still due, including vacation or sick time, disability income, etc. Ask if you or other dependents are still eligible for benefit coverage through the company. Ask whether there is a life insurance policy through the employer, and if so, who the beneficiary is and how to file a claim. If there is a company retirement plan with death benefits payable to a designated beneficiary, find out how to go about filing a claim. If you are not the beneficiary, you should pass this information along to whoever is the named beneficiary.

Check for other pension other pension administrators, to report death and check on survivor's benefits. If the decedent was receiving other pension benefits, that organization should be notified promptly. Post-death pension payments will have to be returned. Also call any unions, professional or service organizations the decedent belonged to. He or she may have had life insurance or other benefits through these organizations.

Phone numbers

Hospital Main 805-955-6000

Emergency Department .... ext. 6100

Mission and Spiritual Care (Chaplain Services) .... ext. 6030

House Supervisor .... ext. 6220

Health Information Management (Medical Records) . 818-409-8171, option 4

Palliative Care .... ext. 6226

Security .... ext. 6166

Social Services .... ext. 6840

Government Agencies

Medi-Cal/Medicare 800-452-2273

Social Security Administration 800-772-1213

Veterans Affairs 800-952-5626

Frequently asked questions

Q: What is an autopsy?

A: An autopsy is an examination of a person who has died to determine or confirm the cause of the death. It can also determine changes produced by disease.

Q: What is embalming?

A: Embalming preserves the body for suitable viewing during funeral services.

Q: What happens next?

A: Once the patient has passed we allow the family to be with the patient for two hours. After the two hours have passed we kindly clean the patient and prepare the decedent for morgue transfer. The deceased is in the morgue until the mortuary retrieves the patient for preparation.

Q: What if I don't have a mortuary in place?

A: Adventist Health Simi Valley allows the family four business days to locate a mortuary.

What to do and when

The following list contains excerpts from No Lifetime Guarantee by Katie Maxwell. This is a guide for dealing with the practical aspects of death, particularly the death of a spouse. However, remember your particular circumstances may warrant a quicker or slower action than this timetable suggests. Use this as a guide and make adjustments when necessary depending upon your financial situation.

First week

- Contact life insurance company for claim forms. Request only the funds you need to live on until you can consult with a financial advisor.
- Visit your bank to open an account for yourself if necessary.
- See an attorney who can explain the terms of the will, and file the Will with the courts.
- Begin probate proceedings, if necessary.
- Petition the court for appointment as executor or executrix
- Locate important documents.

Second week

- Begin applying for survivor benefits.
- Send medical claims to the appropriate insurance carriers.
- Consult with a financial advisor about how to request large sum benefits.
- As executor:
    - Open a bank account to receive money due to the estate.
    - Inventory all assets.
    - Collect all monies due to the estate.
    - Apply for a tax identification number.
    - File Form 56, Notice Concerning Fiduciary Relationship.
- Send thank you notes and acknowledgments.

Third week

- See an accountant to get a tax projection.
- Review all insurance with your agent to see if coverage is appropriate and adequate.
- Change beneficiaries on insurance policies, retirement accounts, savings bonds, etc.
- Transfer all assets into your name or into trust accounts.
- Make a plan for paying debts and obligations.
- Make necessary decisions concerning the deceased's self-employment business.

After first month

- Contact credit card and charge card companies.
- Change billing name with utility companies.
- Change registration on vehicles by contacting the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Notify book clubs, record clubs and other subscription material.
- Contact rental and lease companies.
- Update Will.
- Prepare a net worth statement.
- Make a list of income and expenses.
- Track your expenses to see where your money is being spent.
- Go through old records and files, including canceled checks for clues to any additional benefits, assets or obligations.
- Choose a memorial marker.

After the third month

- Create a new budget.
- Apply for credit in your own name.

- Begin gathering information for tax returns.

After the sixth month

- Begin to think about investments.
- As executor:
  - List claims against the estate.
  - Liquidate assets as necessary to pay bills.
  - Prepare tax returns and pay tax liabilities.
  - Disburse assets to heirs.
  - Prepare an accounting for the courts.
  - Advise beneficiaries of the new tax basis for assets.

After one year

- Close probate.
- Make decisions about your future living arrangements.

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