GLOBAL GRIEF NETWORK | LEARNER TOOLS

Checklist: The First Weeks After a Death

Checklist | Practical steps and caring for yourself



About this page: The first weeks after a death can bring many tasks at a time when it is hard to think. This list can help you see what needs doing, what can wait, and who might help. Not every item will apply. Rules and steps vary by place, so check with local offices or a funeral provider.

In the first days

- [ ] Tell close family and friends, or ask someone to help
- [ ] Ask for a written, itemized price list before choosing services
- [ ] Arrange care for children, pets, or dependents
- [ ] Ask a friend to keep a list of who has helped
- [ ] Contact a funeral home or other provider
- [ ] Look for any written wishes (funeral, burial, cremation)
- [ ] Secure the home and vehicle if needed
- [ ] Eat, drink water, and rest when you can

In the first weeks

- [ ] Order several certified copies of the death certificate
- [ ] Notify banks and insurance companies
- [ ] Look for a will and contact the named executor
- [ ] Keep important papers together in one folder
- [ ] Tell the employer of the person who died
- [ ] Notify government agencies that apply (for example, Social Security in the US)
- [ ] Cancel or redirect regular bills, subscriptions, and mail
- [ ] Return borrowed items and collect belongings

Caring for yourself

- [ ] Let one or two people help with meals or errands
- [ ] Tell my employer or school what I need
- [ ] Write down questions to ask later
- [ ] Keep one small daily routine
- [ ] Put off big decisions (such as moving) if I can
- [ ] Save crisis numbers in my phone

Who is helping with what

Task	Who will help	By when	Done
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐

Questions to ask later (funeral provider, bank, employer, others)

For help finding local services in the US, you can dial 211. The GGN Resource Library lists more organizations.

> **In immediate danger: call 911. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** call or text **988** (US). Elsewhere, use your local emergency number and crisis line.

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