

# Bereavement Guide



**INTEGRIS**  
HEALTH

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# A note about this guide

Dear Family or Friend,

INTEGRIS Health is here to partner with you during the loss of your loved one. Our goal is to walk with you every step of the way and to provide a variety of resources to you during this difficult time. We have chaplain services available to help counsel and support you. You are not alone, and we want to assure you that every effort will be made to be sensitive to your religious and cultural needs.

There is no "right" way to grieve. Grief is a very individualized process. The way you cope with obstacles, your personality, the relationship you shared with your loved one, the progression of their illness and the way you navigate through the range of emotions that accompany loss all contribute to the overall grieving process.

Grasping the feelings that are moving through you right now is an important first step in coming to terms with the death of your loved one. This guide will provide some general information about planning checklists, processing grief, support groups, and hospital and community resources. We hope the information within these pages is helpful to you.



# Arrangement Checklist

When your loved one passes away at INTEGRIS Health, your family and doctors will be notified. We will make every effort to honor your request for visitation and requests specific to your cultural and religious preferences. Once you have selected the funeral home of your choice, we can assist in communicating the information to the funeral home. A member of its staff will come to the hospital to bring your loved one to their facility. Below is a checklist that may assist with your arrangement planning.

- Ask us about contacting the funeral home of your choice to have them take your loved one into their care.
- Talk with the unit nurse manager and they can assist you.
- Contact other family members, close friends, spiritual leader, the deceased's employer, your employer, and if children are involved, their school.
- Arrange for the care of any minor children.
- Delegate family and close friends to help make and answer phone calls
- Contact life insurance companies, social security, creditors, the bank, and if appropriate, your family attorney.

## Important Documents to Bring to the Funeral Home

- Will
- Birth certificate
- Social Security card
- Marriage license
- Deed to burial property
- Copy of funeral prearrangements
- Life insurance policies



# Valuables and Personal Belongings

INTEGRIS Health provides a secure location for your loved one's belongings. These personal items will be held for 90 days.

If your loved one had valuables that they checked in with our security department, we can assist you in collecting those items. To collect these valuables, ask that the unit nurse manager contact security and assist you in retrieving these items. Your photo identification and the valuables voucher will be required to claim them.

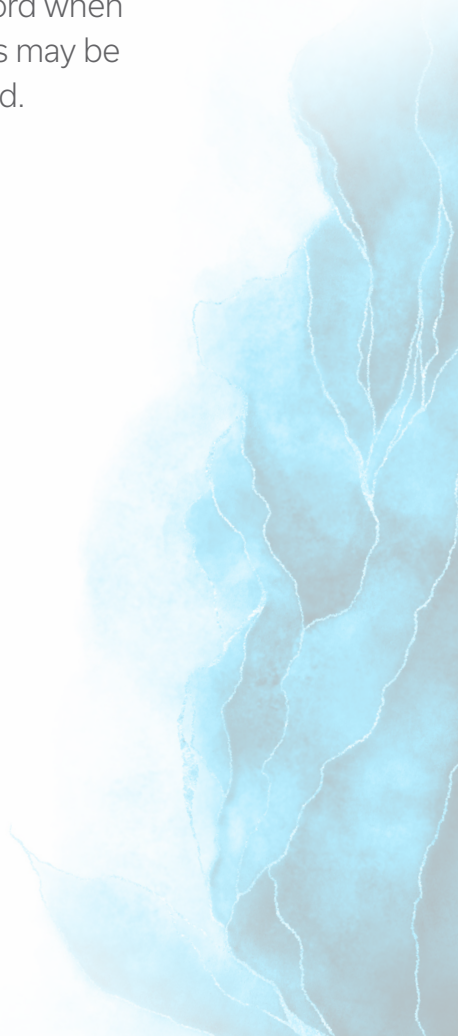
Personal effects, including dentures, glasses, clothing, hearing aids, etc., and valuables, including jewelry, cash, wallets, cell phones, laptops, etc., that have been maintained by the patient, will be secured and available for pick-up by immediate family. Valuables that patients wish to check in are inventoried when the patient is admitted and then locked in a secure location. Notes of the patient's belongings and the valuables voucher are also recorded in the patient's medical record when he or she is admitted. In some instances, clothing or personal belongings may be disposed of because they are too soiled to be safely cleaned or laundered.

## Important Phone Numbers

INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center.....	405-949-3011
INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center Portland Ave.....	405-604-6000
INTEGRIS Bass Baptist Health Center.....	580-233-2300
INTEGRIS Health Canadian Valley Hospital.....	405-717-6800
INTEGRIS Health Cancer Institute.....	405-773-6400
INTEGRIS Health Edmond.....	405-657-3000
INTEGRIS Health Grove Hospital.....	918-786-2243
Lakeside Women's Hospital INTEGRIS Health.....	405-936-1500
INTEGRIS Health Miami Hospital.....	918-542-6611
INTEGRIS Health Southwest Medical Center.....	405-636-7000
Hospice House.....	405-848-8884
Security.....	405-949-3425
Spiritual Care/Chaplaincy.....	405-949-3195

## Other Important Phone Numbers

Oklahoma City Police Department.....	405-231-2121
Oklahoma Division of Vital Statistics.....	405-426-8880
Oklahoma Dept. of Human Services.....	405-521-3646
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.....	405-239-7141
Social Security Administration.....	800-772-1213
Veterans Affairs.....	800-827-1000



## Funeral Home Guide

Funeral homes and funeral directors are specially licensed to provide an assortment of purposes. They will assist with organizing the funeral, providing support and counsel to friends and family, and completing required paperwork.

After you have chosen and contacted the funeral home, they will transport your loved one from the hospital.

The funeral director will meet with you and any other family to discuss funeral arrangements and complete appropriate paperwork.

The funeral home will assist with details regarding the funeral/religious service and burial or cremation options. Ensure you bring your loved one's full name, social security number, parents' names, occupation and life insurance policies. An Oklahoma metro funeral home resource guide can be supplied to you by the Administrative Supervisor.

If you would like a copy of the guide, please contact the unit nurse manager.

## Death Certificates

A death certificate is a legal form that the certifying physician, the hospital and the funeral home complete when someone has died.

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 certificate is then submitted to the attending physician or medical examiner responsible for completing the medical portion of the document and submitted back to the funeral home, which submits it to the Vital Statistics Department.

If you have questions or need assistance with your loved one's death certificate, we encourage you to reach out to your chosen funeral home. We recommend requesting five to 10 copies of the death certificate. You will need these to process Social Security and insurance policy(s) or other claims.

Additional assistance with death certificates can be obtained through:

**The Oklahoma Health Department, Vital Statistics, located at:**

**123 Robert S. Kerr**

**Oklahoma City, OK 73105**

**405-426-8880**

# Autopsy Information

The Oklahoma Medical Examiner may choose to perform an autopsy if the patient's death was unexpected and a medical cause cannot be determined. An autopsy is up to the discretion of the Medical Examiner and depends on the specific circumstances around the death. An autopsy is not normally performed when a patient death is known to be the result of natural causes or the progression of a health condition and medical history exists. Autopsies are typically only performed in about 35% of deaths. When a patient dies in an INTEGRIS Health facility, the state Medical Examiner is notified and will determine if an autopsy is required. If an autopsy is ordered by the Medical Examiner, the cost is covered by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, which is funded by tax dollars. If the Medical Examiner decides an autopsy is not warranted, INTEGRIS Health will keep your loved one until you choose a funeral home. At that time, the body of your loved one is released to the chosen funeral home.

Families who wish to request an autopsy that has not been ordered by the Medical Examiner, will need to arrange to have this performed by a local private autopsy service. We can provide this additional information to you, upon request. Please note that INTEGRIS Health does not endorse, sponsor or guarantee the credentials or competency of any specific physician or private autopsy service. The cost will be the responsibility of the individual(s) requesting the autopsy. Consent for a private autopsy must be given by the person responsible for the deceased burial, such as a husband, wife, father, mother, child, guardian, next of kin, or in their absence, a friend if the friend also assumes responsibility for burial.



# A Guide for Military Families

If you're the survivor of a military veteran, we thank you for your service.

The men and women who have served our country are entitled to very specific benefits. The checklist associated with claiming and receiving these benefits can be daunting. This guide serves to help you through the notifications, benefit eligibility, funeral and memorial planning, and contact information to help answer any remaining questions. You and your deceased loved one deserve to receive all the honors and compensation you are entitled to because of your sacrifices.

1. Notify the Department of Defense - Call the Department of Defense at 800-538-9552 or 800-321-1080 to report the death of your loved one. You will need your loved one's date of death when you speak with the military representative over the phone. This representative will also be an excellent resource for any unanswered questions or additional assistance available to you.
2. Gather the necessary documents - If you plan on having a military funeral, there are additional documents required.
  - A certified copy of the deceased's service records and discharge paperwork
  - Social Security numbers of the deceased, the deceased's spouse and any dependent children
  - Copies of insurance policies
  - Certified copies of the marriage license and birth certificates of children
  - Certified copy of the death certificate of the veteran
  - Veteran's VA claim number
  - Copy of the veteran's will
3. To receive veteran death benefits, the honorably discharged veteran needs to meet specific requirements. For a full list of situations in which a veteran is eligible to receive benefits, visit the VA website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

## A Guide for Military Families *continued*

4. The federal government pays a flat amount to assist family members to pay for a veteran's funeral. Payment is made to the veteran's surviving spouse, the veteran's children, the veteran's parents, the executor or administrator of the veteran's estate, or the survivor of a legal union with the veteran. The first person who applies for the compensation will be paid.
5. Your funeral home director can help you schedule a burial in a nearby national cemetery. To start this procedure, the director will ask for your family member's official discharge papers. This is required to proceed with this process. You will be given a form to complete to have your loved one buried in a national cemetery. Be prepared to provide your loved one's Social Security number as well as Social Security numbers of survivors. You will also need to have your first and second choice of national cemeteries in mind where you would like to have your loved one buried. This same form will ask if you would like to have military honors performed at the funeral. You will be able to request the particular branch of military that will present the honors.

### Additional Military Family Resources and Support

#### **U.S Department of Veterans Affairs**

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

#### **MyVA411 main information line**

800-698-2411

#### **GI Bill hotline**

888-442-4551

#### **My HealthVet help desk**

877-327-0022

#### **VA benefits hotline**

800-827-1000

#### **GI Bill hotline**

888-442-4551

#### **VA health benefits hotline**

877-222-8387

#### **Military OneSource**

[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

800-342-9467

- Military OneSource provides 24/7 service to all active-duty service members, National Guard and reserves, and eligible family members, including surviving spouses who don't remarry. Counselors offer information and make referrals on a wide range of issues including grief and bereavement. Arrange a face-to-face, phone, online or video counseling session by calling 800-342-9647.
- TRICARE mental health care services are available for you during times of grief. Outpatient psychotherapy is covered for up to two sessions per week in any combination of individual, family, group or collateral sessions.

## Understanding Grief

It is highly likely that in the beginning you will experience both emotional and physical symptoms of grief. Symptoms of grief can come in waves. Emotions can have varying levels of ups and downs. Over time, the strength of these waves will decrease, but each person will experience fluctuating surges of emotions. It is normal to experience "trigger waves" that can suddenly materialize when an experience, person, song, birthday or anniversary spark the memory of your loved one. Understand that your grief will come in waves, and it is normal to have good days and bad days. Be gentle with yourself, surround yourself with friends and family who can provide additional support and give yourself the grace and time to move through the grieving process.

## When Grief is New

### Physical Symptoms

Crying  
Insomnia  
Nausea  
Headaches  
Agitation  
Panic  
Numbness  
Body tension  
Dizziness  
Fear  
Restlessness  
No appetite  
Fatigue

### Emotional Symptoms

Anger  
Confusion  
Disbelief  
Regret  
Relief  
Worry  
Shock  
Panic  
Yearning  
Anguish  
Anxiety  
Guilt  
Resentment

## Strategies That Help

1. Set a regular sleep schedule.
2. Eat something each day – even if you don't feel like it.
3. Establish a schedule and set some daily goals.
4. Do something you love. Engage in an activity that brings you joy.
5. Keep a journal.
6. Exercise each day.
7. Make plans with friends and engage in social activities.
8. Take refuge in your religious practices.
9. If your grief feels overwhelming, seek out additional support.
10. Share your feelings and memories with your friends and loved ones.

# Living with Grief

Dealing with death and the loss that accompanies it is vital to your mental health. Experiencing the grief and emotions that come along with it is a normal part of the process. Allow yourself the time and ability to grieve. There are many ways to cope effectively with your pain.

## Surround Yourself with Caring People

Find relatives and friends who can understand your feelings of loss. There are many grief support groups that will allow you to connect with others who are experiencing similar emotions.

## Express Your Feelings

Tell others how you are feeling; it will help you to work through the grieving process. Take care of yourself and maintain contact with your physician. Eat and get plenty of rest.

## Postpone Major Life Changes

You must give yourself time to adjust to your loss. Avoid making major life decisions that could be rooted in your grief.

## Be Patient

It can take months or even years to adjust to a major loss and accept your changed life. Seek outside help when necessary. If your grief seems like it is too much to bear, seek professional assistance to help work through your emotions. Seeking help is a sign of strength and endurance and should never be seen as a weakness.

## Stages of Grief

It is important to be aware of the stages of grief. These stages may come at different times because of different moments. These stages are here to help identify the strong and sometimes uncertain emotions we feel during and after a loss. It is normal to experience some or all of these emotions at different times and at different levels during the grieving process. There is no "right" way to grieve and the grieving process is specific to the individual.

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

# INTEGRIS Health Grief Support

Everyone experiences grief differently. INTEGRIS Health offers a range of religious and spiritual support as well as hospital and community resources for families. Within that framework is grief support provided by social workers, Hospice and pastoral care representing a range of religious denominations. Please do not hesitate to request support at any time during this difficult process.

Grief is the normal and natural response to a loss. Normal grief responses include appetite loss, difficulty sleeping, feelings of guilt or regret, lack of concentration, mood changes, numbness and crying. It will continue to affect our lives and the lives of those around us adversely when we are forced to accept the many myths about grief such as:

*"It just takes time."*

*"You can replace the loss."*

*"You need to be strong for others."*

*"You just need to stay busy."*

Our grief support program provides a step-by-step approach for those who wish to resolve their loss issues and soften the pain of their loss. Meeting once a week for six weeks, these groups are led by licensed professional counselors specializing in the field of grief and loss. Open to the community, our grief support groups are confidential, and offered at no cost to participants. For more information, please call 405-848-8884.

*"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever." — A.A. Milne*

# Grief Support FAQs

## What is the purpose of a grief group?

We provide techniques for dealing with grief, support for the process of grief, an environment to meet other people who are grieving and identify support systems.

## Who may participate in the group?

Anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one, whether it's hospice-related or not. Due to the nature of the materials we cover, it's preferred that participants are older teens and above. Younger children can be referred to community resources who deal specifically with children and their unique grief responses.

## Is there a cost to be in the group?

No. As a non-profit hospice agency, we provide these groups free of charge to anyone in our community who is dealing with a loss.

## What are the time frames for the groups?

Each group meets once per week for six weeks. Each session is 1.5 hours in length. Sometimes we offer a daytime group but most groups are in the evening hours. These groups are held in various locations around the Oklahoma City metro area.

## Can people join the group at any time?

Because of the progressive nature of the materials being covered, it is preferable that new people not join the group after the second session.

## Do you have ground rules for the group?

Yes. The ground rules are simple and basic. First, we respect confidentiality of everyone in the group. Second, we expect each participant to be honest with themselves in this process. Then, we must allow each person the freedom to grieve according to their own personality. These ground rules are built upon the premise of respect for one another.

## How do I register for a group?

Call INTEGRIS Health Hospice regarding registration information for current groups at 405-848-8884.

## Grief Recovery Program

Grief is the normal and natural response to loss. If you have suffered the loss of a loved one through death, on going grief recovery support is available through INTEGRIS Health Hospice.

### About the Program

The six-week program is conducted by a certified grief recovery specialist who provides a step-by-step approach for those who wish to resolve their loss issues and move beyond their grief to a richer quality of life. Limited private counseling is also available.

All programs are FREE of charge, confidential and open to the public. To learn more about the INTEGRIS Health Hospice Grief Support Program call 405-848-8884.

## Financial and Government Resources

Should you find yourself in a situation requiring assistance, financial or otherwise, the following organizations may be able to help. As with most agencies providing assistance, eligibility requirements may vary.

### State Assistance

Burial Assistance - Chickasaw Nation Social Services - 580-310-6481 (Must have CDIB Identification to be eligible)

Burial/Cremation Program - Office of Social Services - 405-270-0082

Choctaw Nation Burial Program - 800-522-6170 (Must have CDIB Identification to be eligible)

### Federal Assistance

COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program Helpline - 844-684-6333 | TTY: 800-462-7585

Social Security Administration 800-772-1213

Survivor benefits vary; call to check eligibility.

Veterans Affairs 800-827-1000 - The deceased must have served in the U.S. Military.

Survivor benefits vary; call to check eligibility.

*Your hospital chaplain will also have some options regarding cremation and burial. Please contact them for additional resources.*

# INTEGRIS Health Pastoral Care Partnership with Calm Waters

## Grief Support Groups



INTEGRIS Health Pastoral Care has entered into an official partnership with Calm Waters Center for Children and Families to provide FREE grief support groups to individuals in our community.

Calm Waters actually started within the Pastoral Care department at INTEGRIS and then expanded to become its own organization with its own board of directors and location. Now, they are the premier grief facilitation organization in Oklahoma City.

Groups will last six to eight weeks and follow the Calm Waters support group curriculum. Calm Waters provides FREE training to group facilitators.

### How do I find more info on these groups?

Call the Pastoral Care office at IBMC at 405-949-3195 or email us at [INTEGRISHealthPastoralCare@integrisok.com](mailto:INTEGRISHealthPastoralCare@integrisok.com) to learn more. We hope to start these groups in Spring 2023.

INTEGRIS Hospice also provides recurring grief support groups for our community. Call 405-848-8884 for more information.

# Next Steps

After the death of your loved one there may be certain financial responsibilities that will require additional attention. Taking care of these tasks now will help to avoid delays and confusion. Some of these tasks involve Social Security, insurance, banks or other financial institutions, health insurance, pension benefits, creditors, clubs and organizations, and title certificates.

You may wish to handle these tasks yourself or enlist the help of a family member or close friend. This list is meant to help guide you on some of the financial concerns that may arise after your loved one is gone.

- Have five to 10 extra copies of the death certificate made. You will need these to process Social Security and insurance policy(s) or other claims.
- Contact any companies with which your loved one held a life insurance policy and/or accidental death insurance policy. This may include insurance companies, motor clubs and your loved one's employer.
- Contact the Social Security Administration office that serves your community if you think you are eligible for benefits or if you need more information about eligibility.
- If your loved one had health insurance, notify the health insurance company.
- Notify your loved one's creditors. Be sure to include any financial institutions and companies or stores that may have issued loans or credit cards in your loved one's name.
- Contact your bank or financial institution(s) concerning individual or joint accounts held in your loved one's name. This may involve closing the account(s) or transferring their control to you, another family member or your attorney, if you choose. If you have an attorney, he or she may be able to complete this task for you. You will also need to discuss the status of any certificates of deposit (CDs), individual retirement accounts (IRAs), or similar savings or retirement accounts.
- Contact your loved one's employer about pension benefits they may have been receiving or that family members may be entitled to receive.
- Contact companies regarding changing your loved one's name on any certificates of title, including titles to vehicles or real estate.

# Grief Resources

This section provides helpful resources pertaining to end of life, as well as grief and loss. Each link will take you to a website not administered by INTEGRIS Health. These links are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval of content by INTEGRIS Health.

## **After Care from LifeShare for organ donor families - [LifeShareOklahoma.org](http://LifeShareOklahoma.org)**

- A resource for grieving families who have chosen organ donation. LifeShare provides a selection of grief materials, surveys for feedback, and various resources and opportunities detailed below. To learn more about the Aftercare Program, please contact 405-840-5551 or via email at [LifeShare-Aftercare@lifeshareok.org](mailto:LifeShare-Aftercare@lifeshareok.org).

## **After Talk - [www.AfterTalk.com](http://www.AfterTalk.com)**

- This is an online grief support site offering inspirational stories, poems, quotes and forums about the grief process after the death of a loved one. Free and nondenominational.

## **American Association of Retired Persons - [www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/](http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/)**

- Extensive list of grief and loss articles, and a list of local and national organizations offering bereavement support.

## **Association for Death Education and Counseling - [www.adec.org/](http://www.adec.org/)**

- The Association for Death Education and Counseling is an international, professional organization dedicated to promoting excellence and recognizing diversity in death education, care of the dying and grief counseling.

## **Calm Waters - [www.CalmWaters.org](http://www.CalmWaters.org)**

- Calm Waters is a grief support resource for young children and teens. It is available for children ages 3-18. They offer grief counseling, support groups and will work directly with the child's school to help provide resources and support. 405-841-4800

## **Camp Widow - [www.campwidow.org](http://www.campwidow.org)**

- Created by widowed people for widowed people, this website provides a wealth of information about weekend gatherings of widowed people from across the country and around the world.

## **Center for Loss & Life Transition - [www.centerforloss.com/](http://www.centerforloss.com/)**

- The center is an educational and training center for bereavement caregivers, with resources also for those who are grieving.

## Grief Resources *continued*

### **Family Lives On Foundation -[www.familyliveson.org/](http://www.familyliveson.org/)**

- The Family Lives On Foundation's mission statement is to bring joy and comfort to grieving children, teens and their families by helping them continue cherished family traditions. Family Lives On supports hundreds of children/teens and their families in continuing cherished traditions, once a year, each year until the child/teen turns 18 years old.

### **GriefNet - [www.griefnet.org/](http://www.griefnet.org/)**

- Grief Net is an internet community of persons dealing with death, grief or major loss, with close to 50 online support groups.

### **GriefShare - [www.griefshare.org/](http://www.griefshare.org/)**

- GriefShare is an international organization dedicated to holding local support group meetings for working through grief, with interactions from attending seminars with experts on grief to walking through your grief with others in your community from a non-denominational, biblical perspective.

# Suggested Reading

Attig, Thomas. *How We Grieve, Relearning the World*

Burns, George. *101 Healing Stories, Using Metaphors in Therapy*

Cook, Alicia & Dworkin, D. *Helping the Bereaved*

Cunningham, Linda. *Teenage Grief Activity Book*

Dodd, Robert. *Helping Children Cope With Death*

Doka, K. & Morgan J. *Death and Spirituality*

Doka, Kenneth. *Living With Grief after Sudden Loss*

Karst, Patrice. *The Invisible String. A book for school-aged children*

Klass, Dennis. *The Spiritual Lives of Bereaved Parents*

Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*

Martin, T. & Doka, K. *Men Don't Cry...Women Do*

Neimeyer, Robert. *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss*

Rando, Therese A. *Treatment of Complicated Mourning*

Straub, Sandra. *Death 101, A Workbook for Educating and Healing*

Wolfelt, Alan. *Understanding Grief, Helping Yourself Heal*

Worden, William. *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*



