



Ascension

Ascension WI EAP

Death and Grief During Social Distancing

Even in the depths of this global pandemic life goes on, and therefore, so does death. If you are faced with the death of a loved one, friend or coworker during this time, there are many factors that can even more deeply impact your grief, one of which may be the inability to attend the funeral. Here are some suggestions:

If you cannot attend a funeral

During this period of social distancing, many funerals are live streamed so people can attend from home. Livestream links are usually placed in the obituary, or you can ask next-of-kin if there is a way to attend online.

In addition to virtual attendance, you may consider setting aside 30-60 minutes to conduct a private ceremony yourself.

- Include your spirituality and culture through prayer and ceremony.
- Sing or play a hymn or song that reminds you of the person and provides comfort.
- Light a candle for the person.
- Write or say your own eulogy and how the person impacted your life.
- Include others who live in your home, or friends, family or coworkers by phone or video. Make it a ceremony that you all partake in.
- Share stories about the person who has died.
- Plant flowers or seeds in remembrance of the person who has died.
- Prepare a special meal for yourself and those living at home with you.

Helping others who are grieving

- Reach out by phone, email, or text and let them know you are thinking of them. Share a positive story about their loved one. Communicate similarly to what you would share at a wake.
- Send a gift card for food that can be delivered or picked up.
- Talk with friends, family or coworkers about ways you can commemorate the person. You may identify ways to help the decedent's family, or brainstorm ideas to create a memorial.
- Plan an activity that you can do in the person's memory, or to help the family once physical distancing is no longer necessary.
- Offer your time by phone or video if the grieving person needs to talk. Ask if it is ok for you to reach out to them, and how they would prefer you do that.
- Practice safe physical distancing. When someone is overwhelmed by grief they may not be as stringent with precautions, so it is important for you to respect distancing requirements and protect everyone's physical health.

