

***When You Have To
Say Goodbye....***



Western Lane Crisis Response staff would like to express our deepest sympathies for the loss of your loved one. We have put together this booklet of information to help you walk through the difficult days ahead.

Feel free to contact a member of our Crisis Support Team if you have any further questions or needs.



**WESTERN LANE
CRISIS RESPONSE**

Western Lane Crisis Response Phone: 541-997-3515 or 911
Website: www.wlfea.org/mobile-crisis-response/
Services are available 24/7/365

When You Have to Say Goodbye.....

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The First Few Days

So many overwhelming and confusing emotions are likely to be flooding you in the immediate days after your loss. All of these feelings (devastation, confusion, shock, denial, numbness, anger and more) are normal reactions to the loss of a loved one. They are proof that we have loved.

Don't expect too much of yourself right now. Give yourself permission to grieve. Focus on the basics—eat regularly, try to get enough rest, and drink plenty of water. Allow yourself to cry when you need to. Right now, grieving and taking care of yourself are the most important things you can do, and that's enough.

And yet, there is so much to do! Funeral arrangements, the multitude of phone calls and visitors, day to day care of your children and household, notifying others.....the tasks ahead of you are overwhelming.

Assign these tasks to trusted family or friends. Loved ones will be offering their support and assistance in this time. Let them help you.

“Making Arrangements”

There's so much that needs to be done, but this isn't the time for you to take it all on yourself. Whenever family and friends offer to help, let them. This is a moment to lean on others. To make it easier, here's a list of things you might want to delegate or keep in mind:

- **Make a list of important people to notify:** family, close friends, employers, etc.
- **Allow others to temporarily be responsible for household tasks** such as: preparing meals, grocery shopping, getting children to school, etc. This is an easy, yet concrete, way for family and friends to show their support.
- **Establish one person to answer phone calls and make necessary calls** to others. Alternately, an email “message chain” can be established to communicate important updates/info to multiple family and friends at one time.
- **Designate one person to answer the door** so you can rest and avoid having to visit with a multitude of concerned visitors.
- **Call the funeral home to make arrangements** for any viewing and/ or funeral services desired by family. Designate someone to check on options, pricing, available times and dates.
- **Decide who you would like to conduct the service/** give the eulogy. Are there going to be other speakers? Establish who will be pall bearers. Contact them all regarding date and time.
- **Write an obituary** (oftentimes the funeral home will do this). You may want to include age, place of birth, cause of death, occupation, military service and any other accomplishments, list of survivors/immediate family, time and place of services (if appropriate) and where people can send flowers or make donations.
- **Check with all life and casualty insurance plans**, as well as Social Security, for possible death benefits. If the deceased was a veteran, contact Veterans Affairs. Also check on any benefits for survivors from these plans.

- **Notify and cancel insurance policies** (including auto insurance). Check for refunds.
- **Check on all debts and installment plans.** Some may include insurance clauses that will cancel the debt upon death. If your loved one lived alone, notify their landlord and notify utilities. Put in an address change at the post office to re-route the mail.
- **Notify the lawyer and Executor of the Will** (if applicable). Obtain multiple copies of the death certificate (through the funeral home). Most banks and other agencies will require a certified copy.

The Roller-coaster of Grief

You will experience a roller-coaster of emotions, all of which are completely normal right now. You will likely experience anger or rage, depression, tearfulness, guilt, numbness or denial and more...and not in that order. Your emotions will be “all over the map” and can/will change within a moment’s notice. You will likely feel out of control or like you are “losing your mind” at times. This is the normal course of grief.

Common responses to the loss of a loved one can include anxiety, difficulty concentrating or focusing, nightmares or intrusive thoughts. Anger, fantasies of revenge or a need to blame someone or something for your loss are common. Many feel angry with God (this is ok, God has broad shoulders. He will accept your anger and continue to love you). Still others experience feelings of guilt, as if they somehow should have been able to prevent the death from happening, or guilt over still being alive or experiencing occasional moments of joy or happiness. Some people develop a sense of hyper-vigilance, or a sensitivity to noise or light. Others become socially withdrawn. Depending on circumstances, the death of a loved one can cause changes in your world view, such as the world now appearing to be an unsafe place or feeling like you are somehow “in a bubble” and seeing yourself as “separate” from the rest of the living world.

Some people (especially children) experience somatic symptoms such as headaches or stomachaches. Disturbances in appetite and sleep patterns are very common, as are impaired judgment, inability to concentrate, inability to motivate yourself (or the opposite: a need to constantly be “in motion”). Fears of going to sleep or leaving the house, or having “panic attacks”, are not uncommon.

It is important to allow yourself to feel all of your feelings without trying to stifle them. Stifled feelings will simply reappear later and may affect your performance at work or role within your family.

Acknowledge your feelings and work through them in whatever way you can. Some people need a lot of “alone time”. Others shout into their pillows or spend time exercising strenuously. Some people write or draw about their emotions/feelings. Some seek out a compassionate friend or therapist who will simply listen. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, nor is there an appropriate “timeline” for how long you will or “should” grieve. Everyone grieves in their own unique way.

Grief can be extremely difficult on a marriage. Men and women frequently grieve quite differently. Women typically are more comfortable expressing their emotions than men. Men may more readily feel anger or simply shove their emotions down, in order to “hold it together”, return to work, or be “strong for the family”. Men are also more likely to offer advice and try to “fix things” for their wives and children, whereas women oftentimes simply want to be heard. Differences in how men and women grieve can create a terrible strain on the marriage, and the children as well. If you find yourself and your spouse growing further and further apart as you both struggle to cope, please seek professional counseling.

It can be very difficult to experience such intense emotions. You may feel incredibly lonely or angry or be unable to control your tears or other emotions. **Beware of any increase in drug or alcohol use. Beware of any increase in risk-taking or destructive behavior.** If this occurs, it might help to seek out professional counseling for a short while.

Although you may not think so right now, your grief will become less intense over time. Grief is a long process, and realistically, it may take a year or more before you think hopefully towards the future once again and experience joy without pain, sadness or guilt.

After the First Weeks

After the funeral and all the immediate activities and arrangements associated with a death, guests and extended family will return to their homes and their work. Life returns to normal for others, but not for you. This can oftentimes be the most difficult time of all. Don't let this catch you by surprise.

You may want to consider the following suggestions:

- **Contact your physician** to discuss any temporary need for medication to help with depression or sleep. Symptoms to watch for include a significant change in appetite (increase or decrease); inability to fall asleep or remain asleep; inability to stop crying; chronic feelings of rage or irritability; panic attacks; new and/or “unreasonable” fears (such as leaving the house or fear of the dark/nighttime). Talk with your physician or therapist about any of these symptoms.
- **Seek out a bereavement support group, blog or professional counselor** to give you a safe, supportive place to express your grief and process your feelings, as well as to help you realize you are not alone. Seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness. It is actually a sign of great strength that you are willing to wrestle with such painful emotions. It will also be good for you to meet other people who have suffered similar losses in their lives, to help you feel less isolated.
- **Find a healthy outlet for your grief.** It will be your constant companion for the foreseeable future, so you might as well find a healthy way to express it. Write about your loss in a journal. Express yourself through artistic channels - draw, paint, etc. Take up exercise - join a gym or take a long daily walk.

Exercise is an excellent way to physically release the overload of emotions during times of stress. Join a group with a cause (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, foundations to find lost children or groups that educate parents about use of seat belts, helmets, river safety, etc.).

- **It is times like this that truly determine which friends will be there for you in your time of greatest need.** You will likely be surprised which people can (and will) be there for you emotionally, and those who simply cannot. Determine who will be able to give you the patience, support and kindness you need as you cry, repeat your story a million times, refuse to get out of bed, forget to eat, and otherwise forget how to function.
- **Let that person (and others) help you in meeting your day to day needs.** Grocery shopping, cleaning house, caring for the children.... just let these “guardian angels” of yours be there in whatever ways you need for as long as you need.

Depression and Guilt: Red Flags

A multitude of emotions are to be expected as you grieve the loss of a loved one. However, there are two emotions that must be kept in check.

Guilt: Guilt is a common response to the death of someone you love. Feeling you should have been there or somehow prevented their death. Things you wish you had said or done (or not said or done!), if only you had known. Guilt is a very common, but completely destructive and useless emotion when it comes to the death of a loved one. What has happened, has happened. Nothing will change that. The world unfolds according to its own rules, and your actions would not likely to have changed the outcome. Grief is hard enough. Don't make it harder than it already is. ***If you find yourself blaming yourself and shouldering tremendous guilt, please do not keep this to yourself.*** Consider short-term counseling or a support group.

Depression: A period of deep depression is not unusual after such a devastating loss. Like all other phases you will experience, this too shall pass. You may find yourself ***temporarily*** experiencing sleep and/ or appetite disturbances, difficulty getting out of bed, lack of willingness to take care of basic hygienic needs (showering, brushing teeth, changing clothes), inability to go back to work or daily activities, and/or uncontrollable emotions (crying, rage, irritability). But if these symptoms persist past the couple months, it will be very important to address this with your physician. Antidepressant medications and/ or professional counseling are two short-term, but very effective ways to manage such symptoms.

Again, all of these symptoms are normal in the short run. But if they do not resolve within a reasonable amount of time, ***they will likely not resolve on their own.*** Seek help.

Being Alone

Losing a spouse or life partner is a uniquely difficult kind of loss. You might feel

a loss of your primary identity when you are no longer one half of a “couple”. You may instantly find your social life diminished. If you have been caring for a spouse who has been ill for some time, it will also mean a loss of your primary role as caregiver. Loneliness and lack of purpose, as well as fear and anxiety regarding how to function in the world as a newly and unexpectedly single person, can be overwhelming. Here are several things to consider:

- Although you will clearly need and want some time alone with your feelings, **do not allow yourself to isolate!** One of the most important things for you to do is remain in touch with friends and loved ones, and realize you are not alone.
- **Maintain your daily routine**, to the best of your ability. Go to bed and rise in the mornings at your usual times. Be sure to eat healthy and regularly. If you read, take a walk in the mornings, go to the gym- whatever your daily routine, try to stick close to it.
- **Don’t make any major decisions or changes for at least a year.** If you are considering getting rid of your spouse’s clothing or belongings, or selling your home and moving, it is best that you wait 6-12 months before making any big changes. There is no hurry, and you don’t want to regret any of your decisions later.
- **It is most important that you stay socially engaged.** Loneliness and isolation are your worst enemy. It is important to still have something to look forward to. Stay in touch with people in your life that you love, and who love you. Attend church. Spend time with your grand- kids. Consider getting a pet for companionship.
- **Know that there are local support groups, “online chat” groups, and a multitude of books written for, by and about newly widowed people.** It really does help to talk to, or at least hear from, others who have been down the path you are embarking on. It will help you to not feel so alone.
- **If possible, incorporate some exercise in your daily routine.** Taking a nice walk each morning will not only elevate your mood, but it will make you stronger, help you sleep better, and give you something positive to look forward to each morning.
- **Sometimes people will be reluctant to talk about your loved one.** They avoid the uncomfortable topic of death. They don’t want to “remind you” of that which makes you sad. People who have not lost their life partner do not realize the importance of acknowledging this person who was, and still is, central to your life. Do not hesitate to say their names out loud, tell and retell the same old stories, tales of love, laughter, what was most memorable and what you miss most. Stories are the fabric that weaves our families together, and our memories are what hold our loved ones closest to our hearts.

“Little Anniversaries”

The thing that catches most people by surprise is how the littlest of events and routines can trigger tears and bring you to your knees with fresh grief. You will naturally expect your loved one’s birthday and major holidays to be difficult days. You prepare for that. However, the things you are not prepared for are the small,

day to day reminders of your loss. The empty place at the table at mealtimes. Seeing their car or bike in the garage. Watching a television show or hearing a particular song your loved one enjoyed. You may actually be having a relatively good day when you drive down a particular street, smell a particular smell, or simply think a particular thought and suddenly you become a bundle of tears. Just expect this.

It is your heart letting your profound grief express itself in small amounts, over time. Just being aware that the smallest things can sometimes trigger the biggest emotions can be exceedingly helpful.

Getting through the Holidays

Holidays are another profoundly difficult time after losing a loved one. And once again, there is no right or wrong way to approach this. But here are a couple suggestions to consider:

- **Decide ahead of time what you can and cannot do.** Don't pressure yourself to stick with your usual celebration. Don't let others tell you what you "should" or "shouldn't" do. Change it up in whatever way you need to and offer no apologies for this. Ask your children/spouse for their input. It can help lower your anticipatory anxiety, as well as the anxiety of the rest of the family.
- **Honor your feelings.** Some people decide to still set a place at the table for their loved one. Others may choose to light a memorial candle in their loved one's honor. Another idea is to invite everyone in the family to share a special memory about your loved one at the dinner table. Honor your loved one in your own unique way.
- **If attending a holiday event, be informed.** Be prepared to see lots of people who may not yet know of your loss or may express their condolences to you in a variety of ways. Some people may avoid you due to their own discomfort. Give some consideration to how you might respond to these various comments or greetings. Give yourself permission to leave early if you need to.
- **Ask for help.** Even if it is difficult, ask for (and accept) help. Don't try to do it all. Get plenty of rest. Keep your expectations low and your plans simple. Sometimes your entire goal will simply be to get through the holiday, and that is ok too.

Children's Grief

Children grieve very differently than adults. Younger children do not yet understand that death is permanent and express their grief mostly through repetitive questions and through their play. They may show regressive behaviors such as bed wetting, fear of the dark or of going to sleep, nightmares, physical complaints such as stomachaches or headaches, temper tantrums, irritability or clinginess.

Older children have a better understanding of death as a permanent and irreversible event. They may shut down and not want to talk about their loss, or they

may have the need to talk about it frequently and in some depth. They may show changes in appetite and/or sleep, may have difficulty concentrating on school and other tasks, and may have intense emotional outbursts of anger, sadness, guilt or anxiety. Teens may withdraw from family, relying on their peers for support. They might have unreasonable thoughts of being responsible for, or having failed to prevent, the person's death. They may entertain thoughts of self-harm.

Children of different ages and developmental stages will struggle with grief in very different ways. And although parents and other adults will need to respond differently to individual children, here are some general ways to respond to children during a time of loss and grief.

- **Listen to your children.** Let them talk about their feelings. As adults, we frequently try to offer advice instead of simply listening. Accept their feelings, even feelings of anger or sadness. Don't try to change, fix, or take them away.
- **Allow them to express their fears and feelings,** even if you find it difficult to hear. Don't tell them not to cry or be mad or frightened. These are normal feelings and children may need to express them. It is good for children to see that adults cry and are sad too. With younger children, simply let them know by "labeling" your feelings for them: "Mommy and daddy are sad and confused too. We miss him/her too. We are sad because we loved him/her".
- **Answer questions honestly and simply.** You may find yourself wanting to shelter your child from difficult realities. Children are much more perceptive than we give them credit for. They need, and deserve, the truth. For younger children, what you share may be short, simple, and age appropriate. For teens, full disclosure is important. You don't want them to hear "the truth" at school or from someone else.
- **Reinforce that they are safe.** Re-establish their daily routine as soon as possible in order to reinforce that not every aspect of their life has changed. Offer lots physical and emotional nurturance.
- **Provide creative and/or active outlets for their emotions.** Encourage outdoor play or exercise. These are great ways to "let off steam". Suggest they draw pictures of their loved one or write/journal about their feelings. Suggest the family plant a tree together in their loved one's honor.
- **Provide choices whenever possible.** "I know you have homework. Would you like to do it now or after dinner?" Set limits but be flexible whenever possible.
- **Seek professional counseling** if symptoms and/or behaviors become extreme or do not resolve with time. There are many excellent child therapists who can help with children who are exhibiting signs of trauma, serious acting out, or suicidal thoughts.

Ages Two to Five

At this age, children don't fully understand that death is permanent. They don't realize it can't be reversed. And they don't yet know that it happens to everyone.

They will frequently ask the same questions over and over, such as “But when will she come home?”. They may cry when first told of the death, then go play as if nothing has happened. Children at this age work through their emotions and confusion through play. Since they are limited in their ability to talk about their confusing and scary feelings, they will express it through their behavior.

You might see an increase in the following behaviors:

- Anxiety
- Crying
- Clinginess or need to be held
- Temper tantrums
- Repetitive questions about their loved one
- Irritability
- Regressive behavior such as bed wetting, fear of the dark, etc.
- Sleep problems

Helpful ways to respond:

- Maintain a consistent routine to re-establish safety and predictability.
- Provide short, honest answers to their questions. Use the words “dead” and “died”. Avoid sayings like “She passed away” or “She’s sleeping now” because it further complicates a young child’s understanding of death. Instead: “Grandpa died because his body stopped working”.
- Set limits but be flexible when needed.
- Give simple choices whenever possible. “Do you want hot or cold cereal?”
- Provide plenty of opportunities for play. This is how children express their feelings at this age.
- Offer lots of physical and emotional comfort.

Ages Five to Eight

At this age, children oftentimes still see death as reversible. They are very concrete thinkers. They also have a tendency towards “magical thinking”, which means they may worry that their thoughts caused the person to die. It is important to relieve children of this erroneous and burdensome responsibility by repeatedly clarifying that it was not their fault.

You might see an increase in the following behaviors:

- Sleep disturbance and nightmares
- Change in appetite
- Concerns about their own safety/abandonment
- Short periods of strong emotions, then going to play as if nothing happened
- Regressive behaviors (fear of the dark, bed wetting, etc.)
- Acting out behaviors, such as kicking, hitting or breaking things
- Physical complaints such as stomachaches, headaches or other complaints

Helpful ways to respond:

- Provide short, honest answers to their questions. Use the words “dead” and “died”. Avoid sayings like “She passed away” or “She’s sleeping now” because it further complicates a young child’s understanding of death. Instead: “Grandpa died because his body stopped working”.
- Be prepared to answer lots of repetitive questions.
- Provide plenty of opportunities for play.
- Allow children to talk about their loss and ask questions. Make time to listen to them.
- Give choices whenever possible. “Your room needs to be cleaned. Would you like to do it tonight or in the morning?”
- Set limits but be flexible when needed.
- Offer lots of physical and emotional comfort.

Ages Eight to Twelve

At this age, children have a better understanding of abstract ideas like death and permanence. They are beginning to be able to understand how the death of their loved one will affect them long-term. Feelings of guilt and regret can lead to concern that their thoughts and actions may have made the death happen. They may think things like: “It was my fault because I was mean to my brother.”

You might see an increase in the following behaviors:

- Acting out behaviors (belligerence, refusal to follow the rules, bad attitude, etc.).
- Anxiety and concern for safety of self and others. Worries that something bad will happen again.
- Difficulty concentrating and focusing (particularly with school work).
- Sleep disturbance and/or nightmares.
- Physical complaints such as headaches, stomach aches, etc.
- Detailed questions about death and dying. Children at this age may ask such questions as: “What happens to the body?” .
- Wide range of emotions: rage, revenge, guilt, sadness, relief, and worry.
- Social withdrawal.

Helpful ways to respond:

- Answer questions clearly and accurately. Use the words “dead” and “died”. Avoid sayings like “She passed away” or “She’s gone”.
- Provide a variety of activities for them to express their grief: talk, art, physical activity, play, writing.
- Maintain routines and limits but be flexible whenever you can. This helps to re-establish safety and predictability in daily life.
- Give children choices whenever possible, such as: “Would you rather set the table or put the dishes away after we eat?”
- It is healthy for your children to see you expressing your own sad emotions.

This gives them “permission” to express theirs. Seeing adults express their emotions and taking care of themselves gives children a model for how to do this themselves.

- Be a good listener. Avoid giving advice unless they ask for it. Don’t try to “fix it” or “take away” their feelings. Just be supportive and listen.
- Talk with their teachers about what has happened, so they can be aware and provide extra support when needed.
- By all means, seek professional counseling for any concerns around self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

Ages Twelve to Eighteen

Teenagers are able to understand and process abstract concepts about life and death. They may wrestle with philosophical questions about the meaning of life, death, and traumatic events. Teens tend to see themselves as invincible at this age. Therefore death tends to hit teens especially hard because the death of a loved one, particularly if it is someone their age, shakes their belief in their own invincibility.

You might see an increase in the following behaviors:

- Withdrawal from family. At this age, children are more likely to seek support from their peers.
- Increased risk taking behaviors such as use of drugs or alcohol, reckless driving and other unsafe “risk taking” behaviors.
- Difficulty concentrating, particularly at school.
- Changes or disturbances in sleep and appetite.
- Intense emotions such as anger, sadness, guilt, relief, anxiety.
- Worry about safety of self and others. Fear of death or violence happening again.
- Teens may feel responsible for taking care of younger siblings (and sometimes other adults), especially when faced with the loss of a parent.
- May have thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

Helpful ways to respond:

- Allow for expression of feelings without trying to change, fix, or take them away. Answer questions honestly. Listen without judging, interpreting, advising, or placating. Have patience with your teen’s wide range of emotions, reactions and questions.
- Provide choices whenever possible. “I’d like to do something to honor your sister’s birthday, would you like to be part of that? What ideas do you have?”
- Encourage teens to connect with other support systems, including their friends and other adults (family friends, teachers, coaches). This may be uncomfortable for parents at a time when they want their child to turn to them for support. But teenagers need to be encouraged to seek support from others as well.

- Model appropriate expressions of grief and ways to take care of yourself. Modeling these behaviors will give your teenager a “guide” for how to deal with grief in a healthy way.
- Reassure your teen that you will keep them safe, even if they don’t express these concerns to you.
- Maintain routines and set clear expectations but be flexible when needed. Adjust expectations whenever possible.
- By all means, seek professional help for any concerns around self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

Should children attend the funeral?

This is a very common question! Some people don’t think so, but often that is because of their own discomfort with seeing children grieve.

Your child’s grief is as significant as yours, and their bewilderment even greater. Children of all ages need to say their goodbyes and attending the funeral will help them with this. With younger children, explain what they can expect to see (adults will be sad and may be crying, their loved one may be in the front of the room and look like they are sleeping, people will be talking about all the nice things they remember about their loved one, etc.). Ask your child if he/she would like to attend with you. Even young children are amazingly adept at knowing if they should go or not, and if given the choice, they will tell you.

Whether or not you allow your children to attend the funeral, it is always helpful to give them a concrete way to say goodbye.

Suggest they draw a picture or write a letter or card to put in the casket with their loved one, that will remain with them forever. Children love this, and it is a very healing experience for them.

How We Remember

As time passes, many grieving people, both children and adults, worry that they will slowly forget small details about their loved one who has died. The smell of mom’s hair; grandpa’s laugh; how their little sister liked to sing songs in the car. It’s important to honor your loved one by holding on to as many memories as possible, as well as to honor their place in your life going forward.

There are many creative ways to honor your loved one and preserve their memory. Here are some ideas:

- **Plant a tree in their honor.** Pick it out as a family. Choose a special place in your yard to plant it. Have family members take turns watering it and caring for it. Take pictures of it in every season and document its growth. Put a placard near it with your loved one’s name or a small poem written by family.
- **Establish a special box** that you and your family can fill with pictures, written memories, mementos and whatever else reminds you of your loved one. Go through the box as a family on your loved one’s birthday or other special holiday.

- **Occasionally cook your loved one's favorite meal or dessert.** Invite additional family and close friends over to partake. Make a toast to your loved one and allow everyone at the table to share their favorite memories.
- **Have family and friends write down stories** about your loved one, especially stories that you or your children may not know about. Collect them and make them into a memory booklet.
- **Acknowledge the day you lost them.** It is a painful date, yes, but one that you will never be able to forget. So treat it with the respect it deserves. Plan a family picnic, a trip to the mountains, or simply a family dinner on that date every year, so family can come together to acknowledge and honor your loved one.

We all have our own unique ways of remembering and honoring those we love. Create your own.

Faith, Relationships and Hope

After a devastating loss, questions of faith and meaning often arise. For some, faith may feel shaken; for others, it becomes a source of comfort or exploration. Grief is complex, and it can stir anger, doubt, guilt, or sadness — none of which are erased by belief. It's natural for grief and faith to feel tangled at times, and with time they often begin to find balance again.

Whether through a faith community, spiritual practice, or simply the support of loved ones, connection is vital. Being surrounded by people who care — reaching out when you need them and letting them walk with you — can provide strength during the darkest moments.

Life may never return to what it was, but with support, hope, and meaning, it is possible to find purpose and even joy again.

Grieving for Pets

The loss of a pet can be as painful as losing any beloved family member. Our animal companions often provide unconditional love, daily comfort, and a steady presence in our lives, so their absence can leave a profound emptiness. Grieving a pet is natural, and it's important to give yourself permission to feel the depth of that loss without minimizing it. Coping may include creating a small ritual of remembrance, keeping photos or mementos close, or sharing stories with friends who understand. Some people find comfort in volunteering with or supporting animal organizations, while others need quiet time to heal. However you choose to honor your pet, know that your grief is valid, and with time, the love you shared can shift from pain to cherished memory.

Resources and Support

Western Lane Crisis Response

Phone: (541) 997-3515 or 911

Website: www.wlfea.org/mobile-crisis-response/

Services: Western Lane Crisis Response (WLCR), also known as Mobile Crisis Response (MCR), is a crisis intervention and community support team dedicated to serving the greater Florence community and surrounding areas, including Westlake and upriver communities such as Mapleton and Swisshome-Deadwood. Our team responds directly to the scene of various situations to assist individuals and families facing mental health crises, unexpected trauma, homelessness, suicidal ideation, family disputes, welfare checks, displacement from structure fires, and other distressing life events. Staffed by Peer Support Specialists, Community Health Workers, and Qualified Mental Health Associates, we provide compassionate emotional support, crisis assessment, connections to community resources, and ongoing follow-up to help people navigate challenging times. We operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and offer both in-person and phone-based crisis response services.

988- Lines for Life

Phone: 988 (24-hour line)

At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone.

Burns Riverside Chapel Florence Funeral Home

Phone: (541) 997-3416 Available 24/7

Address: 2765 Kingwood St., Florence, OR 97439

Website: www.burnsriversidechapel.com

Office Hours: 8am-4:30pm Monday-Friday

Services: Anyone who has lost a loved one or dear friend will know how difficult a situation that it is to manage. If you have lost someone that you are close to, one of the most stressful parts of the process can be planning a funeral. As funerals are often planned and completed within a week of someone's death, getting everything organized on your own can be difficult. For those that are in the Florence, OR area, coming to Burns's Riverside Chapel Florence Funeral Home is a great option. There are various reasons why you should come here for all of your funeral service needs.

Grief and Loss Support Group

Phone: (541) 997-3418

Address: 400 9th St Florence, OR 97439 (mailing address only)

Website: peacehealth.org

Office Hours: 8am-4:30pm Monday-Friday

Services: Bereavement counselors and volunteers with special grief counseling training can help. These services are available for PeaceHealth patients, loved ones and the community.

American Cancer Society

Phone: (800) 227-2345 (24-hour line)

Provides a variety of cancer-related services and information.

YouthLine

Website: <https://www.theyouthline.org/>

YouthLine is a free peer-to-peer help, support, and crisis line for youth up to age 24. No problem is too big or too small for YouthLine – reach out to us today!

The Dougy Center

Website: www.dougy.org)

A multitude of on-line resources for grieving children and families. Very helpful information regarding how to help children through grief.

Compassionate Friends

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

A safe, supportive community for those who have lost a child. Their national magazine is described as a “support group in print”.

Coping with Loss: 115 Helpful Websites on Grief and Bereavement:

Website: <https://mastersincounseling.org/guide/loss-grief-bereavement/>

A multitude of websites for written information, blogs, and other support for all types of grief, including the death of a parent, partner, child or pregnancy.

First Baptist Church

Phone: (541) 997-7660

Address: 1935 25th St, Florence, OR 97439

Services: Faith based grief support group. Some classes are educational in nature with a featured speaker, other meetings are support-group style.

Florence Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (FUUF)

Address: 87738 HWY 101 at Heceta Beach Rd, Florence, OR 97439

Services: Pet Grief. Understanding and support with others who are coping with intense feelings and challenging issues related to pet grief.

Pet Grief Support Group Takes place on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays 4PM-5:15PM
- karensuestanley@gmail.com for info.

Aftermath

Phone: 1 (866) 327-2885

Website: <https://www.aftermath.com/locations/oregon/>

Address: 1939 W 2nd Ave, Ste B1, Eugene, OR 97402

Services: 24/7 Professional biohazard remediation specializing in crime scene cleanup, unattended deaths, traumatic injuries, blood and bodily fluid removal, and communicable disease disinfection.

Belfor Property Restoration

Phone: (541) 726-9905 or 24 HR Emergency Hotline (800)262-9443

Website: <https://www.aftermath.com/locations/oregon/>

Address: 587 Shelley Street, Springfield, OR 97477

Services: Residential and commercial restoration serving Eugene, Springfield, and the Oregon Coast—specializing in fire, water, mold, storm, and earthquake damage.

Pain is real. So is hope.

This resource guide has been developed by Western Lane Crisis Response to assist community members after the loss of a loved one. Please feel free to contact a member of our Mobile Crisis Response Team with any questions you may have or if you need further support.

The list of bereavement resources included in this booklet are not directly endorsed or recommended by WLFEA

