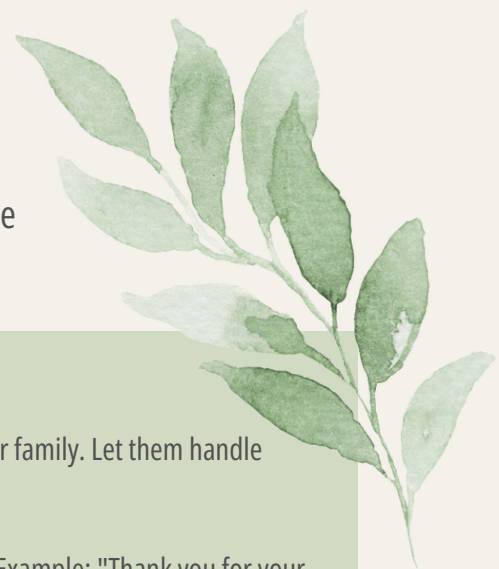


The First 48 Hours: A Gentle Guide

Right now, your brain is in survival mode. The world is moving too fast, and your only job is to breathe. Use this checklist to protect your energy and take things one tiny step at a time.



Step 1: Protect Your Space

- **Appoint your Captain:** Designate one trusted person to be the spokesperson for your family. Let them handle phone calls, texts, and logistics so you don't have to repeat your story.
- **Build a boundary:** Create a simple text template for your spokesperson to send out. Example: "Thank you for your love. The family needs private time and space right now to process this shock. We will update everyone when we are ready."
- **Mute notifications:** Put your phone on "Do Not Disturb" or hand it over to your designated spokesperson.

Step 2: Delegate the Essentials

- **Coordinate child support:** Ask a close friend or family member to take care of the kids' immediate needs, routines, or rides to school.
- **Secure pet care:** Delegate pet feeding, walking, and basic care to a neighbor or friend so your pets stay safe and comforted.
- **Accept food drops:** If people ask to help, tell them to leave meals on the porch or send food delivery gift cards. Do not feel obligated to host them inside.

Step 3: Care for Yourself

- **Drink water:** Dehydration from crying and stress makes the mental fog worse. Keep a water bottle next to you.
- **Eat small bites:** If a full meal feels impossible, try eating small, nutrient-dense snacks like nuts, fruit, or toast.
- **Acknowledge the shift:** Notice how everything looks or feels strange. The world might suddenly feel distorted, too quiet, or entirely different than it did yesterday. This is completely normal. Your mind is processing a massive shift, and feeling disconnected from your surroundings is a natural part of shock.
- **Write it down:** Keep a small notebook nearby. Write down any urgent thoughts or decisions, then close it and put it away. Your memory will be fuzzy, and paper doesn't forget.
- **Just breathe:** You do not have to figure out the future, the funeral, or the rest of your life today. Focus entirely on the next five minutes.

Communication Support & Text Templates



You can provide this page to your designated spokesperson, enabling them to handle updates on your behalf. Additionally, feel free to copy and customize these materials for your own use.

Taking care of yourself involves eating when you're hungry, sleeping when you're tired, and remembering to breathe. Having someone to assist you in communicating with others gives you the opportunity to focus on self-care. By using these text templates or your own, you can prioritize your well-being.

Step 1: Initial Boundary Text

"Hi everyone, this is [Spokesperson Name] texting on behalf of [Grieving Person/Family]. We are devastated to share that [Name] has passed away. Right now, the family is in deep shock and needs quiet time and space to process this loss. Please send your love, but hold off on calls and visits for now. I will be handling updates and logistics, so you can text me directly with any questions. Thank you for understanding."

Step 2: Declining Visits but Accepting Help

"Thank you so much for reaching out to support [Grieving Person/Family]. They are resting and are not ready for visitors or phone calls just yet. If you would like to help, leaving meals or groceries on the front porch is incredibly appreciated. You can also send digital food delivery gift cards to [Email/Phone]. Please keep holding them in your thoughts."

Step 3: The Service Update

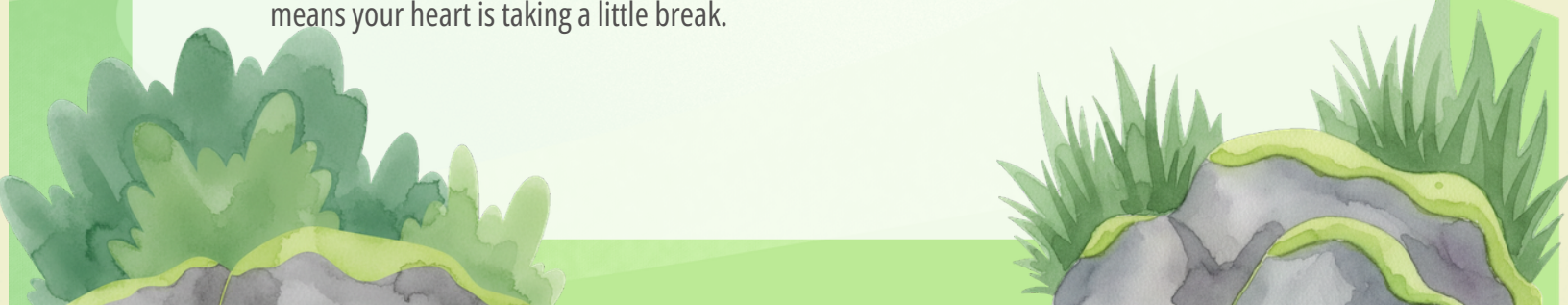
"Hi all, [Spokesperson Name] here with an update from [Family Name]. Thank you for your incredible patience and love over the last couple of days. A service to honor [Name] will be held on [Date] at [Time] at [Location]. The family is looking forward to seeing those who can make it. If you cannot attend, your thoughts and prayers are deeply felt."



Talking with Children

This resource is here to wrap you and the children in your life in a layer of gentle support. When you are navigating your own heartbreak, finding the right words to explain loss to a child can feel impossible. We hope these gentle tips give you a soft place to start, breaking down big, complex concepts into small, honest truths. In those moments when the words simply won't come, let this guide speak for you, bringing clarity, reassurance, and peace to your family when you need it most.

A Note for Big Feelings

- What is happening? When someone dies, it means their body stops working. They don't feel any pain, they aren't hungry, and they aren't sleeping. It is permanent, which means they cannot come back, even though we wish they could.
 - All feelings are okay: You might feel very sad, super angry, or completely confused. You might even feel totally normal and want to play. All of these feelings are 100% okay. Feelings are like waves—they come, they feel really big, and then they wash away.
 - It is not your fault: Nothing you said, did, or thought caused this to happen. You are safe, and you are deeply loved.
 - What you can do right now:
 - **Draw a picture:** Draw how you feel, or draw a favorite memory of the person who died.
 - **Move your body:** Run outside, squeeze a pillow tightly, or cuddle with a pet.
 - **Ask questions:** Ask the grown-ups around you anything you want. If they don't know the answer, they will tell you.
 - **Take a break:** It is okay to laugh and play today. Laughing doesn't mean you aren't sad; it just means your heart is taking a little break.
- 



Grief Sentence Completion

Right now, I feel... _____

I feel the saddest when... _____

The thing I miss most about the person I lost is... _____

Since the loss, things have been different because... _____

My family usually feels... _____

If I could ask the person I lost one thing, I would ask... _____

Something I liked about the person who I lost was... _____

One thing I learned from the person who I lost is... _____
