navigating

THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

This booklet is a gift for you from the Valparaiso Police Department. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences at this time of your loss. We hope that this information will help to ease your burdens.

With sincere sympathy,
Natalie Kasberger, MSW
Police Social Worker, Valparaiso Police Department

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Tasks once a person has passed can be overwhelming and choosing a place to begin can seem very daunting. Utilize this checklist to determine possible next steps.

HOURS

- Notify family and friends
- Locate the remains of the deceased
- Contact a funeral home
- Locate the deceased belongings
- Notify their employer (if applicable)
- If you are in need of a police report, you may contact the department. If you are in need of medical records, contact the hospital. If you are in need of a death certificate, contact the funeral home.

DAYS

- Make funeral, burial, or cremation arrangements.
- Provide care for the individuals pets or children.
- Forward the individuals mail elsewhere.
- Notify companies that the individual is deceased.

The deceased has been taken to the Porter County Coroner's Office in Valparaiso, Indiana for examination to determine the cause of death of your loved one.

Call the funeral home of your choice to inform them of the death and your desire to use their services. The Funeral Director will contact the Coroner's Office.

If you have a question, you may phone the Coroner's Office, at (219)-548-5830
Do not go to the Coroner's Office.

The Coroner's Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

The Coroner will normally take 24 to 48 hours before releasing the body.

The Coroner will call your funeral home to transport the body when they have completed the examination.

Your Funeral Director will make an appointment with you to come into their office to make funeral arrangements.

TELLING SOMEONE
a loved one has passed

BE SURE YOU HAVE THE CORRECT INFORMATION

Listen to the officers or the officials that are investigating the person's passing. Share information only that you know to be true.

BE SURE YOU ARE TALKING TO THE CORRECT PERSON

When possible, deliver the news in person. If that is not practical, ask somebody who knows the person to deliver the news in person.

USE PLAIN LANGUAGE

"I am sorry, there has been an accident" or "I have bad news". state "dead", "killed", or "deceased" versus "lost", "gone", "didn't make it".

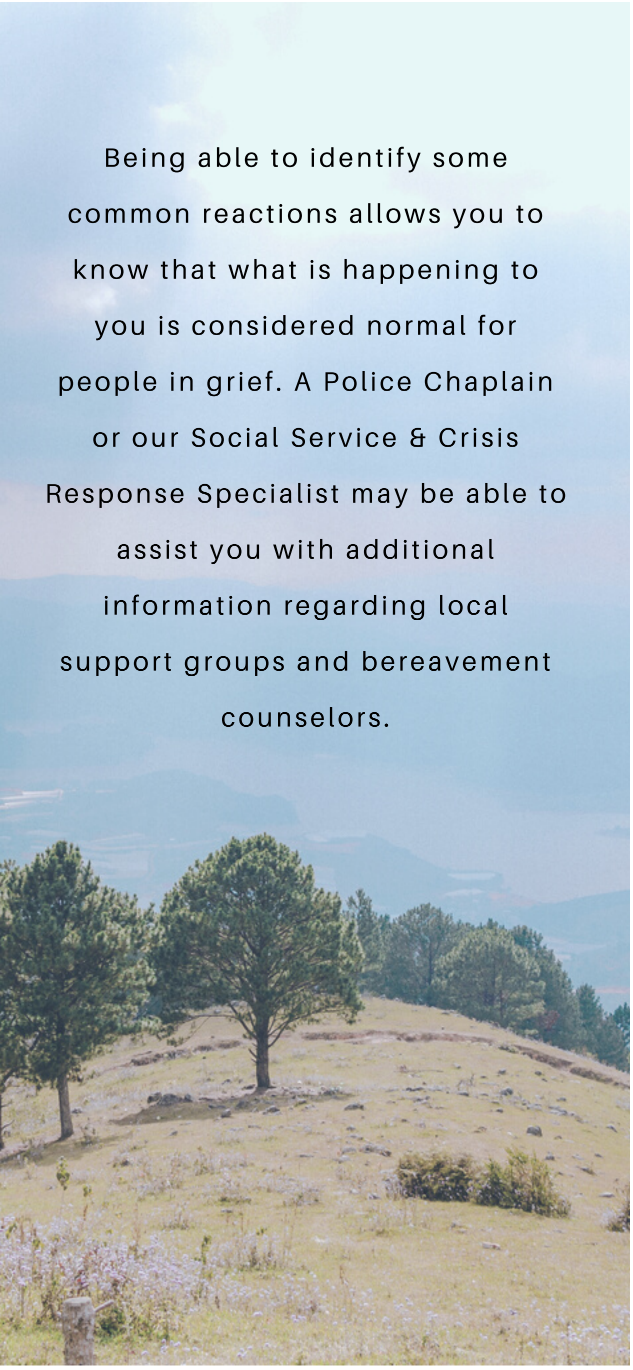
POSSIBLE REACTIONS

Medical crisis, denial, shock, fainting, blaming oneself or others, crying, extreme emotions, stoicism.

OFFER SUPPORT

Notify support systems, allow people to express their feelings, listen, encourage meaningful activities.

COMMON *Reactions*



Being able to identify some common reactions allows you to know that what is happening to you is considered normal for people in grief. A Police Chaplain or our Social Service & Crisis Response Specialist may be able to assist you with additional information regarding local support groups and bereavement counselors.

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

Numbness and Shock
Disbelief and Denial
Sadness
Guilt
Yearnning
dispair
Hopelessness
Fear of being lost
Anger
Biterness

PHYSICAL

Deep sighs
Weakness
Fatigue
Rapid heartbeat
Decrease in activity
Muscle tension
Decreased resistance to illness
Weight or appetite change
Self neglect
Increased sensory awareness

BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS

Blaming others
Preoccupied
CRYING
Seeking solitude
Seeking forgiveness
Detached from surroundings
Disoriented to time and places
Withdrawn from friends and activities
Unable to concentrate

SAMPLE LETTERS

PoDear ____________,

This letter is to inform you that my (husband/wife, etc.) died on (day/month/year).

I would appreciate information on fringe benefits, such as group life insurance coverage, pension funds, accrued vacation or sick pay, disability, terminal pay allowance, gratuity payments, unpaid commissions, credit union balances, service recognition awards, etc.

Sincerely,

Dear ____________,

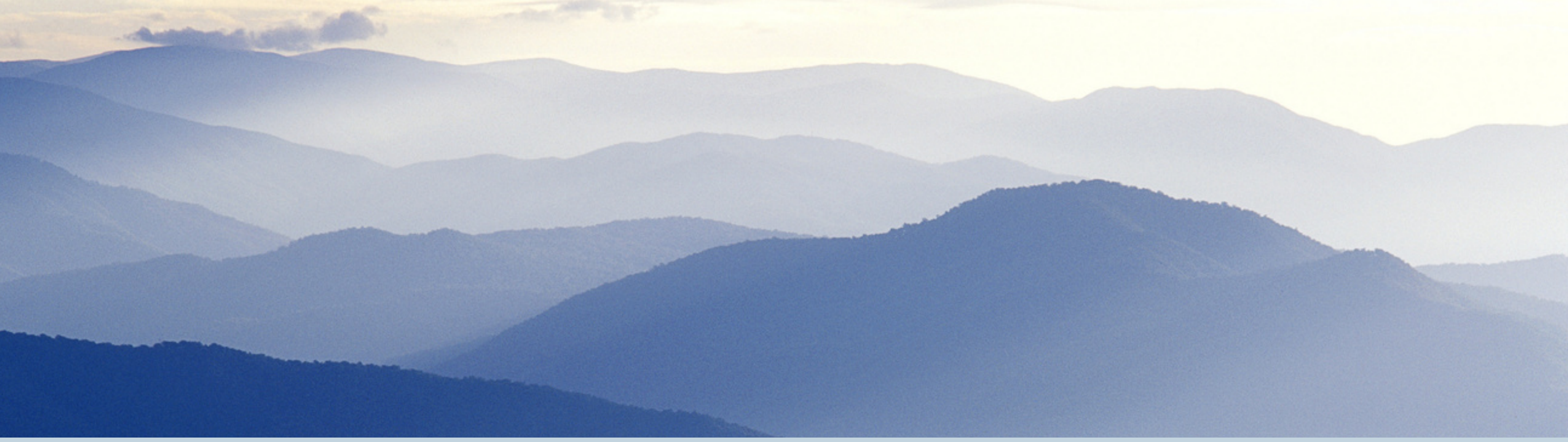
This letter is to inform you that my (husband/wife, etc.) died on (day/month/year).

I wish to inquire whether his/her loan was covered by a credit life insurance plan offered by your organization.

Please send a list of documents and/or information necessary to file a claim. I will appreciate a response at our first convenience.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)
(Your full name – typed)
(Your address – typed)
(Your telephone number – typed)



INTENTIONAL MOURNING

1. Set aside a time each day to mourn privately. Take time to cherish memories.

2. Review the relationship chronologically from the earliest details to the most recent. Think about only one part of the relationship at a time and try to remember every detail.

3. Allow yourself to experience any feelings that come. Let tears come.

4. Write your feelings in your journal. Record your memories.

5. Write a short farewell to doing what you reviewed. Read this farewell aloud to yourself. If this is too painful, tell yourself you'll do it in the near future. Pace yourself when it comes to farewells. You'll know when you are ready for this.

6. Have a few friends that you talk with about your loss. Set ground rules with them so you don't wear out your welcome.

7. Take note of your emotional and psychological losses and responses.

8. Evaluate your support system. Think about who is close and who you can rely on.

9. Spend some time each day being thankful for the blessings that are yours. Yes, you suffered a real loss. We can all agree on that]

10. As you notice the pain subsiding in your daily sessions, you can take a vacation from the daily sessions occasionally. Eventually, you may want to reduce these sessions to once a week, but only when you can rehearse the memories without intense pain.

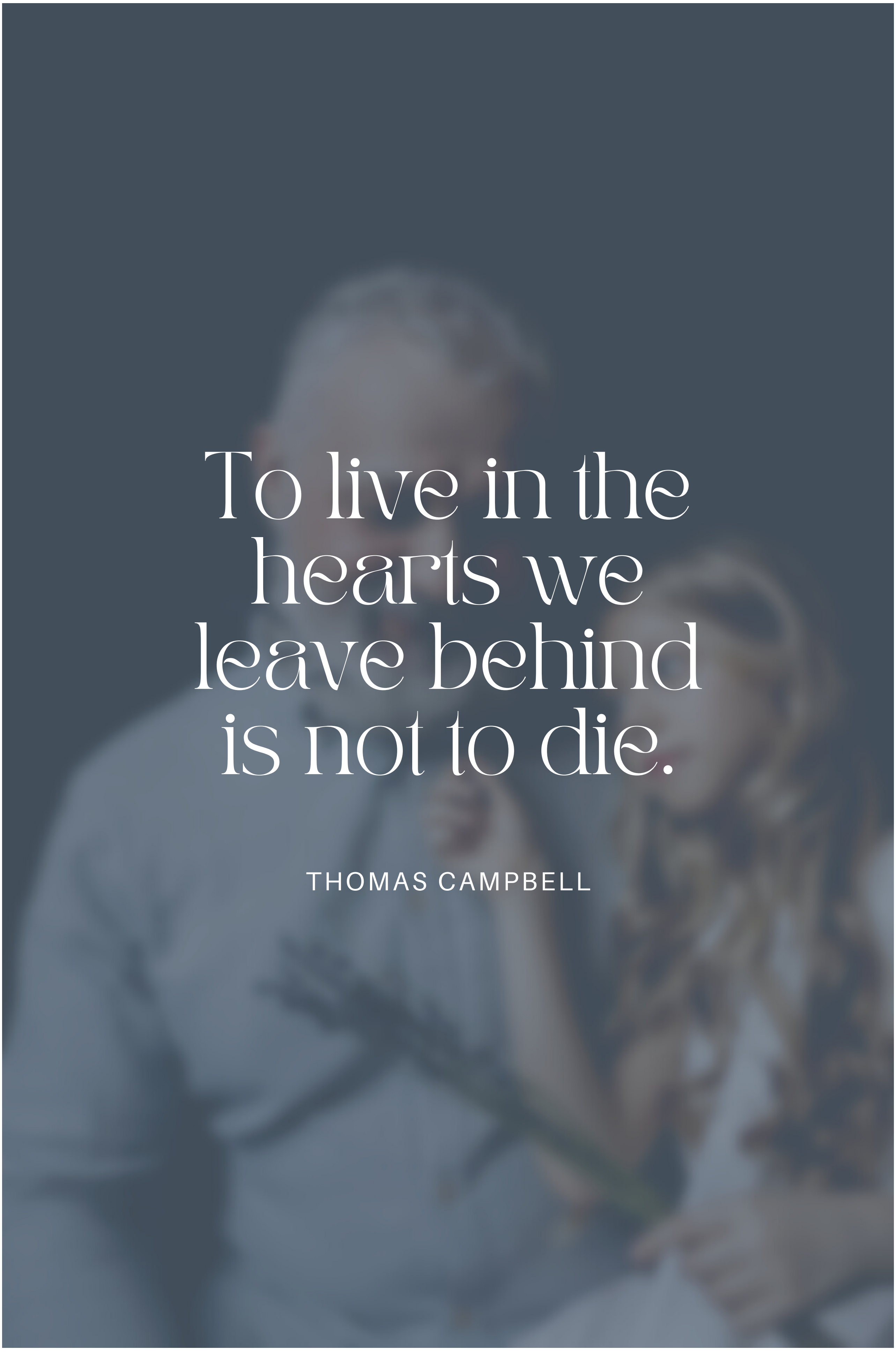
A WORD OF CAUTION

SECURE YOUR HOME

It is common for friends and neighbors to ask what they can do for you in a time of need. Perhaps asking someone to "house sit" or keep an eye on your property during the hours of the funeral ceremonies would be a good suggestion.

BEWARE OF FRAUD

Every year, survivors become vulnerable to those who prey on the suffering of others. The most vulnerable are individuals who are not accustomed to handling their own financial affairs. Some fraud schemes involve someone promising to deliver a product or service. Others offer to inspect your home and then invent a problem that needs immediate and costly repair. A good rule of thumb is to never do business with anyone before checking his or her reputation with the local Better Business Bureau.


To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die.
THOMAS CAMPBELL

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Reputation – Many families prefer to use a funeral home they are familiar with. Perhaps you have visited a funeral home and felt comfortable with the surroundings or staff.

Location – Is it important that the funeral home is close to your Home or other family members?

Price – Federal law requires that all price information concerning funeral goods and services be available by phone. You may also obtain price information in written form upon request.

MAKING *arrangements*

The following items will assist you in making funeral arrangements. If some items are not available, your Funeral Director may be able to help you in obtaining them.

Social Security Number – Benefits that are available will be explained by your Funeral Director. You will need the Social Security number of the deceased to assist you in making a claim.

Veteran's Benefits – In order to apply for these benefits, you will need Veterans Administration identification, such as discharge papers, military service number or identification card.

Vital Records – An important part of the arrangement process is the recording of vital personal data that will form the official record of death. Listed below are some items that are commonly helpful.
Deceased's place of birth
Deceased's date of birth
Mother's maiden name and place of birth
Father's name and place of birth

GENERAL *Grief Support*

Center for Loss & Life Transition:
Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt
(970) 226-6050
http://www.centerforloss.com/

Hospice Foundation of America
https://hospicefoundation.org/Grief-(1)

Loss of a Child:
Compassionate Friends
http://www.compassionatefriends.org
(877) 969-0010

Suicide Survivors:
Suicide Prevention Action Network
www.afsp.org/

Police Social Worker
Natalie Kasberger, MSW
219-476-7910

www.findhelp.org
Call 211 or visit www.211.org

Police Chaplains
Shawn Evans
Lead Pastor- Valparaiso Nazarene Church
(219) 242-3698 shawne@valponaz.org

Chris Gonzales
Discipleship Pastor- Valparaiso Nazarene Church 219-465-8933 chrisg@valponaz.org

OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS

- Civil Service – government employees may be eligible for benefits.
- Contact Social Security – secure death benefits.
- Check memberships – some groups offer group life insurance.
- Gather insurance policies – remember to check credit cards and loans for credit life policies.
- Automobile Insurance – if the death is the result of an automobile crash, it may be possible to file a claim for incurred medical fees, vehicle damage or other benefits.
- Veterans benefits – Veterans Administration Regional Office
- Contact the bank - especially if there are joint accounts.
- Obtain death certificates - these are available from the funeral home. They are often necessary for insurance and many other legal purposes. A minimum of six certified copies is often suggested.
- Check current bills - utilities, phone, loans, credit cards, etc.
- Locate titles of ownership – auto, property, etc.

our condolences

This booklet was compiled using the Bloomington Police Social Work Guide as a reference. Thank you to those community resources who help those in our community and thank you, the community members, for allowing us to serve you. For more resources and work sheets, visit valparaisopolice.org