



# THE ACUTE LOSS PERIOD

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## EMOTIONAL NEEDS

### HEARING

Powerful emotions accompany the news that someone we love has died. For most people, their first thought is, "I can't believe they're gone." The more unexpected the death, the more emotionally charged the survivors' response.

### SHARING

The emotional need to share the sad news allows survivors to express their initial feelings about the loss. While this sharing is comforting, it often leads to the question, "When will the service be held?" This can cause additional stress for those responsible for planning.

## RELATIONAL NEEDS

### SEEING

As they face their common loss, friends and family of the deceased begin their journey to healing by expressing words of affection and saying a final goodbye. Their relationships are strengthened when surrounded by loved ones.

### GATHERING

In gathering with friends and family, survivors are reminded that though something significant has changed in their lives, they can still find familiar comfort in the company of others.

### CONNECTING

Though they gather with many, survivors will more deeply connect with a few close friends and family members, who will form a support network in the days and weeks following their loss.

## SPIRITUAL NEEDS

### REFLECTING

When we are loved, love changes us. As friends and family reflects on how the deceased has touched their lives, they will embrace memories that nurture healing. This period of reflection can be an important time of restoration and renewal that helps loved ones to evaluate the most important things in life.

### CELEBRATING

In this context, celebrating is not the same as "throwing a party" or "marking a holiday." Celebrating a life allows for a special combination of emotional expressions - the sadness of loss and the joy of love shared.

# An Intentional Plan to Begin Healing

When considering what will happen when we die, most of us think, “I just need to decide whether I’m going to be buried or cremated.” But while that decision is necessary, we often forget one important thing...

*Ultimately, your death doesn’t belong to you. It belongs to those who loved you and shared life with you.*

This means the people most affected by the decisions you make about your memorial will be your family as they begin to cope with a world you’re no longer a part of. Your most important decision will be how your plan will care for the emotional, relational, and spiritual needs and well being of those who you’ll leave behind.

That’s why we teach every family about the period of time between the event of death and the onset of grief, known as the Acute Loss Period. Our purpose is to ensure every family has an intentional plan to begin healing at the time of loss and to help them establish the vital habits and behaviors they will need for a healthy grief experience.