

The First Week After a Loss





Hello there!

I am sorry you are here.

The first days after a loss can feel unreal. You may feel like the whole world is coming down on you. You may be grieving, answering messages, making decisions, looking for documents, or simply trying to understand what happened.

I am happy you chose to come here.

I know seeking help isn't always easy. This guide is not here to rush you. It is here to give you a calm place to start. You do not have to do everything today. You only need the next step.

You've got this.

I believe in you.

Julius

Founder & CEO, Meolea

No loss feels the same.



I want to begin by giving you a little reassurance: There is no “right” way to feel after a loss.

You may feel devastated. You may feel numb. You may feel strangely calm. You may feel relieved, guilty, angry, confused, exhausted, or all of these at once.

Some people are very composed for a long time, and then grief finally strikes them. Others feel like they got hit by a truck. And yet others feel absolutely nothing at all.

None of this means you are grieving wrong.

Every relationship is different. Every family situation is different. Everyone has their own story. What you need today may not be what someone else needs, and it may not be what you need tomorrow.

This guide is not here to tell you how to grieve. But I hope it helps you find the next small step when everything feels uncertain.

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

– Winnie-the-Pooh

Your next steps

01

CONFIRM THE DEATH

Contact the doctor, hospital, care home, or emergency service so the necessary medical confirmation can be issued.

02

CONTACT A FUNERAL HOME

Ask what needs to happen next, which documents are needed, and what choices are urgent.

03

INFORM OTHERS

Decide who needs to know immediately and who can help coordinate.

04

COLLECT THE DOCUMENTS

Start with ID/passport, birth or marriage certificates, health insurance details, will or power of attorney documents, and any funeral or insurance papers.

05

CREATE A SHARED SPACE

Use a folder, notebook, shared note, or digital space for contacts, appointments, documents, questions, and next steps.



COMMUNICATION

A SIMPLE MESSAGE

Hi, I wanted to let you know that [Name] has passed away. We are still taking things step by step and will share more information when we can.

Please understand if we do not reply quickly right now.

ASKING FOR HELP

Could you help with [...] this week, such as [making calls, collecting documents, or keeping track of messages]?

REMEMBER

You do not have to update everyone at once and you do not have to answer all their questions.

Who to contact first

In the first days after a loss, it can feel like everyone needs to know immediately. They do not.

Start with the people and places that matter most right now. You can tell others later, when you have more space.

Start with close people

Tell the people who were closest to the person who died, or those who may need to hear it from you directly. This may include:

- immediate family
- close friends
- caregivers or
- anyone who depended on the person
- anyone who may need support right now

You do not have to make every call yourself.

Choose one trusted person who can help you share the news.



Then inform practical contacts

Some people or organizations may need to know earlier because they are connected to care, housing, work, finances, or important next steps. This often includes:

- employer or employees
- doctor, hospital, or care home
- funeral home
- landlord or care facility
- health insurance
- banks and insurers
- legal or tax contact, if already involved



Important tip

You do not have to contact everyone in one day.

Write down who has been informed, who still needs to be informed, and who is responsible for each call.

You are allowed to keep the message short.

You do not need to explain everything.

You do not need to answer every question.

You do not need to reply immediately.

A simple message is enough:

[Name] has passed away. We are still taking things step by step and will share more when we can.

Documents you may need

After a loss, many people and organizations will ask for documents. You may not have everything right away. That is okay.

Start by gathering what you can find. A partial folder is still helpful.

DEATH CERTIFICATE

Usually the most important document for funeral arrangements, banks, insurers, pensions, and official notifications.

ID OR PASSPORT

Helps confirm identity when speaking with official offices, funeral homes, banks, insurers, or other institutions. You'll need yours and that of the person who died.

FUNERAL WISHES & ARRANGEMENTS

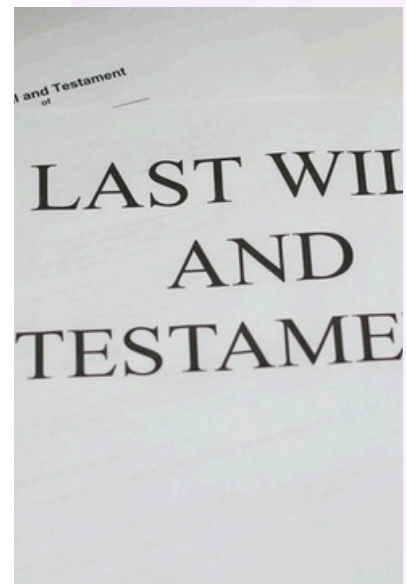
Look for any written wishes, funeral plans, burial or cremation preferences, music, readings, donation wishes, or notes shared with family.

WILL OR INHERITANCE DOCUMENTS

Check whether a will, estate instruction, or inheritance document exists. If you find one, keep it safe and avoid making assumptions too early.

INSURANCE, BANK, PENSION, OR EMPLOYER DOCUMENTS

Gather what you can find. These documents help you understand who may need to be informed and what practical steps may come next.





Important tip

If relevant, check whether the person carried an organ donor card, had shared donation wishes, or left funeral, burial, or cremation preferences. In hospital situations, medical staff will usually guide you.

Other documents that may help

You may not need all of these. Some may only become relevant later.

- birth certificate or marriage certificate
- family register or proof of relationship, where relevant
- health & life insurance information
- pension & employer information
- bank details
- rental or property documents
- care home or hospital documents
- funeral documents
- power of attorney documents, if available
- important contracts and subscriptions

Keep copies together

It may help to keep originals in one safe place, copies or photos in a second place, a simple note of who requested what, and a list of missing documents

Do not panic if something is missing

Many documents can be requested again. Some institutions will tell you exactly what they need.

What to ask the funeral home

A funeral home can often help you understand what needs to happen next. You do not need to arrive with perfect questions. You can simply say:

I am not sure what to do next. Can you please walk me through the first steps?

Other questions you can ask



About the next steps

- What needs to happen first?
- Which decisions are urgent?
- Which decisions can wait?
- What will you handle for us?
- What do we need to do ourselves?



About documents

- Which documents do you need?
- Do you need originals or copies?
- How many death certificates should we request?
- Will you help with official registrations or notifications?



About timing

- What needs to happen today?
- What needs to happen this week?
- When do we need to make final decisions?
- What happens if we need more time?



About costs

- Can you provide a written overview of costs?
- Which services are required?
- Which services are optional?
- Are there fees we should expect later?



About personal wishes

- Did the person leave any wishes for the funeral?
- How can we include family traditions, beliefs, or personal details?
- What choices do we have for the ceremony, burial, cremation, or memorial?

Before the call or appointment

You've got this far. Well done. **You can do this, too!**

Talking to a funeral home can feel strange, especially if you have never done it before. They are usually used to speaking with people who are grieving or overwhelmed.

To make the whole talk easier for everyone, I recommend you have these things at hand because they will 100% come up during the conversation:

- the person's full name (including middle names, etc.)
- date and place of birth
- date and place of death
- your relationship to them
- your contact details
- any known wishes
- your most urgent questions
- Your budget



Remember

You are allowed to ask the same question twice. You are allowed to ask for things in writing.

You are allowed to say:

I need a moment before deciding.



Costs and choices

It is okay to ask about costs early. A funeral or memorial can include required services, optional choices, and extras that may not be obvious at first.

IT IS OKAY TO ASK

- ✓ What costs are required and which choices are optional?
- ✓ What options are available if we need to keep things simple?
- ✓ Can you send me a written estimate?

**CHOOSING SOMETHING
SIMPLER AND CHEAPER
DOES NOT MEAN YOU
CARED LESS.**

What can wait

I know, many things can feel urgent right now. But not everything has to be solved now or even in the first week.

Things that often do not need to happen right away

- sort all belongings
- close every account
- cancel every subscription
- make every inheritance decision
- understand every legal detail
- handle every family disagreement
- write perfect thank-you messages
- plan every memorial detail
- respond to every message
- decide what to keep, donate, or throw away
- explain everything to everyone

What to focus on first

- official confirmation
- funeral or immediate arrangements
- close family and key contacts
- urgent care for dependents, pets, or property
- important documents
- one shared place for information
- your own basic needs

Give yourself permission to pause

It's not a failure to take a moment before moving on to the next step. In fact, most people need some time to process and you are definitely not alone in this.



Sometimes, coffee can help 💜

Take care of yourself



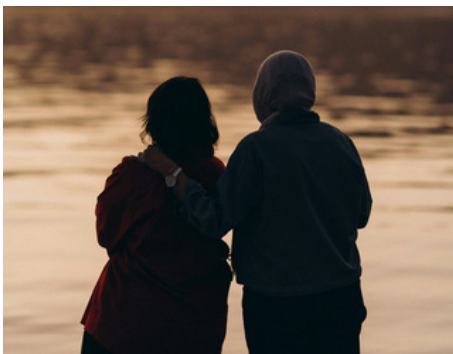
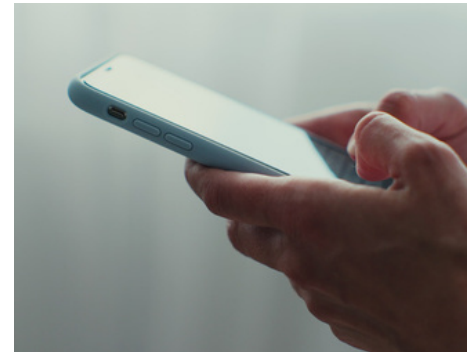
Stay Safe

Be careful with alcohol, medication, or other substances. If you feel like you might harm yourself, lose control, or cannot be alone safely, contact someone you trust or local emergency support immediately.

Protect your Attention

It is easy to get lost in social networks or keep checking for messages.

Put the phone down for a moment when you notice that it is becoming an “escape”.



A sorrow shared is a sorrow halved.

Ask one person you trust to sit with you, check in on you, or help with one small task. You do not have to carry every call, message, decision, and feeling by yourself.

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*A plan will not make the loss smaller.
But it can make everything feel less
impossible.*

*You do not have to do everything today.
You only need somewhere calm to begin.*

- JULIUS



FAQs

Do I have to do everything right away?

No. Some things are urgent, but many things can wait. Start with official confirmation, funeral or immediate arrangements, close contacts, important documents, and one place to track everything.

What if I do not know what the person wanted?

That is common. Start with what you do know, ask close family or trusted friends, and write down open questions. You do not have to make every decision alone.

What if I cannot find important documents?

Start with what you can find. Many documents can be requested again, and institutions can usually tell you what they need and whether they require originals, copies, or digital versions.

Who should I inform first?

Start with the closest people and anyone who may need immediate support. Then move to practical contacts like the funeral home, employer, landlord, insurers, banks, or care providers.

What if I feel completely overwhelmed?

Pause and reach out to one person you trust. You do not have to carry every call, message, decision, and feeling alone. You can also use something like Meolea to help you through.

You got this!

You made it this far. That matters.

No matter where you are in your grief process, whether you just lost someone a few hours or days ago, are coping with loss after weeks and months, or just want to prepare mentally, you are trying your best. And that's what counts.

That is enough. Even if it does not feel that way.

And if you need help now or anytime, Meolea is here for you to keep things together when life feels scattered.

You can use our guides, resources, and support options to understand what comes next, collect important information, and make the first steps after a loss feel a little less overwhelming.

There is no pressure and no perfect timeline.

Start where you are.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julius". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J'.

Founder & CEO, Meolea

hello@meolea.com

www.meolea.com