

Asking for Help Following a Loss

Objective

To identify your needs and the people that can help you following a loss.

What to Know

Even though you feel overwhelmed by the tasks and responsibilities you are faced with following a loss, you might not know how to ask for help. Loved ones might want to be helpful but cannot think of concrete things to do for you. They might simply say, "Call me if you need anything."

To get the help you need, ask the people in your life to help you with specific tasks. You will probably find that most people will be receptive to your requests. Helping allows your support system to show care toward you during your time of need. In addition, it can help them process their grief in a healthy and positive way. Depending on the type of help you need, there are different ways of reaching out. You might:

- call or text specific friends or family members directly to ask for assistance and let them know the days and times you need help
- email a group of people so they can coordinate among themselves; for example, if you need someone to walk your dog you can email people in your neighborhood
- take advantage of online resources that can help you ask for and coordinate help, like www.everplans.com, www.carecalendar.org, or www.mealtrain.com

When asking, do so genuinely, and do not expect that everyone will say yes. Try to be understanding if someone declines. For those who do agree to help, you can show your appreciation with a card or gift.

This worksheet will help you become aware of your needs and identify who might help you meet those needs.

What to Do

Based on the nature of your loss and your situation, you may need help with many types of things. Check off any of the following items that apply to you. On the lines that follow, add any helpful details or the names of people who can help.

Personal help, including:

___ childcare _____

___ transportation _____

___ pet care _____

___ thank you notes/email/other correspondence _____

___ coordinating out-of-town guests _____

___ set up online help registry _____

___ set up online account with Care.com or other service _____

___ help you memorialize your loved one _____

___ other _____

Household help, including:

___ housekeeping _____

___ laundry _____

___ grocery shopping _____

___ cooking/providing meals _____

___ car wash/gas/service _____

___ yard work _____

___ other _____

Financial help, including:

___ funeral arrangements _____

___ help collecting benefits _____

___ help settling the estate _____

___ filing taxes _____

___ other _____

Make phone calls, including:

___ professional advisors _____

___ bank/credit union _____

___ social security office _____

___ child's school _____

___ your employer/job _____

___ loved ones at a distance _____

___ other _____

Accompany me:

___ funeral home _____

____ attorney _____
____ accountant _____
____ store _____
____ financial advisor _____
____ doctor's office _____
____ other _____

Your needs may look very different than the ones listed above. Is there anything else you can think of?

Is there someone who can simply listen to you or offer advice or guidance? If so, write down their name.

With whom can you share this list? _____

Who are the people or groups that can help you?

Are you willing to use online services like Care.com? Why or why not?

You might not know whether your support system can or will meet these needs but identifying what you need and being willing to ask for help is the first step.

Are you comfortable asking for help? Why or why not?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this activity?
