

A Sample Version of

DEATH NOTIFICATIONS & RELATED ISSUES

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The complete course totaling 30 pages can be taken at no charge. After successfully completing a written exam, a course completion certificate will be issued to you from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri. It should take approximately 4 hours to complete the course.

Death Notifications

What is a death notification?

A death notification occurs when a person or persons with relational ties to the deceased need to be told of the death of their loved one/family member/friend. When a person is called upon to inform another person of a death, performing that duty constitutes a death notification.

What circumstances require a death notification?

There are two main circumstances we want to consider which require death notifications: 1) a situation in which the person receiving the death notification is on the scene when the death occurs or arrives on the scene shortly thereafter; 2) a situation in which one or more loved ones not present at the scene of the death need to be notified. Much of this study will refer to notifying loved ones who were not present at the death scene. However, many of the steps in the death notification process are the same in either circumstance.

Why is it important how a death notification is given?

A death notification properly given can help a bad situation be a little more bearable. On the other hand, an insensitive, ill-prepared notification can add to the pain of the bereaved. We must keep in mind that there is more involved to giving a death notification than simply following an outline or a set of step-by-step instructions. Adequate preparation and training must be blended together with kindness and empathy. As ambassadors of Christ in the situation, we attempt to ease the burden of loss, not add to it. . .

How do I prepare myself to give a death notification?

1) Get good, accurate information.

You will need to know: who died (full name and date of birth), . . . how the body was identified, the age and gender of the deceased, when and where the death occurred, where the body is now, details regarding how the death occurred, and a phone number the person you are notifying can call for more information . . .

2) Ready yourself mentally, spiritually and emotionally.

Death notifications can be difficult and stressful on everyone. As the chaplain, you need to . . .

When giving a death notification, what types of responses should I anticipate?

1) Overt, physical reactions.

As much as possible, be prepared for . . .

After helping the bereaved through the initial reactions to the notification, what do I do next?

1) Allow and facilitate (within reason) whatever makes the situation better for them.

Following the actual death notification, you could say something like, . . .

What are special circumstances that might affect the death notification process?

1) If the scene of a death is considered a crime scene.

Once a situation is deemed a possible crime scene, be very careful to . . .

What should you do as you conclude your time with the bereaved?

1) When possible, try to transfer spiritual care to another spiritual care provider.

Ask if they have a minister or pastor you can call. Speak to the pastor privately by . . .

SUMMARY: Steps to making a death notification . . .

DEATH-RELATED ISSUES

I. Specific issues regarding death notifications to children . . .

2) How do age and personal experiences affect how children deal with the death of a loved one?

Preschool children usually . . .

Between the ages of five and nine, most children are beginning . . .

From nine or ten through adolescence, children begin to . . .

Teenagers often become intrigued with . . .

For more information on "Talking to Children About Death," read the full article found at . . .

II. Issues regarding the deceased and the body of the deceased

1) On a scene where there is a death, should the chaplain make it a point to view the body?

It is important for the chaplain not to . . .

III. Procedures and entities involved on the death scene before the body is released

1) What happens after a person dies and the death notification has been given?

In most instances when a person does not die in a hospital, a coroner or medical examiner must . . .

2) Should the family watch as the funeral home personnel, medical examiner, or coroner load the body of the deceased onto their cot and into their vehicle?

We suggest that the family NOT watch this process. We suggest that they . . .

3) In the event of a death, what is the role of the coroner or medical examiner?

The role of the coroner is to . . .

IV. Issues regarding embalming, cremation, and funerals

1) Is it possible for a family member(s) to request a person be buried without being either cremated or embalmed? . . .

2) What does it mean for a body to be embalmed?
"Embalming, in most modern cultures, is . . .

V. Understanding grief and loss

1) What are the five predictable stages of loss in the grieving process?

Through her research and interviews with terminally ill hospital patients, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross found that people go through five distinct stages of loss. These stages are . . .

SELF-CARE FOR THOSE WHO GIVE DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

What are some of the important factors that help determine how the death notification will impact the notifier?

There are many factors that determine how the death will affect the notifier. They include . . . You should not give a death notification if . . .

If you are currently experiencing overwhelming stress, should you be the one to give a death notification?

Dr. George Everly, a noted researcher in emergency services stress, notes that . . .

What are some of the indicators that a notifier has not exercised good self-care techniques?

Some of the indicators of being over-stressed might include. . .

What are some of the factors that help notifiers be resilient?

Factors that help in resiliency include . . .

How do notifiers release stress?

Statistics indicate that there are several activities that help relieve the stress of being a notifier. They include . . .

What personal, spiritual practices will help a chaplain cope with stress-related issues?

1) Personal times of meditation on God's Word.

We must have the truth of God ingrained in our spirits. When we are grounded in His truth, we are not as inclined to . . .

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The successful completion of this course requires that you do the following:

1) Go to the Internet site: _____ and watch the music video " _____ " . . .

2) Go to the Internet site: _____ and watch at least three videos on . . .

3) Go to the Internet site below and listen to at least one 9-1-1 call involving a death or possible death. . .

Suggested Readings & Reference Materials

Primary Reference:

Lord, Janice Harris and Alan E. Steward. I'll Never Forget Those Words: A Practical Guide To Death Notification. Burnsville, NC: Compassion Books, 2008. ISBN: 9781878321336. 135 pages.

Additional Readings & Research Material . . .

The above was taken from our course "Death Notifications & Related Issues." To take the complete course, you may email Robby Jernigan at robbyj@ipa.net or go on the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary's website www.agts.edu and look under their Continuing Education Department.

As an introductory offer, this course can be taken free of charge.