

Funeral Support and Physical Distancing



With the increase of the Coronavirus pandemic, physical distancing is having an impact on how funerals are conducted and the participation of mourners.

The Australian Government has increased physical distancing rules. This may mean that more people may be unable to attend a funeral or that more people may choose to hold a private funeral and or cremation.

When you can't attend a funeral, you can still show your support to grieving family and friends in the following ways:

- » Check with the family of the deceased to see if they're doing a live stream of the funeral service. This way, you can still virtually attend the funeral or watch it at a later time.
- » If the funeral is delayed or reduced to a very short service, you could set some time aside to have your own personal memorial at home. Take some time looking at photographs of the deceased, light a candle, write a message to them, or follow any of your own cultural or spiritual rituals. If you are not in isolation you may be able to visit somewhere meaningful to you or the deceased, keeping in mind physical distancing rules.
- » Sending flowers is a simple, yet meaningful gesture. You can send them to the funeral home or the home of the bereaved and include a note to express your condolences and sadness for not being able to attend.
- » Send a sympathy card with a heartfelt message. You may choose to share a favourite memory of the deceased. A short, simple note can provide comfort and let's those who are grieving know that you're thinking of them.
- » Ask if there is an online guest book, for friends and family members to sign and offer their condolences. Family members often find comfort in reading these messages and having them available online makes it easy to look back on them at a later time. Ask if the deceased has an active social media page where you could write a message.
- » Making a donation in the name of the deceased not only pays tribute to them, but also creates a positive impact on the lives of others.
- » Consider writing or recording a message to be read out or played at the funeral. Contact the funeral director for information.
- » After the funeral check in with people, either by telephone, social media or a video call using the Internet such as FaceTime or Skype. You could ask someone to call you afterwards to let you know how it went. This is a good opportunity for you to talk about the deceased and share your memories.

During the current coronavirus restrictions, the circumstances of the bereavement may have been particularly distressing or traumatic.

Download the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement's *MyGrief* App for immediate information about how to receive bereavement support or how to support someone who is grieving.