



Guidance for Supporting Grieving Families During Social Distancing

To all of the families supported by Kidder Memorial Home and Spears Funeral Home:

After taking some time to try and understand what our communities are going through, we'd like to share some thoughts and guidelines to help navigate this uncharted time.

First and foremost, it's our responsibility to keep current with and follow federal and state guidelines. These guidelines do not change any part of how we physically care for your loved one. We always use universal precautions for the safety of our staff, and COVID-19 has a very low chance of infecting them. However, the greatest threat, to our staff and the families we serve arises when we are in close contact with the public. The immediate response would be to only hold private visitations, memorials or funerals. The long-term effects of this restriction could be detrimental to grieving families.

To quote a trusted grief expert, Dr. Alan Wolfelt, "Anything that delays a funeral delays the natural mourning and healing process. You can't push "pause" on grief. People will continue to feel their grief but will have fewer options to express it and be supported."

So how do we care for the deceased and their family while also doing our part to protect society from this pandemic? Here is our best thinking in response to that question. The two most important goals of a funeral or memorial service are 1) to give family and friends an opportunity to acknowledge and accept their loss, and 2) to give the community a place to express their sympathies to the grieving family.

At this time the state guidelines require gatherings be restricted to less than 10 people. As a result, any services will need to be private. This makes accomplishing the above goals very difficult, but with the use of current technology we stand a good chance of succeeding together.

Some complimentary services we will offer to families during this time include:

- Live streaming of services
- Recording services to share privately or publicly
- An additional memorial or funeral service after restrictions are lifted

Some ways you can help support grieving families:

- Offer condolences
 - Written – through our website, or by mailing a card to one of our funeral homes.
 - Audio – Record an audio message to share with the family – we can help!
 - Video – Record a video message to share with the family – we can help!
- Expression of sympathy
 - Flowers – Sending flowers is a thoughtful gesture to let the family know you are thinking of them
 - Food – A homemade dish is always a welcome gesture. Just keep in mind any potential dietary restrictions.

If you have any questions for us or suggestions about how we can help support grieving families during this period please reach out via e-mail at agoss@gossfs.com or by phone at 933-4408 or 868-3331.

Thank you,

Adam Goss, Funeral Director / Owner