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dedicated holistic support

the kindest care

## Care of the mind

# Planning a funeral

Meaningful funeral ceremonies create a space for grieving and allow family to express their love for the person who has died.

A funeral can be:

- A *religious* service appropriate to the faith tradition of your loved one. As a spiritual practice it will include rituals and prayers that support their transition from this life to the next. A priest or minister from the faith tradition will help you arrange the service.
- A *non-religious* ceremony may include a celebration of life, an opportunity to say goodbye and a way of supporting one another in grief.

Your loved one may have already let you know what they would like included in the ceremony, but may also prefer to not take part in the planning. To structure a ceremony, you may consider the following suggestions:

### Value their life

Rejoice in the positive qualities and contributions the person has made to their family, their workplace, their community and to individuals. You can do this through eulogies, photos and sharing of stories. Engaging other family members and friends in this part of the ceremony can assist with the grieving process for all involved.

### Value their death

Their death is a reminder of the fragility of life and of our own mortality, thus highlighting the preciousness of each moment that we have with each other. For all of us death is certain and our time of death is uncertain. In awareness of death we seek meaning in life which guides us in how to live well.

### Support their transition

Include rituals and practices that are meaningful in supporting the transition of your loved one's mind or soul from life to life. This can include prayers, meditation, offering of light, music and flowers, readings and poems. The practices will be influenced by the person's faith tradition or spiritual beliefs. For example, Buddhists recite prayers every 7<sup>th</sup> day for 49 days after death.

Other considerations:

- Identify your loved one's special cultural or religious

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requirements.

- Decide who will conduct the ceremony (e.g., an ordained member of the faith community, a funeral celebrant, a friend or family member).
- Decide where to hold the ceremony (e.g., a church or chapel, a funeral home, your own or a friend's home or garden or in another place special to you).
- Select a preferred funeral service provider to assist you.
- Choose the number of days after death the ceremony will be held. This can be determined by religious or cultural beliefs.
- Decide between burial and cremation. Identify where the ashes will be placed or scattered, or where the body will be buried. It may be possible to be buried on private land subject to permission from the local council.

**Karuna also has experienced people you can talk with on:**  
07 3632 8300 or [karuna@karuna.org.au](mailto:karuna@karuna.org.au)



This is a **Support and Learning** resource. More resources available at [www.karuna.org.au/resources](http://www.karuna.org.au/resources). Karuna is affiliated with [www.fpmt.org](http://www.fpmt.org)



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