



## **Augusta Health Bereavement Care Team Member Guide**

## Supporting You in Loss

In life's hardest moments, you're not alone.

Losing someone you love is heartbreaking—and it can be hard to even know where to start when grief sets in. At Augusta Health, we see you, we support you, and we're here to walk beside you.

This guide was created to bring comfort, offer practical support, and remind you: you're surrounded by a community that truly cares.

This Bereavement Care Guide is available to all team members—regardless of your role, schedule, department, or employment status.

With compassion,

*Your Organizational and Talent Development Team*





## A HEARTFELT APPROACH TO

# Grief

Grief isn't something you just "get over."  
It's messy. It's personal. It shows up in waves.

**And that's okay.**

This Bereavement Guide is designed to ease some of the stress that comes with loss—so you can focus on what matters: healing, remembering, and resting.

**Let this serve as a gentle reminder:**

In sorrow, *you are seen.*

In loss, *you are supported.*

In grief, *you are never alone.*

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## What We Offer

We know no two people grieve the same way. When grief comes, even small decisions can feel overwhelming. That's why we've taken care of a few thoughtful gestures to ease your burden and show you you're not alone.



### SYMPATHY FLOWERS

Flowers are selected with care and can be delivered to your home, your loved one's service, or another location of your choosing on behalf of your Augusta Health family—delivering love, support, and remembrance during your time of loss.



### BEREAVEMENT MEAL

Grief can feel heavy—and even the thought of planning a meal can feel impossible. That's why we take care of it for you. We'll provide a meal for up to 15 people so you and your loved ones can simply be together without worrying about food.

#### What's included:

- Deli meats and cheeses with rolls
- Chips and assorted condiments
- Three 6-packs of sodas
- One homemade-style pie and one cake

**Have dietary needs or allergies in your household? We're happy to adjust—just let us know in advance.**



### TIME OFF TO GRIEVE

You deserve space to breathe, cry, remember, and rest. Bereavement leave is available to support you as you navigate this loss.

- Depending on your relationship to the person who passed, you may be eligible for paid time away from work.
- If you need more time, we can explore options like PTO, flexible scheduling, or even FMLA (if eligible).

Let's work together to make sure you're supported, both personally and professionally.

**For full details, see the Bereavement Policy in Policy Manager or speak with HR.**

## How to Request Support

You don't have to go through this alone—and you don't have to manage the details.

We've made it simple to receive support, so you can focus on your heart, not the logistics.



### STEP 1: LET YOUR LEADER OR SUPERVISOR KNOW

When you're ready, share the news of your loss. If you're comfortable, let them know what support you need (flowers, a meal, time off). If you're not ready to talk, a simple email or message is enough.



### STEP 2: WE HANDLE THE DETAILS

Your leader will notify our Organizational and Talent Development Team, and we'll handle the floral arrangements and meal with love and care. We'll work quietly in the background, so you don't have to carry more than you already are.



### STEP 3: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We'll keep in touch through your leader or directly with you—whatever you prefer—so you're supported every step of the way.

**Optional: If you'd like to email us directly to get things moving or ask for privacy preferences, you can contact us at:**

✉ [OrgDevelopment@AugustaHealth.com](mailto:OrgDevelopment@AugustaHealth.com)

☎ (540) 332-4889

# Coping with Grief

**There's no right way to grieve. Just your way.**

Grief is personal. It's messy, unpredictable, and doesn't follow a schedule. One moment you may feel numb. The next, you're crying in the car or laughing at a memory. All of it is normal.

**Here are some evidence-based ways to cope and care for yourself emotionally:**



## ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

- Say how you feel—even if it's messy. Grief can bring sadness, anger, relief, guilt, or numbness.
- Journaling, talking to someone, or simply naming your emotion out loud helps your brain process pain.



## TELL THEIR STORY

- Share memories that make you laugh. Talk about what they taught you.
- Keeping their story alive honors their legacy and helps you integrate the loss into your life.



## SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SUPPORT

- Let friends and family know how they can help—rides, meals, company, or just presence.
- Consider a grief group (in-person or virtual). Talking to others who “get it” can be healing.



## TAKE BREAKS FROM GRIEF

- Watch a funny show. Go for a short walk. Pet your dog.
- Taking breaks doesn't mean you've forgotten—it gives your nervous system a chance to rest.



## CONSIDER PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

- If your grief becomes too heavy or begins interfering with daily life, consider therapy.
- Complicated Grief Therapy (CGT) and grief-focused counseling are available and effective.

# Taking Care of Yourself Daily

## Tiny acts of care, big impact on healing

When grief is loud, the basics matter most. This isn't about fixing anything—it's about making space for healing in the small, everyday moments.



### BREATHE + PAUSE

- Try deep breathing: Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 6. Repeat 3–5 times when you're feeling overwhelmed.



### MOVE YOUR BODY

- Take a short walk. Stretch. Dance to one song in your kitchen. Even if it's just 10 minutes, movement helps your body process stress and sadness.



### NOURISH YOURSELF

- Grief often suppresses appetite or leads to emotional eating. Try to stay nourished with small, consistent meals—smoothies, soup, or whatever's easy and comforting. Aim for 6–8 glasses of water per day.



### REST WITHOUT GUILT

- Your energy may feel lower than usual. That's okay. Let yourself nap, say no to extra responsibilities, or just be still. Sleep is healing.



### DO ONE SMALL THING A DAY

- Fold some laundry. Make tea. Water a plant. These tiny actions create structure and calm when everything else feels chaotic.



### CREATE A MEMORY RITUAL

- Keep a “memory jar” where you write down special stories
- Light a candle at the same time each evening in their honor
- Wear something that reminds you of them

*Small routines = big emotional resets. Listen to what your body and spirit need.*

## Where to Turn: Helpful Contacts

You're surrounded by people who care—and we've made it easy to reach them.

### Organizational and Talent Development

For floral arrangements, meals, or any bereavement package support

✉ [OrgDevelopment@AugustaHealth.com](mailto:OrgDevelopment@AugustaHealth.com)

☎ (540) 332-4889

### Human Resources

Questions about your time off, policy, or what's available to you

✉ [HumanResources@AugustaHealth.com](mailto:HumanResources@AugustaHealth.com)

☎ (540) 332-4700

### Spiritual Care Services

Prayer, presence, and support from someone who will simply listen

✉ [GAHolman@AugustaHealth.com](mailto:GAHolman@AugustaHealth.com)

☎ (540) 332-4744

### Canopy Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Free and confidential counseling—available 24/7

✉ [info@canopywell.com](mailto:info@canopywell.com)

☎ (800) 433-2320

# Bereavement Care Checklist

Because during hard times, simplicity helps.

If you're navigating the loss of a loved one, this checklist can guide you through what's available to you—one small step at a time.

## Step 1: Let Someone Know

- ☐ I notified my supervisor or leader about my loss
- ☐ I shared any immediate needs (time off, support, space)
- ☐ I let them know if I'd prefer someone else to handle communication for me

## Step 2: Request Support

- ☐ I requested a Bereavement Meal (optional)
- ☐ I shared any dietary restrictions for the meal
- ☐ I requested a Sympathy Floral Arrangement

## Step 3: Review Time Off Options

- ☐ I reviewed the Bereavement Leave Policy in Policy Manager
- ☐ I connected with HR for guidance on:
  - How many days I may take off
  - Whether I can use PTO
  - Options for extended leave (FMLA, unpaid, etc.)
- ☐ I spoke with my leader about a return-to-work plan that feels manageable





## Bereavement Care Checklist (continued)

### Step 4: Take Care of My Heart + Mind

- ☐ I gave myself permission to grieve at my own pace
- ☐ I tried a self-care activity (rest, walk, prayer, journaling)
- ☐ I explored Canopy EAP for free, confidential counseling
- ☐ I connected with a chaplain for prayer or emotional support
- ☐ I reached out to a friend, coworker, or support group
- ☐ I created a small ritual to honor my loved one (e.g. candle, photo, memory jar)

### Optional (If/When You're Ready)

- ☐ I requested a tribute or moment of silence at work
- ☐ I shared a memory or quote to honor my loved one
- ☐ I asked for a gentle re-entry plan into meetings or shift work
- ☐ I saved grief resources to return to later

### Reminder: There's no rush.

You can take your time with this checklist, skip around, or come back later. We're here for you—however and whenever you need.

## In Your Grief, You Are Held

Dear Team Member,

We hope this guide has offered you a sense of comfort, clarity, and support during this incredibly difficult time. More than anything, we want you to know this:

You are not alone.

Your grief is seen.

Your heart matters to us.

We understand that loss looks different for everyone. There's no right way to mourn, no perfect words to say—and no deadline for healing. Take all the time and space you need.

We'll be here.

Whether you need a helping hand, someone to talk to, or simply a moment of grace as you move forward, we are ready to walk beside you. If there's anything we can do—big or small—please don't hesitate to reach out.

With deepest sympathy and unwavering support,

*Your Organizational and Talent Development Team*

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