



TOPIC 4

PLANNING OF FUTURE FUNERAL RITES AND LAST WISHES

Funerals and farewell rites are public, traditional, and symbolic ceremonies for expressing our beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about death. They are also ways of coping with loss.

Preparing for one's own funeral might be an opportunity to celebrate your own life in the way you wish. It can bring peace of mind knowing that for example the organisational and/or financial burden of a burial or cremation is not left to family and friends. It will also help them to honour your life while full of sorrow.

Think ahead about any important wishes for both for those who are leaving and for those who are left behind and consider discussing them with your nearest. Give them the opportunity to express their own thoughts on how to say farewell as a part of their grieving process.

Preparing for a funeral: check list of considerations.

What would you like to happen to your body after you die? Burial, cremation?

- If you want to be buried? Where?
- If you want to be cremated, do you want your ashes to be buried, scattered, kept in an urn at home with your loved ones, or some combination of those options? Are you aware of the regulations in place regarding cremation?
- Do you have any preferences regarding the casket or the urn?
- Would you like to choose a headstone, gravestone, or grave marker and what image, epitaph, or other text should appear on it?

What clothes would you like to be dressed in?

Do you want to be buried or cremated immediately or should there be a ceremony first? In case you would like to have a ceremony, you might want to consider:

- How do you want your friends and family to come together to mourn you? What fits your personality? What would be most helpful to those you will leave behind?

Some options might be a funeral (a religious event, focused on loss) a celebration of life (which tries to be a happier event honouring the deceased)

- Who should conduct the ceremony and according to which rite?
- Whom would you like to be there?
- Would you like any food and drinks to be served?
- Do you want specific types of flowers or décor?
- Would you like any photos to be displayed or music to be played or text to be read?

How would you like to be remembered? Do you want to write your own obituary or leave your life story?

Who is going to pay for all the related costs? For example, would you like to allocate a sum to this or have you an insurance policy?

Module 2:

Planning for death (medium and long-term)



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...at the end of life

Funerals preferences: who needs to know and how to include them.

Speak with someone close to you and/or leave written instructions. Consider contacting a funeral service provider for support in organisational and financial aspects.

Choosing who you want to talk to:

- Your family: many people will avoid discussing their funeral wishes for fear of upsetting themselves or others. However, discussing your final wishes may ease the pressure on your family members when that difficult time comes. To start the conversation, you might want to have:
 - a direct approach, explaining you would like to discuss your funeral wishes.
 - an indirect approach creating opportunities to have the conversation for example by mentioning someone else's funeral you have attended or a funeral you have seen in the news.
- Someone you want to legally appoint to be responsible for implementing your funeral wishes, through a dedicated proxy or make disposition for this in your will.
- A funeral service company, where you can plan and pay in advance for your funeral.

Where to write down your funeral wishes:

- You can include your wishes in your will but consider that they may not be legally binding (check your national regulations). Also, your family may have begun making funeral arrangements before your will has been activated.
- You can write down your preferences in a document, use the checklist we have provided you. In the "Resources" section you can also find links to forms and templates that can guide you. Make sure that someone close to you knows where you have left this document and where they can find it.
- In a funeral plan that you will stipulate with a funeral service provider.

Funerals preferences: who needs to know and how to include them.

- This flashcard helps in initiating a reflection about wishes for funerals and farewell rites.
- It can be complemented by providing a template, based on the provided checklist, guiding the person in writing down their wishes. Some examples are available in the resources section.
- Some people might be worried about the costs of a funeral and what happens if they cannot afford them. It might be useful to explore this concern and in case provide further information about it.

Tips for trainers

- The stages of planning for a funeral.
 - (a) preparing the corpse.
 - (b) holding the ceremony and,
 - (c) handling the interment.
- The information included in this flashcard should be complemented by a meeting with experts that can provide further information, so that they can carefully consider all aspects before making their plans.
- Once the person has considered their own wishes, it might be useful to suggest to those finding it more difficult to address the issue with family members. Try to engage in a role-play in which they can practice how to start the conversation.

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