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Planning for a funeral
can help reduce
anxiety in the terminal
phase of life

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*Please do not hesitate to consult your
health care professional to talk about the
options available to you and your family*



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Planning for a Funeral



Thinking ahead

Some people in the end stage of their life like to be involved in the planning of their funeral.

Some of the things useful to consider in planning your funeral are mentioned later in this information sheet.

If you have someone in mind to conduct your funeral you might want to consult with them about the details of what you would like to happen at your funeral service.

Some people are happy to leave the funeral planning to family/whanau, or perhaps to a specific person in whom they have confidence. In this case the family/whanau or nominated Funeral Celebrant takes a lead role in planning a suitable funeral for you.

If you are unsure of who might act as your Funeral Celebrant your Funeral Director will be able to advise you of who could be contacted.

When death occurs

When a person dies every effort is made to provide a supportive environment for family/ whanau to spend whatever time is appropriate with their loved one.

Staff will be present to offer their care, and to answer questions which may arise at this point.

The nursing staff will care for the body of the deceased person.

Spiritual support

When a person dies some families/whanau wish their spiritual/pastoral support person to be present to conduct prayers/karakia or other religious rites. Staff can assist in contacting that person if necessary.

The Funeral Director

If the services of a Funeral Director are required, it is usual to contact them at this point. They will come to remove the body of the deceased person.

Some families/whanau wish to be present at this point; others are happy to go home, leaving Staff to pass their loved one on into the care of the Funeral Director.

Initial talk with the Funeral Director

Sometimes families/whanau find it helpful to have an initial consultation with the Funeral Director when he/she comes to remove their loved one. Some or all of the following matters can be discussed with the Funeral Director at this early stage:

- Whether the deceased person is to be buried or cremated
- The likely venue for the funeral
- Whether the deceased person is to be taken home prior to the funeral service
- The likely day and time of the funeral service
- The name of the person who is to officiate at the funeral
- The wording for a death notice to appear in the local and other newspapers
- The newspapers in which any death notice is to appear.

If it is not appropriate to discuss all these matters during the initial meeting with the Funeral Director he/she will arrange another meeting to continue the discussion.

As part of this follow-up meeting the Funeral Director will need to record some details, required by law, of the deceased person's life.

If you are unsure of who might officiate as Funeral Celebrant for your loved one, discuss the matter with your Funeral Director—he/she will be able to help.

Things to consider when planning a Funeral

Generally today families/whanau want a spirit of celebration to flow through the funeral service.

It is good to remember that while a funeral service is to mark the life of the person who has died, it is also intended to be fitting for those who remain to mourn their loved one's death.

Music — there is the question of whether to sing hymns or other songs; there is the incidental music to consider — what to play when people are arriving for the service, what song to have when the deceased person is carried from the chapel, church, hall or other venue.

Readings — these can be readings from the scriptures of your particular religious tradition; they can be poems or other writings which convey ideas appropriate for a funeral setting.

Tributes — people can be arranged to offer a tribute or eulogy; in addition, an opportunity can be given during the funeral service for other people to speak briefly during the tribute time.

Prayers — it is common for there to be prayers for help and support, prayers for the deceased person, and other prayers appropriate to your particular religious tradition.

Visual Presentation — depending of the facility in which the funeral is held, it is possible that a Power Point style visual presentation summarising the life being celebrated could be shown. Consult with your Funeral Director.

Information required by the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages

- Full name of deceased person, Name at birth, Birth date, Birth place, Ethnic group, Address, If not born in NZ, year of arrival in NZ, Profession/occupation
- Full name of mother, and her profession/occupation
- Married/civil union/separated/divorced
- First marriage/union details; Where married/united
- Age when married/united; To whom married/united
- Living spouse/partner's birth date
- Second and subsequent marriages/unions to be recorded separately
- Children living; Sons' names and birth dates, Daughter's names and birth dates
- Service record; Service number, Overseas/NZ service, which war, Rank, unit or regiment