

SAFETY PLAN

Steps You Can Take to Stay as Safe as Possible Safety During an Explosive Incident

A. If you feel an argument may be about to occur, try to move to a place that has one or more exits. Try to avoid being in a bathroom, kitchen or room that may contain weapons.

B. Practice exiting your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairwell to use.

C. Pack a bag, and leave it at a friend's or relative's house.

D. Identify one or more neighbors you can tell about the violence, and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.

E. Develop an age-appropriate safety plan with your children.

F. Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends and neighbors when you need someone to call the police.

G. Decide and plan where you will go if you ever have to leave home.

H. Trust your instincts and your judgment. In some dangerous situations, you may choose to give the abuser what he/she wants to calm him/her down. Only you can decide the best way to protect yourself and your children in each situation.

Safety with Technology

A. Create a new email account.

B. Your abuser may be monitoring activity on your computer. If possible, use a safe computer, which may be located at:

- a public library
- a community center
- an internet cafe.
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C. Change passwords and PIN numbers frequently.

D. Your abuser could use your old cell phone bill to see who you've been calling or use the GPS in your cell phone to track your location. To avoid these risks, use a donated or prepaid cell phone to make plans. Contact your local domestic violence program to see if they could provide you

Emergency Numbers

Police Emergency 911

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

416 S. Alton Blvd.

Alton, TX 78573

(956)424-3276

www.rgvez.org

National Parents of Murdered Children

4960 Ridge Avenue Suite 2

Cincinnati, Ohio

(888)818-7662

www.pomc.org

Texas Crime Victims Compensation Program

1-800-983-9933

www.oag.state.tx.us

GRIEF

Support From Others

Don't tell me that you understand. Don't tell me that you know. Don't tell me that I will survive. How I will surely grow. Don't come at me with answers that can only come to me. Don't tell me how my grief will pass, that I will soon be free. Accept me in my ups and downs. I need someone to share. Just hold my hand and let me cry. And say, "My friend, I care."

~Author Unknown



Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

VOC Program

Phone: 956-424-3276

FAX: 956-424-3050

www.rgvez.org



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**Rio Grande Valley
Empowerment Zone
Corporation**

Homicide Survival Guide & Safety Plan

*Dedicated to the Restoration of
Victims of Violent Crime*



*For Victims That Have Been Impacted
by Violent Crime*

Established 2013

TO THE FAMILY OF A HOMICIDE VICTIM

There is nothing to compare with the impact and profound shock of losing a loved one to a sudden, unexpected and violent death. Grieving is an important and difficult process. It can be emotionally draining, confusing and sometimes frightening because we usually do not have much experience with it. No two people ever grieve the same way, with the same intensity or for the same duration. Perhaps most important is the fact that it really helps to know what kind of feelings and experiences are normal and natural for a grieving person to have. Many have found their feelings so intense and their behavior so unlike their usual pattern that they have begun to doubt their own sanity. Give yourself time to heal slowly.

Those suffering the loss of a loved one may experience a number of "grief stages:"

Shock and Denial - A numbing shock and the denial that the loved one is really gone. These are normal human responses. Eventually these feelings will pass, and you will be able to face the reality of your loss.

Anger - Losing something precious hurts and is unfair. You may feel resentful anger with yourself and with others for not preventing the loss. For some the need to express anger is a consuming one.

Guilt - It's not unusual to blame yourself for something you did or did not do prior to your loss. Guilt for things that were said or left unsaid, for moments of impatience or anger for failure to act fast enough. If only I had ..." Remember, you are human and there are events you just can't control.

Depression - For a time you may feel physically and mentally drained, unable and unwilling to perform even routine tasks. Eventually, you will take steps, perhaps tiny ones at first, toward becoming involved in life again.

Hope - You will reach a stage where you can accept your loss. This does not mean that you forget about your loved one or that the pain disappears completely. But you do start to break the strong emotional ties with the past and look at the present and future.

For Homicidal Grief Counseling Call: (956)424-3276

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IMPORTANT PAPERS YOU WILL NEED TO LOCATE

1. **Prearranged Funeral Policies** - If there has been a prearranged agreement, you will need to locate it immediately so that funeral arrangements can be completed.

2. **Cemetery Lot Deeds** - If one is not already purchased, this will have to be done in most cases. Cemetery lots are handled by the cemetery, separate from the funeral home. Also, there is a charge by the selected cemetery for opening the grave and the cement encasement (if that is required or selected).

3. **WILLS**- If there is a will; try to think where it is kept, security deposit box, attorney's office, home? If there is no will, contact your attorney to see if the estate must go through probate. You may also call the Probate Court for assistance.

4. **Insurance Policies (life, disability, health, travel)** - These documents may be kept in the same place as the will. Don't forget, some organizations such as the National Rifle Association and some gas company travel clubs automatically cover the member with some type of insurance.

5. **Bank Checking and/or Savings Accounts** - If the accounts are in the two names, the survivor will have access. If the account is in the deceased's name only, money cannot be taken from the account until an executor is appointed. An attorney can help you draw up the appropriate forms for the bank.

6. **Stocks and Bonds.** Joint ownership goes to the survivor. Single ownership goes into the estate for probate.

7. **Annuity Payments** - If the deceased was receiving annuity checks, you must notify the company of the death. Do not cash and checks dated after the date of death. Return them to the company. If there is a beneficiary, the checks will go to them as soon as the requirements are met to certify the death.

8. **Mortgages**- Sometimes, if insurance coverage was purchased, the mortgage will be paid off at the time of death. Check your papers. The insurance premium is usually paid in the mortgage payment.

9. **Marriage Certificate and Birth Certificates of Surviving Children** - These will be necessary for survivor benefits with Social Security. Children can receive benefits up to the age of 18 (*19 if still in school*). The widow or widower may be eligible for benefits until the children are 16, if he or she does not remarry. Contact your Social Security office for assistance.

10. **Military Papers or VA Claim** - If the deceased was a veteran, you may be eligible for veteran's burial allowance, widow's pension and/or VA insurance. Contact your VA regional office for assistance.

11. **Death Certificate** - You can get a certified copy of the death certificate from your funeral home. Survivors will need copies of the death certificate for social security, insurance company, banks or other matters that could come up later where proof of death is needed, so you may wish to order several copies.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When a family member or friend has died, it is important to notify various government agencies, banks, creditors and credit reporting agencies of the death. To reduce the risk of identity theft, these notifications should be made promptly after the death.

To expedite notification, you should initially make the contact by telephone followed by written verification. For many of the government agencies and financial entities, you will need the decedent's social security number, a copy of the death certificate, and, if you are a personal representative (executor) of the estate, your appointment forms from the probate court. Make sure to retain copies of all notices that you send. Below is a checklist of possible agencies and businesses that should be notified of the death. Because each individual case is unique, the list may not be complete. Also, the funeral home may have notified some of the government agencies on your behalf. Please consult with the funeral director when you receive this list so you can check off those agencies which have been notified by the funeral director.

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| A. Social Security Administration, 800-772-1213 (everyone). | Government Agencies | Secu- |
| B. Veteran's Administration (if decedent was formerly in the military). | | |
| C. Defense Finance and Accounting Service, 800-269-5170 (military service retiree receiving benefits) | | |
| D. Office of Personnel Management, 888-767-6738 (if decedent is a retired or former federal civil service employee). | | |
| E. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, 800-375-5283 (if decedent was not a U.S. citizen) | | |
| F. State Department of Motor Vehicles (if decedent had a driver's license) | | |

Credit Reporting Agencies

There are three national credit reporting agencies which you should notify of the death and instruct them to list all accounts as: "Closed. Account Holder is deceased." You may also request a credit report to obtain a list of all creditors and to review recent credit activities. For a sample notification letter please call (956)424-3276.

- A. **Experian:** 888-397-3742, P.O. Box 9701, Allen, Texas 75013.
B. **Equifax:** 800-525-6285, P.O. Box 105069, Atlanta, Georgia 30348.
C. **TransUnion:** 800-680-7289, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, California 92834