

THE WORST CALL OF YOUR LIFE

When you have a seriously ill relative - someone who is in the hospital or under hospice care - you learn to dread phone calls. *Is this the one from the nursing home telling you that your mother has died? Is it the hospital calling to say that your husband passed away 20 minutes ago?*

When you do get this call, what do you do? What are your next steps?

Remember to **BREATHE**

B **Brake.** Stop whatever task you were doing when you got the call. Make sure that you are being safe (turn off the stove, pull the car over, etc)

R **Reduce noise.** If you are in public, find a quiet place to collect yourself before attempting to leave. If you are home, turn off the TV or radio.

E **Exhale.** Your body has been placed under a sudden amount of stress. Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself.

A **Alert your immediate family** (spouse, adult children, siblings), whomever is going to be your support group and needs to know the death occurred.

T **Talk to the funeral home.** They may be calling you shortly, but if you haven't heard from them within 6-8 hours after the death, call them to make sure they have been properly notified by the hospital/nursing home.

H **Hydrate.** Your body and mind are both running on high energy now. Do not forget to drink fluids. Dehydration can cause headaches and dizziness, which will make you feel even worse than you already do.

E **Eat.** You may not feel hungry for several days, and you may even be sick to your stomach. That is normal, so focus on soft foods like soup or pudding, and quick foods like granola bars or fruit to keep your energy up.

We hope that these steps help aide you in your time of immediate grief. As always, we are here to answer any questions or concerns you have as your time of need approaches.