

# Autism & Grief Project

## Fact Sheet



### Changes After a Caregiver Dies

When a caregiver dies, it is common to have feelings of grief. Caregivers often provide support, so there may be much to miss when a caregiver is absent. You might miss their presence, companionship, cooking, and more. You may even miss things you didn't much like about them. This is completely expected because the relationship you had with your caregiver is special to you.

### The Possibility of a New Living Environment

After your caregiver dies, you may find that there are many changes in your life, including your living environment. If you need to move due to the death of a caregiver, communicating with someone you trust about your rights, choices, and preferences is important. If there are only new people to talk to, you may need to communicate with someone you have just met. Try to talk with staff people, or people who are associated with community service organizations.

Many different living situations could happen as a result of a caregiver's death. In all situations, your daily routine will likely be different. If you move away from your home, you might miss seeing your family or neighbors each day. In some situations, it can be frustrating or frightening because you may not be included in choosing where you live or who you live with, and everything about it will be new at first.

### Things to Remember After a Caregiver Dies

- It's okay to have a lot of emotions.
- Feelings can waver from being very strong to numb and anywhere in between.
- Whatever you are feeling is natural. There is no right or wrong way to grieve as long as no one is harmed.
- If you feel you need support, ask people you trust for help.
- If you will need to move due to the death of a caregiver, communicate with someone you trust about your rights, choices, and preferences.
- You may experience surges of grief years after the person died. This is typical.
- Even if you didn't like the person who was your caregiver, you might still grieve because you depended on them and they won't be there for you anymore.
- Planning early for changes that can happen when your caregiver dies can help you feel secure about the future.