



## GUIDE TO PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE TO FUNERAL RITES



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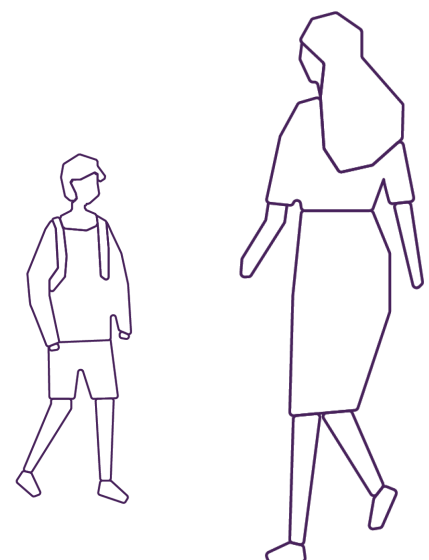
### **Funeral rites are a collective way of paying homage to the deceased.**

It is an event that makes the death of the deceased more concrete, especially if the body is exposed in a coffin. The funeral ceremony can be very moving, but also comforting. Indeed, it shows how much the person is loved and how they touched the lives of their loved ones.

In many cases, we avoid having young people participate in funerals, allegedly for their own good. The adults can feel uneasy. However, experience shows that excluding young people from these events when they do want to participate can have a significant negative impact on them. By excluding a young person without asking if they want to participate in the funeral, they may feel alienated, as if their grief is not as important as that of others. They may feel unseen or not taken into account. They may have negative reactions and emotions towards the adults around them.

### **The important thing is to give young people a choice by informing them of the event.**

We want to prepare them well, explain what the funeral will look like, so they can make informed decisions. We want to provide details about the location, the process, the people who will attend, as well as participants' possible reactions. By preparing young person for this event and giving them the right to participate in their own way, the funeral becomes a very important moment, a final goodbye to their loved one. This moment helps them better understand the reality of death.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **How do you react if a young person doesn't want to participate? What are the alternatives?**

For young people who do not want to participate in the funeral despite the explanations given, alternatives can be offered. For example, partial participation (e.g., come 15 minutes, come before visitors arrive, participate only in the ceremony, etc.) or alternative participation (e.g., participate in the selection of photos, be present by videoconference, prepare a drawing that someone will bring to the funeral or a text that can be read during the ceremony, etc.). Doing a ritual at home can also be an option (e.g., soaring balloons, listening to the deceased person's favourite song in a place they loved, planting a memorial tree, etc.). There are many possibilities! However, if a young person really does not want to participate, it is important to respect their choice.

### **Should we bring a baby to the funeral?**

Yes! The baby will certainly not remember participating in the funeral, but they will one day be a child, a teenager and an adult who will also experience the grief of this loved one in their own way. It will then be beneficial to tell them that they were there, that they made people around them smile, or that they cried during the ceremony. Taking pictures of the baby at the funeral can help nourish the memories. It is not necessary to include the baby in all rites, but it is important to consider all options. The baby also feels family changes and upheavals, and needs comfort and a sense of being part of the family.

### **What if my child doesn't want to read a speech?**

It is important to respect the needs and limitations of young people. We suggest asking the young person about the place they wish to take during the funeral rites. A young person should not be forced to read a speech or to do anything else. However, alternative options can be proposed to involve them in a way that suits them (e.g., writing a speech that will be read by someone else, choosing a song that will be played, helping to think about the key people who will speak at the ceremony, etc.).



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **How can I experience the funeral according to my needs while allowing my child to meet their needs?**

It is important that young people be able to participate in the funeral according to their needs, but adults are just as important! Remember that you are not only the parent of a bereaved child, you are also grieving. It is important not to forget yourself during funeral preparations. In this sense, we suggest that you have someone who will be in charge of caring for your child or children if necessary, for example a person who is less emotionally involved in the funeral. They can be the point of contact for your youth if they are not feeling well, want to go play, get some fresh air or leave.

### **Is it normal if my child wants to play at the funeral?**

It's quite normal if a young person wants to play at a funeral. They have the right to react in their own way and playing is a possible reaction. It is important to let each reaction emerge and to respect everyone's way of grieving. Playing can be comforting and allow the young person to experience this emotional moment.





## SUMMARY TO NOT FORGET ANYTHING

### **T**alk

It is necessary to talk to the young person about funeral rites so that they understand what they are and why it is important to participate. If they are reluctant to participate, talking about it can help them make an informed decision.

### **P**articipate

It is essential to provide young people with the opportunity to participate in the funeral. Questioning them about their needs is also relevant, particularly as regards the role they wish to play, the time they wish to be present, etc.

### **P**repare

If the young person decides to participate in the funeral, it is important to prepare them well for what they will experience. For example, it is good to explain the different stages of the day and what they will likely experience (e.g., they will probably feel emotions or see people crying, they will meet different people, etc.). It is also important to give them examples of what they might see: a large room, the urn or the coffin, photos, flowers, etc. Planning different scenarios can be beneficial, for example by targeting a place to go or a person to call if the young person is not feeling well or needs a break. Visiting the site in advance can also make it easier for young people who feel more nervous about the funeral.



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## Contact us

If you have any questions or would like more personalized assistance, please contact a Deuil-Jeunesse specialist.

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