PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Planning a Celebration of Life

One step at a time — and you don't have to carry it alone.

◆ PRINT IT · CHECK IT OFF · BREATHE ◆

The first steps

Only a few things are urgent. Everything else can wait a day.

- [ ] **Tell the closest family and friends.** Ask one or two people to help make calls.
- [ ] **Contact a funeral home or cremation provider.** They will guide you through what comes next.
- [ ] **Look for written wishes.** A will, prearrangements, notes or a legacy file.
- [ ] **Arrange care for any dependents or pets.**
- [ ] **Ask someone to keep a list.** Who called, who brought food, who offered help.

Decisions about the service

Make the big decisions together, then delegate the details.

- [ ] **Decide on the type of gathering.** A traditional funeral, a memorial, a celebration of life, or a small private service.
- [ ] **Choose a date, time and place.**
- [ ] **Set a budget.** Funeral home, venue, flowers, food, printing, transportation.
- [ ] **Choose an officiant or host.** Clergy, a celebrant, or a family member.
- [ ] **Write the obituary or announcement.** Ask family for details and photos.

NOTES

Let people help

People will ask what they can do — have an answer ready.

- [ ] **Make a short list of tasks to hand out.** Food, flowers, photos, music, guest list, travel for relatives.
- [ ] **Choose someone to coordinate the reception.**
- [ ] **Ask someone to gather photos.** For a slideshow, a display or the program.
- [ ] **Keep vendor contacts in one place.** Funeral home, florist, caterer, venue.

The program and the words

The order of the day, and who will speak.

- [ ] **Plan the order of service.** Welcome, readings, music, speakers, closing.
- [ ] **Ask speakers early.** And give them a time guide.
- [ ] **Write the eulogy in small pieces.** A few memories, then a few sentences about each.
- [ ] **Print programs.** Proofread names and dates twice.
- [ ] **Plan the reception.** Food, space for stories, a memory table.

NOTES

Afterward

There is no deadline on most of this.

- [ ] **Send thank-you notes when you're able.** There is no deadline.
- [ ] **Order certified copies of the death certificate.** Banks, insurers and agencies often ask for one each.
- [ ] **Notify agencies, banks and insurers.** The funeral home can often tell you where to begin.
- [ ] **Collect memories while they're fresh.** Stories from family and friends.
- [ ] **Take care of yourself.** Grief doesn't follow the checklist.

> **If you take one thing from this checklist:** you don't have to do this alone. Write the tasks down, then hand them out. Most people genuinely want to help — they're just waiting to be asked for something specific.

> **Please note:** Requirements for death certificates, permits and burial or cremation vary by state and locality. Your funeral home or local authorities can tell you what applies where you live.

NOTES

WHEN PAPER STOPS BEING ENOUGH

This checklist can't be shared across a family.

Paper helps on the first day. Later, it can be hard to keep a budget, a guest list, the order of service and the thank-yous in one place — especially when several family members are helping.

The MDRN Celebration of Life Planner

A gentle checklist, a budget, a guest list, vendors, an order of service, eulogy prompts, and a thank-you tracker. One private file, made to share with family.

mdrn-milestone-website.vercel.app/planners/funeral-planner.html

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