

Table 1. Topics to Cover When You Connect With the Emergency Contact Person or a Family Member

First call | as soon as possible

- Introduce yourself and explain your role in the organization.
- Explain the reason for your call and offer condolences.
- Ask what they have been informed of thus far, and gather any other knowledge or thoughts they may have.
- Ask permission to speak with other clinicians or non-clinical team members about cause of death.
- Offer to meet.
- Explain the assistance the organization can provide (general, can hold details for next call).
- Explain the potential for media attention. Make sure the contact knows that they are not obligated to take interviews and can refer media to the organization's communications team if they prefer. If this is their preference, provide a name and number to direct all media inquiries to.
- Provide your contact information.
- Ask how best to make contact going forward (phone number, email, if evening or weekends are okay).
- Make commitment to calling again in the next day or two.

Second call | 24 to 48 hours after the first call

- Ask about willingness to share funeral or memorial plans, if flowers may be sent, and if colleagues may attend.
- If appropriate, ask about desire for onsite memorial service and acceptable venue.
- Offer more detailed assistance the organization can provide:
 - Collect the deceased physician's belongings.
 - Assist with travel plans for any out-of-town family members.
 - Collect condolence notes and send them to the family in one package.
 - Assist with administrative or human resource issues (insurance, final paycheck).
- Discuss the organization writing an obituary.
- Provide resources for suicide loss survivors (afsp.org/loss).

Subsequent call(s) | up to several weeks later

- Follow up on any of the above items as needed.
- Discuss the need to return any property of the organization (eg, electronics).

**Adapted with permission from After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Physician Residency/Fellowship Programs developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Mayo Clinic.*

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