

## Counseling & Support Groups

Alachua County Crisis Center  
352-264-6789

- 24-Hour Phone Counseling
- Free face-to-face counseling services for individuals, couples and families
- Survivor of Suicide Support Group

Haven Hospice  
1-800-727-1889

- Bereavement Groups



## Grief Reactions

Following the death of a loved one, you will likely experience both physical and emotional reactions. There is not a “normal” way or length of time to grieve. Resources are available to provide individual and group counseling services. These services are offered through the Crisis Center free of charge or through Hospice (see section above). Sometimes it is helpful to attend a support group where you can give and receive support from others who have experienced a similar loss.



## Victim Advocates

If you or your loved one (s) were a victim of a crime, you may be eligible for Victim’s Compensation. For assistance with deaths caused by criminal action, contact a Victim Advocate from one of the agencies listed below. All services are free and available to any Alachua County resident.

### QUICK REFERENCE LIST

Alachua County Crisis Center, 352-264-6789

Medical Examiner’s Office, 352-273-9292

United Way Info & Referral, 2-1-1

Alachua County Sheriff’s Office

General Number: 352-367-4000

Victim Services: 352-384-3317

Gainesville Police Department

General Number: 352-393-7500

Victim Services: 352-393-7676

University of Florida Police Department

General Number: 352-392-1111

Victim Services: 352-392-5648

Alachua County Office of Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center, 352-264-6760

Detective or Investigator:

\_\_\_\_\_

Case Number:

## When You’ve Experienced the Death of a Loved One

 A guide to help you through this difficult time using Alachua County resources.



Alachua County  
Crisis Center



Alachua County  
Sheriff’s Office



District 8 Medical  
Examiner’s Office



Gainesville Police  
Department

We are very sorry for the loss of your loved one. The coming days may be a whirlwind of pain and confusion as you begin to grieve and are confronted with arrangements surrounding the death. This brochure is to serve as a point of information and support during this difficult and overwhelming time. This resource was created by various agencies within Alachua County. If you have further questions, please see the resources included or call the Alachua County Crisis Center at **352-264-6789**. We are ready to help you in any way we can.



## Cleaning Up the Scene

Proper scene clean up is important for health and safety reasons. It may be necessary to call a trauma scene cleanup company. For a list of providers in your area, you can contact:

- American Bio-Recovery Association (ABRA) at: **1-888-979-2272**
- FL Department of Health: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/biomedical/trauma.htm>

These services may be covered under the home owner's insurance. For crime victims, Crime Compensation may cover a percentage of the cost. Contact a Victim Advocate for assistance.

## Autopsies & the Medical Examiner

Your loved one's body may be taken to the District 8 Medical Examiner's Office for an autopsy. They are required by law to determine the cause and manner of death when a person dies suddenly due to criminal violence, an accident, suicide, or when in apparent good health. For a full listing of circumstances requiring an autopsy, please see the following website: [www.district8me.com](http://www.district8me.com).

Autopsies are typically completed within 24-48 hours, at which time your loved one's body will be released to a funeral home. It generally will take 3-6 months to determine the cause of death. Copies of the autopsy report must be requested in writing. The request form can be found online at the website listed above.

Viewings of the body must be arranged through the funeral home, not the Medical Examiner's office. Any personal belongings found will be inventoried and passed on to the funeral home or to law enforcement if needed as evidence.

If you have additional questions, the Medical Examiner's Office is available Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 am-5:00 pm. Call **352-273-9292**.

*If you would like assistance when picking up the belongings of your loved one, please contact the Crisis Center or speak with your Victim Advocate.*

## Choosing a Funeral Home

Following the death of your loved one, you will need to choose a funeral home. This usually needs to happen within 24 hours.

- Ask someone you trust, such as family or friends, if they can refer you to funeral homes they have used before.
- The funeral home will transport your loved one's body from the Medical Examiner's Office to their facility. They can help you make decisions regarding the service and can answer any questions you may have.
- If you are concerned about how to pay for the funeral, assistance may be available. Contact Social Services at **352-264-6750** or a Victim Advocate for Crime Compensation (See Reference Section)

## Obtaining a Death Certificate

The funeral home will provide you with the death certificate when it is available. You may need multiple copies as you manage your loved ones affairs. Check with the funeral home for the cost of each certificate.

Know that the Medical Examiner can delay signing the death certificate until all tests are done and the actual cause of death is determined. If that is the case, the funeral home can provide guidance on how to proceed.