

Here are some ways in which the Foundation can help:

- Put you in touch with other fire service survivors who have had a similar loss
- Help you find grief support groups or counseling in your local area
- Help you find information about survivor benefits for which you may be eligible
- Provide grief brochures and books through our lending library
- Help you find information and support for grieving children in your family
- Send you newsletters and special publications for fire service survivors
- Provide scholarships to eligible children and spouses of fallen firefighters
- Help you attend a Memorial Weekend which will honor your loved one
- Provide workshops through an annual survivors conference
- Maintain a comprehensive website about our programs and other resources
- Provide space for a tribute page for each fallen firefighter on our website

More than anything, we want you to know that you are not alone. Though each person's loss is different, there are many survivors who have walked a similar path. If you are looking for support resources or could use a listening ear, a compassionate heart, or a sense of hope, please don't hesitate to contact us.



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In the Beginning





The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to honoring firefighters who die in the line of duty and assisting their survivors. We understand that dealing with the loss of a loved one is a long and difficult journey, and we offer immediate and continuing assistance.

Here are some thoughts from other fire service survivors about what helped them in the early weeks and months after the loss of their loved ones:

[Note: Date indicates the year of the firefighter's death.]

Take care of yourself.

Try to get as much rest as you can, and eat well even when you don't feel hungry.

Mother, 1998

If I didn't want to do something, I didn't. I learned to say NO, which made a world of difference to me.

Mother, 2003

Find a focus.

I focused on my son's life—the fact that he lived his life the way he wanted and didn't worry about anything.

Mother, 1996

We made lists and did things one step at a time. As they say, baby steps. Each step brings us closer to the end of the day. And that was all I could handle. Just one day at a time.

Wife, 1999

Find outlets for your grief.

The most important thing I did was to begin a journal to my son. Included were my anger, my pain, and many, many whys. After more than 20 years, there are still days I jot something down.

Mother, 1980

I spent a month putting together memory books about my husband's life for each of our children. I did a book for myself and included cutouts from the sympathy cards I received. In my case, it was healing. I still get that album out and add to it.

Wife, 2000



Seek and accept help.

Take people up on their offers of assistance. One of the greatest things was having someone fix a meal, mow the lawn, fix the leaky faucets, or just come by and check on us.

Wife, 1996

I didn't think I needed a grief support group, but it ended up being such a help. It gives you a safe place to cry, to talk about your loved one, to voice confusing feelings, and to find out you are not crazy or alone.

Mother, 1998

Take whatever time and space you need.

You have to know yourself and honor your feelings, no matter how long it takes. Everyone wants to rush you along and get you back to the person you had been, but it will never be the same. You must create a new life.

Mother, 1995

I wish I had told my family and friends that I needed some space. I really needed privacy to come to grips with what had happened.

Mother, 1999

Know that you will begin to feel better in time.

I must be healing, because I can talk about my husband without tears running down my face. Not every day is great, but they aren't as bad as they were a year ago.

Wife, 2001

Returning home from my first grief counseling session, I had a glimmer of hope, a reprieve from the darkness, a realization that I would make it.

Wife, 1999

