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The Role and Responsibilities of a Funeral Director in Mortuary Science

The mortuary science field, although often forgotten, is of central importance to society, offering the most necessary services during the saddest and most highly emotional times. Being a funeral director requires compassion that concerns death rituals and traditions. The technical skills needed for funeral operations are also a prerequisite. The study outlined in this article seeks Funeral Directing as a profession, provides insight into Mortuary Science, and determines whether the applicants for this job can find it suitable. By incorporating the literature in question, the opinion of industry experts, and the analysis of the professionals, this paper seeks to provide the readers with information regarding the career overview that includes the necessary required skills, educational background, and personal attributes that are crucial for success in this field (Bi and Ploeger-Lyons, pp.5011-526). Being a Funeral Director is always a matter of suitable education from the start, and you usually need a degree in Mortuary science to reach that point.

Through theoretical and application-based training, this program ensures comprehensive knowledge of embalming, therapeutic arts, grief counselling, business law, and funeral service administration. Based on research done by ABFSE, a board that provides accreditation for funeral service education, such programs are meant to build a diverse skill set, entailing the aspects that are essential from a career point of view. In addition to technical skills, empathy, communication, and ethical judgment are among the soft skills that are fundamental for Funeral Directors, who work very closely with the bereaved and are prone to severe emotional distress. Working on a funeral service as a funeral director includes managing the lift and ceremonial details in a way that respects the chosen wishes of the deceased family. The NFDA underlined that a funeral director is a professional responsible for all stages, from laying out the body, supervising the burial and cremation, managing all funeral arrangements, and providing emotional support to the grieving family. Within this environment, work arrangements are different, and they may need you to be on-call and adjust to the real-time occurrence of the death. After all the tireless efforts, nurses often experience profound satisfaction as a dear option to a family member, saying goodbye with peace and dignity.

The service companies in the mortuary industry have gone through profound changes in the last year that have influenced the shift in the demand for personalized and non-conventional services, as noted by the Funeral One Blog in their 2024 report. Also, the emergence of technology and social media redefined some funeral services, including digital memorials and live-streaming services. The fact that the death care industry has undergone some changes does not compromise the need for Funeral Directors, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics consistently projects a steady job outlook.

This stability is the result of the reality of death and the ceaseless growth of the need for compassionate professionals to help people in the process of grieving and memorializing. Determining oneself for a Funeral Director career requires reflecting on what the person wants and the reasons behind it. To be selected candidates, the person must have exceptional emotional hardiness and the determination to help the affected community in times of crisis. The New York Times they have published an article in 2020 by a reporter on the coronavirus. The funeral director, Ms. Cunningham, comforted people that the most satisfying part of their job is to help families say goodbye to their loved ones despite all the restrictions. She even expressed her worry that the only moment the family may meet the body again is when it arrives in the mail after being cremated, which might be very personal; in this way, though, the healthcare profession is not only praised but also its challenges such as unusual duties and stress of seeing continual grief and death (Jordan et al., pp.700-708). The funeral director's profession is characterized by high cultural competence and sensitivity. Funeral directors need to familiarize themselves with the diverse funeral practices of various cultures and religions, which are becoming more prevalent in our society.

They need to be furnished with fundamental tools that allow them to respond to the requirements of individual communities by offering the required ritual services and family traditions. This cultural competence is not only continuous learning but also having a broad-minded perspective on other people's customs and sanctioned beliefs.

This reflection of the occupation shows that the field is a highly professional discipline, and the specialists are expected to possess a good level of cultural literacy. Funeral Directors work in a complicated environment where compliance with laws and ethical rules is of the essence. They have to fulfil the requirements of federal or state regulations on dealing with the handling, transporting, and disposition of human remains. These information managers also manage confidential data (personal data), which calls for a detailed apprehension of privacy laws and ethical standards of conduct. Ethic mazes may be put in their place, such as in cases of the family and the deceased conflicting, thus the funeral director as a facilitator being in the middle while abiding by the law and professional ethical requirements (Robins and Smith pp.1-12). It is, however, necessary to look at the issue of not many people recognizing the emotional terrain that funeral directors go through. They must remain professional while assisting those mourning and helping the grieving process go smoothly. This means creating significant services that correspond to the prosperous person involved.

Usually, the specialists must work under tight deadlines and with little information. Quick yet tactful decision-making is very much required. Furthermore, the emotional health aspect is also essential, as the professional must manage their emotions since the job's emotional requirements can burn them out or lead to compassion fatigue if not effectively dealt with through self-care and professional support networks.

In conclusion, mortuary science is led by constant evolution, with new developments and processes that funeral directors must remain tuned to. Eco-friendly choices, such as green burial, have recently become more popular, and there has been an increased interest in using other methods of disposition, including alkaline hydrolysis. With time, these changes will undoubtedly occur; funeral directors must keep up with them by introducing new approaches to their services and informing the families about their options. A Funeral Director must have varied skills based on a solid grounding in mortuary science and a flexible, caring, and culturally sensitive approach to service. While death conditions may have changed, funeral directors must keep evolving to continue serving the new expectations and increasingly adopting the latest innovations. They should act legally and ethically, in a state of constant emotional support, and maintain professional and cultural competence throughout their careers.

**Work Cited**

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