

# Loss of Spouse: Advisor Checklist

After the loss of a spouse, clients are often overwhelmed and not in a place to make major financial decisions. Your role is to create space, simplify what needs to happen, and remove any sense of urgency. More than anything, you're providing steadiness and helping them focus only on what's necessary now, while gently protecting them from decisions that can wait.

## What to Say:

- *"You don't have to make any big financial decisions right now. We can take this one step at a time."*
- *"Let's focus only on what truly needs attention in the near term."*
- *"I'm here to help you through this at a pace that feels manageable for you."*

## 1. Immediate Administrative Tasks

- Obtain death certificates
- Notify Social Security
- Notify institutions and insurers
- Identify all accounts

## 2. Income & Cash Flow Review

- Survivor benefits
- Pension options
- RMD considerations
- Expense vs income review

## 3. Account & Asset Management

- Retitle accounts
- Consolidate where appropriate
- Reassess investments

## 4. Tax Considerations

- Final joint return
- Filing status changes
- Step-up in basis

## 5. Planning Reset

- Delay non-urgent decisions
- Rebuild financial plan
- Update estate plan

**This is a time when your role is less about immediate planning and more about steady guidance. Use this checklist to help your client move forward at the right pace while safeguarding their long-term financial well-being.**