

Can We Bury “In Lieu of Flowers”?

An Open Letter From the Floral Industry

Dear Funeral Director,

Your customers express sympathy for loved ones in a variety of ways. One tradition that has been part of nearly every culture throughout history is sympathy flowers.

According to research by Rutgers University and Harvard University, *flowers increase feelings of compassion and happiness, and people feel less depressed, anxious and agitated in their presence.* Such compelling research shows flowers can be a critical part of the bereavement process.

In light of these findings, it is difficult to imagine a funeral or memorial service without flowers sent from family and friends to express condolences, but the increasing use of the “in lieu of flowers” phrase runs the risk of just that. Please consider removing this phrase from the death notices you write.

Your customers who honor loved ones with charitable contributions rarely want a service completely devoid of flowers. It is possible to recommend donations without a negative reference to flowers. For example, “The family suggests memorial contributions be made to...” eliminates the reference and honors the family’s request.

Get personal with your local florist. It is their job to help you enhance your services and make you look good while you create a memorable, healing experience for your customers.



For a Florist Directory or more information on the Harvard or Rutgers research, visit www.aboutflowers.com.

