



My Life, My Grief

Activity Book

Welcome! These activities will help you think about grief and how someone's death is affecting your life.

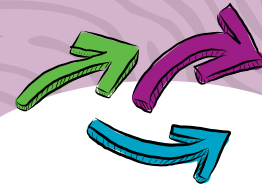
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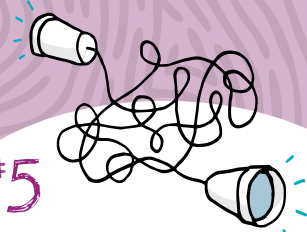


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Adults – please read “Information
for adults” on pages 36 & 54

How you can use this book

Use this book any way you want to! Since we made this book for people dealing with all different kinds of situations, some parts may feel useful, and others may not feel like they are right for you. That is okay! You can do, change, or skip any parts you choose.

You can

- Work at your own speed
- Skip sections
- Come back to sections later
- Do the activities in your own way
- Stop anytime
- Save your answers
- Work on it with a parent or healthcare provider

You may have lots of different questions, feelings, and ideas as you go through this book. You may want to talk about or work on the activities in this book with a parent, healthcare provider, counsellor, or another adult who you trust, so they can try to help you with hard questions and feelings.

You might want to do some activities by yourself, or with someone's help but without talking about your feelings. That is okay, too. If there is an adult helping you with some parts of the book, tell them which parts you want help with, and how they can help. You might say:

- "Can we do this part together?"
- "Can you keep me company while I do this part by myself?"
- "I'd like to be alone while I work on this part."
- "Can you stay with me while I work on this part, but without talking about my feelings?"



This site includes activities you can do - grab a sketchbook or some scrap paper and draw along!

You can go through the activities in order to make your own path.

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About Me

I am years old. I live in

Someone important to me has died.

Their name was They were my

They died from.....

Here are some other people who are important to me:

.....

.....

.....



Activity - People in my life

Use your sketchbook to make a collage or a picture book of the people in your life. You can draw or paint them, or you can print, cut out, and glue or tape photos!

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Making Sense of Changes

When someone important to you dies, it can feel like everything changes. If the person died because of an illness or serious injury, things may have started changing even before the death. No matter how a person dies, some things may change right away and other things change over time.

Some changes can feel awful, others might not feel as bad. Some changes may even bring a bit of relief, like not having to see the person suffer, or not feeling worried about them all the time. This does not mean it is a relief that the person died, just that one part of a really hard time is over. There is no "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad" way to feel.

For me, the changes in my life are:

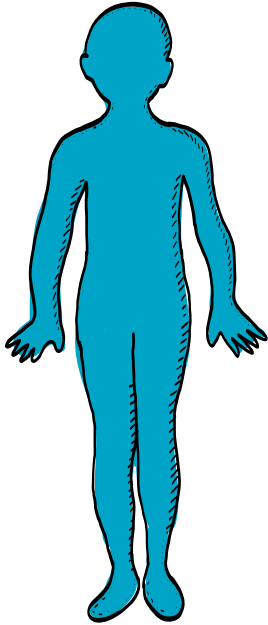
- **Very new:** Things just started to change a short time ago.
- **A little bit new:** The changes started a while ago.
- **Not new:** Things have been changing for a long time.
- **I'm not sure**
- **Other:**

If the person in your life died from an illness, you may have noticed some changes before they died. Their body may have started to feel, work or or look different. No matter how they died, may have thoughts and feelings that you've never had before. Some of your daily activities might also change.

Let's explore these changes and what they mean for you:

How the person changed before they died

If they had an illness or serious injury, they may have felt pain, discomfort, or tired. How they moved, or the way their body worked might have changed. These changes may also have affected their mood and the way they thought or acted, or may have made it so that you could not spend time together the same way as you had before.



Did you notice any of these kinds of changes?

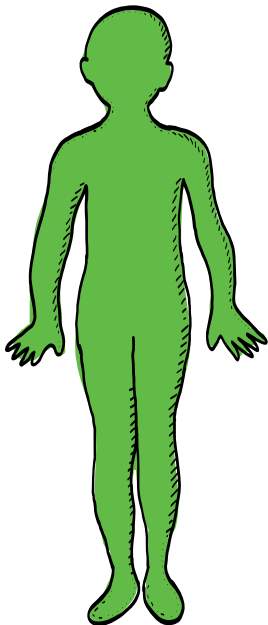
What changed?

When did you start to notice these changes?

What has that been like for you?

How your body feels

When something hard is happening in your life, like when someone important to you is sick, injured, or if they have died, you may feel pain, discomfort, or tired. You may have more or less energy, or you may feel like eating more or less than usual.



Have you felt any changes in your body?

What has changed?

When did you start to feel these changes?

What is that like for you?

What you think and how you think

It might be harder to focus or think clearly, or to talk about what's happening. You may have lots of questions or worries.

Has anything changed about how you think, focus, talk, or learn?



What has changed?

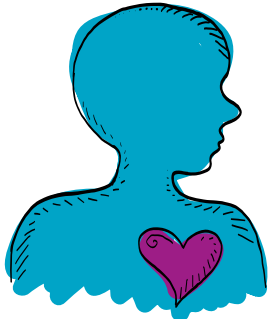
When did you start to feel these changes?

What is that like for you?

Feelings, emotions, or moods

You may have new, stronger, or different feelings, emotions, or moods than you are used to having.

Have you felt different or stronger feelings?



What has changed?

When did you start to feel these changes?

What is that like for you?

Friends and family

You might not get to see some friends or family as often, or you may spend more time than you used to with different people. Some people may treat you differently than they used to. You might find it hard to do, or talk about things that have changed.

Have any of these things changed for you?



What has changed?

When did you start to feel these changes?

What is that like for you?

Everyday life

You might feel like your "normal life" has changed a lot. You might miss doing regular, everyday activities like playing sports, taking music lessons, or going to clubs.

Have your daily activities changed?



Do you have less time to do things you used to do?

More time doing new things?

What is that like for you?



Activity - Knowing what to expect

When big changes are happening, it can seem like everything is different and unfamiliar. Creating your own calendar can help you to know what to expect and to feel more prepared. Print out a calendar, use one you have already or make your own out of craft paper and supplies! Use it to write down where you will go or who will help to take care of you on different days, and any activities, appointments, special or important dates that you have planned. Decorate it however you want and hang it somewhere so that you can always see what to expect in the days ahead.

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My Body and Mind

When someone has died, it can affect the people in their lives in different ways. Being aware of what is happening, and knowing how to express your feelings can help you talk to find support, and sometimes find ways to feel a bit better.

There are many ways to show or tell what we are feeling in our bodies or minds, like pictures, words, or using numbers to rate how strong a feeling is. In this section, you can try different ways and see what works for you.

About **THEIR** Body

Here are some of the ways the person's body might have felt if they had a serious illness or injury before they died. Did you notice them feeling any of these? Do you have questions about any of these?

Circle or point to anything you have noticed, or that you have a question about.



Headache



Stomachache



Vomiting (or feeling like you are going to vomit)



Sharp pain



Dull aches



Feeling hot



Feeling cold



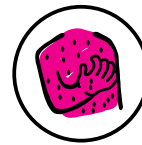
Tingling



Numbness



Dizzy



Itchy



Prickly



Hungry more or less often?



Tired more?



Weak muscles



Trouble sleeping



Can't sit still



Hearing changes



Vision changes



Changes in smell or taste

Did you notice them feeling things that are not on this list? What are they? Write anything that isn't on this list.

About **YOUR** Body

When someone in your life has died, the changes, questions or worries can make your body feel different, too. It is very important to know that having some of the same feelings in your body does not mean that you have an illness, or that you will die, too. Talk with a doctor, a parent or an adult you trust about what you're feeling and what might help.

Here are some of the ways your body might be feeling because of the changes, questions and worries you might have. Have you felt any of these sensations in your body?

Circle or point to anything you have felt, or that you have a question about.



Headache



Stomachache



Vomiting (or feeling like you are going to vomit)



Sharp pain



Dull aches



Feeling hot



Feeling cold



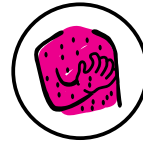
Tingling



Numbness



Dizzy



Itchy



Prickly



Hungry more or less often?



Tired more?



Weak muscles



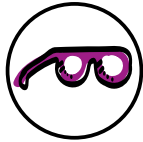
Trouble sleeping



Can't sit still



Hearing changes



Vision changes



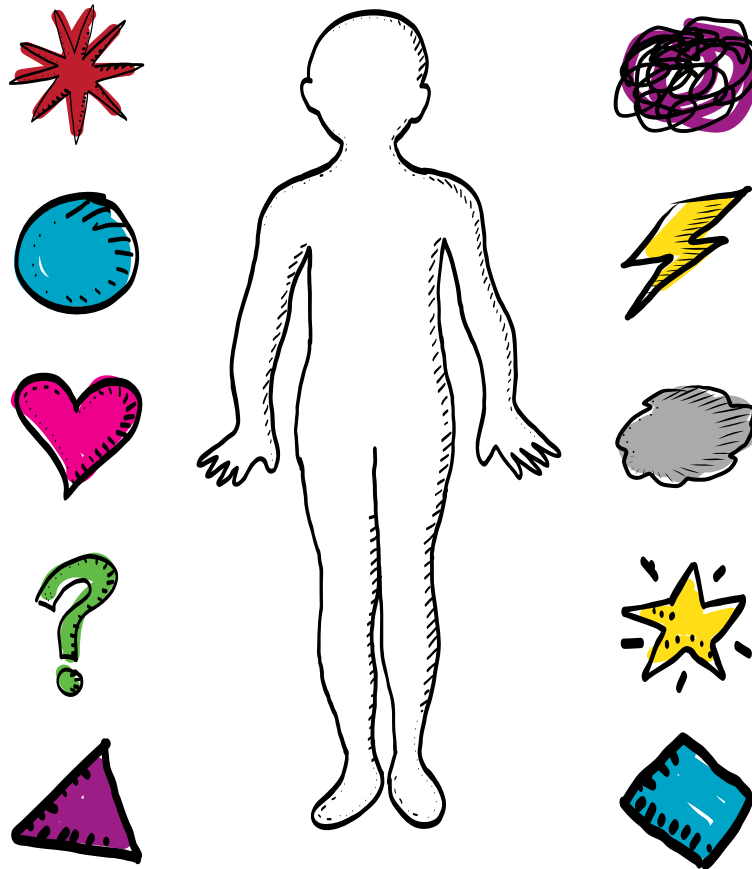
Changes in smell or taste

Have you felt things in your body that are not on this list? What are they? Write or draw anything you've felt that isn't on this list.

Pick one shape for each of the feelings you have in your body.

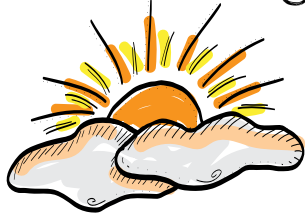
Draw a line from each shape to any parts of the body outline, or point to show where you have that feeling.

1. **What hurts or is uncomfortable?** Pick a shape that matches the feeling and draw it on the body pictured here. For example, you could draw a triangle or zigzag for sharp pain, or dots for tingling.
2. **What feels okay?** Use your favourite colour to colour in the parts of your body that feel okay.



Sometimes you might feel different at different times of day. This is natural. Knowing how your body feels at different times can help you feel prepared.

In the morning my body feels....



0
No Hurt



1-2
Hurts
Little Bit



3-4
Hurts
Little More



5-6
Hurts
Even More



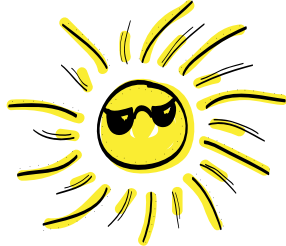
7-8
Hurts
Whole Lot



9-10
Hurts
Worst

If it is changing, explain how: _____

In the afternoon



my body feels....



0
No Hurt



1-2
Hurts
Little Bit



3-4
Hurts
Little More



5-6
Hurts
Even More



7-8
Hurts
Whole Lot



9-10
Hurts
Worst

If it is changing, explain how: _____

At bedtime



my body feels....



0
No Hurt



1-2
Hurts
Little Bit



3-4
Hurts
Little More



5-6
Hurts
Even More



7-8
Hurts
Whole Lot



9-10
Hurts
Worst

If it is changing, explain how: _____

At night



my body feels....



0
No Hurt



1-2
Hurts
Little Bit



3-4
Hurts
Little More



5-6
Hurts
Even More



7-8
Hurts
Whole Lot



9-10
Hurts
Worst

If better or worse, explain how: _____

Let's learn more about your mind, and then we'll work together to "Make a Plan" for more ways to feel better.



About My Mind

When someone in your life has died, it can change what you think about.

Can the person's death affect what I think about?

Yes, this is very common! When you start to learn about a person's death, you have to make sense of a lot of new information. It might feel like you are always thinking about these things, even when you're not trying to. It's okay if you have lots of questions or worries about what is happening now, or about what might happen in the future.



Can their death make it harder for me to think or focus?

Living with changes, questions, worries and feelings can make it hard to stay focused on something. You might feel like your thoughts are "foggy," or you might forget things more easily.

Exploring my mind

Decorate your brain with pictures, symbols, words, or colours to show what you think about and how you think.

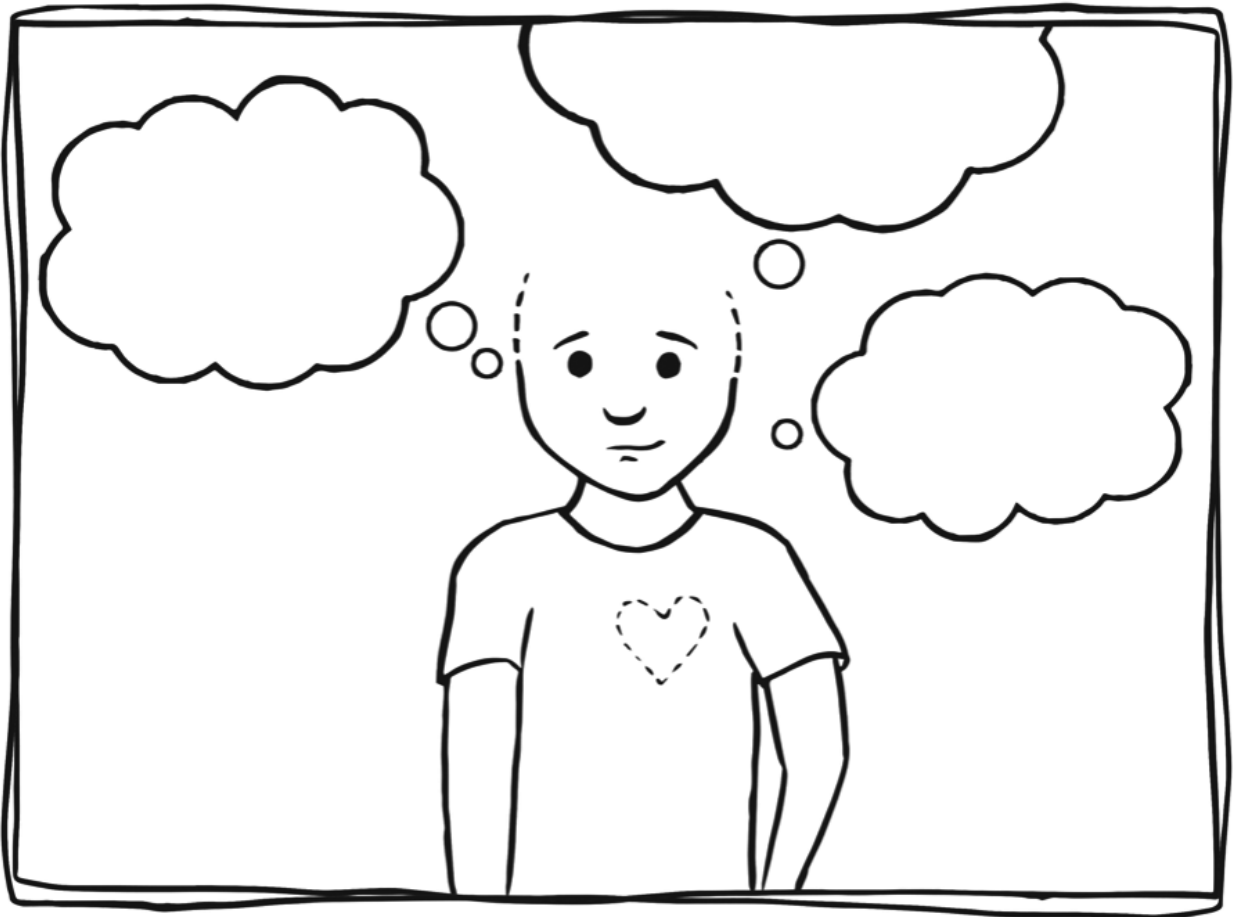
You can choose and circle things you like, things you don't like, and anything you wonder or worry about. If you sometimes get headaches or feel "foggy," you could show that in your drawing, too. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to do this. Be as creative as you want!





Activity - Use your sketchbook and draw!

Print and fill in this page with pictures, symbols, words, or colours to show what you think about. You can include anything you wonder, worry, hope, remember, imagine, or even dream. Be as creative as you want!



Make a Plan

Lots of things might help your body and mind feel better. Let's talk about what you have tried, and what could help in the future. Everyone is different -- there's no "right" or "wrong" choice. This is all about you.

Point or draw a line from each image to the circle that shows: I have tried this; I want to try this, I don't want to try this, or I don't know if I want to try this.



Warm bath



Stretching



Listening to music



Writing in a journal



Going outside



Being with animals



Rest



Deep breathing



Art



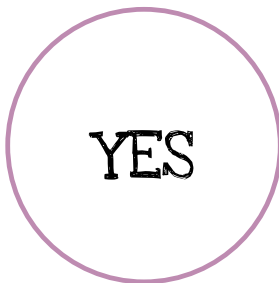
Moving around or exercising



Talking to someone



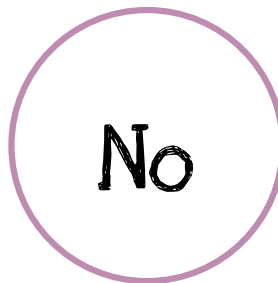
Watch tv or a movie



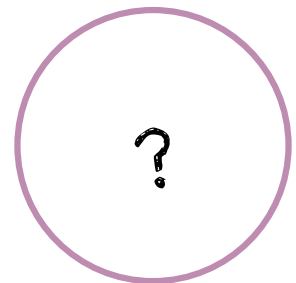
I have tried this



I want to try this



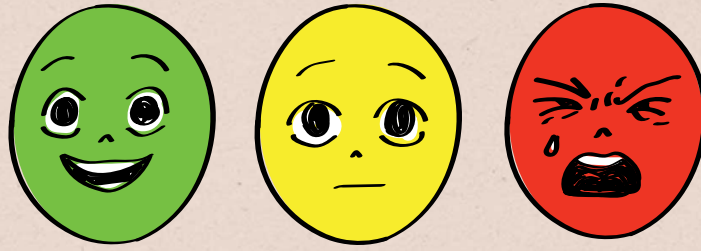
I don't want to try this



I don't know if I want to try this?

Is there anything else you might like to try? Write your answers here:

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My Feelings

When someone in your life has died, it can be a very **difficult** experience. You may have many thoughts, feelings and emotions, like being sad, angry, lonely, hopeful, scared, confused, and many more.

It is natural and okay to feel all different feelings. This mix of feelings is part of grief - grief is a natural reaction when something really hard happens, like when someone important to us dies. People who are grieving may wonder, "will I always feel like this?" Many people say that they always remember the person who died, so the grief doesn't really go away, but it doesn't always feel so strong. Some people say it comes and goes like waves in the ocean, sometimes bigger and more often, and sometimes smaller and further apart. Grief changes over time.

Even though there are many difficult feelings, there can be happy times, too. Some people wonder if it is okay to feel happy even if someone has died. Yes, it is okay. It doesn't mean that the happiness is because they died, but that even when we are grieving, we can still have room for happiness and enjoying life.

Did you ever:

- Feel one way for a long time?
- Bounce quickly between different feelings?
- Feel different (even opposite!) feelings at the same time?
- Feel numb, or feel nothing at all for a while?
- Feel all of the things listed above?
- Something else

All of these reactions and emotions are natural. There is no "wrong" way to feel. Strong emotions can be hard to cope with. Here are some things that can help, have you tried to:

- Learn the names of your emotions
- Think about which of your emotions are harder
- Know what it feels like when you have hard emotions
- Think about what helps you when you have those emotions
- Share your emotions with someone else

Naming My Feelings

Here is a list of feelings. You might have some and not others. They may feel some of them a lot, a little, or not at all. They may change after a short or a longer time. Some of these emotions feel good inside, and some are hard. Think about which ones you feel most often and why.



SHY - when meeting many new people or in a group



COMFORTABLE - feeling good, being with people you like, or doing something you like



ANNOYED - having to do things you don't want to do, or when things don't go the way you expected



CURIOUS - thinking about what is going to happen next



BORED - when it feels like there isn't anything fun or interesting to do



HOPEFUL - about going home from the hospital, feeling a bit better, or getting to do something you want to do



SNEAKY - about not following rules or not taking medicines



SCARED - about treatments or changes in your body, your life, or your family



SUSPICIOUS - if you think that something is going on without knowing for sure



ANGRY - about things changing or not working the way you want them to, or not being able to control or change something



HAPPY - when you're having a good time, doing something you enjoy or with people you care about



SURPRISED - about something you weren't expecting, either in a good way or a bad way.



ANXIOUS - when something is going to happen or might happen, but you do not want it to, or you don't think it will go well



CONFUSED - about medical information that is unclear or hard to understand, or when you don't know how to feel or what to do about something



EXHAUSTED - when your body is so tired because of the illness or treatments, or you feel tired of feeling hard feelings and thinking about hard things



SHOCKED - about something you weren't expecting, either in a good way or a bad way.



EXCITED - about doing something or seeing someone



FRUSTRATED - about things changing or not working the way you want them to, not being able to control or change something, or needing help with something you want to do by yourself



EMBARRASSED

- about having people see you or talk about you in a way that does not feel comfortable



PROUD - when you do something hard or something you've been trying to do for a while, or when someone notices something special about you



SAD - about things changing or not working the way you want them to, not being able to control or change something, or needing help with something you want to do by yourself



DISGUSTED - when something smells, tastes or looks awful. Some medicines can make your senses more sensitive so some things may smell, taste or look even worse than they used to



DEPRESSED - a deep and lasting sadness about things that have happened, or that you think will happen



LONELY - when you miss people you care about, or when you feel like you're the only person feeling the way you feel even if you're surrounded by people who care



GUILTY - feeling bad about something you said or did, maybe about things that have happened or changed because of your illness



CAUTIOUS - if you need to be careful to avoid germs, or if you are afraid to get your hopes up



OVERWHELMED - when your feelings, thoughts or worries feel too big or too hard to deal with



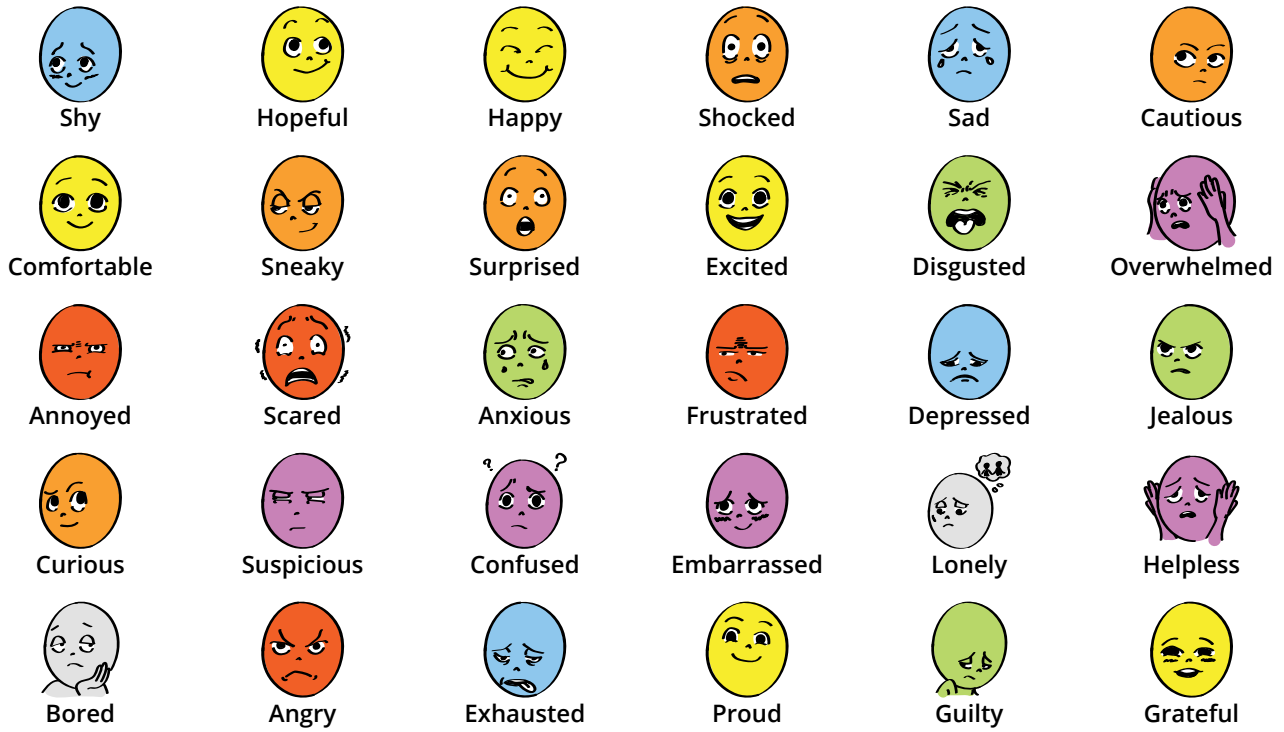
JEALOUS - when someone can do or have something that you can't, because of the illness or for another reason. Some people worry that being jealous of someone who is healthy is the same as wishing for that person to be sick - it is not the same. It is okay to feel jealous about being healthy



HELPLESS - when you can't do anything to change something that really matters to you



GRATEFUL - when you feel thankful for something someone did or said, or for something you were able to do



Which colours do you think go with each feeling? You can colour these faces however you want.

Circle or point to the faces or write your answers to the questions below.

1. How are you feeling today?

2. Some feelings are harder to deal with. What are the hardest emotions for you?

There might be times that are harder to manage than others.

Here is a list of times that feel harder for some people. Write or draw how you feel at any of the times listed here. If there are other times that are hard, write or draw them in the blank space below.



at night

when they are alone

when they're doing something they used to do with the person who died



before a medical appointment

when they can't do something they want to do

when they first wake up in the morning



Are there other times when you often have hard feelings?



Activity - use your sketchbook and draw!

1. Print the blank emotions face sheet below.
2. Colour the emotions and decorate them to add your own style.
3. Cut out the emotions you feel most often and glue them to a colourful piece of paper OR keep all the faces together on the paper you coloured.
4. Cut out some arrow shapes from sticky-notes. Use these to point at the feelings you're having.
5. Put the poster on the fridge, your bedroom door, or wherever you want so that you and your family can see how you're feeling.



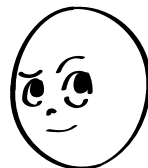
Shy



Comfortable



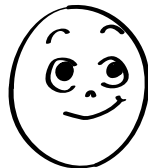
Annoyed



Curious



Bored



Hopeful



Sneaky



Scared



Suspicious



Angry



Happy



Surprised



Anxious



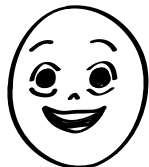
Confused



Exhausted



Shocked



Excited



Frustrated



Embarrassed



Proud



Sad



Disgusted



Depressed



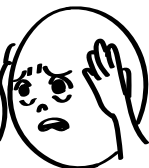
Lonely



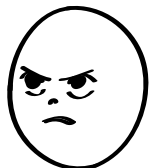
Guilty



Cautious



Overwhelmed



Jealous



Helpless



Grateful

Make a Plan

Working through hard emotions

What do you do when you have hard emotions? Here are some ideas that might help:

Point or draw a line from each image to the circle that shows if you want to try it, or not, or if you have tried it before."



Talk with someone



Go somewhere else



Take a bath



Listen to music



Play a game



Read



Try to sleep



Cry



Practice deep breathing



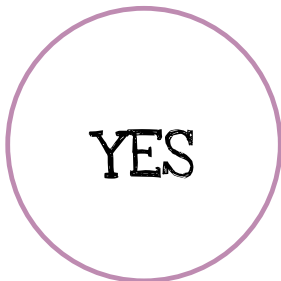
Colour



Eat something



Watch tv or a movie



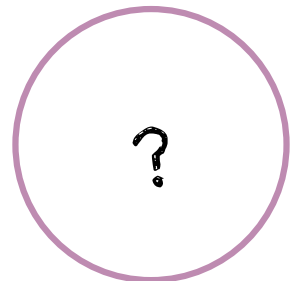
I have tried this



I want to try this



I don't want to try this



I don't know if I want to try this?

Other things I like to do:



Activity 1

SPONGEBALLS! You will need washable markers, tracing paper or other smooth craft paper, 2-6 sponges, string, duct tape, a bucket or large bowl with water.

- Use the markers to write or draw feelings that are hard to have, the things that cause those feelings, nightmares, or anything else that upsets you. The more colourful, the better.
- Make "sponge balls" by cutting sponges into strips and tying them together with string. (1-2 sponges for each sponge ball) When you pull the string tight, the sponge strips will look like a chunky pom-pom.
- Use duct tape to stick your drawing to a wall outside, or to the inside of your shower.
- Soak the spongeballs in the water and throw them at the pictures. Do this again and again until the spongeballs have washed away the pictures.



Activity 2

WRECKING THE HARD STUFF! Write down or draw any feelings that are hard to have, or the things that cause those feelings. Then tear or use scissors to cut the paper into little pieces.

Sharing your hard feelings

Share what you know about your feelings with others. Make a chart, a list, or draw a picture. This list can help remind you, your family, and other people in your life about some of the things that are hard for you and some of the things that help you feel better. Here's an example:

I feel...

When...

It helps to...

Anxious

I have to have a test

Know all about what's going to happen

Jealous

My classmates play a game that I can't play

Be the scorekeeper

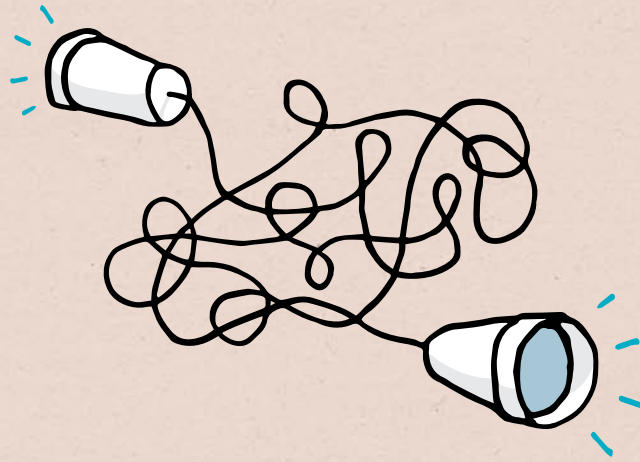
Sharing your favourite feelings

Make a chart or list, or draw a picture about your favourite feelings. Use this to remind you, your family, and other people in your life about some of the things that help you feel better. Here's an example:

I feel...	When
Safe	My parent/caregiver gets home
Excited	My best friend invites me over
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----

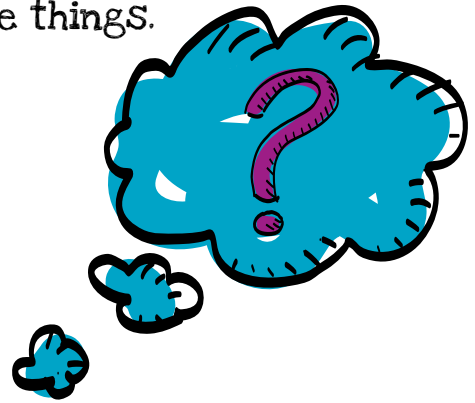
Talking about your feelings with your family and other people who care about you, lets them know more about how to help you.

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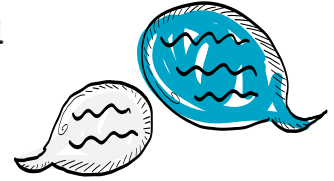
Talking Can Be Hard

When you have lots of questions or worries, it can help to learn more about what is happening. You might know a lot about the person's death, or you might only know a little. You might want to know "everything" about it, or you might only want to know some things.



Why Asking Questions Can Be Hard

Some questions may feel a little bit hard to ask and others may feel **too** hard to talk about at all. There are many different reasons why something might feel hard to talk about.



Finding the words

Explaining what you mean or what you want to know can be hard.

Can you think of a time you did not ask a question because you did not know how to explain what you were wondering?

TIP:

- Try starting by saying something like, "I have a question but I'm not really sure how to explain what I want to know." Next, you could say what you know already, and what you want to know more about. For example, "I know they died because of an illness in their body, but I don't really understand how it got there."
- When you have a lot of questions, they can feel overwhelming. Try writing them down. After you ask a question, check it off your list. Then your mind might feel calmer. Use the next "Make a Plan" activity to think about your questions and make a list.

Feeling unsure or overwhelmed

Maybe you're not sure that you really want to know the answer to your question. Or maybe saying something out loud makes it feel more "real." It is natural to feel this way, but saying something out loud can't make it happen.

Is there something you are scared to ask about because you don't know if you want to know the answer? Are there topics you are not comfortable talking about?

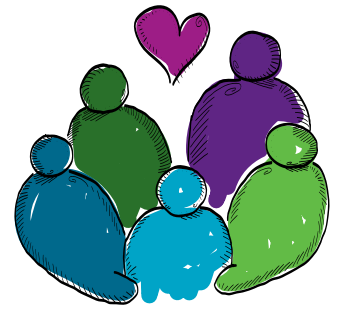
TIP:

- Write down your questions, thoughts, or feelings so that you don't have to say them out loud. Then say what would be helpful, for example, "I need a hug but I don't want to talk," or "I'd like to talk about this but I don't know how to start."
- Start with an easier question and see how that goes. Next, you could try asking a question that is a little bit harder. Try this again until you feel more comfortable asking harder questions.

Finding the right person to ask

You may think that no one knows the answer to your question. They might not. But you might feel better if you share your questions and feelings with someone else.

Have you ever not asked a question because you weren't sure if anyone would know the answer?



TIP:

- Think about a time when you talked to someone about an illness, your feelings, or anything else that could be hard to talk about. How did it go? If it went well (or "okay"), could you talk to that person again? If it didn't go so well, is there someone else you could talk with? Some people talk with a parent or another family member. Others talk with a teacher, a coach, or someone else in their community.
- Say something like, "I need to talk about something but do you think you could just sit with me without trying to find an answer to my question?"

Not wanting to upset others

Maybe you're worried that your question or thoughts would upset someone. Most parents want to know what their children are thinking and worrying about so that they can try to help. If your parents cry when you say something, it's not **you** that is making them upset -- it's the situation that you're in. You both might feel better after you talk about these things because it means you can deal with them together.



Sad



Surprised



Hopeful

Have you ever not asked a question because you were afraid of making someone upset?

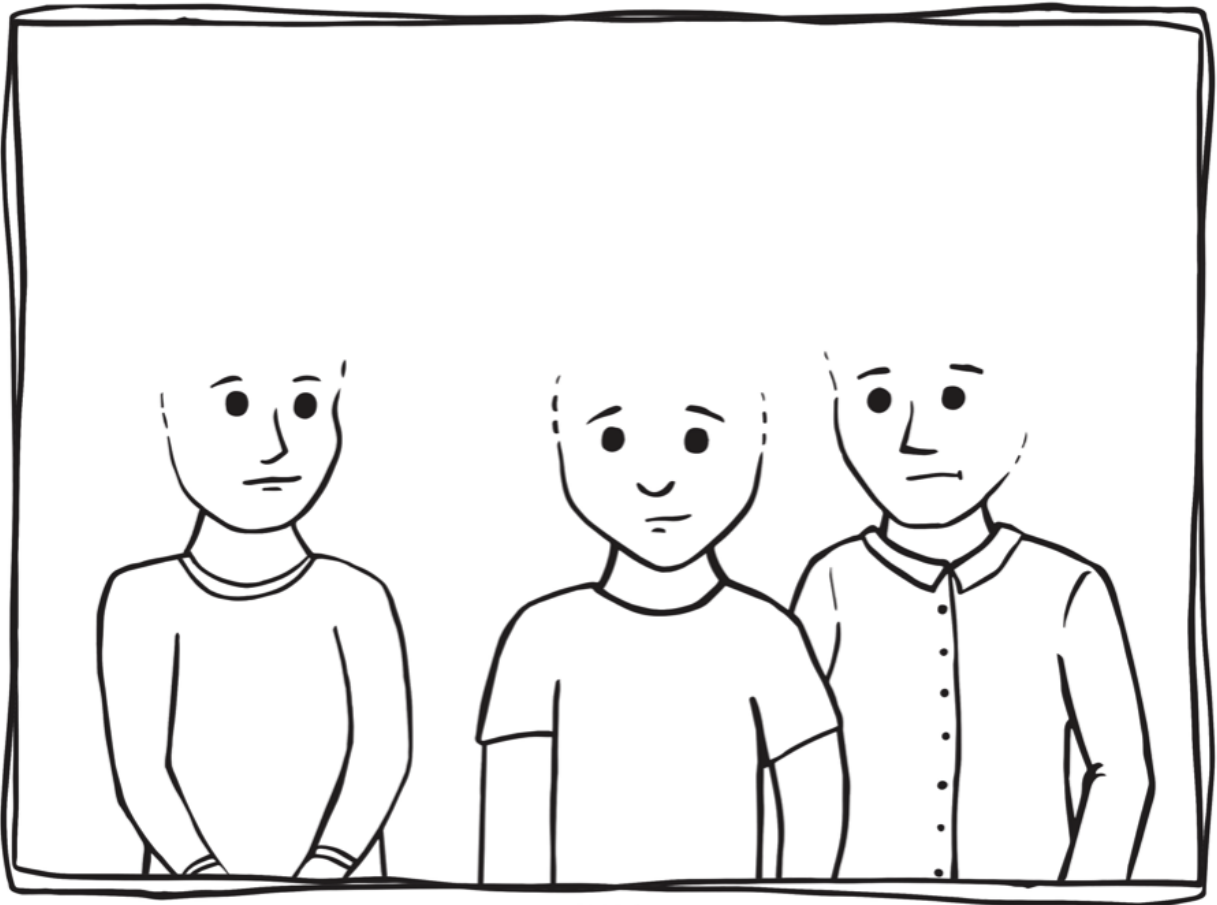
TIP:

- Say something like, "I need to talk about something, but I'm afraid you might get upset. Do you think you could listen without answering right away?"



Activity - Use your sketchbook and draw!

Print and fill in this page with pictures, symbols, or words to show the questions you think about. You can also write or draw what the people in your life might be wondering about, or how you think they might answer your questions. Be as creative as you want!



Make a Plan

When things happen suddenly, hard conversations might have to happen suddenly, too. But sometimes an event is planned ahead of time, like a funeral, memorial, or other ceremony. Other times, families may be waiting for more information about the person's death. Waiting can be very hard, but sometimes while they're waiting, families can plan the way they want to talk and make decisions about these things.



In this activity, you can think about what might help you feel a bit more comfortable when something feels hard to talk about. Below is a list of questions and ideas. You can fill in the blanks, choose any ideas that you would like to try, and add your own ideas to this list. Show this page to a parent, guardian, or someone you trust so they can better understand how to help you.

1. Some things that feel harder to talk about are:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. When we need to talk about these things, I would like:

- a. _____ (person/people) to talk with me about it
- b. _____ (person/people) to be there with me, too

3. In this conversation, I would like people to:

- Talk to me directly
- Talk with _____ first before/instead of talking with me
- Give me time to think before asking me to answer
- Write down the information so I can read it again later
- Ask if I have questions and give me time to think about it
- Explain any medical words or other words that are new to me
- Check in with me a little while afterwards to see if I have questions
- Other: _____

4. If I have questions that are hard to ask or to answer, I would like _____ to try to help me.

5. When I'm having a hard time, I would like the people around me to:

Ask if I need to take a break and then come back to the conversation

Give me some time/space to myself

Hold my hand

Give me a hug

Sit quietly with me

Help me think about something else

Other: _____

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Common Questions After Someone Dies

It is natural for people of all ages to wonder about dying and death, even when they are feeling well. When someone in your life has died, it's natural to think or wonder about it even more.

Dying can be hard to think or talk about, and it may be even harder when someone in your life has died. Sometimes people worry that thinking or talking about death could make it happen, but death does not work that way. Many people say that talking about their questions and worries helps them to feel better. Some questions have answers - talking about them can help us find answers or figure out who to ask. Other questions may not have answers, but it helps to wonder about them together and know that we're not alone with our feelings and worries. Either way, it will be important to talk with someone who knows you and can talk and wonder with you.

You might have some of these questions, or you can make a list with other questions and ask a parent or guardian to help you find out the answers, or to wonder together about them.

See "Note for Adults", next page

A NOTE FOR ADULTS:

Children naturally have many different questions about illness, dying, and what happens when and after someone dies. Some questions have answers and others may be mysteries. How you talk together about these things depends on many different things, including how a person died, and religious, spiritual, or personal beliefs. Try to invite the child's questions, and answer in a clear and honest way using words that they can understand. It is okay not to have all the answers and to say "I don't know." For more information and guidance about exploring these questions, visit: <https://kidsgrief.ca/mod/lesson/view.php?id=211>



What does it mean when someone dies?

When someone dies, it means that their body has stopped working, and it cannot start working ever again. Their heart stops beating and lungs stop breathing. Their brain cannot think, and their body cannot move, feel pain, cold, hunger, or tiredness anymore. These are things that doctors (and other people) can check by looking at, listening to, and touching a person's body after they have died.



What does dying feel like?

You might worry that dying is painful. The way a person's body stops working depends on their illness or injury and where it was in the body. Many illnesses cause the body to slow down bit by bit until it stops. Other illnesses or injuries make the body stop more quickly. Usually, the body stopping does not seem to be painful, but sometimes people do have pain caused by their illness or injuries even when they are dying. Doctors and nurses do their best to help people feel as comfortable as they can. Every illness or injury and every person is a little bit different.



Talk with a family member, counsellor, teacher, doctor, nurse, or another adult you trust about these questions and let them know what you're thinking and feeling so that they can help you.

Is it my fault?

You might wonder if a person's illness, injury, or death was caused by something that you did or didn't do. People often wish things could have been different, asking questions like "what if I had just _____?" or saying "if only they had _____." These are very common questions and worries, and the answer is no, it is not your fault.

Doctors are still learning about why some people get serious illnesses and others do not. Injuries and accidents can happen even when people are being as careful as they can. Sometimes people get injured or die because of something that they or someone else did on purpose. No matter how a person died, it is not your fault. If that feels hard to believe, talk with someone you trust who can listen and support you.

Why couldn't someone save them?

If the person died from an illness, you might wonder why some people can get better, or live with the illness, but this person couldn't. Sometimes medicines and treatments work to make the illness go away or make the person feel better, but sometimes that's not possible. Sometimes medicines and treatments aren't enough to make the illness go away, and the illness causes the person to die. Every person's body is a bit different, and the same illness can affect different bodies in different ways. Some medicines work better in some people's bodies than others, and some illnesses have no cure at all.

If the person died when something made their body stop working suddenly, like a heart attack, an accident, or a very serious injury, you may wonder if doctors could have "fixed" it or made their body start working again. Movies and TV shows make it seem like this is possible, but in real life when someone's body stops working, it cannot start again. You may wonder about CPR, which can restart a person's heart sometimes, but does not work all the time. If other parts of the person's body have stopped working, like their brain, then their body is not able to work again even if their heart could be restarted.

No matter how they died, it is not because some people try harder than others to be saved, or to save another person, or that some people deserve it more than others.

Will this happen to me, or someone else I care about, too?

When someone dies, it can suddenly feel like things are not as safe, or that there are more risks and dangers than there were before. Especially if the person died suddenly, you might worry that something else could happen suddenly, too. These feelings are common and natural when we are grieving, but it does not mean that you or the people you care about are actually in danger.

Death is not contagious - you can't "catch" it from another person. Some illnesses, like a cold or flu, are contagious, but most serious illnesses, like cancer or genetic disorders, are not. They may be able to spread inside a person's body, but they can't spread outside to another person's body. You can't catch them even if you kiss, share a pillow, or share a drink with someone who has them.

If there are things you are worried might happen, it might help to say them out loud to someone you trust who can talk with you about whether those things are likely to happen, and about what would happen if they did.



If you have more concerns, talk with a family member, counsellor, teacher, doctor, nurse, or another adult you trust about these questions.

What happens after someone dies?

You might wonder about what happened to the person's body after they died, where, and who took care of the person's body. These things depend on how the person died, and on the wishes of the person and their family.

After a person's body has stopped working there are different ways their body may be taken care of. Some people choose to have their body placed in a special box called a coffin that can be buried in the ground. Others may have their body turned into ashes (called "cremation") so that the person's ashes can be scattered somewhere that was important to them, or kept in a box or a special container called an urn. Remember that once they have died, people's bodies do not feel what happens.

Many people believe or wonder if we have something else besides our bodies. Some people call it a soul, spirit, life force, energy, or something else. You may have questions about this, too.



Talk with someone in your family, or someone else you trust who can tell you more about what happened to the person who died. Some questions may not have clear answers because they are a kind of mystery, but it can still be very helpful to talk and wonder about them together.

Will our family be okay without the person?

When someone dies it is very, very hard for their family. Every family member misses, remembers, and struggles with different things. A family does not just "go back to normal," but most families can find ways to help each other. Over time, they find new ways to feel "okay" and be a family even though they still love and miss the person who died. The person who died will always be a part of their family, even after they died.

Who will take care of me now?

If the person who died helped to take care of you in big or small ways, you may wonder who will do those things now. If your parent or caregiver is grieving too, they may need help taking care of you while they take care of their own grief and learn to live in a new way. That doesn't mean that they can't still take care of you, but it may take some time before they can do all the things they did before. Talk with someone you trust about who will help you with different things now.

You may have mixed feelings about doing things with someone new instead of with the person who died. Sometimes people feel glad that they can still do those things, but they also wish they could still do them with the person who died. Sometimes people feel guilty about having fun or doing things without the person who died. Try to remember that even if you do special things with a new person, you are not replacing the person who died. No one can ever replace that person. You are just doing things in a new way.



What are some of the ways that people in your family help to take care of each other? Who else in your school or community helps to care for you and people in your family?

Will my family always remember the person?

This is a common worry, but people who have had a family member die say that they could never, ever forget them. Some children and young people have talked with their families about how they would like to remember the person who died. Here are some ideas that other children and young people have shared:



Keep pictures of them up around the house



Celebrate their birthdays with favourite foods and activities



Write to them in a journal or in letters that you can keep in a special place



Choose a special symbol, like a rainbow, a dragonfly, or a cat, and think of the person who died anytime they see one



Do something that was important to the person, like learning guitar, cooking, or travelling



Include music, activities, or clothes in a funeral or celebration of life



Start a fundraiser



Take care of their special belongings (like jewelry or toys) that they have given in a "will"



Share stories about the person



Talk to the person out loud or in your head



Create a special place in your home or in nature to remember the person



what would you like to
remember or celebrate
about the person who
died?

What would you like people to do to remember or celebrate the person who died? Write or draw your ideas in your sketchbook.

Are there things you don't want to remember, or that you want to let go of? If you want, you can write or draw these on a separate piece of paper and cut or tear them up. It is okay if you want to hold on to some memories and let go of others.

Make a Plan

The last section explored some common questions and answers. You may feel like some of your questions have been answered, but for other questions, you may feel like, "it's different for me because _____"



In this activity, you will build your own question and answer sheet that you can share with anyone you choose. Below is a list of common questions. You can read them and put a checkmark beside any questions you wonder about or want to hear more about. You can also add any other questions you have that are not on the list.

Share this page with a parent, caregiver, or someone you trust so that they can help you find answers to these questions. You can also print or share this sheet with a healthcare provider, a counsellor, or someone else who might be able to help. If you have more questions, you can always come back to this page and build another sheet.

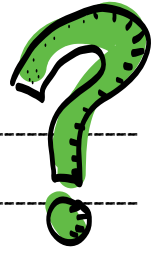
Build your sheet:

1. Choose the questions you want to ask from the list below.

- How did the person die, or what made their body stop working?
- If it was a physical or mental illness:
 - What was the illness called? How did it work? _____
 - What medicines or treatments were tried? How did they work? _____
- Is there anything I did that made this happen, or anything I didn't do that I should have done to try to stop it? _____
- Could the same thing happen to me too, or someone else I care about? _____

- What if it did? _____
- Who will take care of me now? _____
- Who will help with: _____
- How will we remember and stay connected with them? I would like to _____

2. Add your own questions here:



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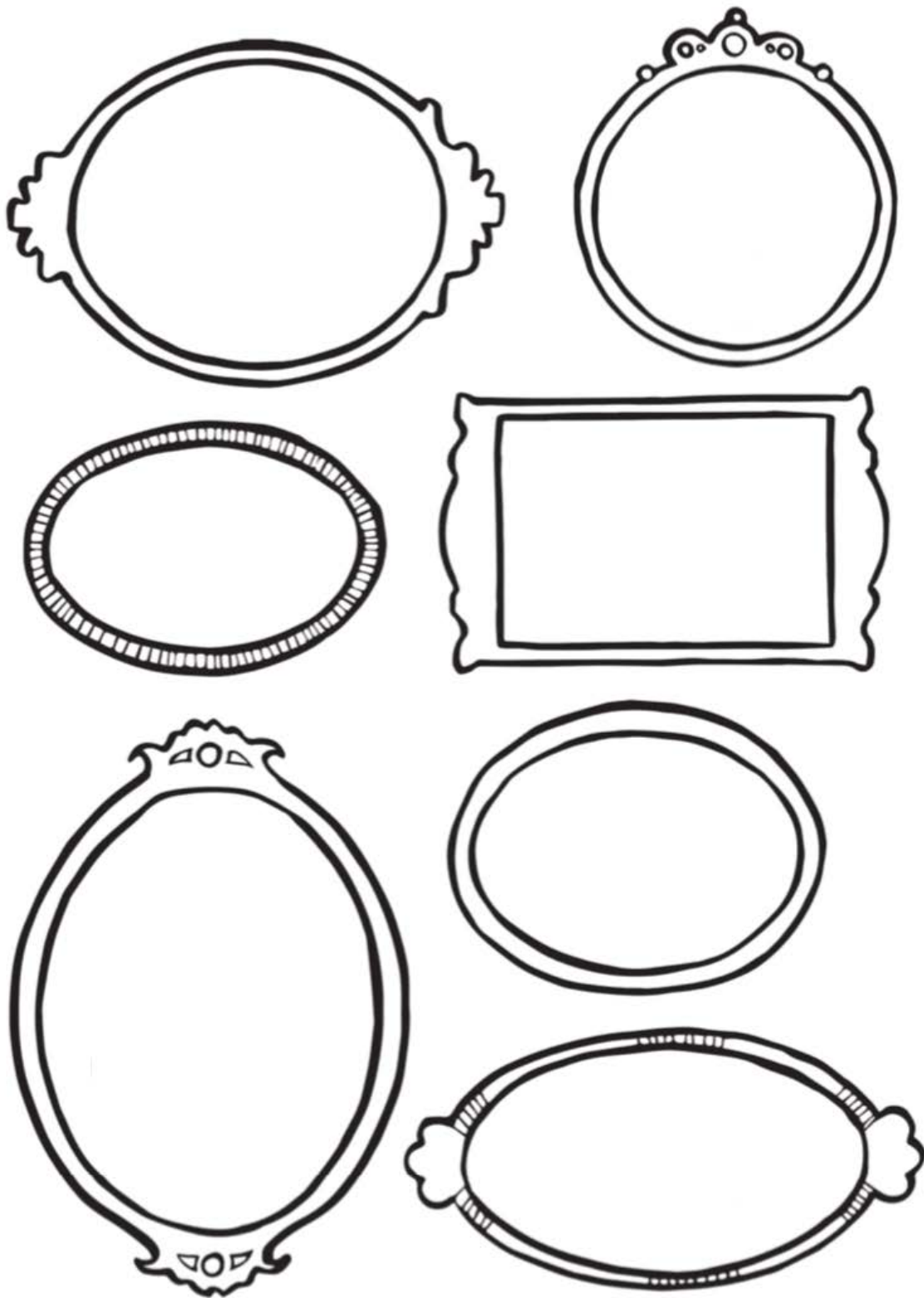
My Community & Me

Who IS in My Community?

Your community is all the people in your life who care about you and who you might like to spend time with. When someone in your life has died, you may not get to see some people as often as you like. Your daily routine may have changed, or there may be different people helping to take care of you. It can be very hard to get used to these changes, and not to see some of the people you care about as often as you used to.

Draw or write the names of the people who are important to you and the people you miss spending time with below. Circle the people who you feel comfortable talking with about some of the things you have thought or written about in this book. Then you can make a plan for how to reach out to those people and connect with them, even in this new situation.

Draw or write the names of the people you miss spending time with below. Then make a plan for how to reach out to those people and connect with them, even in this new situation.



Why Relationships Feel Different

Relationships with some people may feel different because you are spending more or less time together, or dealing with new things.

Even if you do get to spend time with people who are important to you, you may feel like things have changed. Here are some changes you might notice:

Being treated differently.

You might find that other people treat you differently than they used to do. They may treat you differently than they treat other people. Even if people are being extra nice to you, you might want to be treated the same way as before, or to be treated the same as everyone else.



Feeling lonely.

You might feel lonely even when you are with other people. It might seem like no one knows exactly how you feel. If that happens to you, try talking about how you're feeling. Sometimes other people have a lot of the same feelings even if they are going through something different.

Relationships with some people may feel different because you are spending more time together or dealing with new things. Here are some reasons this might be true:

Spending more time together.

This can be a good thing sometimes. You might feel like you are even closer than you used to be with some people in your family. On the other hand, spending a lot of time together might give you more chances to get on each other's nerves.



Going through a hard time together.

Sometimes this can be a good thing. You might feel closer together than you were before, or you might realize that your family is stronger together than you thought. On the other hand, it can be hard to see other people in your family feeling sad or worried, or having other difficult feelings. Some of you might try to hide your own feelings or keep your worries to yourselves. You might want to try to protect each other, but this can make you and your family members feel even more alone and more worried about each other. Try talking about your feelings together, even if it is hard to do at first.

Hard feelings

When they are grieving, people may get upset more easily, so there may be more conflict and hurt feelings. Even though this is common, it is very hard, but it is not your fault, and it is not up to you to fix it. Try to talk with a family member or someone else who you trust so you don't have to try to deal with it alone.

Feeling left out

Relationships with friends, classmates, or other people in your life may feel different. If they haven't had someone die before, they may not "get it" and not know what to say or do around you. Some people are so afraid of saying the "wrong" thing that they don't say anything at all. Other people may say something or ask you about what has happened or how you feel. Sometimes it may feel helpful, and other times it may not.

Here are some of the things that might happen and some ideas about what you could try.

If someone seems to be avoiding you, or if they don't know what to say or do around you, you could:

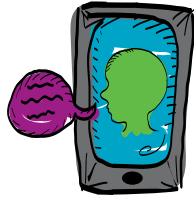
- Say something like, "I'm still the same person, and we can still do the same stuff we used to."
- Start talking about something you used to talk about together.
- Write them a note or tell them what you do and don't feel comfortable talking about.
- Suggest doing something that you used to do together.

If someone says something hurtful without meaning to, you could try saying something like, "I don't know if you meant it this way but when you say _____, it makes me think/feel/wonder _____."

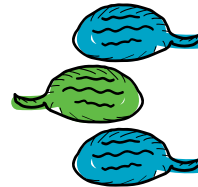
If someone says or does something hurtful, either on purpose or without meaning to, talk with an adult you trust who can help you figure out what to say or do to take care of yourself.

Make a Plan: Relationships

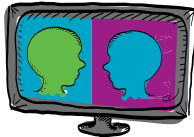
If you have friends and family who you cannot spend as much time with as you want to, try:



Talking on the phone



Writing email or text messages



Video chatting



Writing letters or send artwork



Doing an activity while you video chat, like baking, dancing, playing a game, or making a craft

When you see friends and family, you could:

Try to do "regular stuff" together

Change the way you do things. For example, if you used to play hockey together, watch a game together instead. If you used to cook together, eat a favourite meal together.

Make a list of the people you would like to connect with, and some of the ways you might be able to connect with them.

Person	Activity we can do together
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----

Make a Plan: Activities

You may also miss doing familiar activities after the person dies. When you can't do something the way you used to, you might still enjoy doing it a bit differently. For example, if you miss playing a game you used to play with them, you might try to play it with someone else you trust. For some people, doing things they used to do with the person who died, helps to feel close to them. On the other hand, doing something without them might make you miss them even more. Think about things you might want to keep doing because they feel familiar, and other things you could try to find comfort in new ways.

What activities would you like to do?



Talk to friends



Listen to music



Play games



Tell jokes



Be with your family



Read



Eat favourite foods

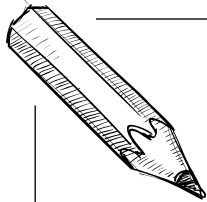


Watch tv or movies

Other:

Use this space to write or draw whatever you are feeling or thinking.

Has anything surprised you as you've worked on these activities? Have you learned or realized anything new about yourself or your life? You are an incredible, important, and unique person! We hope you will keep sharing your thoughts and feelings with other people.



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Information for adults

Who is this book for?

This activity book has been designed for young people who have someone in their life has died. It is best suited to children aged 6–12, but it may also be helpful for younger or older children. Parents, guardians, and clinicians are encouraged to review the book in advance. This way you can be familiar with the content if your child asks questions, and you can think about their ability to complete the book on their own or with your help.

This book does not need to be read from start to finish, all at once. You can work through it together in smaller 'chunks'. Try to let the child's attention or feelings let you know when they need a break, or to skip parts of it. The child may find those parts helpful at another time, or they may not. That is okay. Use this book in whatever way feels right for your child.

What is the purpose of this book?

Families often say that there are things that feel important to talk about, but they worry about how, or don't know how to talk about these things. This book was written to help guide parents, caregivers, or healthcare providers explore some of these topics together with children when someone in their life has died. This book is a tool to help start, or guide a conversation. It should not be used instead of a conversation.

Sometimes people think, "there's nothing anyone can say to 'fix' what's happening, so what's the point of talking about it?" Although talking cannot cure an illness or take away a person's grief, it can help people:

- understand what is happening now and what might happen in the future;
- understand how they are each feeling and what they are thinking about;
- find ways of helping each other;
- know that they are not alone.

How can I prepare to use this book?

Review the whole activity book in advance so that you know what the child will be reading and thinking about. This will help you:

- Decide how you want to be involved;
- Identify topics that you or the child might need more help with, or want to save for later;
- Prepare for conversations or questions that may come up;
- Decide where to start.

Will they complete it on their own or with help?

Most children and teenagers will find it helpful to have an adult work on this book with them. That person might be a parent, caregiver, healthcare provider, counsellor, or anyone who can talk with them about their questions, worries, and feelings.

Children may want to do some activities by themselves. They may want to keep their thoughts private, or they may want to talk about it or show someone when they are finished. For other activities, they may want help, or an adult's company or encouragement. It is okay to use this book in any of these ways. Try to give children as much control, privacy, and independence as they want (or as much as possible), while letting them know that they are welcome to talk about any of the content with you. That will help them to think about and let out their thoughts, feelings, and questions in a way that feels comfortable.

Will content be “right” for this child?

Each child and situation is unique, so this book can be used and adapted in different ways. The activities explore a wide range of topics, and some may be a better fit than others for a child’s situation, needs, and interests. Here are some ideas for adapting this book to your situation:

- ☉ You can do the activities anywhere: on a computer or on printed copies.
- ☉ You can adapt the activities to fit the child’s situation.
- ☉ You or the child can decide to skip or spend less time on some topics, and to focus on others.

Talking, listening and doing

Some children are comfortable talking about their feelings and worries, but just like adults, they may need time to “warm up” first. Others prefer to listen, point at pictures, or show their thoughts and feelings through art or play instead of talking. All of these are natural and healthy ways of expressing themselves. Try to check in often, like at the beginning of a new section or activity, to see what would be most comfortable for them.

Strong feelings and big reactions

This activity book includes topics that can stir up strong feelings. Children may cry or become upset, or they may not seem to react at all. Some children need some time before they let their feelings out, and others may react right away. All of these are natural reactions.

Sometimes when a child has a big emotional reaction, adults wonder if that means they should not be talking about these things. The opposite is often true — a child may have had these feelings for awhile and this is the first time they have expressed them. This can be hard for adults to see, but it is helpful for the child to be able to let those feelings out rather than trying to hold them inside. That gives adults a chance to reassure the child that their feelings are natural and that they do not have to go through this alone.

Content about dying and death

This book focuses on illness, feelings, and plans, and includes one section with questions about dying and death. This section is not focused on the child. It explores common questions people have even if they are feeling well.

More support

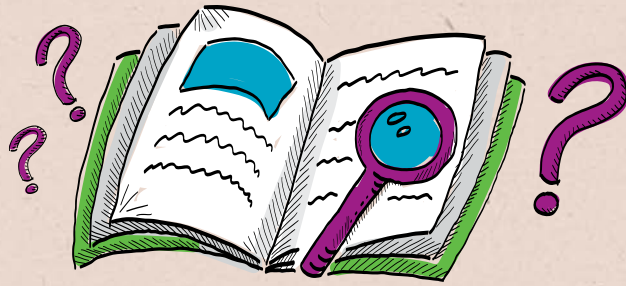
If you have questions about this workbook, you can contact us at info@virtualhospice.ca.

For more information about caring for a child with a life-limiting illness, please visit: CaringTogether.life.

For more information about supporting children and talking about illness, dying and grief, please visit: kidsgrief.ca



www.virtualhospice.ca



Resources & Downloadable PDF

Tools for relaxation and comfort:

HeadSpace (app - <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>) and

PeaceOut (podcasts - <https://app.kidslisten.org/pod/Peace-Out>), I'd also add

CosmicKids Yoga (youtube videos including yoga with ASL translation, meditations, etc. - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5uIZ2KOZZeQDQo_GSi_qbQ)

Recorded guided imagery from paediatricians at CHOC (children's hospital): www.choc.org/programs-services/integrative-health/guided-imagery/

<https://kids.aboutkidshealth.ca/> - health games and videos for kids about how bodies and illnesses work, ways to help

<https://kidshelpline.ca/> - call, text or chat to get help

Acknowledgement:

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