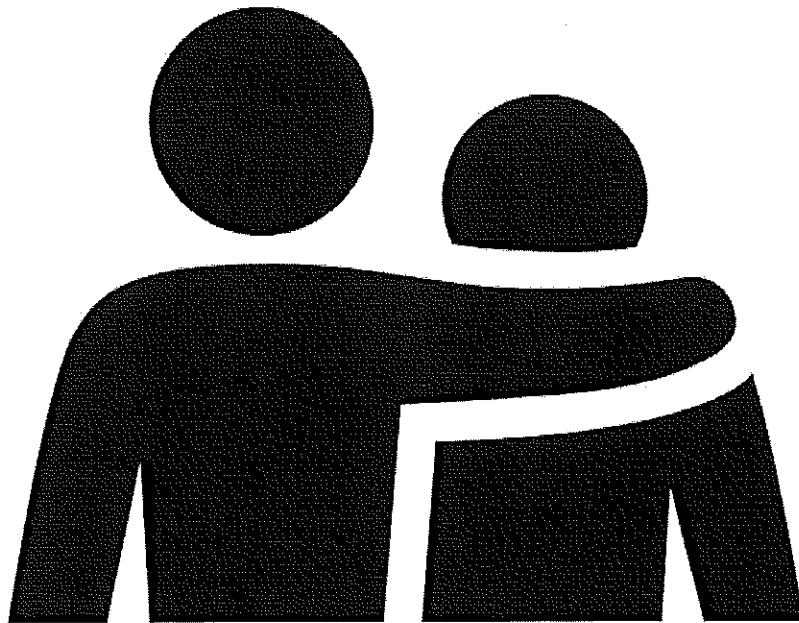


# Coping with grief and loss: A six sessions support group



# Session #1

# What is grief?



Grief is what we may feel  
after a major loss.

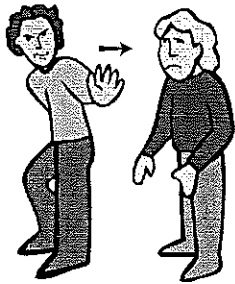
# A major loss could be:



Someone dying



A pet dying



A relationship ending

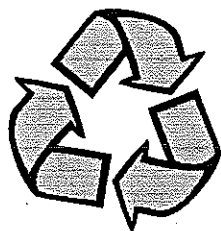


An important life goal  
not being reached

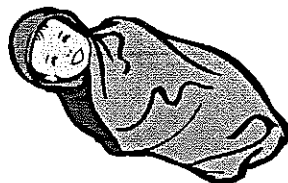


Not being able to do  
the things you used to

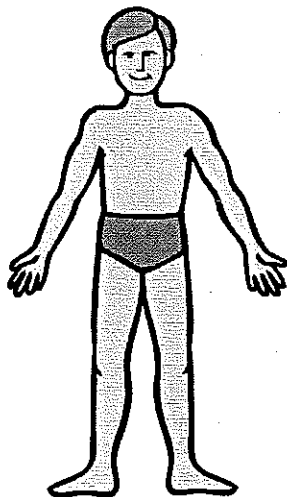
# The cycle of life



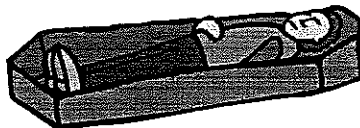
All living things:



Are born



Grow



Die

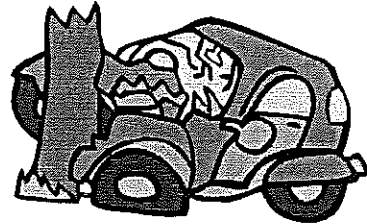
# Why do people die?



Some people get very old and die.



Some people die after an accident.



Some people die because they are very sick.



But not all people who get sick die.  
Most people get well.

# When someone dies you may have many different feelings.

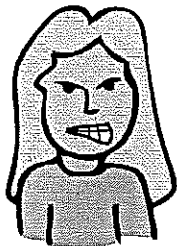
## You may feel:



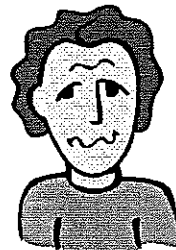
Sad



Like you did something wrong



Angry



Upset



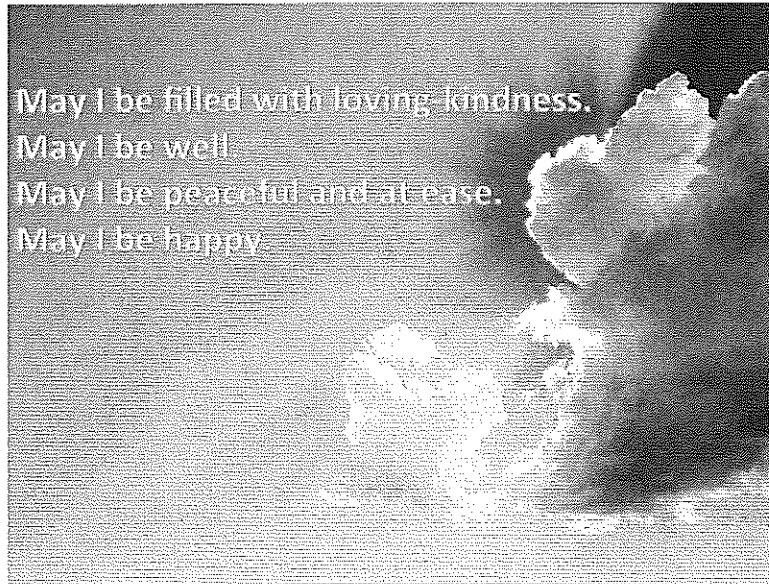
Lonely



Confused

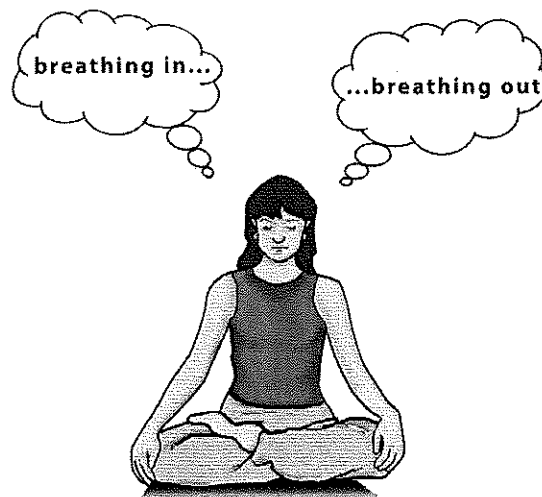
## Loving-Kindness meditation (to self):

1. Say the following out loud to self...



## Breathing meditation:

- Breathe in POSITIVITY (through nose)
- Breathe out NEGATIVITY (through nose)

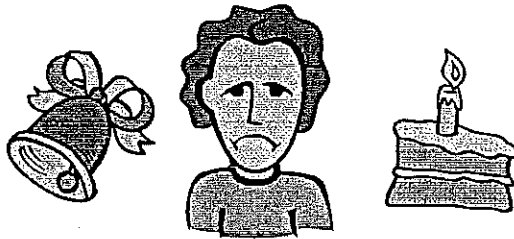




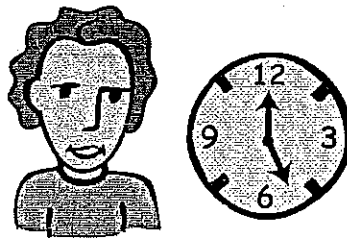
# Session #2

## Special days:

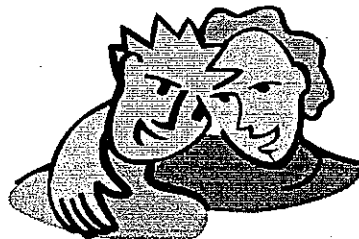
You may feel sad on special anniversaries and special days like Christmas and Birthdays.



It's OK to have sad days.



Give yourself time.

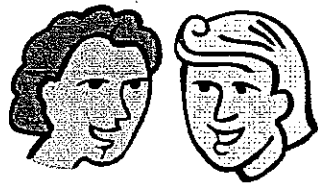


It usually gets easier.

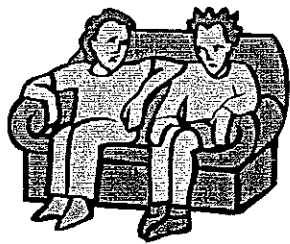
## What helps?

Always remember there are people who can help you.

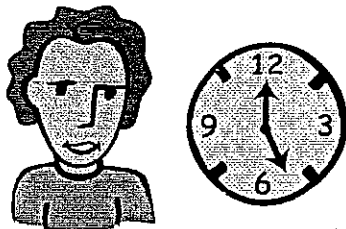
Here are some ideas that can help many people.



Share your feelings with someone you are comfortable with.



Spend time with others who have experienced a similar loss.



Give yourself time.

Loving-Kindness meditation (to Gloria):

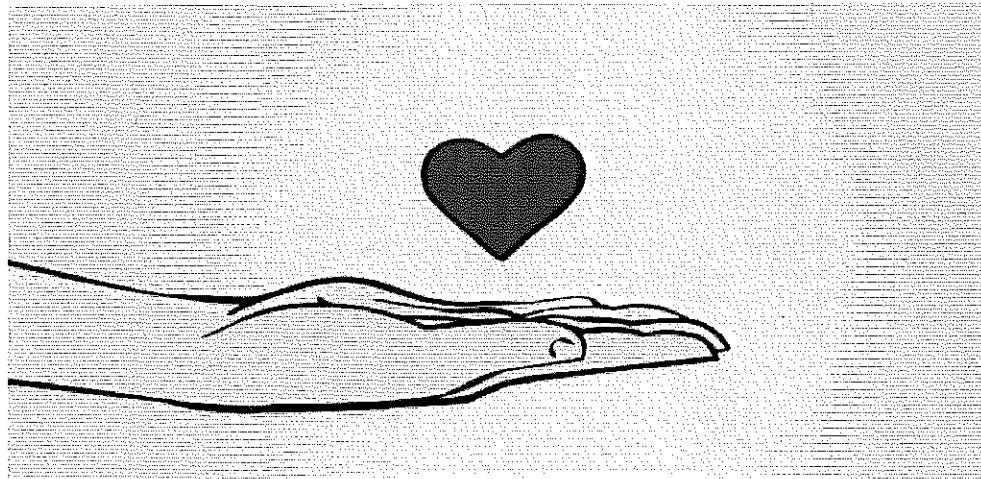
1. Say the following out loud to Gloria...

“May she be filled with loving-kindness”

“May she be well”

“May she be peaceful and at ease”

“May she be happy”



# Session #3

## Other ideas that may help:



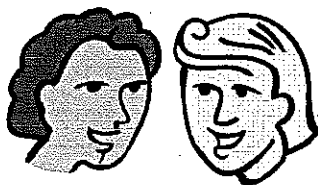
Accept that you are going through a hard time.



Go on doing the things you normally do. But take a break if you need it.



Try not to make big decisions when you are feeling a lot of grief.



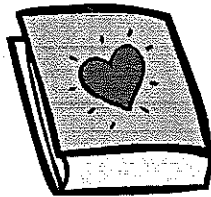
Tell someone about any fears or worries you might have.



Do things that give you comfort, like visiting the cemetery or a place that holds special memories.



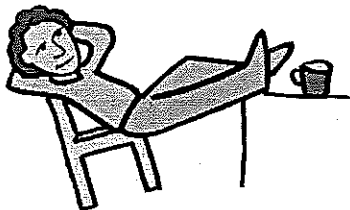
If there are things you want to say to the person who has died you can write a letter. You don't have to send the letter.



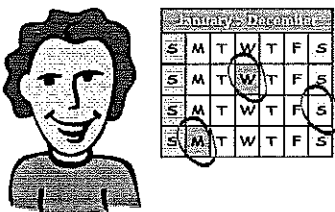
You can make a book of any sympathy cards you get.



You can find a poem, saying or song that helps you remember the person.



You can look for a comfortable place to relax.



You can put together a calendar that helps you plan and look forward to coming events.

## Gratitude exercise:

- Identify 3 things you are grateful for
- Identify 2 things you appreciate about yourself
- Identify 1 person who you would like to give thanks to



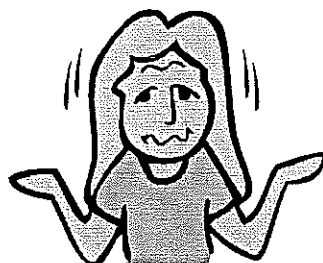


# Session #4

# Your thinking may change. You may:



Find it hard to  
concentrate

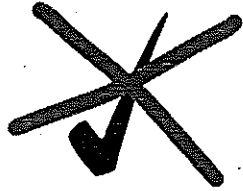


Feel confused



Find it hard to  
make decisions

# You may have thoughts, like:



"It's not true"



"Why me?"



"I feel scared and lonely."



"I will never get over this."

"Am I always going to  
feel like this?"

# You may behave differently.

## You may:



Spend time on  
your own



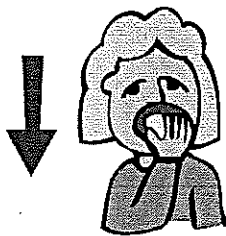
Get angry  
with others



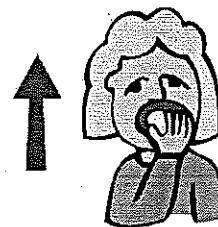
Lose interest in things



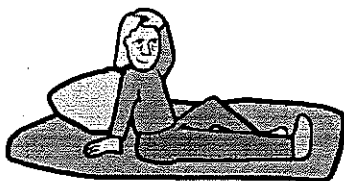
Cry more



Eat less



Eat more



Sleep less



Sleep more

# Your body may be affected.

You may:



Get headaches



Feel pain



Feel sick



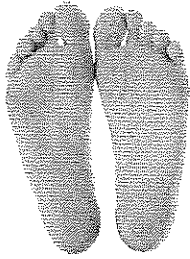
Find it hard to breathe



Feel tired

Body awareness exercise:

1. Think about your feet



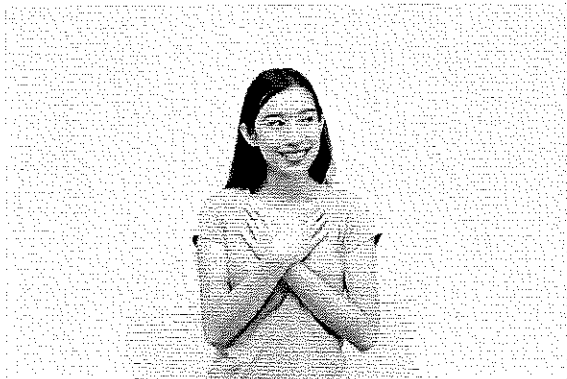
2. Think about your legs



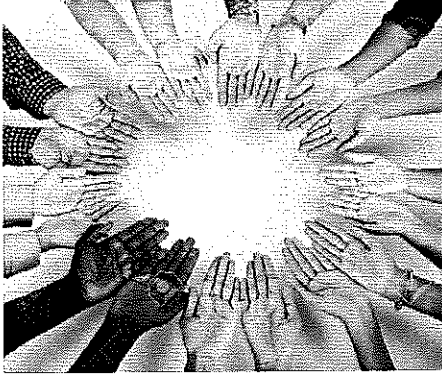
3. Think about your stomach



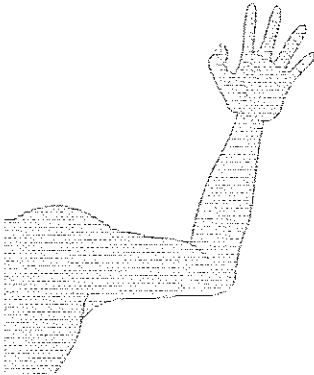
4. Think about your heart



5. Think about your hands



6. Think about your arms



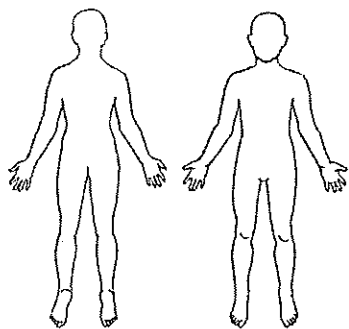
7. Think about your neck and shoulders



8. Think about your face



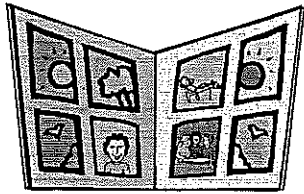
## 9. Think about your whole body



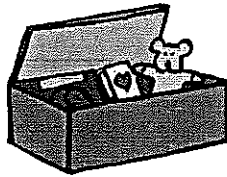


# Session #5

# You may keep reminders of the person who has died. You may keep:



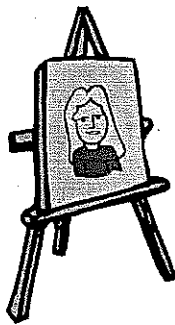
Photos or a memory book of the things the person liked.



A memory box where a favorite thing from the person is kept.



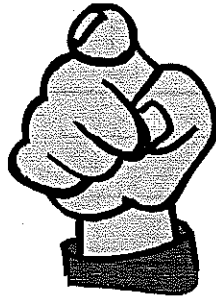
A memory garden where you plant a plant and look after it.



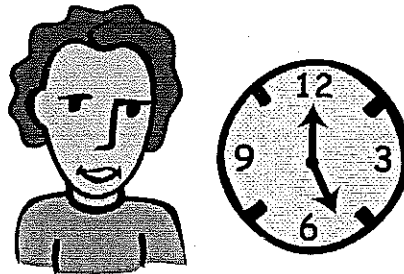
A painting or collage of the person.



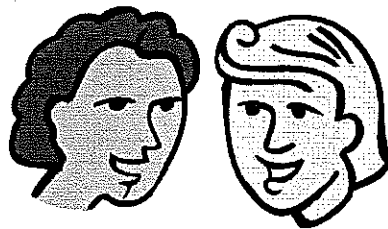
A tape of the person's favorite songs.



**But, remember, what you decide to do will be up to you.**



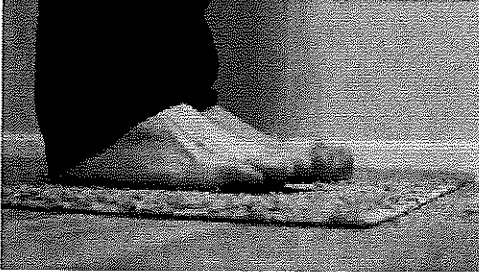
**Remember you will probably feel better with time.**



**If you don't begin to feel better, ask for help.**

## Grounding exercise:

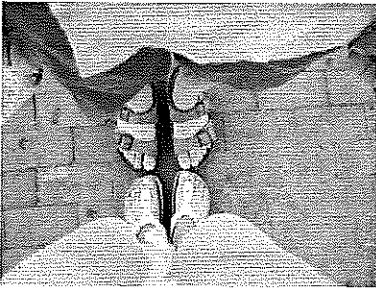
1. Wiggle your toes



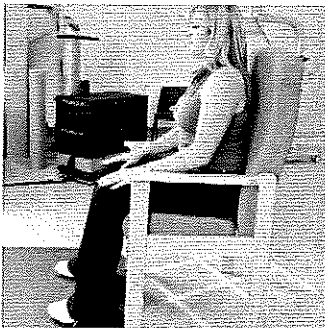
2. Feel your feet in your shoes



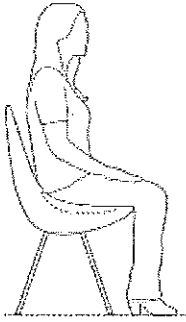
3. Feel your feet on the ground



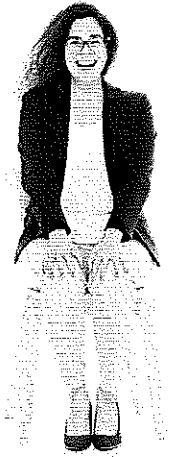
4. Feel your back against the chair



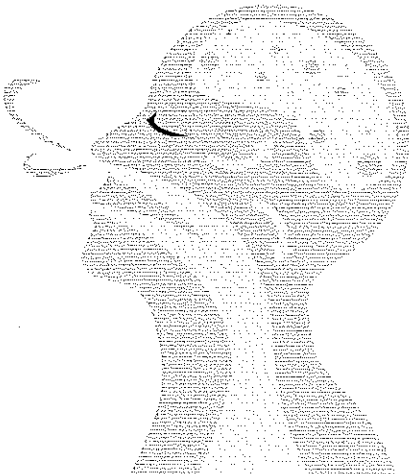
5. Feel the weight of your body on the chair



6. Rest your hands gently on your legs



7. Take 5 slow, deep breaths (in through nose, out through nose)



# Session #6

# SMART Goals

**S**pecific

What **exactly** will you do?

**M**easurable

How will you know if you **meet** your goal?

**A**chievable

What **steps** are you going to take to reach your goal?

**R**elevant





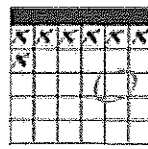
What about your goal makes it **important** to you?

**T**imely

**When** do you want to complete your goal?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# S.M.A.R.T GOALS

<b>S</b> PECIFIC 	Specific means that your goal is detailed and exact. It can answer the questions who, what, where, when, why, and which.
<b>M</b> EASURABLE 	Measurable means you can track your progress and know exactly when your goal is met. It usually involved numbers.
<b>A</b> TTAINABLE 	Attainable means that your goal is a reasonable one. It is not completely out of reach, or too easy for you.
<b>R</b> ELEVANT 	Relevant means that your goal is worthwhile. It is something that is actually important to you right now.
<b>T</b> IMELY 	Timely means that your goal will be accomplished in a set time frame, such as two weeks, three months, or one year.

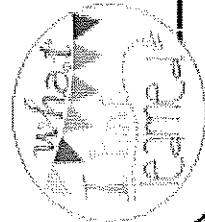


# My SMART GOAL

I want to \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_

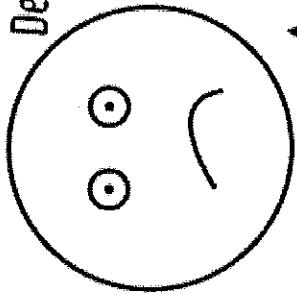
SO I will \_\_\_\_\_



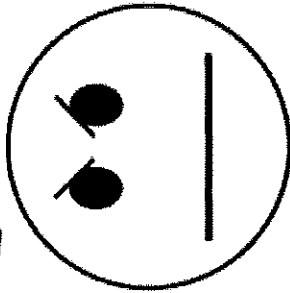
\_\_\_\_\_ to meet my goal.

# 5 Stages of Grief

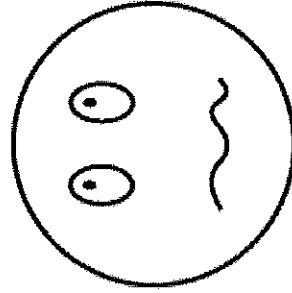
Denial



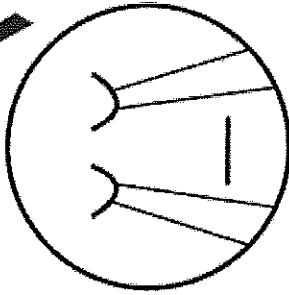
Anger



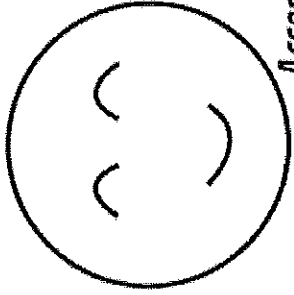
Bargaining



Depression

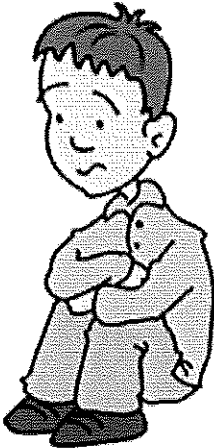


Acceptance



# STAGES OF GRIEF

GRIEF OCCURS WHEN SOMEONE CLOSE TO US PASSES AWAY OR WE EXPERIENCE ANY KIND OF LOSS.



## DENIAL

It is really hard for you to imagine that this person is really gone. You find it hard to believe that it's true.

## ANGER

You start to feel angry because this person is not in your life anymore. You may feel angry toward them or others.

## BARGAINING

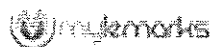
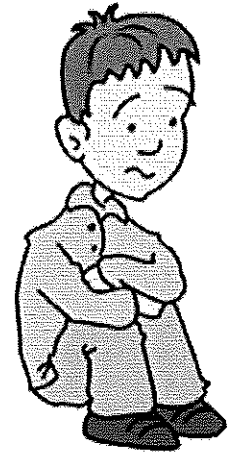
You try to figure out if there's anything that you can do or change that could make this person come back.

## DEPRESSION

You feel really sad because you understand that this person is gone and will not come back.

## ACCEPTANCE

You understand that this person is gone, and you try to continue to get things back to normal the best that you can.



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# Additional Resources

# Goodbye Letter

To: \_\_\_\_\_

I am saying goodbye because \_\_\_\_\_

Saying goodbye makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_

I remember a time when we \_\_\_\_\_

You taught me \_\_\_\_\_

Something I want you to know is \_\_\_\_\_

I will always remember \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

## How should I grieve?

Grief is different for everyone. Your feelings may change from day to day or even from minute to minute. Below are some common ways that teens tend to grieve. We have intentionally left some blank lines for you to write in how YOU are grieving.

- Crying. Tears are healthy, not childish.
- Talk about it. Confide in an adult that you are comfortable with.
- Write about death, your experience with death and how it has made you feel. Keep a journal or a notebook.
- Express your feelings in creative ways. Draw pictures. Paint. Build. Scrapbook.
- Exercise. Physical activity helps release anger and sad emotions. Play sports. Dance. Join a gym.

Today I.....

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## 12 Helpful Hints for Your Personal Grief Journey

Grief is exhausting. It takes a lot of time and energy and can wear you out. That is why anyone who is going through grief needs love, understanding and encouragement. Grief is a journey and no two journey's are alike. However, here are some helpful hints that you can use along the way.

1. Eat healthy foods and snacks. A healthy diet will keep your physical body in good health and will promote a better well being.
2. Get lots of rest. Take naps—remember grieving takes a lot of work.
3. Talk about your feelings. Find someone you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and emotions with.
4. Exercise. Physical activity will help to release negative energy.
5. Laugh often. Laughing, even when you are sad or angry is healthy. In fact, it's nature's own best medicine.
6. Spend time with friends.
7. Write down your feelings. Keep a diary or a journal.
8. Draw pictures or paint. Art is a fantastic way to express yourself! Share it with others.
9. Start a book of memories or make a memory box, power-point or video. Be creative. Scrapbook or journal. Include special pictures and thoughts. When you are finished you will have a very special keepsake all about you and the person who died. Refer to it often. It will make you smile.
10. Don't rush grief. It takes it's own time. You do not "get over" grief. In time however, you will accept things intellectually and will learn how to go on.
11. Write a letter to God, or a counselor or to the person who died. Tell them how you feel, what makes you angry or sad. It will make you feel better, even if you don't send it.
12. Join a support group or workshop. Being with other teens who have experienced a loss is comforting.

## Create a Grief Support System

1. Find three people you are comfortable talking to.
2. Name a place that you can go that is comfortable and safe.
3. Name three things you can do, or three people you can be with, where you can let out anger without hurting yourself or others.
4. Name three things you can do or three people you can be with to let out sad feelings.
5. Name three non-harmful ways to release feelings of anger or sadness.
6. Name three things you can do when life feels meaningless.
7. Name three activities you can do that will help you to express your feelings. Examples: writing, drawing, hitting pillows, singing, playing sports, dance.
8. Name some things that will help you get your mind off your loss.





**Finish the Sentences...**

The thing that makes me feel the saddest is .....

If I could talk to the person who died I would ask (say)....

Since the death my family doesn't....

My worst memory is....

If I could change things I would....

One thing that I liked to do with the person who died was...

When the person died I....

Since the death my friends....

After the death, school....

When I am alone....

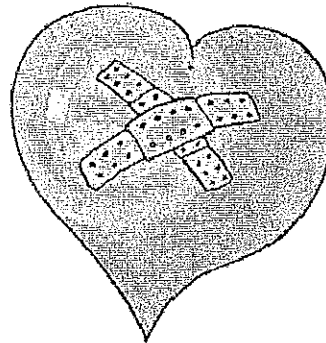
The thing that makes me feel the happiest is...

The thing that makes me feel the safest is...

The one person who understand me the most is...

The thing that makes me feel the angriest is...

I feel better when...

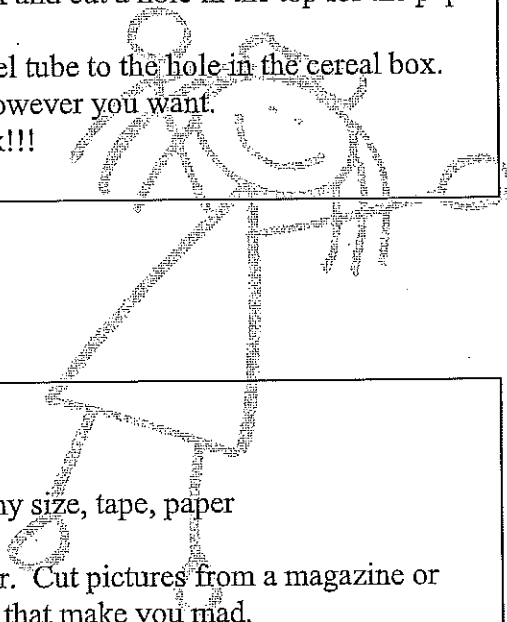


## Physical Activities

### Make a Scream Box

Equipment: Cereal box, paper towel tube, tape, paper, scissors

1. Stuff a cereal box with crumpled paper
2. Close the cereal box and cut a hole in the top for the paper towel tube.
3. Tape the paper towel tube to the hole in the cereal box.
4. Decorate the box however you want.
5. Scream into the box!!!



### Make a Mad Box

Equipment: Box of any size, tape, paper

1. Fill box with paper. Cut pictures from a magazine or write down things that make you mad.
2. Tape the box shut.
3. Use a plastic bat or jump up and down on the box until it is destroyed.
4. Discard or recycle the remnants.

## **Make Worry Beads**

Equipment: Sculpting clay, toothpick, old cookie sheet

1. Roll clay into small balls.
2. Use the toothpick to put a hole through the center of the ball, making a bead.
3. Bake according to directions on the package.
4. String the beads after baking.

*Variation:* Use molding clay or play-dough to mold and sculpt into different shapes. The feel of the clay can be soothing, helping to release anger, especially when children throw it onto a hard surface.



## **Fly Like a Lion**

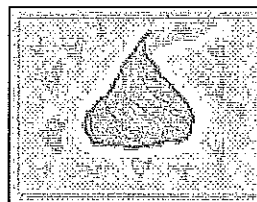
Equipment: Table, bean bags, gym mats or other soft surface, loud voices and supervision

1. Talk to your child about strength and power. Discuss people and animals who are powerful and what it means to them.
2. Help your child climb onto a table.
3. Let your child jump off the table onto the soft landing. Encourage him to jump powerfully (like a lion) and use a loud powerful voice (or roar).
4. This is a great exercise for children to take back some of the power they may feel that they have lost during an illness or death, as well as a way to reach and express deep feelings.

## Kisses for Heaven

*A simplistic way for a child/adult to still send love. It is the physical touch that we miss so much and while nothing ever replaces that, we can do "physical" things to help process grief.*

Unwrap a chocolate Hershey kiss and allow the candy to melt in a special place (graveside/memorial site/garden ect.). This allows a child to feel that they are indeed sending kisses and love. It is also perfectly acceptable to eat the kisses, perhaps referring to the sweet taste as sweet kisses back.



Be sure to remove the foil and discard appropriately. The heat, wind and rain will take care of the rest. Be sure to place upon the ground and not upon tables, chairs, and tombstones.

## Bedtime Prayers



Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.  
Bless this bed he/she lays upon.  
Four corners to the bed.  
Four angels 'round his/her head.

One to watch,  
One to pray,  
And two to keep him/her  
Safe all day.

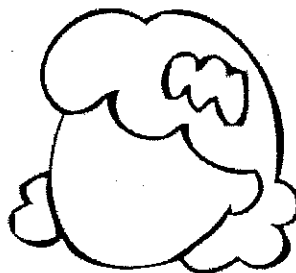


*Parents: After a death, children sometimes fear the dark or fear that they won't wake up. To help calm their fears, you can use this comforting prayer as you tuck your children in at night. It's simple, soothing lyrics can begin to ease anxieties and can help a young child to feel protected.*

## Understanding emotions



I'm happy



I'm sad



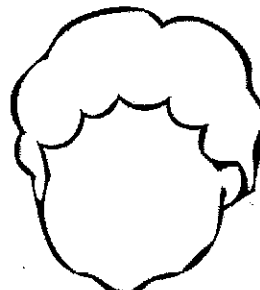
I'm sleepy



I'm afraid



I'm angry

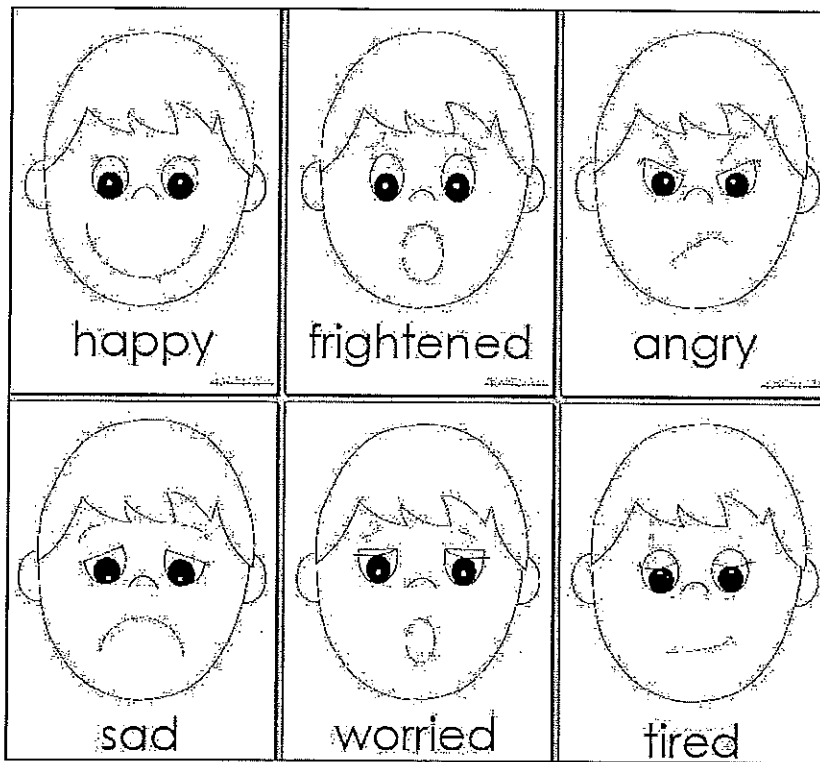


I'm hot

Discuss each emotion. Talk about things that make you feel each one. Then draw in the faces.

## How are you feeling today???

The faces below show different examples of how you may be feeling right now. Which one best describes you?



**Parents:** Have your child point the emotion picture that best shows how they are feeling today. Talk to them about why they feel this way. Explain that it's ok to feel angry or sad, but encourage them talk about things that make them feel happy too.

# References

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