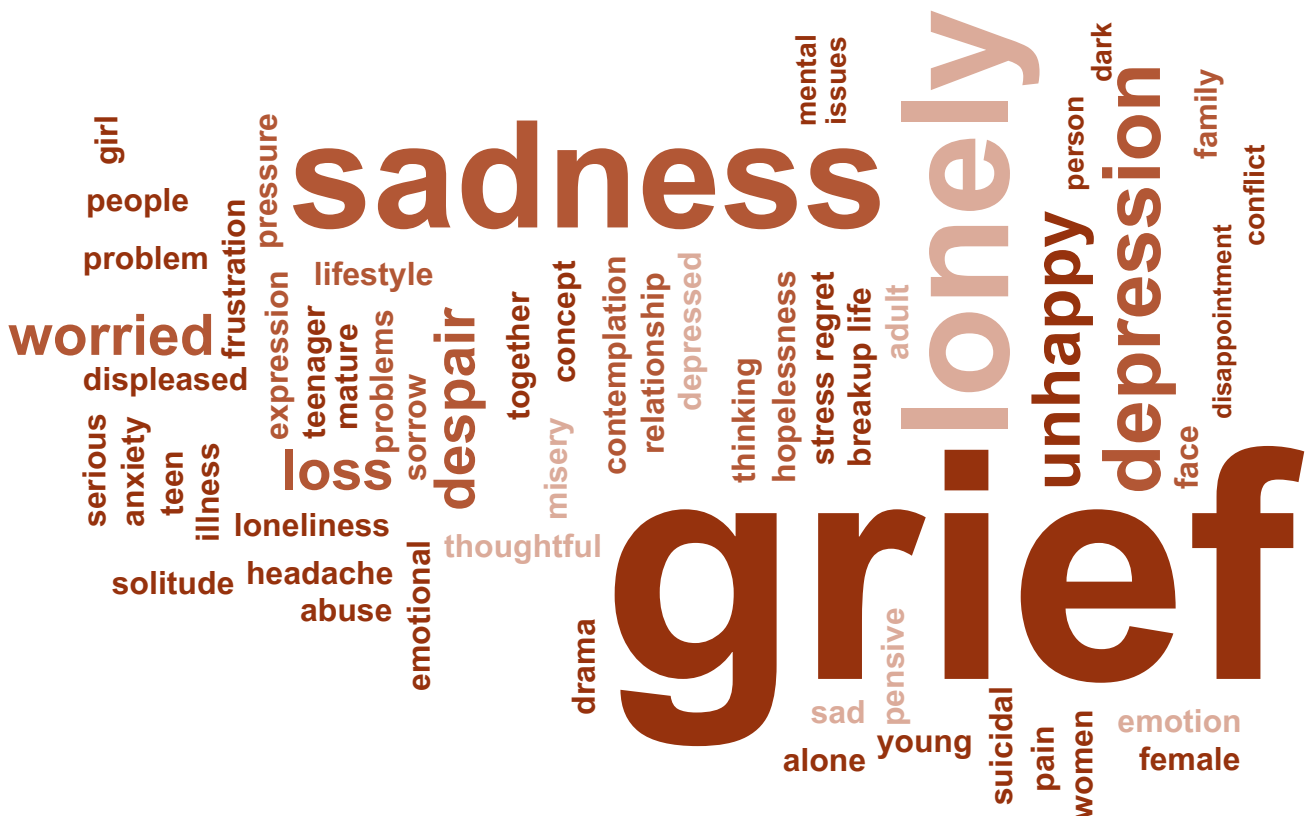




Beside you through grief's journey

# My Journal to help me cope with grief during this time of loss.

*It's okay to say, "I'm not okay."*





## **This journal has been developed to help youth cope with their grief during times of loss**

As much as we try to prepare for loss, there's only so much we can do to brace ourselves for the mental and emotional impact of grief. Losing someone we love is one of the most difficult things we will experience during our lifetime, but the grief we endure as a result can be transformative-after all, grief is the ultimate reflection of love.

It's understandable that loss causes anxiety. When we lose someone significant, we are reminded of our mortality and of how little control we have over our lives. This can be an overwhelming realization. We may begin to feel fearful that we will experience more loss. All of these feelings and fears may feel foreign and very overpowering. Many people do not understand the connection between their grief and their anxiety until they are really suffering and in need of help.

The impact of loss permeates all areas of our life and can often bring us to a standstill. Losing someone reminds us that everything can change at a moment's notice. It is an experience unlike anything else. There are no timelines to grief. Society places pressure on us to "get over loss and get on with life." How long should a woman grieve the loss of her husband of fifty years? How long should a parent grieve the loss of their child? Our loss happens in a moment, but its aftermath lasts a lifetime.

In grief, we must walk a path of fire and pain, of deep sadness, and crippling anxiety in order to get to the other side. We will never get over the loss of someone we love, but we can learn to live with it and navigate through this complicated journey.

# Helping Heal Young Hearts

At Caring Hears, we know how important it is to have safe places to express thoughts and feelings about loss. This journal is one of those places. Youth are encouraged to write, draw, colour, and tear pages out if they want, or add stickies to their book. Here are a few tips to help youth use this journal:

- Keep it in a safe place
- Always keep a pencil, pen, or crayon handy
- Keep something that is comforting nearby (a stuffed animal, a special keepsake)

We encourage youth to choose at least one adult they trust who will listen to any thoughts or feelings they want to share as they work through their book. We recommend children look at this book a little bit at a time instead of all at once. Provide reassurance not to worry if feelings or experiences are not the same as what others are going through. As long as the child feels safe, their way of grieving is what's right for them.

This is a book about my feelings.

This is me. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

There are changes in the world around us.

Change is natural.

Nature marks change with the passing seasons. We see change everywhere.

Spring

Summer

Fall

Winter

Draw the changes a tree makes as it passes through all the seasons of the year

Just as seasons change, people change. I am changing also.

Me as a baby

Me right now

Me as a very old person

Change is a part of living and growing.

All living things - plants, animals, and people - grow, change, and die.

Death is a natural part of living. It happens to every living thing. It is part of life.

Draw a picture of the life cycle.

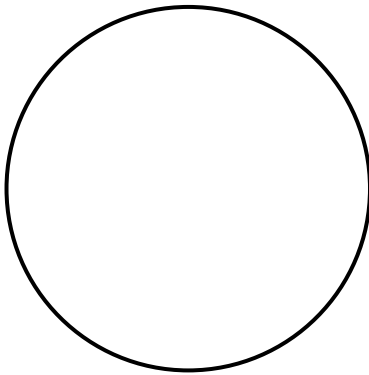


## Change can create loss.

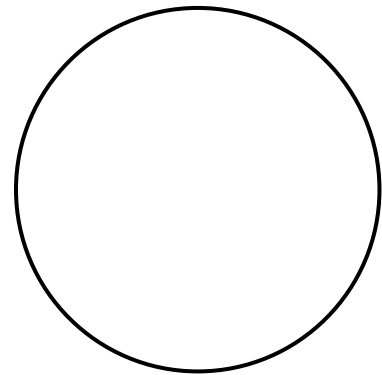
The pain that comes from loss is called grief. Feelings of grief can come and go. Sometimes you feel confused. Sometimes you feel sad. Sometimes you feel empty and alone. Sometimes you feel scared. Sometimes you feel like your old self.

When you lose someone you love, you may have many different types of feelings - some confusing, some painful and sad.

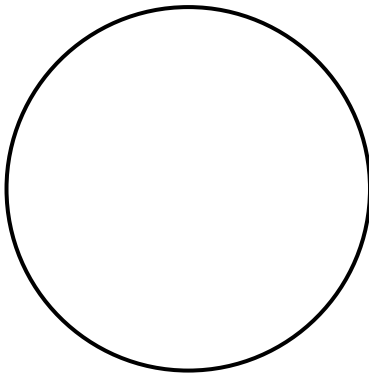
Everyone has different feelings. People's feelings can change.



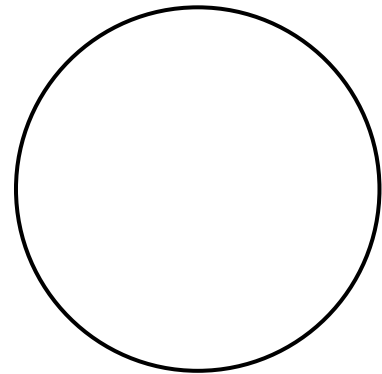
the lonely me



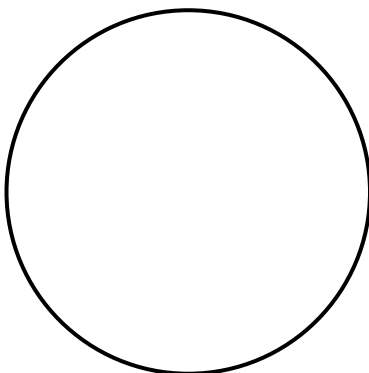
the sad me



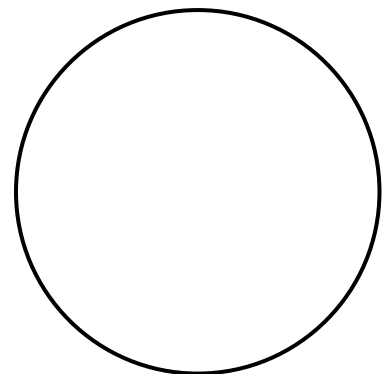
the angry me



the worried me



the scared me



the confused me

Death happens for many different reasons.

Sometimes people die from diseases or illnesses. Sometimes people grow old.

Sometimes people have accidents. Sometimes people hurt themselves.

But people do not die because of things we think, say, or feel!

Draw some things that can cause death.

Death can happen unexpectedly through  
an accident or sudden illness.

Sometimes people die from diseases or illnesses. Sometimes people grow old.  
Sometimes people have accidents. Sometimes people hurt themselves.  
But people do not die because of things we think, say, or feel!

This is a time when I was sick.

People die for reasons that are hard to understand.

Whatever caused your special someone to die,

It's important to know it's not your fault.

You may think you caused your special someone to get sick or feel that you caused the accident that caused your special someone to die.

Tell someone who cares about you if you feel this way.

This is how I feel \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When someone special dies, there's no right or wrong way to feel.

You might feel all mixed up.

Sometimes you might feel sad, confused, angry,  
guilty, frightened, or even glad.

It's natural to have many different feelings. They are all okay. This is called grieving.

Draw some of the feelings you have.

When someone you love dies, it's very sad.  
Tell yourself it's okay to cry when you are sad.  
Talk to a grownup who cares about you. Tell them how you feel.

Sometimes I feel sad.

When you draw something that makes you sad,  
sometimes it helps make the sadness go away.

Sometimes you feel things would have turned out differently  
if you had only done something.

If only I had \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My "If Only"

Facing our fears can be scary.

Sometimes it helps to write about our fears and share them with a grownup.

Sometimes I feel frightened when \_\_\_\_\_

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When we draw our fears it helps us face them.



Life can be full of mysteries and wonder.  
What do you wonder about?

Sometimes I wonder if

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Here's a picture of what I am wondering.

Share your worries with a grownup who cares about you.

Sometimes I worry that \_\_\_\_\_

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Here's a picture of some of my worries.

Sometimes I am confused because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Drawing helps me make sense of things I don't understand.

Sometimes I am angry because \_\_\_\_\_

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When you are angry, if you draw pictures about it,  
sometimes you feel better and nobody gets hurt.

When I am confused or angry I can: ...

- ♥ Tell others with words "I am angry because ..."
- ♥ Write down my feelings
- ♥ Jump rope, run, walk, bounce a ball
- ♥ Scribble on an old piece of paper with crayons
- ♥ Crumple up a piece of paper and throw it
- ♥ Sock a pillow, or yell into a pillow
- ♥ Cry
- ♥ Draw with crayons on a big piece of paper
- ♥ Play with playdough or modeling clay
- ♥ Rock in a rocking chair
- ♥ Talk to a pet
- ♥ Talk to someone who cares about me
- ♥ Work in this journal

Add your own ideas:

- ♥ \_\_\_\_\_
- ♥ \_\_\_\_\_
- ♥ \_\_\_\_\_

When someone dies, their body stops working.

They cannot think, talk, hear, see, eat, smell, see, or feel anything ever again. It might look as if they are sleeping, but they are not asleep and they cannot wake up. When your special someone dies, they will no longer feel any pain. Death is forever.

Draw a picture of something you have that has stopped working.

Everyone has a body that you can see and touch.

Many people believe that people also have a spirit inside their body that cannot be seen or felt, but it makes them a special person.

Most people believe that when someone dies, the spirit leaves the body and goes to heaven to be with God. Others believe that death is like the birth of a new spirit - like a caterpillar who changes into a beautiful butterfly.

Create a beautiful butterfly.

Beliefs are for sharing.

Take some time to talk to a grownup about your family's beliefs.

Draw or write about your own beliefs.



This is a picture of someone special to me who has died.

\_\_\_\_\_ was special to me because  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My special someone.

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

It was special because \_\_\_\_\_

Our special time.

The first year after your special someone dies is filled with holidays and special days that may be hard for you.

You will miss your loved one and want to remember the happy memories of the special days you shared.

You may want to create new traditions for these special days.

- ♥ Volunteer at a local charity, school, or community center
- ♥ Donate a gift in your loved one's name to a favorite charity or organization
- ♥ Write an affirmation to each of your family members and share with them why they are special to you
- ♥ Write down a special memory of your loved one and put it in a memory box or stocking
- ♥ Plant a tree or special plant in your garden in their honor
- ♥ Visit a place that was special to you and your special someone
- ♥ Create a special ornament for your Christmas tree in their honor
- ♥ Release a balloon with a message or prayer to your loved one

Add your own ideas:

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Although you miss your special someone  
there are many people around you who love and care about you.

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Family or people you live with

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Others

(teachers/ coaches/ scout leaders/ clergy)

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Friends

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Neighbors

Write names of the people who care about you.

When you lose someone you love, you may find it  
hard to go back to school.

You might feel different or have trouble keeping your mind on your schoolwork.  
Your friends might not know what to say or how to act around you.  
Let your teacher and classmates know what has happened  
and tell them how they can help you.

This is what I want my classmates and teacher to know

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Here are the people who care about me.

I have someone who will always listen and make me feel special  
When I need to talk.

This can be someone who cares about me,  
or I can talk to a pet, a special stuffed animal or favorite doll or toy.

I feel special when \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When someone dies, it is a special time to show your love and respect.

It is a time to say goodbye to your special someone.

Friends and family will want to honor the life of your special someone.

They may gather together for a funeral or a memorial service to  
remember your special someone.

You may have some questions about this.

I would like to ask someone who cares about me these questions:

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You are not alone in grieving.

Your friends and family are grieving, too. This means they are feeling sad, angry, lonely, confused, and mixed-up just like you.

Ways I can help others who are grieving are: \_\_\_\_\_

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I can help others who are grieving.

Family and friends gather at a memorial or funeral service to say goodbye to your special someone.

They will remember all the good things about your special someone and share them with you, and show their love for you.

Saying goodbye.

# Saying goodbye can be hard.

Here are some ways you can honor your loved one by saying goodbye. Choose one with a family member or make up your own way. It's up to you.

- ♥ I Write a special goodbye poem or letter
- ♥ I Make a drawing or painting
- ♥ I Say a prayer and write it down
- ♥ I Share a special memory with others
- ♥ I Create a memory garden and plant a tree or flowers
- ♥ I Make a scrapbook about my special someone
- ♥ I Look at pictures from the past
- ♥ I Keep a journal like this one
- ♥ I Make a donation to a charity or special organization in their honor
- ♥ I Continue a hobby or activity we enjoyed together
- ♥ I Make a new friend who reminds me of my special someone
- ♥ I Hang a special ornament on my Christmas tree in their honor
- ♥ I Visit their grave and place flowers or other special gifts
- ♥ I Keep something that belonged to my special someone, look at it and touch it
- ♥ I Play with toys or gifts given to me by my special someone

Add your own ideas:

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Losing someone you love teaches us about life and about ourselves.

I have learned

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I can honor my special someone  
by remembering something important they taught me.

Here's a picture of my special someone.

I've learned that all the good memories I have of my special someone are mine to keep.

I will always have these memories and my special someone's love.

No one can take that away.

This is my favorite memory.



This space is for your special feelings or drawings



This space is for your special feelings or drawings





This space is for your special feelings or drawings



This space is for your special feelings or drawings



This space is for your special feelings or drawings

