

# KIDS' PEER TO PEER SUPPORT GROUP HANDBOOK

Compliments of HOPE'S HOUSE 2301 Riverside Drive, Green Bay, WI 54165

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## About Hope's House



Hope's House is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides a **FREE**, fun, confidential and safe place for grieving children and families to gather.

We provide trained facilitators, support volunteers, as well as partner with other schools and other programs to offer education, healing and coping information to children who have suffered a loss in their lives.

Core Beliefs:

**Connection-** Connecting children with others who have gone through a loss. Creating an area where children can see they are not alone.

**Education-** Pairing with certified counselors in the area provides educational material and activities for kids to interact and learn through the grieving process and helpful healing tactics.

**Safe-** Provide a safe and comfortable atmosphere for children to talk, play and interact with each other. Children should be able to talk openly about tough topics without feeling pressured or judged by others.

**Fun-** Hope's House is a fun atmosphere, laughter is the best medicine. Too much of life is serious and the process of death is not fun, but memories can be.

Hope's House is also a resource center for anyone in the community. We connect individuals and families to grief resources that fit their specific need (groups, counselors, online resources, books, podcasts, social media groups and more).

- Gina Peotter- Executive Director [ginapeotter@hopeshousewi.com](mailto:ginapeotter@hopeshousewi.com)
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## Contacting Parents And/Or Guardians About A Child Joining A School Grief Group

There are a few options, a letter directly to the parents/guardians, an insert in your school newsletter, and posters around the school (tear off information is recommended). Also, touch base with all staff to let them know this service is now available if they recognize a student who could benefit from this group.

Letter- you can send directly to the “in need” families, but we suggest sending a letter to all parents/guardians. The reason for this is sometimes we don’t realize kids may be struggling with a death that has not been brought to the attention of the school (great-grandparent, grandparent, cousin, friend, miscarriage...). Also, by promoting this to the larger school population, you will have a larger group of students.

The letter should include **WHY** the school is offering this **FREE** program. **WHO** will be running the group, **TIME** and location of the group, and **WHAT** will it be like. Grief is scary enough, but walking to the unknown to be vulnerable and talk about it may scare some kids away.

At Hope’s House we always like to talk about the misconception of a grief group for kids. Many people think it is only for kids who lost a parent. We always say a loss is a loss, is a loss. Any loss is important; you may not know how it is really affecting the child. Some kids do not talk about how they really feel about the death, or brush it off and say they are ok. Refer to the common concerns by age group page for more information.

You can also include some statistics to show the need for a group:

*1 in 5 children will experience the death of someone close to them by age 18.* (Kenneth Doka, Editor of OMEGA, Journal of Death and Dying)

*In a poll of 1,000 high school juniors and seniors, 90% indicated that they had experienced the death of a loved one.* ([nahic.ucsf.edu/downloads/Mortality.pdf](http://nahic.ucsf.edu/downloads/Mortality.pdf))

*In a study of 11- to 16-year-olds, 78% reported that at least one of their close relatives or friends had died.* (Harrison and Harrington, 2001)

Grieving in Schools: Nationwide Survey among Classroom Teachers on Childhood Bereavement  
Conducted by New York Life Foundation and American Federation of Teachers, 2012 Classroom teachers’ report that students who have lost a parent or guardian typically exhibit:

- Difficulty concentrating in class (observed by 87% of teachers)
- Withdrawal/disengagement and less class participation (observed by 82%)
- Absenteeism (observed by 72%) - Decrease in quality of work (observed by 68%)
- Less reliability in turning in assignments (observed by 66%) 7 in 10 teachers (69%) currently have at least one student in their classes who has lost a parent, guardian, sibling, or close friend in the past year.

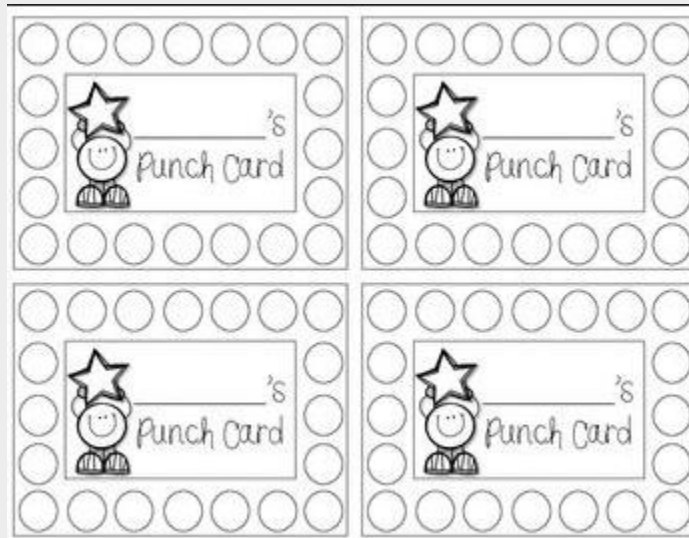
## Getting More Participants

1. Create an inviting, safe and fun atmosphere for current kids. If they like going to grief group, they may influence their friends to join too.
  - a. Relaxing music in the background
  - b. Lavender essential oils misting in the air (optional)
  - c. Comfy chairs or bean bags
  - d. Therapy dogs if possible- local groups Fox Valley Humane Society has a therapy dog program, or by reaching out on Social Media you may have success finding other companies out there.
  - e. **Repeat the expectations every group**

- i. **Respect**
- ii. **“I pass”- do not have to talk, can pass without judgment**
- iii. **Confidentiality**
- iv. **Safety- safe space**

## Getting More Participants

2. Reward system for attendance. If they like going to grief group, they may influence their friends to join too.
  - a. Sticker chart
  - b. Punch card- each group they make it to they get a punch... if they “refer a friend” they can get 3 punches. Fill up the card and they get (pick a book, bookmark, fun pens, get to be the helper of the day, get to be the greeter of the day...)



## Getting More Participants

3. Continue to show the fun activities you do with photos (make sure parents sign off of a consent to use photos if a parent says no, use hands close ups of projects)
  - a. On schools social media pages
  - b. Website
  - c. In school newsletter
  - d. Letters home to parents



## Getting More Participants

4. Continue to advertise the group- some are not ready right away until they hear what it is like.
  - a. On schools social media pages
  - b. Website
  - c. Overhead announcements
  - d. In school newsletters
  - e. Quartly or yearly letters home to parents
  - f. Posters around the school



## Getting More Participants

5. Have the current kids spread some joy around school.
  - a. Random acts of kindness to another friend who might have lost someone. Sign the group name at the bottom
  - b. Random acts of kindness in the community to another friend who might have lost someone. Sign the group name at the bottom.



## Getting More Participants

6. Host an “Open House”
  - a. Show other kids what a few activities would look like (calming jars, memory bracelets, coping skills bingo...)
  - b. Invite parents to see what a group is setup like
  - c. Send out a Press Release to local media to get exposure and recognition
7. Add section to the school’s website with basic information and a contact number and email address.



## Common Concerns When Kids Talk About Grief

These are great to hang up on your wall or keep handy. Some of our volunteers have their one go-to phrase if they are caught off guard by a comment.

### **Talking points- for death comments**

“That must have been hard...?”

“I can imagine that was stressful?”

“Do you want to talk more about it?”

“I can see you have a lot of love in your heart for...”

“I’m here to listen if you want to talk more.”

### **Things you can ask kids...**

"Do you have someone you feel comfortable talking to outside of here?"

"What do you usually do when you feel sad about your loss?"

"What helps you get through a tough day?"

"Do you ever have thoughts of harming others or yourself?" ←**if yes then action step is needed.**

## Common concerns about death by age group | Ages 4-6

See death as non-permanent  
Use drawing or toys to play out how they see death  
May have separation anxiety  
Waiting for the person who died to return  
May regress in sleep patterns or potty training  
**Provide comfort items during group**

### Deeper Dive:

1. Children believe their thoughts and wishes can cause things to happen.
2. They may be interested in the process of dying and ask "how" or "why" things have happened. Their questioning may be repetitive.
3. They have begun to understand that death is not reversible or temporary, but still may believe that death only happens to some people and will not happen to them.
4. Death is often personified as things like ghosts and monsters.
5. They lack the words to express their emotions. They may have strong feelings of grief and loss but can't express this in appropriate ways.
6. They may express feelings through anger and frustration.
7. Symbolic play using drawings and stories can be helpful.
8. They may need permission and encouragement to grieve.

*Encourage expression of feelings through talk, play, or physical outlets.*

## Common concerns about death by age group | Ages 6-7

Blunt questions about death  
Feelings of guilt  
May have dreams of the person who died  
May think they are responsible for the death  
Realize death is permanent and not reversible  
Can lack words to express feelings  
May engage in violent play

**Include cuddle toys and/or play such as sand play, puppets or dolls**

### Deeper Dive:

1. Children believe their thoughts and wishes can cause things to happen.
2. They may be interested in the process of dying and ask "how" or "why" things have happened. Their questioning may be repetitive.
3. They have begun to understand that death is not reversible or temporary, but still may believe that death only happens to some people and will not happen to them.
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5. They lack the words to express their emotions. They may have strong feelings of grief and loss but can't express this in appropriate ways.
6. They may express feelings through anger and frustration.
7. Symbolic play using drawings and stories can be helpful.
8. They may need permission and encouragement to grieve.

***Encourage expression of feelings through talk, play, or physical outlets.***

## Common concerns about death by age group | Ages 8-11

Understand the finality of death

Anxious about safety of themselves and family

Stronger emotions- anger, guilt

Feels different from their peers, and may conceal their loss to others

**\*Let them know it is ok to not be “adult-like” and ok to play, cry or just talk**

### Deeper Dive:

1. They understand the finality of death and that everyone eventually dies, however they still may engage in denial that it will happen to them.
2. They are curious about the physical aspects of death, such as...  
... "what does the body look like?"  
... "what does it feel like?"  
... etc.
3. Provide straightforward explanations. They know how to express their feelings and emotions, but they may choose not to.
4. Encourage them to express the range of feelings they are having.
5. They may be concerned with how others are reacting to the death. What is the right way to react? How should they react?

## Common concerns about death by age group | Ages 12+

Curious about the physical aspects of death  
Concerned about how others are reacting to the death  
Jokes around death or how they died to avoid the feelings  
Feelings of isolation  
Shutting down and not wanting to bring up memories  
Lower self-esteem  
Sadness moving to depression for some  
Could lead to risky behavior- fast driving, drinking, drugs, sexual contact  
May withdraw from school  
Some are interested in mediums or sensing the presence of a loved one  
Could have troubles sleeping  
Blame themselves for the death or circumstances around death  
Withdrawing and wanting to be alone

**\*Include comfort items and let them know it is ok to share, it is a safe space**

### Deeper Dive:

1. Reassure they are in a safe space, incorporate something like a circle hand squeeze or side hug in a group to show comfort
2. Please note additional traumas or \*ACES may cause additional dynamics to how the child is processing a death(s).
3. Remember some kids “regrieve” meaning as they get older they go through each of these stages and have to process the death in a different way.

**\*ACES stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences Study**

# Types of Group Interactions

There will be many different personalities in your group. Recognizing different dynamics in a group setting can be helpful to move the group in the right direction.

## **Withdrawn Participant:**

Observing rather than talking may happen for a number of reasons. The first few sessions they may be a little shy or waiting to warm up to the group, but if the behavior continues, you may want to try some ways to include the participant. Occasionally ask that participant if they have anything to add or include them by passing out the material for the project. Or have them harness their inner thoughts through a song they may want to share with the group next time, or have a group do some journaling or drawings. Often times the withdrawn participants do get something out of group even if they don't participate.

## **Monopolizing:**

One or two members may surpasses the respect expectation and continue to talk. The conversation could be off topic or related to the conversation. In this case you can politely interrupt and use what they were talking about as another topic.

“Sally, that is a great topic you and Suzie are talking about, let's see what everyone else thinks”.

“Let's make sure everyone gets a chance to share tonight, Bobby, what do you think about XYZ”?

You can always remind everyone about the respect expectation. If that still does not work, using a tangible item for the “talking person” may help until you can have a side conversation with the monopolizing individual(s). A suggestion would be to give them a reminder word or phrase like “it's getting warm in here”, and have them use that phrase as a secret reminder they need to pause and let someone else talk.

## **Should-er:**

This is someone who gives advice to others. They should go see their loved one at the cemetery... they should go talk to a counselor... they should throw away their loved ones clothes...

A great way to dance around this is by saying, “That is a nice idea Billy, it must have worked for you. Johnny sounds like you have one option of what to do.” Then ask the group for other ideas for Johnny.

## Base model of a peer to peer support group

This is what we suggest based on our successful group nights at Hope's House. Feel free to tailor the structure to what works best for your kids.

We have found a lot of joy built around therapy dogs. If that is something that is attainable in your school, reach out to your local animal shelter to find out if they have a therapy dog program. At Hope's House we go through the Fox Valley Humane Association. Camp HOPE also has a great therapy dog program that brings comfort to campers all weekend long. The Boys and Girls Club, Center for Grieving Children in the Fox Valley also has a similar program in place.

Opening of THE FIRST group:

1. Start each group with thanking the kids for being there. (gratitude)
2. Talk about the structure of the group- open circle, activity, then closing circle. (addressing the unknown)
3. Address the four rules; confidentiality, respect, "I pass", and safe space. (setting the tone)
4. Go around the circle and ask each participant to say their name, age, which they are here to remember, and a fun topic of your choosing- favorite color, favorite season, what they are excited about this weekend, favorite animal, favorite band... (building connections and trust)

**\*\*\*\*First few times you may want to give the option of having the kids tell their story. How the person died or any details they want to share about the death, funeral or fun stories about their loved one\*\*\*\***

Activity

Closing of group:

1. Thank the participants for coming, and trusting everyone to share their thoughts and memories. (gratitude)
2. Speak about what the next group topic will be and remind them the structure will be the same (addressing the unknown)
3. Close out the group in a circle with a grief quote, circle hand squeeze, or candle light (LED) ceremony- lighting the candle in memory of their loved one.

**Time Limit: We recommend about an hour to an hour and a half if possible.**

Regular Group Structure: Find something that works and stick with it. **Consistency is key!**

Example breakdown:

5 minutes- sign in sheet then coloring sheets, activity sheets, and/or games. (Breaks the ice and sets the comfortable safe atmosphere)

5-10 minutes- Go around the circle and say your name, age, which you are here to remember and one fun question (favorite color, favorite season, what you are doing this weekend...). **For**

**middles and teens we suggest adding in what is your high and your low for the week-** basically a weekly check in. Remind them that you will ask every times so they search for a good thing to talk about... that sometimes is a hard one for tweens and teens.

20- 40 minutes- Group activities. Each group can have a theme “coping skills” or be made up of multiple topics and activities. The elementary age group we suggest breaking everything into 10 minute activities with one “level change”, stand up and do an activity, sit on the floor to read a book, do a quick Simon Says then bring it back to the next activity.

5 minutes- Go around the circle with an LED candle and lights low to say “I light this candle in memory of XYZ” Quiet time to acknowledge the person who died in a more ceremonial atmosphere. Feel free to end the group with a quote or poem (for older kids) or a treat for younger kids.

**Try incorporating the word death every group. Often time’s adults and kids soften the reality and say things like passed away.**

Below are some common phrases you can use to validate the conversation and keep it moving.

“So, you feel ...”  
“You think ...”  
“You wonder ...”  
“It sounds like you ...”  
“What you mean ...”  
“As I understand it, you felt that ...”  
“You’re sort of saying that ...”  
“If I’m hearing you correctly ...”  
“To me it seems like you are saying ...”  
“I’m not sure that I’m with you, but ...”  
“As you see it ...”  
“Could it be that ...”  
“I wonder if ...”  
“Is it possible that ...”  
“I get the impression that ...”  
“Perhaps you are feeling ...”  
“Let me see if I get what you are saying ...”  
“It seems to me that ...”  
“As I get it, you think ...”  
“You mean ...”  
“Maybe you feel ...”  
“From where I stand ...”  
“Let me see if I’m with you ...”

# Group Activities

These are all activities we have done in the past with our kid's at Hope's House. Some are from other grief books, but most ideas have come from Pinterest. We base our curriculum off of a few pillars:

**Coping Skills**

**Continuing Bonds**

**Emotional Awareness**

**Grief**

**Memory**

**Self Discovery**

**Sensory Breaks**

→Activities have an overarching art therapy approach for non-verbal expression.

We also fill gaps in our groups with questions. Close to the end of this document is a section called "Car Ride Questions" We print off about 10 of these each group to send home with kids. They can journal with these, have them in the car with their family and ask everyone to participate... but we also cut these into questions that we fold up and put in a cup. Kids have fun picking a question to answer. Sometimes other kids piggyback on the question or also answer the question. Most times others want to pick one to answer too.

We have also purchased a deck of cards on Amazon we use with our groups. The littles it is called Mindful kids: 50 Activities for Kindness, Focus and Calm. For the middles group we bought a deck called, Bright Spots Game Memory Garden, and for the teens a card deck called Teen Talk In A Jar.

# Group Activities | Littles 4-7

# Dream Catcher Activity | Littles 4-7

**Time: 10-20 minutes**

**Objective: Talk through feelings and memorial**

**Material: String, cardboard circle, beads, feathers**

*Facilitator: "Has anyone heard of a dream catcher before? What do you think they do? You are supposed to hang them by your bed so bad dreams get caught in the web part. Then the good dreams go through the center and rest of the feathers. The beads can also trap the bad dreams.*

*Today we are going to make our very own dream catcher in memory of the person who died. Do you know what 'in memory' means? It is a way to show how we can remember the person".*

\*\*\*To take up more time have the kids cut out their own circle and punch the holes for the string.

## **Activity:**

1. Talk about positive things in your life that make you happy. Examples: family, friends, pets, hobbies...
2. Pick a piece of yarn for each thing that makes you happy.
3. Wrap each positive string around the outside of the ring and tie (or tape) it to the ring at each end. Once one string ends, begin until your ring is completely wrapped.
4. Now, think of things that makes you sad. Examples: mom passed away, fighting with sibling, didn't get something you wanted...
5. Pick a piece of yarn to symbolize each thing that brings you down. Tie the yarn pieces together at the ends, to make one long string.
6. Tie the string to the ring and then string the yarn through the holes in a star formation, overlap or reuse holes if needed and tie/tape at the end when the string runs out.
7. Pick out a bead to represent your loved one who died and have someone help you tie it to the middle of the dream catcher.
8. Pick out a few beads to represent wishes you have.
9. Choose two feathers to represent things you do to make you feel better when you're upset.
10. Pick out two additional pieces of yarn, string with the wish beads and feathers and then tie/tape to the bottom of the ring.

11. Use one more piece of yarn to tie/tape a loop at the top of the ring so you can hang your dream catcher.



# Leaves Jar | Littles 4-7

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** To discuss death and changes

**Material:** Mason jars or plastic jars, modge podge (can make your own with glue and water), leaves (real, paper or fabric)

*Facilitator: “After a loved one dies some things can be different. They are no longer here to talk to. Sometimes that means your person won’t be with you trick or treating, or at your birthday party. There can be some changes when a loved one dies. **What other things in nature change?** Examples: The sky changes from sunlight to darkness and the moon comes out. Also the seasons change, and the leaves change colors.”*

## Activity:

1. Spread the leaves on the table and have the kids pick a favorite leaf and talk about if they notice leaves changing colors. Ask if they know any good changes or any bad changes? (good- leaves changing, seasons changing... bad- someone dies, gets sick)
2. Use modge podge to coat each jar and have the kids place the leaves on the jars. They can decorate a piece of paper that has the person who died on it and add it to the jar.
3. Then cover with modge podge to coat them.



# Play dough Faces | Littles 4-7

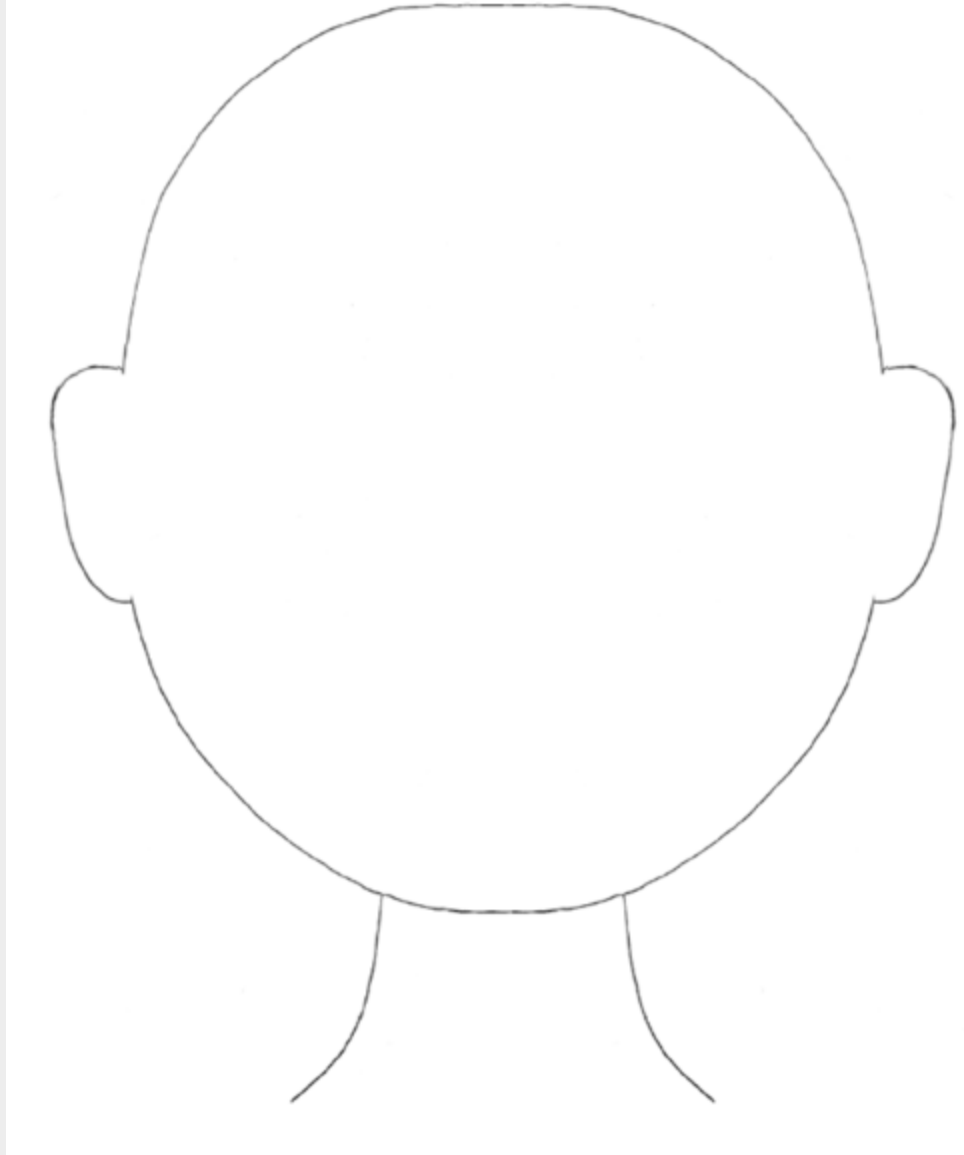
**Time:** 10 minute

**Objective:** To build emotional awareness

**Material:** Face print out (or paper and marker to make a face), play dough, optional beads, sticks or Mr. Potato Head pieces.

*Facilitator: “After the death of a loved one, many people describe their grief as feeling numb; they have no emotions and all the colors seem to have gone gray. Today, we are going to talk about emotions, what they look and feel like and how certain colors can make us feel a certain emotion.”*

1. Play Dough Faces: Have each kid pick out a face and one color of Play Dough. Ask kids to create a face with how they are feeling right now. You can include beads, sticks and Mr. Potato pieces. Go around the circle and share their faces.
2. Have the kids each think of an emotion they felt when their loved one passed away. Create a play dough face to match that emotion.
3. Ask the kids guess each of the emotions and talk about them.



# Calm Down Cocoa | Littles 4-7

**Time: 10 minutes**

**Objective: Coping Skills/Emotional Regulation**

**Material: Cocoa print out or paper and scented markers.**

*Facilitator: “Were you ever really mad at someone? What did you do? Today we are going to learn a way to calm down on our own. We can use our breathing to calm us down sometimes. Let’s all put our hands on our tummies and take a big deep breath (in and out). What do you notice? Do you feel your body moving in and out?”*

1. Color the calm down cocoa coloring page. Use scented marker for the cocoa part if you have them.
2. Go through the cocoa breathing exercise. Smell the cocoa on the paper then blow out hard to cool off your cocoa. Repeat a couple of times.
3. Talk through someone else in their life they could teach this to. By doing this it may stick in their minds longer.

## My calm down Cocoa



I can breathe in my nose to  
smell the hot chocolate and out  
my mouth to blow on it.  
Breathing this way can calm my  
mind and body!

# Sun Catcher Activity | Littles 4-7

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Memory/Continuing Bonds

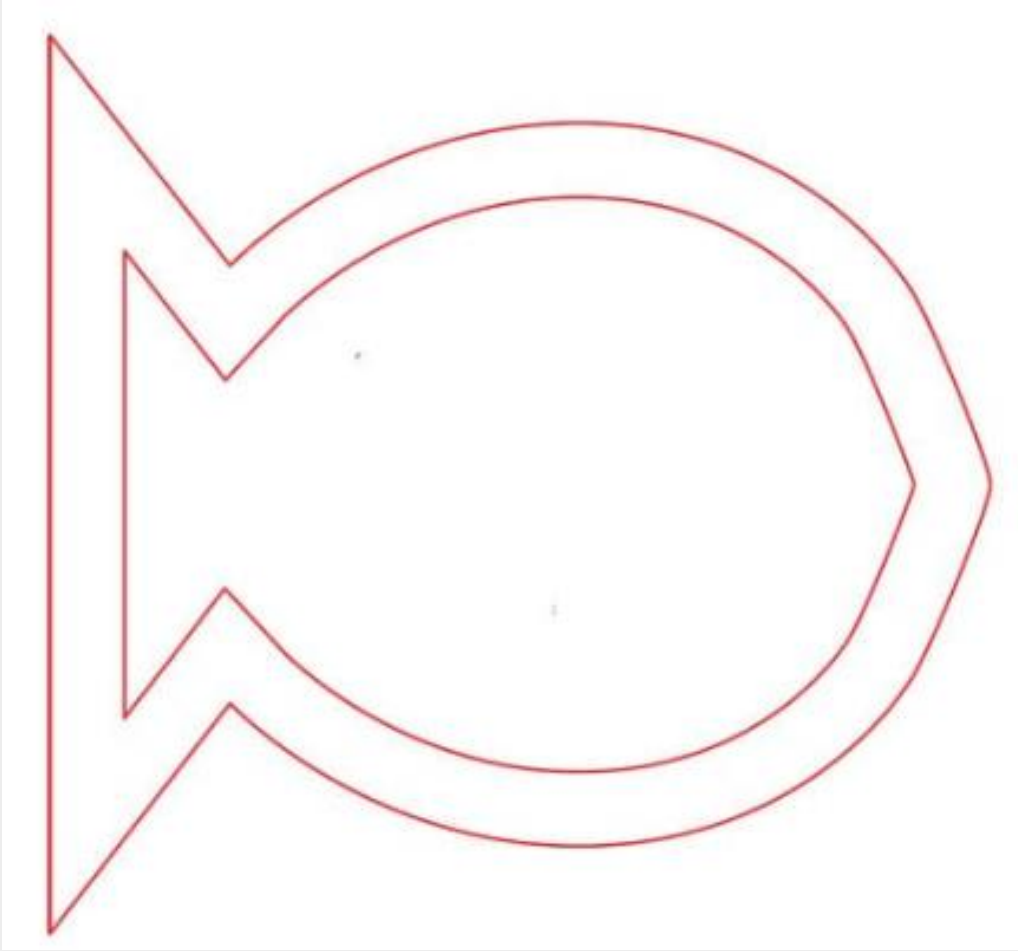
**Material:** Construction paper, Tissue paper, contact paper

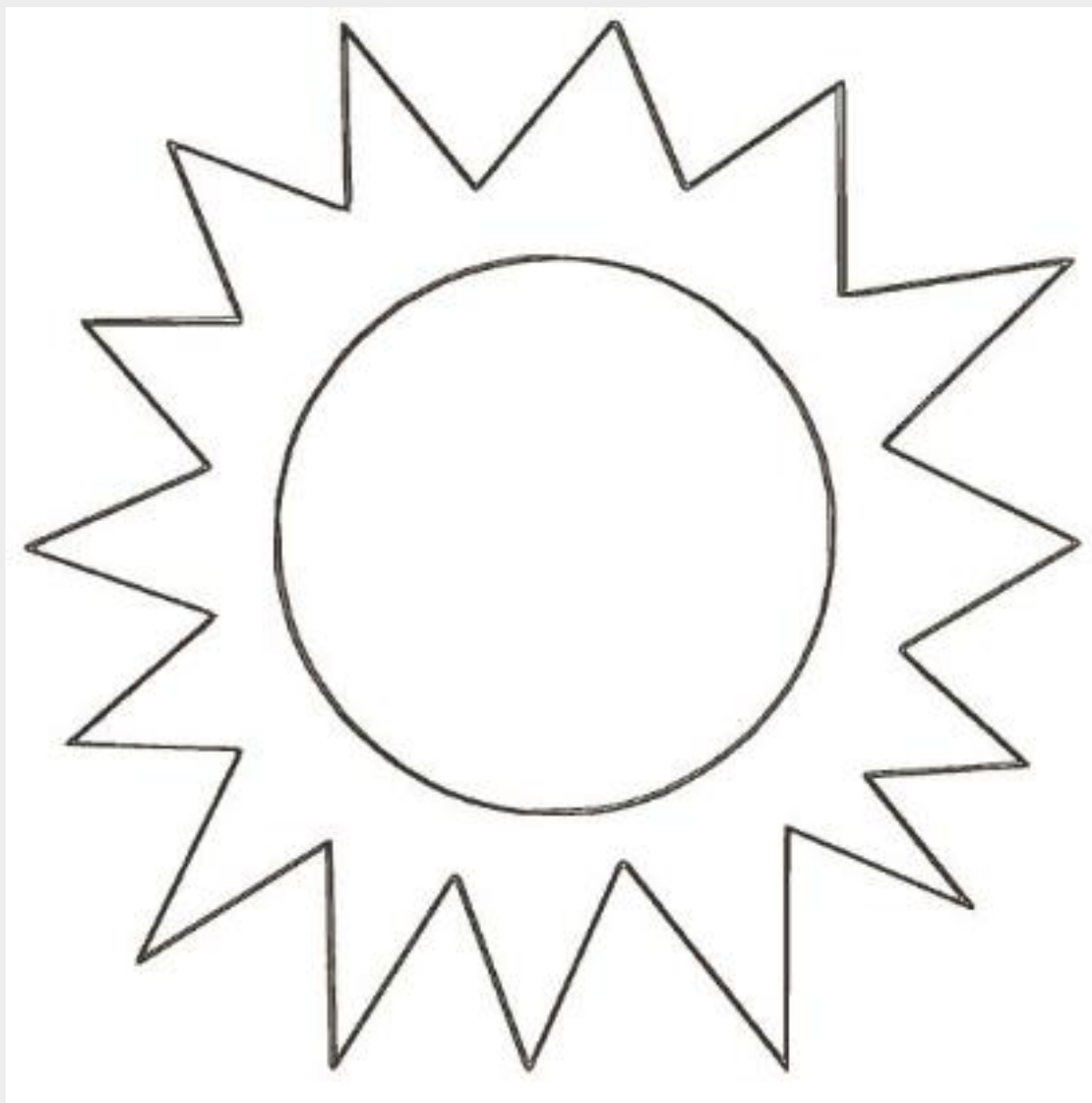
*Facilitator: “Losing someone we love can be very hard and make us feel all sorts of emotions. Some of us may have memories of the person who died, but some of us might only know what others have told us through stories. Today we are going to make our own memorial for the person who died.”*

## **Activity:**

1. Ask what we can do to continue a relationship with the person who died?
2. Talk about how we can draw pictures about our loved one. We can talk to them, Listen to a song that reminds us of them, visit them with our family if they are in a cemetery, or create something in memory of them
3. Art Activity:
  1. Have each student pick out a shape that represents their loved one and two pieces of contact paper.
  2. Help each child remove the backing from one piece of contact paper and then have them place the shape on the sticky contact paper. Maybe a color that represents the person who died or a color for the time of the year the person died. Can color with markers on the tissue paper or write the person’s name.
  3. Ask the children to add tissue paper squares until their shape is filled. Cover the whole area.
  4. Assist the kids with the other piece of contact paper to seal the image. Have children cut out their shape and then show them off to the group.







# Invisible String Activity | Littles 4-7

**Time:** 20-40 minutes

**Objective:** Connections and coping with loss and separation

**Material:** *Invisible String* book, string, white paper, white crayon, water color, scissors

*Facilitator: “After the death of a loved one, we might sometimes start to feel like they are far away. We can’t see or hear them like we used to, we might wonder if they’re still connected to us somehow. If we’re away from home, we may feel worried that we’re separated from our parent, sibling or stuffed animals. Today we’re going to talk about how love keeps us tied together even when we’re apart.”*

## Activities:

1. Read book: *The Invisible String*
2. Painting Activity: Have each kid use a white crayon to draw invisible strings on a piece of paper. Then have them use watercolor paints to reveal the strings. “Even if we can’t see our loved one anymore, like our white crayon, they are still near us.”
3. Yarn Activity: Have all kids stand in a circle. Using a large ball of yarn, have each kid share something about themselves (pick one topic at a time: hobby, age, # of siblings, places visited, coping technique, special talent, lost a loved one, etc). If another kid has that same thing in common, have the first kid hold the string and toss the ball to the next kid. The second kid will say something, hold the string and toss to another that matches. If no one has that in common, have the child pick something else and continue until there is a big web, showing how we are each connected.
4. Cut a piece a yarn about 6 inches long for each kid. Have them color and a small heart and tape their string to it. They can take the string hearts with them so they can feel connected to everyone in the group, even when they’re at home.

# Feelings | Littles 4-7

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings

**Material:** Feelings song sheet

*Facilitator: We are going to be talking about feelings today. Most people think feelings are sad, mad, angry and happy, but it is so much more than that. There are a lot more feelings people feel every day.*

*By learning to acknowledge our feelings again, it can help us.  
For me, right now I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
What feelings are you feeling right now? (Go around the circle)*

Once we get better at identifying our feelings, we can learn healthy ways to express and cope with our feelings.

ASK: Why would we want to get better at expressing our feelings?

Work through the grieving process  
Be able to support family and friends  
Less behavioral problems at home and in school  
Feel more self-aware and confident (ask if they know what these are)  
Avoid bottling up feelings and exploding later

ASK: What is the best way to tell someone how you are feeling?  
Go around the circle and have each kid say, "Right now I'm feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and I need \_\_\_\_\_"

## **Activity:**

1. Stand up and teach the kids the feelings song
2. Pick one of the feelings books to read
3. End with the feelings song



# Emotions Action Song

**If you're happy and you know it  
clap your hands.**

**If you're mad and you know it  
cross your arms.**

**If you're frustrated and you know it  
stomp your feet.**

**If you're excited and you know it  
jump up and down.**

**If you're sad and you know it  
make a frown.**

**If you're scared and you know it  
hide your face.**

[www.notimeforflashcards.com](http://www.notimeforflashcards.com)

# Calm Down Bingo | Littles 4-7

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Coping Skills

**Material:** Calm down bingo sheets, something to use as bingo markers (markers, candy pieces, pom pom balls...)

*Facilitator: “When we get mad, sad or angry what are some things we do? Some people get tight fists and feel really stiff. Some people breathe really heavy. Other people shake and get really quiet. What does your body do when it gets angry? Let’s act out what our faces might look like. Now let’s think of some GOOD ideas on what to do when we get really mad, sad or angry.*

*Would it be a good idea to count to 10? How about take some slow deep breaths? Or say the words ‘I’m really angry right now and I need \_\_\_\_\_’?”*

**Activity:**

1. Walk through the different ideas on the calm down bingo sheets and act out a few ideas.
2. Play a few rounds of bingo
3. Ask the kids to act out the different squares on the sheet.

# CALM DOWN BINGO



© One-Stop Counseling Shop

# CALM DOWN BINGO



© One Stop Learning Shop

# If I Could Turn Back Time | Littles 4-7

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Continuing bonds

**Material:** If I could turn back time sheet, markers or crayons

*Facilitator: “Sometimes it can be fun to imagine if the person who died was here with us today. Wouldn’t that be cool? We could do all kinds of fun things with them today. We could talk to them, hug them and play games with them. Today we are going to work on a sheet that is all about that”.*

**Activity:**

1. Walk through the questions and have the kids draw a small picture to “answer” each question.
2. Ask the kids to color in the clock with a color that represents how they would feel if the person was with them today.
3. Go around the circle and talk about a favorite memory of the person who died. Or if they don’t have a memory, brainstorm something that would have been fun to do with them.

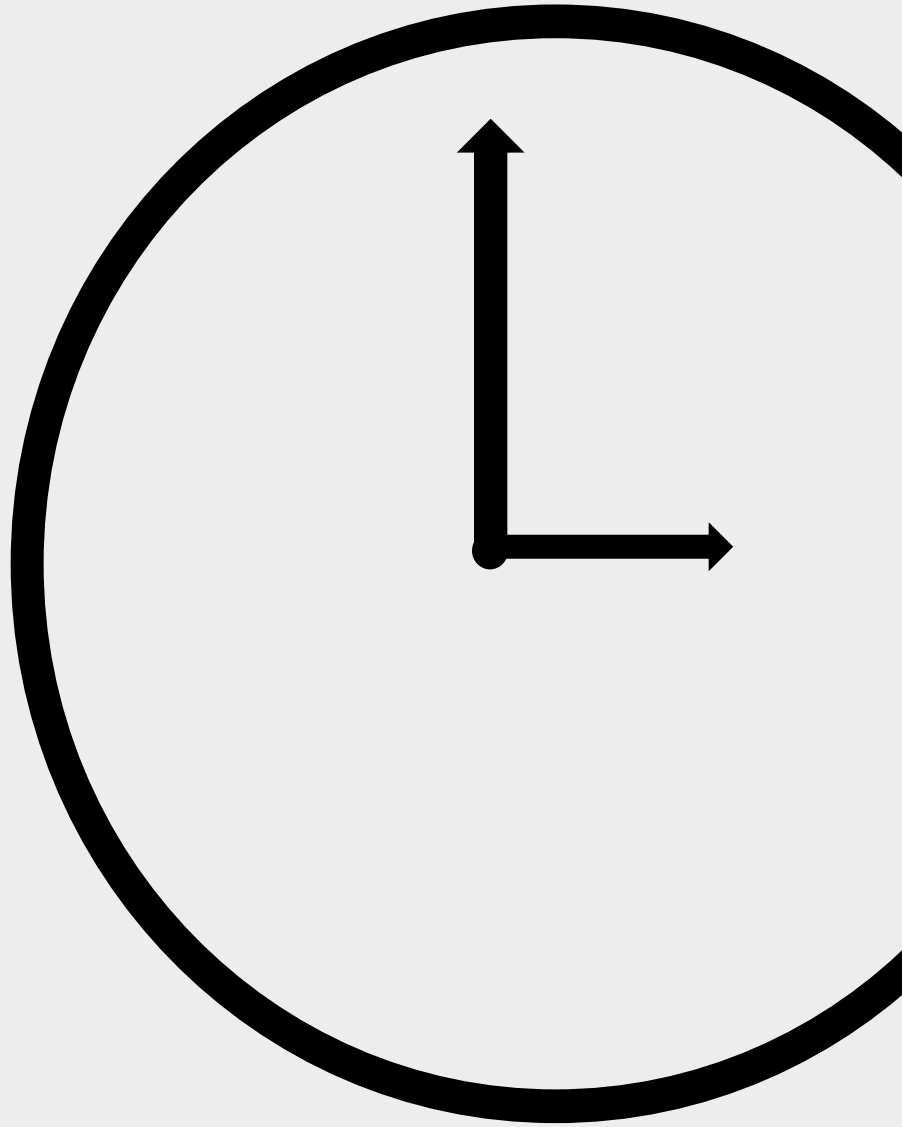
If I could turn back TIME...

What would I say?

Who would be there?

Who would I hug?

What would I do?



# Guided Meditation | Littles 4-7

**Time: 10-20 minutes**

**Objective: Coping Skills/Emotional Regulation**

**Material: Comfy spots, meditation cd or computer to play video**

*Facilitator: “Has anyone heard of meditation? What do you think it looks like? There are different ways we can meditation, by just being still and quieting our minds, or even using a guided meditation. That just means listening to a cd or a video that someone else is talking to you explaining how to relax and what to think about. Does anyone know why we might want to try meditation?”*

## **Activity:**

1. Ask the kids find a comfortable spot, lower the lights, and diffuse some lavender essential oil if possible. Let the kids hug a pillow or stuffed animal if they are available.
2. Some kids may giggle at this exercise or be making jokes. Remind them the respect expectation. Even if they are not into it or want to try it out that they need to respect that other friends might want to try this. Give them the option of just trying to be quiet for the first half... usually works for the ones who are laughing at the activity.
3. Play the mindfulness CD. After it is complete, talk about how the guided meditation makes you feel.
4. Talk about ways they can do this at home- play a video on a computer or phone (with adult permission), sit quiet for 5 minutes, do breathing exercise for 5 minutes when you wake up or before bed, or rent a meditation or breathing cd from the library.

**\*\*We ordered the “Happy Little Hearts” by Katrina Cavanaugh – can look for it at a public library as well.**

**\*\*If the kids are too wiggly try a guided yoga or mindfulness DVD available at your local library.**

# Group Activities | Middles 8-11

# Feelings | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings

**Material:** Journals or pieces of paper and pen, optional large sheet of paper

*Facilitator: “We are going to be talking about feelings tonight. Most people think feelings are sad, mad, angry, and happy, but it is so much more than that. There are so many more feelings people feel every day. Also, what you do with feelings can be good or bad”.*

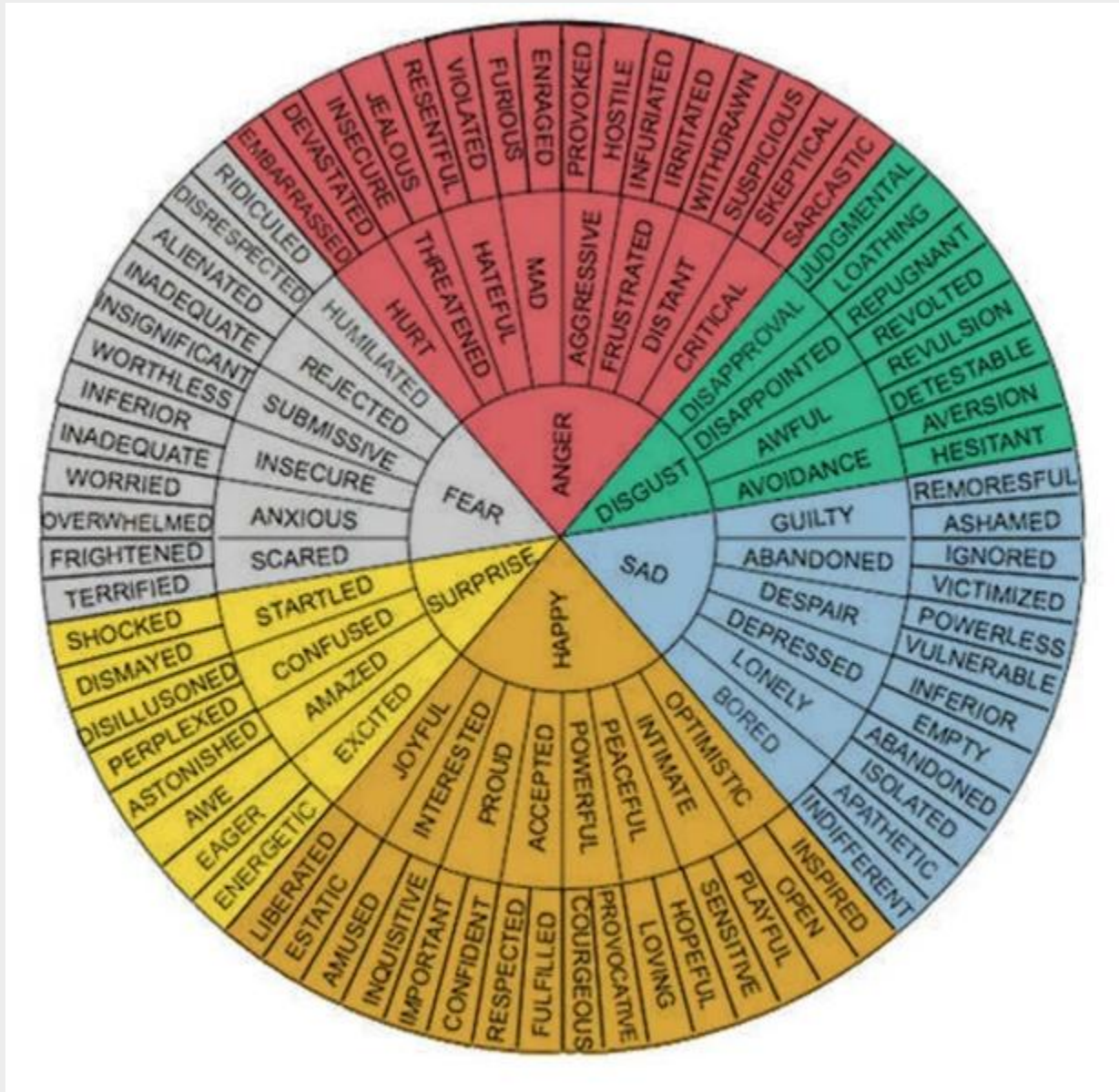
## Activity:

1. Hand out feelings wheel and talk about how core feelings can have deeper feelings attached to them.
2. Ask each person to go around and say “Right now I’m feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_”
3. When we get better at identifying our feelings, we can learn healthy ways to express and cope with our feelings. Why would we want to get better at expressing our feelings?  
(Optional brainstorm on large piece of paper)
  1. Be more kind to others
  2. Be able to support family and friends
  3. Perform better in school less behavioral problems at home and in school
  4. Feel more self aware and confident (ask if they know what these are)
  5. Avoid bottling up feelings and exploding later

## Journaling:

1. Get out journals or pieces of paper. Have the kids spread out and get comfortable.
2. Journal for about 15 minutes and leave a few minutes to share if they would like to. If they are stuck hand out the feelings journal prompt sheet.

## Feelings Wheel



## Feelings Journal Prompt

1. Name five memories when you were extremely happy.
2. Name two memories when you were extremely sad.
3. The biggest challenge in your life right now is...
4. Who can you talk to about the challenge in your life?
5. What are three things that scare you?
6. If you could rewrite the outcome of the person who died, what would it look like?
7. What helps you the most when things are sad?
8. What is your biggest regret?
9. Name five things that you are grateful for. (Of those five things pick two- How would you feel if you didn't have those two things in your life and why?)

# Feelings Word Find | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 20-40 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings and the behaviors

**Material:** Large piece of paper, markers, paper plates and scissors

*Facilitator: “When we recognize our emotions we are then able to think back to see what we did with those emotions. An example would be, ‘How did you feel after you heard your loved one died?’ Most people say sad... but what did you do after you felt that emotion (cried, got mad and yelled)”*

## **Activity:**

1. Use the feelings word search in this booklet to help draw out a larger version. We kept off the words they need to find on the big wall sheet and had the kids write the words they need to find on their own sheet of paper.

**An alternative to this is just to print off the attached feelings word search. We found they were far more interested in getting up and finding a word on the wall sheet and participating vs. the print off.**

**\*\*\*To make the giant wall sheet we created a grid and filled in all the letters.**

2. Ask the kids to take turns finding words on the wall word search. Each time they find a word answer these two questions:
  - a. Tell us about a time you felt this way?
  - b. What did you do with that feeling
3. Once the words are all found move onto the next activity. Cut a paper plate in half. Have the kids draw a face to match their HARDEST emotion to deal with or talk about.
4. Take turns guessing the emotion. Ask everyone to suggest ways to help deal with the emotion. Have the kids write the suggestions on the back side of the face.

## Feelings Word Find

O R H Y K Z D E R A C S  
T D T A O G U I V W W O  
S N A S D C P X W T S K  
W T X S E E K I L S I D  
M E B U S H A P P Y V R  
D A E S I E X C I T E D  
E W U I R S Y D Y C G M  
I P K C P V R F E H G I  
R K F K R X G R W R S Q  
R D Z S U Y N S F Y I K  
O P M H S W A C C O X T  
W S U S P I C I O U S C

ANGRY

DISLIKE

EXCITED

HAPPY

SAD

SCARED

SHY

SICK

SURPRISED

SUSPICIOUS

TIRED

WORRIED

# Anger Catchers | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 10 minutes

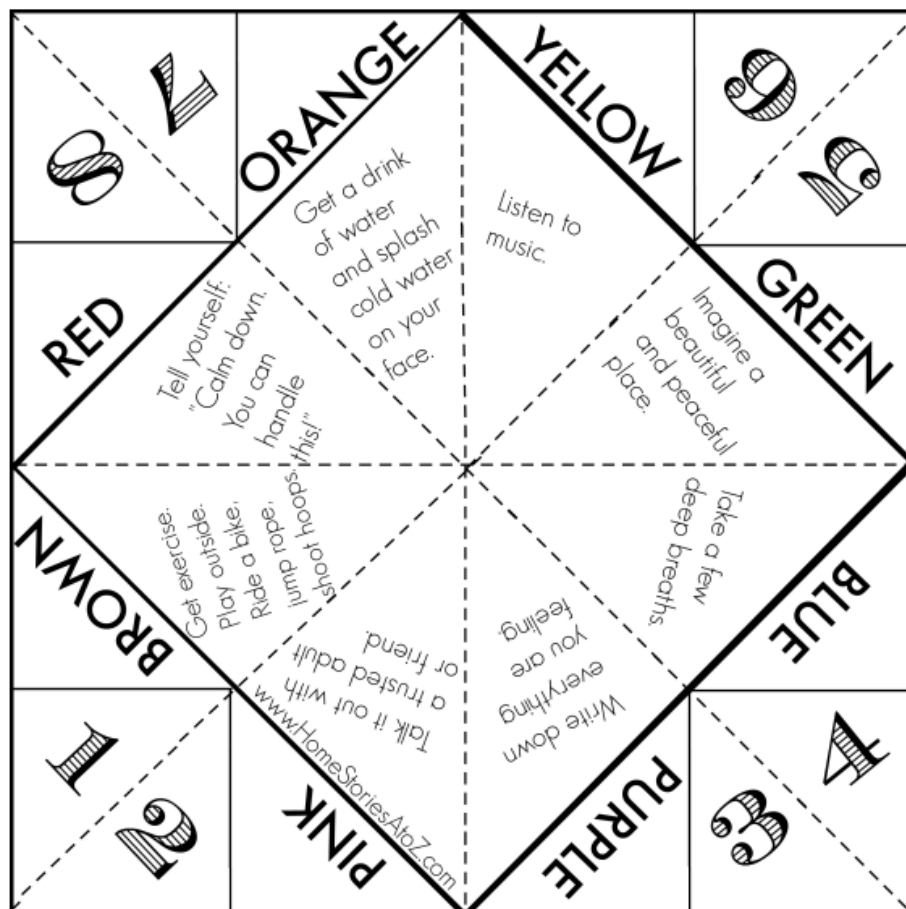
**Objective:** Talk through feelings- anger

**Material:** Anger catcher sheet, coloring materials, scissors

*Facilitator: “Think back to a time when you were angry. Was it today, this week, last week? What did you do because of it- go talk to a friend, ignore the issue and so something else that made you happier? Even recognizing the fact that you are angry can be a great first step to working through the anger.”*

**Activity:**

1. Talk through examples of anger what they did with it feels like in your body. What they did after getting angry. What are some ideas of what they can do? Write about it, talk to a friend, call someone they trust, punch a pillow, deep breaths, walk away from the situation, sit with the emotion and announce that they are angry.
2. Color the anger sheets and through the options on the flaps.



#### ANGER CATCHER DIRECTIONS

1. Cut out the anger catcher and turn it face down.
2. Fold each corner towards the center so that the numbers and colors are facing you.
3. Turn it over and again fold each corner into the center so that the color names are visible.
4. Fold it in half so that the color names are touching and the numbers are on the outside. Now open it and fold it in half the other way.
5. Insert your thumb and first finger of each hand (pinching motion) under the number flaps.
6. Close the anger catcher so only the numbers show.

**TO USE:** Pick a number and open and close the anger catcher that number of times. Next, pick a color and spell out the color name, opening and closing the anger catcher for each letter. Then pick a color that is visible and open that flap. Read what it says and practice that anger management technique! This game can be played with one or two players and is a great way to teach self-soothing techniques.

# Sun Catcher Activity | Middles 8-11

**Time: 15-30 minutes**

**Objective: Memory/Continuing Bonds**

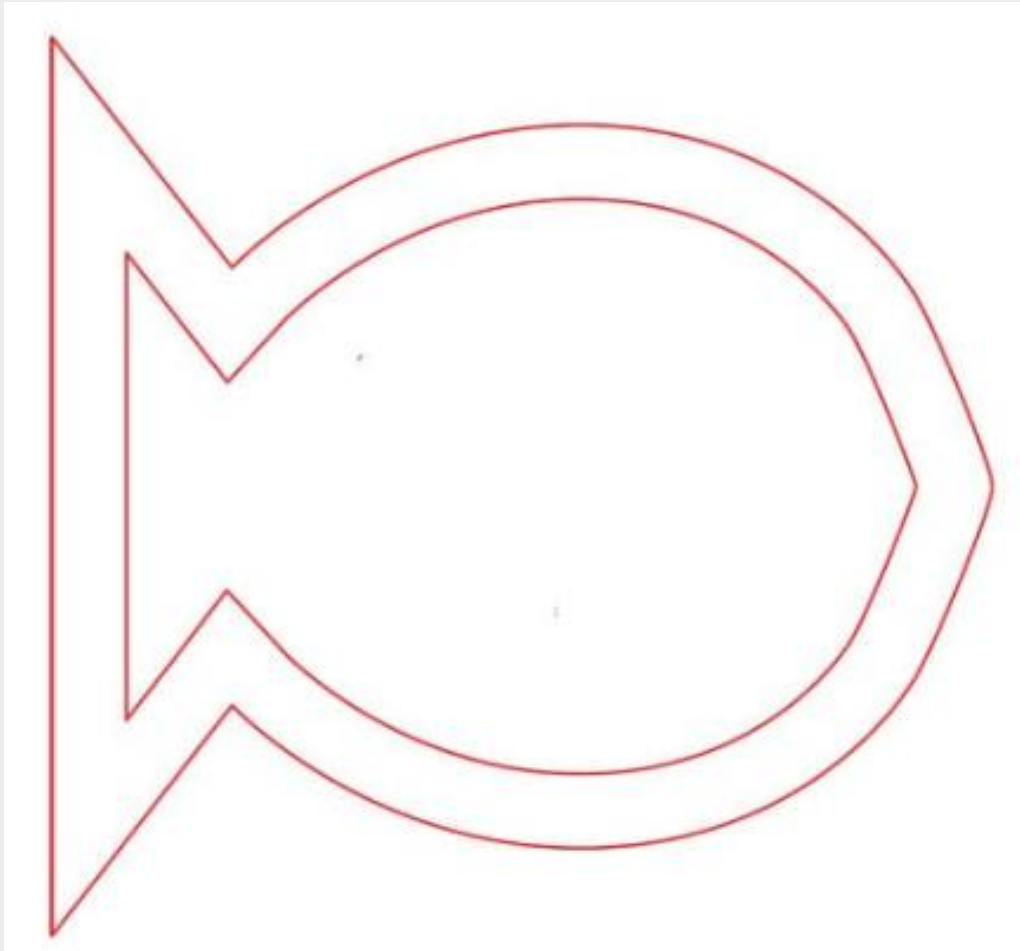
**Material: Construction paper, tissue paper, contact paper, and journals or piece of paper**

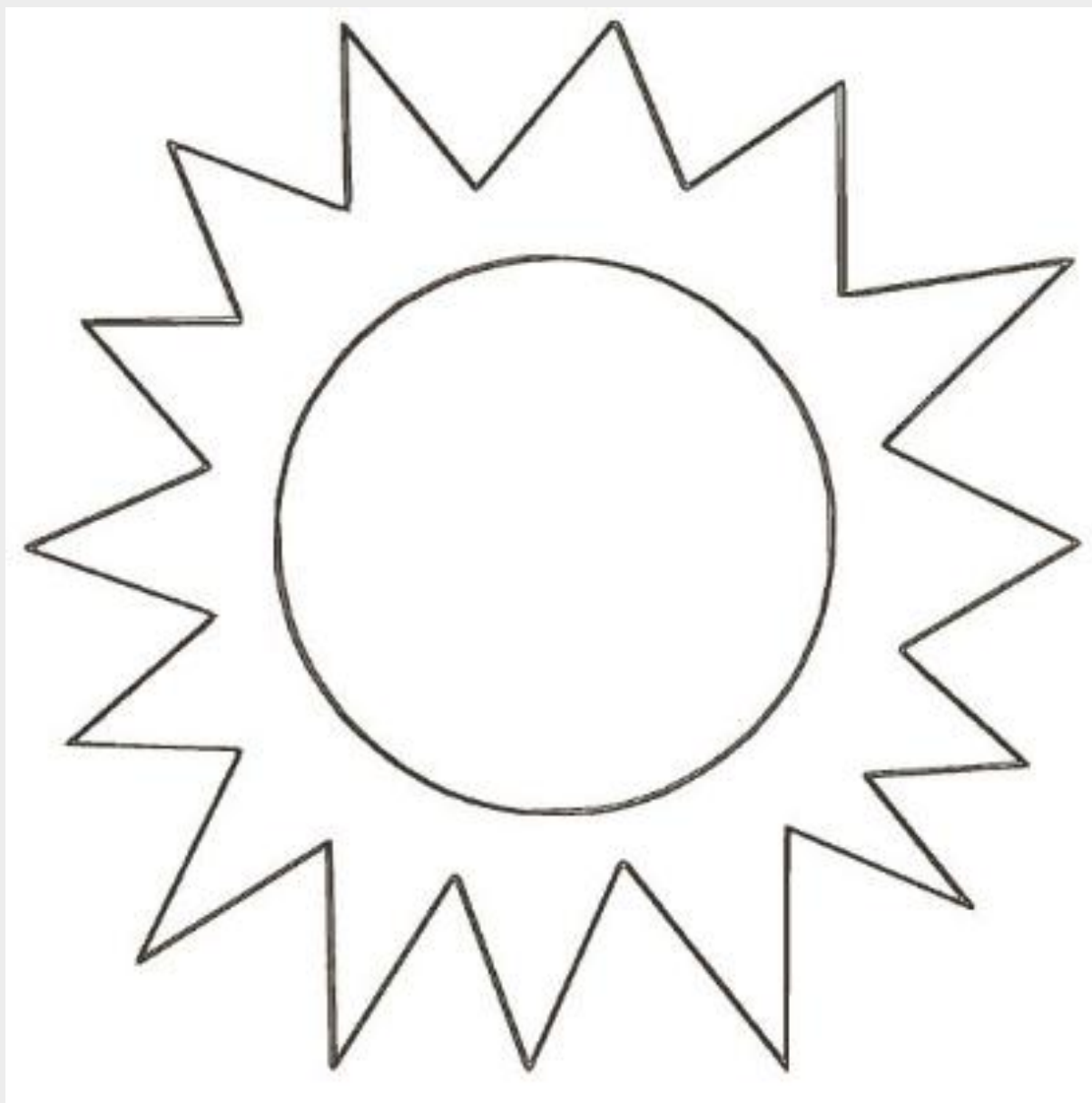
*Facilitator: “Losing someone we love can be very hard and make us feel all sorts of emotions. Some of us may have memories of the person who died, but some of us might only know what others have told us through stories. Today we are going to make our own memorial for the person who died.”*

## **Activities:**

1. Hand out journals or piece of paper. Ask what we can do to continue a relationship with the person who died? Suggest the students add these ideas in their journal. Brainstorm together as a group.
  1. We can draw pictures about our loved one.
  2. Write them a letter.
  3. Look at their pictures.
  4. We can talk to them.
  5. Listen to a song that reminds us of them
  6. Visit them with our family if they are in a cemetery.
  7. Create something in memory of them
2. Art Activity:
  1. Have each student pick a shape that represents their loved one and two pieces of contact paper.
  2. Help each child remove the backing from one piece of contact paper and then have them place the shape on the sticky contact paper. Maybe a color that represents the person who died or a color for the time of the year the person died. Can color with markers on the tissue paper or write the person's name.
  3. Ask the children to add tissue paper squares until their shape is filled. Cover the whole area.
  4. Assist the kids with the other piece of contact paper to seal the image. Have children cut out their shape and then show them off to the group.







# Guided Meditation | Middles 8-11

**Time: 10-20 minutes**

**Objective: Coping Skills/Emotional Regulation**

**Material: Comfy spots, meditation cd or computer to play video**

*Facilitator: “Has anyone heard of meditation? What do you think it looks like? There are different ways we can meditation, by just being still and quieting our minds, or even using a guided meditation. That just means listening to a cd or a video that someone else is talking to you explaining how to relax and what to think about. Does anyone know why we might want to try meditation?”*

*Some benefits of meditation can be distressing and lowering our heart rates. By calming our minds and bodies, that can help with stress and anxiety. Taking a break from our everyday school and home life can be helpful even if it is for 5 minutes.”*

## **Activity:**

5. Ask the kids find a comfortable spot, lower the lights, and diffuse some lavender essential oil if possible. Let the kids hug a pillow or stuffed animal if they are available.
6. Some kids may giggle at this exercise or be making jokes. Remind them the respect expectation. Even if they are not into it or want to try it out that they need to respect that other friends might want to try this. Give them the option of just trying to be quiet for the first half... usually works for the ones who are laughing at the activity. Often times they are just uncomfortable about being quiet and trying to relax their bodies. You can give them the option as a last resort to use a fidget toy and stay quiet.
7. While getting the room ready, have the kids each think about their loved one. Have them pay attention to how those thoughts and memories make them feel.
8. Play the mindfulness CD. After it is complete, talk about how the guided meditation makes you feel.
9. Talk about ways they can do this at home- play a video on a computer or phone (with adult permission), sit quiet for 5 minutes, do breathing exercise for 5 minutes when you wake up or before bed, or rent a meditation or breathing cd from the library.

**\*\*We ordered the “Magic Island: Guided Meditation for Kids” by Betty Mehling on Amazon for \$14.65 – can look for it at a public library as well. The 8-10 year old kids really took to it.**

# Dream Catcher Activity | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings and memorial

**Material:** String, plastic circles, beads, feathers, journals or paper and pen

*Facilitator: “Has anyone heard of a dream catcher before? What do you think they do? You are supposed to hang them by your bed so bad dreams get caught in the web part. Then the good dreams go through the center and rest of the feathers. The beads can also trap the bad dreams.*

*Today we are going to make our very own dream catcher in memory of the person who died. Do you know what ‘in memory’ means? It is a way to show how we can remember the person”.*

## **Activity:**

1. On a piece of paper or journal, write out a few sentences or words of things that bring you down. Examples: mom passed away, homework, fighting with sibling, lack of spending money...
2. Now, write down a list of positive things in your life. Examples: family, friends, pets, job, sports/hobbies...
3. Lastly, write down two things that help cheer you up when you are feeling upset.
4. Pick out a piece of colored string to represent each pro and con.
5. Wrapping each positive string around the outside of the ring and tie it to the ring at each end. Once one string ends, begin the next until your ring is completely wrapped.
6. Take the con strings and tie them together at the ends, to make one long string.
7. Pick out a bead to represent your loved one who has passed away and a few beads to represent goals or dreams you wish to achieve. Tie to the middle of the dream catcher.
8. Tie the remaining string to the ring and then create a star formation. Add a bead to the string and make a second star formation that is slightly staggered from the first. Add another bead and repeat until the string and beads are fully used up and tie at the end.
9. Choose two feathers that represent the coping techniques you use to help make you feel better when you're upset and a few beads to represent happy memories.

10. Pick out two additional pieces of yarn, add beads and feathers and tie to the ring.

11. Use one more piece of yarn to tie a loop at the top of the ring so you can hang your dream catcher.



# Memory Lantern | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Memorial to remember the person who died

**Material:** Mason jar (or plastic jar), tissue paper, modge podge (or glue with water), optional LED candles

*Facilitator: “Memories are a great way to share the life of the person who has died. They can help some people feel connected to their loved ones, and even make people smile. Ask if anyone would like to share a memory of their loved one”?*

## Activity:

1. Use markers or pens to write or draw:
  - a. The person who died name
  - b. A symbol or drawing that reminds them of the person who died.
  - c. Their favorite food
  - d. A favorite memory of their loved one
  - e. One wish

\*\*\* Scrapbooking pieces and cut out pictures of magazines can be used, as well as photos of the person who died (will have to ask the kids ahead of time to bring these along- make a photo copy if they don't have permission to use the actual photo).

2. Use modge podge and sponge to coat the jar.
3. Add pieces on top the glue, the cover with a coat of modge podge to seal it all.
4. Place a LED light bulb inside the lantern. Turn out the lights to see all the lanterns glow.
5. Extra time? Have the kids get out some paper and pen. Take some time to write fun memories or gratitude they have for the person who died. Have them fold up the papers and place them in the jar. Remind the kids this can be a go-to for a bad or sad day, read through the good notes to lift their spirits.



# Good Bye Letter | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Coping Skills, continuing bonds

**Material:** Journal (or paper) and pen, (optional- LED candles)

*Facilitator: “Sometimes we think about the person who died. Some people may even talk to them, or go visit them at the cemetery. Others look at old photos, draw pictures or paint memories of the person who died. Can you think of other ways we can honor or communicate with the person who died? Today we are going to work on writing them a letter.*

*This might be tough for some of you and it’s ok if you can’t get through it all. We are going to give each other some space today and be respectful of each other’s privacy”.*

## **Activity:**

1. Set the tone with soothing background music and comfy seating.
2. Hand out journals
3. Hand out Good Bye Letter template or show it up on a screen.
4. Ask if anyone wants to share. (Optional) When each kid finishes reading their letter, give them a candle to light. (You can dim the lights if you would like)

---

## **The Goodbye Letter**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Self Care Plan | Middles 8-11

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Self discovery, self care

**Material:** Self Care Plan sheet, pen or pencil (optional- magazines, scissors and glue)

*Facilitator: “Self care can mean a lot of different things. What does that phrase mean to you? (Can use a big paper on the wall to brainstorm).*

*Here is a definition of self care: ‘Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others.’ - psychcentral.com*

*Now let’s brainstorm what self care could REALLY look like to you.*

## **Activity:**

1. Finish brainstorming actual self care activities;
  - a. Quiet time
  - b. Journaling
  - c. Drawing/painting/ceramics/art
  - d. Exercise (yoga, swimming, running, weight lifting...)
  - e. Spending time with family or friends
  - f. Watching movies
  - g. Personal care (painting nails, grooming hair...)
2. Talk about why it is important to take care of you. Can use the expression you can’t pour from an empty cup.
3. Hand out the Self Care sheets.
4. Can use magazines to cut out and glue on their page if they would like to. Otherwise color and fill out the sheets.
5. Wrap up by sharing with each other.

## Self Care Plan

**'s Self-Care Plan!**


**MIND**

**BODY**


**SPIRIT**

**SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE**

**I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH**



Self Care Plan by Social Work Tech | Ignacio Pacheco  
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# I Am Poem | Middles 8-11

**Time: 10-20 minutes**

**Objective: Self Discovery**

**Material: I AM Poem Sheet, journals (or paper and pens)**

*Facilitator: “In order to explain to others who we are, sometimes we need to take a moment and really think about who we are. Today we are going to work on an exercise of writing a poem about ourselves. We have sheets to help guide you through the poem, or you can feel free to freely write your own poem if that is more your style”.*

## **Activity:**

1. Hand out journals (or sheets of paper and pen)
2. Hand out I Am Poem Sheets or show up on a screen.
3. Let the kids spread out and work on their poems. (Soothing music playing in the background.
4. Go around and let each kids share if they would like.
5. Talk about if they think they changed since the person died.
6. Talk about if they think anyone in their family has changed.

# I Am Poem

## Writing an "I Am" Poem

### MODEL

#### FIRST STANZA

I am (2 special characteristics you have)  
I wonder (something of curiosity)  
I hear (an imaginary sound)  
I see (an imaginary sight)  
I want (an actual desire)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

#### SECOND STANZA

I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)  
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)  
I touch (an imaginary touch)  
I worry (something that bothers you)  
I cry (something that makes you sad)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

#### THIRD STANZA

I understand (something that is true)  
I say (something you believe in)  
I dream (something you dream about)  
I try (something you really make an effort about)  
I hope (something you actually hope for)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

### EXAMPLE

I am polite and kind  
I wonder about my kids' future  
I hear a unicorn's cry  
I see Atlantis  
I want to do it all over again  
I am polite and kind

I pretend I am a princess  
I feel an angel's wings  
I touch a summer's cloud  
I worry about violence  
I cry for my Gram  
I am polite and kind

I understand your love for me  
I say children are our future  
I dream for a quiet day  
I try to do my best  
I hope the success of my children  
I am polite and kind.

# Group Activities- Big Kids 12-18

# Dream Catcher Activity | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings and memorial

**Material:** String, plastic circles, beads, feathers, journals or paper and pen

*Facilitator: “Has anyone heard of a dream catcher before? What do you think they do? You are supposed to hang them by your bed so bad dreams get caught in the web part. Then the good dreams go through the center and rest of the feathers. The beads can also trap the bad dreams.*

*Today we are going to make our very own dream catcher in memory of the person who died. Do you know what ‘in memory’ means? It is a way to show how we can remember the person”.*

## **Activity:**

1. On a piece of paper or journal, write out a few sentences or words of things that bring you down. Examples: mom passed away, homework, fighting with sibling, lack of spending money...
2. Now, write down a list of positive things in your life. Examples: family, friends, pets, job, sports/hobbies...
3. Lastly, write down two things that help cheer you up when you are feeling upset.
4. Pick out a piece of colored string to represent each pro and con.
5. Wrapping each positive string around the outside of the ring and tie it to the ring at each end. Once one string ends, begin the next until your ring is completely wrapped.
6. Take the con strings and tie them together at the ends, to make one long string.
7. Pick out a bead to represent your loved one who has passed away and a few beads to represent goals or dreams you wish to achieve. Tie to the middle of the dream catcher.
8. Tie the remaining string to the ring and then create a star formation. Add a bead to the string and make a second star formation that is slightly staggered from the first. Add another bead and repeat until the string and beads are fully used up and tie at the end.
9. Choose two feathers that represent the coping techniques you use to help make you feel better when you're upset and a few beads to represent happy memories.

10. Pick out two additional pieces of yarn, add beads and feathers and tie to the ring.
11. Use one more piece of yarn to tie a loop at the top of the ring so you can hang your dream catcher.



# Feelings Word Find | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 20-40 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings and the behaviors

**Material:** Large piece of paper, markers, paper plates and scissors

*Facilitator: “When we recognize our emotions we are then able to think back to see what we did with those emotions. An example would be, ‘How did you feel after you heard your loved one died?’ Most people say sad... but what did you do after you felt that emotion (cried, got mad and yelled)”*

## **Activity:**

1. Use the feelings word search in this booklet to help draw out a larger version. We kept off the words they need to find on the big wall sheet and had the kids write the words they need to find on their own sheet of paper.

**An alternative to this is just to print off the attached feelings word search. We found they were far more interested in getting up and finding a word on the wall sheet and participating vs. the print off.**

**\*\*\*To make the giant wall sheet we created a grid and filled in all the letters.**

2. Ask the kids to take turns finding words on the wall word search. Each time they find a word answer these two questions:
  - a. Tell us about a time you felt this way?
  - b. What did you do with that feeling
3. Once the words are all found move onto the next activity. Cut a paper plate in half. Have the kids draw a face to match their HARDEST emotion to deal with or talk about.
4. Take turns guessing the emotion. Ask everyone to suggest ways to help deal with the emotion. Have the kids write the suggestions on the back side of the face.

## Feelings Word Find

O R H Y K Z D E R A C S  
T D T A O G U I V W W O  
S N A S D C P X W T S K  
W T X S E E K I L S I D  
M E B U S H A P P Y V R  
D A E S I E X C I T E D  
E W U I R S Y D Y C G M  
I P K C P V R F E H G I  
R K F K R X G R W R S Q  
R D Z S U Y N S F Y I K  
O P M H S W A C C O X T  
W S U S P I C I O U S C

ANGRY

DISLIKE

EXCITED

HAPPY

SAD

SCARED

SHY

SICK

SURPRISED

SUSPICIOUS

TIRED

WORRIED

# Anger Catchers | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings- anger

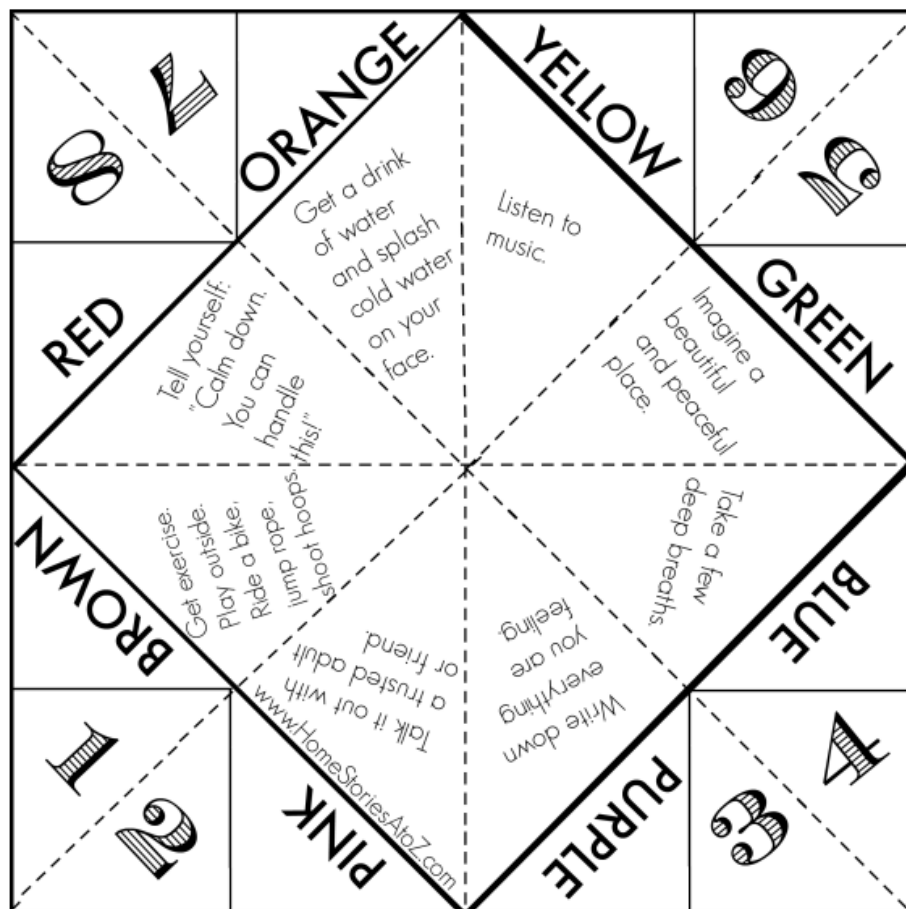
**Material:** Anger catcher sheet, coloring materials, scissors

*Facilitator: “Think back to a time when you were angry. Was it today, this week, last week? What did you do because of it?*

*Talk out loud of what they ACTUALLY did: go talk to a friend, ignore the issue and do something else that made you happier, scroll on social media, shopping, partying...? Even recognizing the fact that you are angry can be a great first step to working through the anger.”*

## **Activity:**

1. Talk through examples of anger what they did with it feel like in your body. What they did after getting angry. What are some ideas of what they can do? Write about it, talk to a friend, call someone they trust, punch a pillow, deep breaths, walk away from the situation, sit with the emotion and announce that they are angry.
2. Color the anger sheets and through the options on the flaps.



#### ANGER CATCHER DIRECTIONS

1. Cut out the anger catcher and turn it face down.
2. Fold each corner towards the center so that the numbers and colors are facing you.
3. Turn it over and again fold each corner into the center so that the color names are visible.
4. Fold it in half so that the color names are touching and the numbers are on the outside. Now open it and fold it in half the other way.
5. Insert your thumb and first finger of each hand (pinching motion) under the number flaps.
6. Close the anger catcher so only the numbers show.

**TO USE:** Pick a number and open and close the anger catcher that number of times. Next, pick a color and spell out the color name, opening and closing the anger catcher for each letter. Then pick a color that is visible and open that flap. Read what it says and practice that anger management technique! This game can be played with one or two players and is a great way to teach self-soothing techniques.

# Timeline | Big Kids 12-18

**Time: 10-20 minutes**

**Objective: Emotions related to life events**

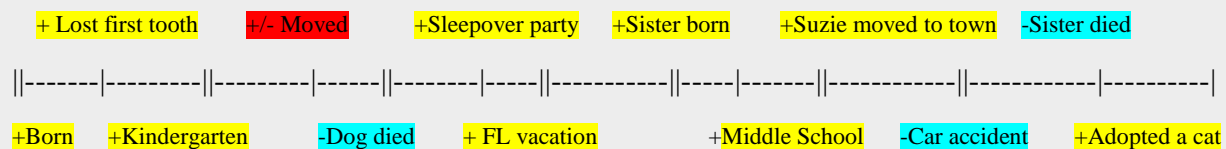
**Material: Journal or paper and pen, with markers or colored pencils**

*Facilitator: “Today we are making timeline of our lives. By looking back to see what good and bad things we have lived through, we can get an appreciation for being as far as we are in our journey. We are going to talk about the events in your life, but also the way you felt during these events. Pick out a color that represents happiness to you, and then pick out a color that represents sadness to you”.*

## Activity:

1. Pass out journals or pens and paper.
2. Draw a line. Doesn't have to be straight, can be curvy or any design.
3. Think back to all the different things in your life and add in order to your timeline:

1. Born
2. First day of school
3. Middle School
4. High School
5. Any siblings born
6. Any pets in your life, new to the family or died
7. Moved any houses
8. Has anyone died
9. Have you been to any funerals
10. New friends in your life
11. Any friends moved away
12. Vacations
13. Any accidents



4. Add a plus or minus based on happy memory or a sad memory. Then go through and color over the words or make a symbol with colors based on how you FELT during that time. Can get out the feelings wheel to help them put a feeling word with the event.
5. Take turns sharing your timeline.
6. On the back of the page or bottom of the page write 1 reason you are grateful for each life event.

# Guided Meditation | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Coping Skills/Emotional Regulation

**Material:** Comfy spots, meditation cd or computer to play video

*Facilitator: “Has anyone heard of meditation? What do you think it looks like? There are different ways we can meditation, by just being still and quieting our minds, or even using a guided meditation. That just means listening to a cd or a video that someone else is talking to you explaining how to relax and what to think about. Does anyone know why we might want to try meditation?”*

*Some benefits of meditation can be distressing and lowering our heart rates. By calming our minds and bodies, that can help with stress and anxiety. Taking a break from our everyday school and home life can be helpful even if it is for 5 minutes.”*

## **Activity:**

1. Ask the kids find a comfortable spot, lower the lights, and diffuse some lavender essential oil if possible. Let the kids hug a pillow or stuffed animal if they are available.
2. Some kids may giggle at this exercise or be making jokes. Remind them the respect expectation. Even if they are not into it or want to try it out, that they need to respect that other friends might want to try this. Give them the option of just trying to be quiet for the first half... usually works for the ones who are laughing at the activity. Often times they are just uncomfortable about being quiet and trying to relax their bodies. You can give them the option as a last resort to use a fidget toy and stay quiet.
3. While getting the room ready, have the kids each think about their loved one. Have them pay attention to how those thoughts and memories make them feel.
4. Play the mindfulness CD. After it is complete, talk about how the guided meditation makes you feel.
5. Talk about ways they can do this at home- play a video on a computer or phone (with adult permission), sit quiet for 5 minutes, do breathing exercise for 5 minutes when you wake up or before bed, or rent a meditation or breathing cd from the library.

**\*\*We ordered the “Magic Island: Guided Meditation for Kids” by Betty Mehling on Amazon for \$14.65 – can look for it at a public library as well. The 8-10 year old kids really took to it.**

**\*\*For teens we ordered, “Mindfulness Meditation for Teens” by Bodhipaksa on Amazon for \$9.95- can look for it at a public library as well.**

**\*\*Apps: <http://jesslively.com/favoritemeditations>**

# Doodle Memorial | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 5-15 minutes

**Objective:** Memorial through art therapy

**Material:** Journal or paper and art supplies

*Facilitator: “Some people express their grief of the person who died by journaling, or talking to friends, family or counselors. What are some other forms of expression?”*

*Songs- listening to music, singing or writing or playing music*

*Journaling- writing down feelings and what is going on in your life*

*Exercise- running, working out, swimming, kick boxing, yoga, karate...*

*Art- drawing, painting, creating...*

*Today we are going to try out creating through drawing or painting”.*

## **Activity:**

1. Ask the teens to close their eyes and think of their loved one. Ask if a symbol or color or animal come to mind? Maybe their favorite color, or car or shirt?
2. Turn on calming music. Pass our journal or paper and supplies. Have them just start drawing or painting.
3. If they are stuck you can prompt them with these questions:
  1. If you were to get a tattoo in memory of their loved one, what would it look like?
  2. Was there a favorite holiday you shared with the person who died?
  3. Does your body feel angry, sad, frustrated, joyful or happy when you think of the person who died? (jagged lines vs. fluid curves)
  4. If you could have one more day with the person who died, what would you do together?
4. Go around the circle and they can share their drawing if they would like. Explain that drawing is also a form of journaling and may be a good way to express their feelings and cope with a heavy loss.

# Feelings | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Objective:** Talk through feelings

**Material:** Journals or pieces of paper and pen, optional large sheet of paper

*Facilitator: “We are going to be talking about feelings tonight. Most people think feelings are sad, mad, angry, and happy, but it is so much more than that. There are so many more feelings people feel every day. Also, what you do with feelings can be good or bad”.*

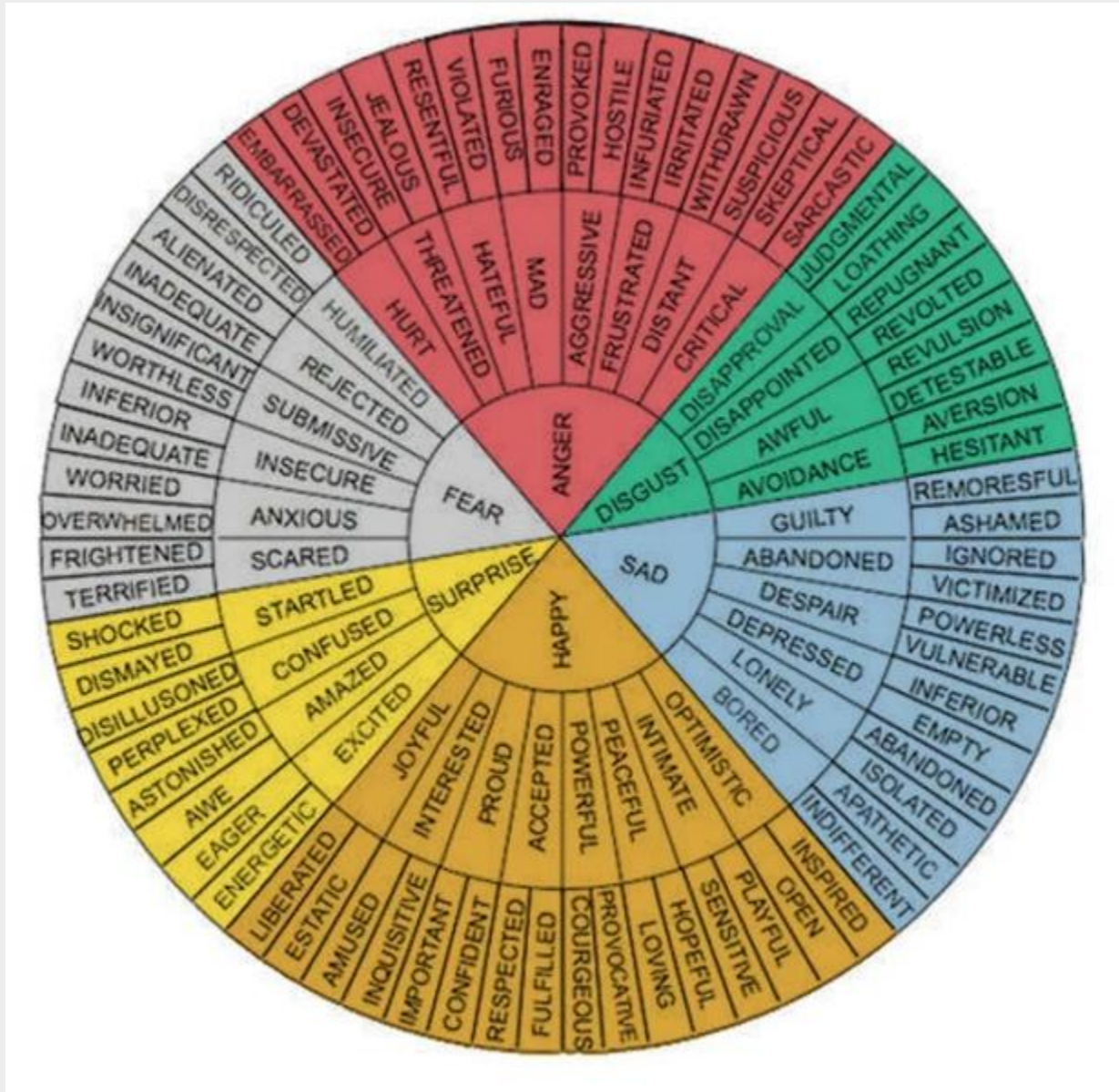
## Activity:

1. Hand out feelings wheel and talk about how core feelings can have deeper feelings attached to them.
2. Ask each person to go around and say “Right now I’m feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_”
3. When we get better at identifying our feelings, we can learn healthy ways to express and cope with our feelings. Why would we want to get better at expressing our feelings? (Optional brainstorm on large piece of paper)
  - a. Be more kind to others
  - b. Be able to support family and friends
  - c. Perform better in school less behavioral problems at home and in school
  - d. Feel more self aware and confident (ask if they know what these are)
  - e. Avoid bottling up feelings and exploding later

## Journaling:

1. Get out journals or pieces of paper. Have the kids spread out and get comfortable.
2. Ask the kids “What do you ACTUALLY do when you feel sad? (Not what you should do). Kids can always draw pictures if they don’t want to write.
3. Journal for about 15 minutes and leave a few minutes to share if they would like to. If they are stuck hand out the feelings journal prompt sheet.

## Feelings Wheel



## Feelings Journal Prompt

Name five memories when you were extremely happy.

Name two memories when you were extremely sad.

The biggest challenge in your life right now is...

Who can you talk to about the challenge in your life?

What are three things that scare you?

If you could rewrite the outcome of the person who died, what would it look like?

What helps you the most when things are sad?

What is your biggest regret?

Name five things that you are grateful for. (Of those five things pick two- How would you feel if you didn't have those two things in your life and why?)

# Containing Worries | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Emotional Regulation

**Material:** Journal or paper and art supplies

*Facilitator: “Worries, we all have them. Some can seem like BIG worries in our life and others can seem like small ones that will be over soon, like a test or sports game. We are all walking around with a head full of worries.*

*Today we are going to call them out on paper. You can hide your papers if you want so others don’t see. Why do you think we would want to acknowledge our worries?*

*To see how much worry we are carrying around.*

*To realize how big or small our worries are.*

*To work on ways to lessen our worries”*

## **Activity:**

1. Hand out journals or paper and art supplies.
2. Hand out the Challenging Negative Thoughts sheet. Journal on the questions. Share if they would like.
3. On a separate sheet of paper ask the kids to draw the brand new worry on the back side of the paper. Give them some time to add details if they wish.
4. Then have them draw a container around their thought. Talk through the questions on the Challenging Negative Thoughts sheet.
5. Then have them tear up/crumple/destroy their negative thought and throw it away.

## Challenging Negative Thoughts

Depression, poor self-esteem, and anxiety are often the result of irrational negative thoughts. Someone who regularly receives positive feedback at work might feel that they are horrible at their job because of one criticism. Their irrational thought about job performance will dictate how they feel about themselves. Challenging irrational thoughts can help us change them.

**Answer the following questions to assess your thought:**

- ◆ Is there substantial evidence for my thought?
  
  
  
  
- ◆ Is there evidence *contrary* to my thought?
  
  
  
  
- ◆ Am I attempting to interpret this situation without all the evidence?
  
  
  
  
- ◆ What would a friend think about this situation?
  
  
  
  
- ◆ If I look at the situation positively, how is it different?
  
  
  
  
- ◆ Will this matter a year from now? How about five years from now?

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." – William Shakespeare

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# Grief on Special Days | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minute

**Objective:** Grief feelings

**Material:** Journal or paper and art supplies

*Facilitator: “When it comes to special days and holidays, people experiencing grief often say things like – “I just want to make it through in one piece.” or “I’m worried I won’t be able to hold it together.” In an effort to avoid falling apart, people often brace them very tightly and avoid anything that might compromise their strength. Reasons why grieving people become very rigid, anxious, avoidant, and inflexible about the holidays include...*

- *They feel incapacitated by their grief*
- *They can’t muster up energy or enthusiasm*
- *They fear change*
- *They fear grief triggers*
- *They fear the holidays will be too emotional*
- *They don’t know how to bring the family together due to conflict and/or different coping styles*
- *Their loved one was so central to holiday ritual and tradition that they don’t know where to begin*

*It’s normal to feel any or all of these things, but instead of shutting down or giving up; we want you to acknowledge your fears, challenges, and barriers. Accept that things won’t be perfect. Recognize the emotions that have been following you around since your loved one’s death. Then, once you’ve done all that, put one foot ever so slightly in front of the other and baby step your way towards whatever holiday it is that brought you here”.*

## **Activity:**

1. Close your eyes for a few minutes and envision whatever holiday or special day is currently looming on the horizon.
  - a. When you think about this day, what thoughts, memories, emotions, worries, and anxieties come up for you?
  - b. After sitting with your thoughts for a few minutes, get out a sheet of paper and finishing the following statements:

**I anticipate my loved one’s absence will be most painful when...**

**I’m worried about becoming emotional when...**

**My biggest fear is...**

**On this holiday, my loved one used to...**

**I am devastated that \_\_\_\_\_ will have to change.**

**It breaks my heart that my loved one will miss...**

**Source:** WYG [whatsyourgrief.com/course-status/](https://www.whatsyourgrief.com/course-status/)

# Good Bye Letter | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Coping Skills, continuing bonds

**Material:** Journal (or paper) and pen, (optional- LED candles)

*Facilitator: “Sometimes we think about the person who died. Some people may even talk to them, or go visit them at the cemetery. Others look at old photos, draw pictures or paint memories of the person who died. Can you think of other ways we can honor or communicate with the person who died? Today we are going to work on writing them a letter.*

*This might be tough for some of you and its ok if you can't get through it all. We are going to give each other some space today and be respectful of each other's privacy”.*

## **Activity:**

1. Set the tone with soothing background music and comfy seating.
2. Hand out journals
3. Hand out Good Bye Letter template or show it up on a screen.
4. Ask if anyone wants to share. (Optional) When each kid finishes reading their letter, give them a candle to light. (You can dim the lights if you would like)

---

## **The Goodbye Letter**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Baggage Exercise | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minute

**Objective:** Talk through feelings/Coping skills

**Material:** Paper and pens/pencils

*Facilitator: “Do you walk through the halls at school with a lot of stuff on your mind? What do you do with your worries? A lot of teens don’t have a good outlet for sharing their worries and feelings. Today we are going to crumple up our feelings”.*

## **Activities:**

1. Have the students write what is hurting them, worrying them, or heavy on their hearts. One on each piece of paper.
2. Ask them to crumple up the worries and toss it across the room or in a basket (avoiding hitting people).
3. Once everyone is done have each student to pick up one random paper and read it out loud. They can remain anonymous or the writer can speak about it if they would like.
4. Once everyone reads one paper have the students throw all the paper in one bag and talk about how you are not alone.
5. Talk about ideas on how to unload worries.

# I Am Poem | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Self Discovery

**Material:** I AM Poem Sheet, journals (or paper and pens)

*Facilitator: “In order to explain to others who we are, sometimes we need to take a moment and really think about who we are. Today we are going to work on an exercise of writing a poem about ourselves. We have sheets to help guide you through the poem, or you can feel free to freely write your own poem if that is more your style”.*

## **Activity:**

1. Hand out journals (or sheets of paper and pen)
2. Hand out I Am Poem Sheets or show up on a screen.
3. Let the kids spread out and work on their poems. (Soothing music playing in the background.
4. Go around and let each kids share if they would like.
5. Talk about if they think they changed since the person died.
6. Talk about if they think anyone in their family has changed.

# Writing an "I Am" Poem

## MODEL

### FIRST STANZA

I am (2 special characteristics you have)  
I wonder (something of curiosity)  
I hear (an imaginary sound)  
I see (an imaginary sight)  
I want (an actual desire)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

### SECOND STANZA

I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)  
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)  
I touch (an imaginary touch)  
I worry (something that bothers you)  
I cry (something that makes you sad)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

### THIRD STANZA

I understand (something that is true)  
I say (something you believe in)  
I dream (something you dream about)  
I try (something you really make an effort about)  
I hope (something you actually hope for)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

## EXAMPLE

I am polite and kind  
I wonder about my kids' future  
I hear a unicorn's cry  
I see Atlantis  
I want to do it all over again  
I am polite and kind

I pretend I am a princess  
I feel an angel's wings  
I touch a summer's cloud  
I worry about violence  
I cry for my Gram  
I am polite and kind

I understand your love for me  
I say children are our future  
I dream for a quiet day  
I try to do my best  
I hope the success of my children  
I am polite and kind.

# Self Care Plan | Big Kids 12-18

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Objective:** Self discovery, self care

**Material:** Self Care Plan sheet, pen or pencil (optional- magazines, scissors and glue)

*Facilitator: “Self care can mean a lot of different things. What does that phrase mean to you? (Can use a big paper on the wall to brainstorm).*

*Here is a definition of self care: ‘Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others.’ - psychcentral.com*

*Now let’s brainstorm what self care could REALLY look like to you.*

## **Activity:**

1. Finish brainstorming actual self care activities;
  - a. Quiet time
  - b. Journaling
  - c. Drawing/painting/ceramics/art
  - d. Exercise (yoga, swimming, running, weight lifting...)
  - e. Spending time with family or friends
  - f. Watching movies
  - g. Personal care (painting nails, grooming hair...)
2. Talk about why it is important to take care of you. Can use the expression you can’t pour from an empty cup.
3. Hand out the Self Care sheets.
4. Can use magazines to cut out and glue on their page if they would like to. Otherwise color and fill out the sheets.
5. Wrap up by sharing with each other.

## Self Care Plan

**'s Self-Care Plan!**


**MIND**


**BODY**

**SPIRIT**

**SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE**

**I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH**

 Self Care Plan by Social Work Tech | Ignacio Pacheco  
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# How do you measure success of the program?

First you have to set some key performance indicators (KPI). These could be:

Attendance

Healing signs

You can always take a survey every 5 groups. Include questions about your KPIs.

Healing could look like:

Enjoy coming to groups

Participating more than the beginning

Looking forward to the holidays

Eating and sleeping better

Accepting the reality and looking forward to the future

Personal growth

# Take home questions or group questions

Who do you feel comfortable talking to at home? (Or over the phone)

Where is your safe space at home?

Do you have any pets at home you can play with or talk to?

My favorite thing to do when I'm at home is \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like about work?

What makes you nervous or anxious at work?

Do you ever have emotional triggers at work?

Feelings when you are alone

Do you have some special photos or things of your person who has died?

How does it make you feel when you look at those things?

What do you do when you are sad when you are alone?

What do you do when you are mad when you are alone?

When I feel really alone and nobody understands me I like to \_\_\_\_\_.

What are three things you can do to make you happy?

When I can't sleep I worry about \_\_\_\_\_

What I worry most about is \_\_\_\_\_

I feel the saddest when \_\_\_\_\_.

I feel the most anxious when \_\_\_\_\_.

Since the loss, the biggest change for me has been \_\_\_\_\_.

My family does or does not talk about the death?

I wish people would have \_\_\_\_\_ right after my person died.

What I want people to know about me now is \_\_\_\_\_.

If I could ask the person one last thing, I would ask \_\_\_\_\_.

One thing that remains the same after my person died is \_\_\_\_\_.

My biggest fear in relation to my person dying is \_\_\_\_\_.

What would you tell a newly bereaved person- some good advice after the loss?

I wish others could understand \_\_\_\_\_ when someone loses a person.

Where do you wish you would be on your grief journey in 5 years?

My biggest support person or animal is \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm the happiest when \_\_\_\_\_.

If I could ask the person(s) I lost one thing, I would ask \_\_\_\_\_.

I struggle most with \_\_\_\_\_.

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

What is one thing someone did or said after the person(s) died that helped or made you feel good?

If you could spend all day tomorrow with the person(s) who died, what would you do?

Who do you feel most comfortable talking to about problems in your life?

When I need to cool down in a heated moment I \_\_\_\_\_ but I really should \_\_\_\_\_.

What is the most important lesson you learned this year?

What is one thing you could be more intentional about?

A smell that reminds me of you is \_\_\_\_\_.

A song that reminds me of my loved one is \_\_\_\_\_.

What are the biggest stressors in your life?

When I feel overwhelmed, I \_\_\_\_\_.

Share about the last time you were with the person(s) who died.

Three words that describe the person(s) who died.

What is one thing you wish you could have said to the person(s) who died?

The things that help me the most are \_\_\_\_\_.

The greatest challenge in my life right now is \_\_\_\_\_.

During tough times, I realize \_\_\_\_\_ helps me the most.

I'm really good at \_\_\_\_\_.

If you could go back in time, what would you tell your 10 year old self?

If you could go forward in time, what would you tell yourself 10 years from now?

If you could ask the person who died one question what would it be?

What is your best memory of the person who died?

I wish my friends would say \_\_\_\_\_.

What season or time of the year holds the most memories for you?

The things that help me the most right now are \_\_\_\_\_.

What is one thing you learned from the person who died?

If they were alive today, what would you want to go do with them?

What is a symbol you have or could have for the person who died?

What is one thing you want to do this year in memory of the person who died?

Who can you talk to when you get sad?

Who can you talk to when you are happy?

# Resources Available

If any kids or families need additional resources (counseling, peer support groups, specialized groups, books, videos, articles, podcasts...) please reach out to Hope's House [info@hopeshousewi.com](mailto:info@hopeshousewi.com) we can create a customized list.

Addition Facilitator Resources for Grief Groups you can check out through Hope's House

“Grief and Loss Support Group Facilitator’s Manual” by Susan Hansen M.S.

“Grief Support Group Curriculum: Facilitator’s Handbook” by Linda Lehmann

“Children and Youth Grief Network: A Handbook for Volunteers”

“Children and Youth Grief Network: A Handbook for Supporters”

## Online Resources:

Can order a free copy of Children and Youth Grief Network books at [www.youthgriefnetwork.com](http://www.youthgriefnetwork.com)

What’s Your Grief [www.whatsyourgrief.com](http://www.whatsyourgrief.com)

The Dougy Center [www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)

National Alliance for Grieving Children [www.childrengrieve.org](http://www.childrengrieve.org)

## Recommended Books for Children Coping With Loss or Trauma

Source: © 2015, National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814, (301) 657-0270 [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

Books can be wonderful tools to use with children who have experienced difficult times such as trauma or loss. Reading (or being read to) and talking with adults can help them understand and cope with their feelings in a developmentally appropriate way. Reading also offers a great way to spend time with a child, reinforce a sense of normalcy and security, and connect with them, all of which are important to recovery from a traumatic experience.

Following is a list of books that are recommended by grief and crisis experts working with children. Parents and caregivers who want to find other books should look for books that address children's grief and loss, natural disasters, anxiety, and dealing with tragedy. Talk to a children's librarian for other appropriate search terms. Parents and caregivers can also refer to the following tips for talking to children about their feelings.

Tips for Using Books to Engage with Children Parents and caregivers who share books with children after a tragedy or loss should be prepared to do the following:

- ☐ Let the characters and story help your child understand how to cope. Discuss ways to feel less anxious or nervous about what is happening.
- ☐ Be willing to answer your child's questions simply, at their level of understanding.
- ☐ Let them know that it is normal to cry, feel scared, or want comfort during difficult times. Provide them with opportunities for that emotional closeness, as needed.
- ☐ Remind children that you, the caregiver/parent are there for them and that you are always willing to help them when times are difficult.
- ☐ Use the power of ritual to help teach children how people in your family or social group remember those who have died.
- ☐ Encourage children to identify simple plans of action to take each day to reengage in normal activities with others.
- ☐ Help children develop simple ways to remember good things about those who have died. They might share a story, draw pictures, or remember occasions that they enjoyed with the person(s) who have died.
- ☐ Let children know that they are loved and cared for. Reach out to other family members or close friends who could also support your child/ren.

## PICTURE BOOKS

*Always and Forever*—Alan Durant (Picture Book) A story for anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. When Fox dies, Mole, Hare, and Otter are devastated. They feel they will never get over their great sadness. How can life go on without him? Then one day Squirrel comes to visit. She reminds Fox's family of all the funny things he used to do. And as the friends share dinner and tell stories, they realize at last that in their hearts and memories, Fox is still with them, and he will be-always and forever.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0152166366 □ Pages: 32 □ Publisher: Harcourt Children's Books □ Age Range: 3+

*Badger's Parting Gifts*—Susan Varley (Picture Book) A touching look at death, and how life goes on. Badger's friends are saddened by his passing, but they come to realize that everyone lives on through their gifts of kindness and the happy memories that remain.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780688115180 □ Publisher: HarperCollins 1984 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 4+

*Bear's Last Journey*—Udo Weingelt (Picture Book) This gentle picture book succeeds in articulating the sense of loss and confusion that children may feel when a loved one dies. Old Bear is very sick. With his animal friends gathered around him, Bear tells them that that he must say good-bye, for he is going on a special journey. "But...but...you're not dying?" asks Rabbit, and Bear admits that he is. All the animals are saddened by the news, but the little fox is especially upset - hurt and angry and confused. He cannot imagine life without Bear. How Fox and the other forest animals

Product Details □ ISBN-10: 0735817995 □ Publisher: North-South Books- 2003 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 4+

*Dead Bird*—Margaret Brown Wise (Picture Book) A group of children find a dead bird and bury it in the woods, sing to it, and place flowers on its grave. Without any reference to religious concepts, the author addresses the sensitive issue of death in a non-threatening way that young children can understand. The spare writing style and design help to sustain the serious mood suggested by the subject matter, making the book an excellent mechanism for the sharing of feelings about death. By gently confronting the emotions associated with the experience of death, the author provides a starting point for discussion with young children faced with the loss of a cherished pet or loved one.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780060289324 □ Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 4 - 7

*Everett Anderson's Goodbye*—Lucille Clifton (Picture Book) A touching portrait of a little boy who is trying to come to grips with his father's death. Lucille Clifton captures Everett's conflicting emotions as he confronts this painful reality. We see him struggle through many stages, from denial and anger to depression and, finally, acceptance. In this spare and moving

poem, the last in this acclaimed series, Lucille Clifton brings Everett Anderson's life full circle.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780805008005 □ Publisher: Square Fish- 1983 □ Pages: 32 □  
Age range: 5+

*Goodbye Mousie*—Robie H. Harris (Picture Book) One morning a boy finds that his pet, Mousie, won't wake up. The truth is Mousie has died. At first the boy doesn't believe it. He gets very mad at Mousie for dying, and then he feels very sad. But talking about Mousie, burying Mousie in a special box, and saying good-bye helps this boy begin to feel better about the loss of his beloved pet.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780689871344 □ Publisher: Aladdin- 2001 □ Pages: 32 □  
Age range: 4+

*The Purple Balloon*—Chris Raschka (Picture Book) When a child becomes aware of his pending death (children tend to know long before the rest of us even want to consider it), and is given the opportunity to draw his feelings, he will often draw a blue or purple balloon, released and unencumbered, on its way upward. Health-care professionals have discovered that this is true, regardless of a child's cultural or religious background and researchers believe that this is symbolic of the child's innate knowledge that a part of them will live forever. . . .

In disarmingly simple and direct language, creates a moving, sensitive book that is also a phenomenally useful tool to talk about death. The message of the book is clear: talking about dying is hard, dying is harder, but there are many people in your life that can help.

Product Details □ ISBN-10: 0375841466 □ Publisher: Schwartz & Wade □ Pages: 32 □  
Age range: 3+

*Remembering Crystal*—Sebastian Loth (Picture Book) Crystal and Zelda are best friends. They do many things together (read books, take trips, talk). When Crystal disappears from the garden and it's evident that she has died. As Zelda remembers all that Crystal taught her about the world and the good times they shared, she realizes that her friend will always be in her heart. In this gentle story, children learn, with Zelda, that true friendship is a gift that doesn't die.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0735823006 □ Publisher: NorthSouth □ Pages: 64 □  
Age range: 3+

*Rudi's Pond*—Eve Bunting (Picture Book) When a sick boy dies, his friends and classmates remember him by building a schoolyard pond in his memory. Based on a true story, "Rudi's Pond" is a gentle, insightful book to help young readers deal with loss.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780618486045 □ Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 1999  
□ Pages: 32

*Sammy in the Sky*—Barbara Walsh (Picture Book) A tale of love, loss, and remembrance. Sammy, the best hound dog in the whole wide world, loves his girl and she loves him. When illness cuts Sammy's life short, the girl's family keeps his spirit alive by celebrating his love of chasing wind-blown bubbles, keeping loyal guard at night, and offering his velvety fur for endless pats and tummy scratches.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0763649272 □ Publisher: Candlewick □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 4+

*The Scar*—Charlotte Moundlic (Picture Book) The story of a boy struggling with wild fluctuations of emotions: sadness, sympathy, and fear, following the death of his mother, which he tries to counteract by closing all the windows, holding his breath, and running around until his heart pounds, since he was told that she'll always be "in your heart." With tenderness, touches of humor, and unflinching emotional truth, Charlotte Moundlic captures the loneliness of grief through the eyes of a child.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0763653415 □ Publisher: Candlewick □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 5+

*Six Is So Much Less Than Seven*—Ronald Himler (Picture Book) A bittersweet story of loss and love. The story follows a farmer's day as he remembers and mourns the loss of one of his seven cats. Though a farmer regrets the sad loss of one of his faithful companions, he realizes that life goes on.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-1887734912 □ Publisher: Star Bright Books □ Pages: 40 □ Age range: 5+

*Someone Special Died*—Joan Prestine (Picture Book) An unencumbered, explanation of death for young children. Using language appropriate for younger audience, the book addresses some of the feelings that a young child may have about death. Instilled is the message that while the person is no longer here with them, there are ways in which they can be remembered.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-1577686828 □ Pages: 32 □ Publisher: Brighter Child □ Age Range: 3+

*Where Do People Go When They Die*—Mindy Avra Portnoy (Picture Book) The answers to the age old question may be as varied as the individuals asked. Some thoughtful answers are provided in this book. Suggestions for parents, on providing honest, age and developmentally appropriate answers to this and related questions are also addressed by the author, Portnoy, a rabbi.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-1580130813 □ Pages: 24 □ Publisher: Kar-Ben Publishing □ Age Range: 5+

*Where The Tomorrows Go*—Manoj S. Abraham (Picture Book) This picture book reminds children of the importance and support that family pets provide. They are beloved companions, very much a part of daily life. Sometimes those pets, such as the main

character's dog, become ill and die, leave a painful gap in the family. The child in the story is saddened by her pet's death, and wonders how to keep her memories alive. As the author illustrates, writing stories about one's experiences with her dog helps accomplish that task, and gives the little girl hope for the future.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0-9887965-7-7 □ Pages: 21 □ Publisher: Sennin Group LLC □ Age Range: 6+

## GENERAL

*A Terrible Thing Happened - A Story for Children Who Have Witnessed Violence or Trauma*—Margaret M. Holmes Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first he tried to forget about it, but soon something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous for no reason. Sometimes his stomach hurt. He had bad dreams. And he started to feel angry and do mean things, which got him in trouble. Then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing that he had tried to forget. Now Sherman is feeling much better. This gently told and tenderly illustrated story is for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic episode, including physical abuse, school or gang violence, accidents, homicide, suicide, and natural disasters such as floods or fire. An afterword by Sasha J. Mudlaff written for parents and other caregivers offers extensive suggestions for helping traumatized children, including a list of other sources that focus on specific events.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9781557986429 □ Publisher: Amer Psychological Assn- 2000 □ Pages: □ Age range: 4+

*Bird*—Zetta Elliott (More appropriate for older children) Mekhai, otherwise known as “Bird”, loves to draw. As Bird struggles to understand the death of his beloved grandfather and his older brother's drug addiction, he escapes into his art. Drawing is an outlet for Bird's emotions and imagination, and provides a path to making sense of his world. A look at a young boy's path to coping with real-life troubles.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-1600602412 □ Publisher: Lee & Low Books □ Pages: 48 □ Age range: 7+

*Chester Raccoon and the Acorn Full of Memories*—Audrey Penn (More appropriate for older children) Chester Raccoon's good friend Skiddel Squirrel has had an accident and will not be returning - ever. Chester is upset that he won't get to play with his friend anymore. Mrs. Raccoon suggests that Chester and his friends create some memories of Skiddel, so that they will have good memories when they miss him. Chester, his brother Ronny, and their friends decide to gather at the pond, where they combine their memories and create a touching celebration of their friend's life.

This sweet story will help children to understand the positive purpose behind memorial services and how "making memories" can provide cheer and comfort when missing an absent loved one.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-1933718293 □ Publisher: Tanglewood Press □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 3+

*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages*—Leo Buscaglia A warm, wonderfully wise and strikingly simple story about a leaf names Freddie. How Freddie and his companion leaves change with the passing seasons, finally falling to the ground with winter's snow, is an inspiring allegory illustrating the delicate balance between life and death.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780943432892 □ Publisher: Slack Incorporated- 1982 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 4+

*Good-bye, Sheepie*—Robert Burleigh Goodbye Sheepie portrays the love between a boy and his dog, the boy's grief related to the death of his dog, and the supportive love and understanding of the parent, as the boy says his goodbye. The story fuses the sadness of loss with the hope Sheepie will remain a pleasant memory. No form of afterlife is mentioned and no religious beliefs are referenced.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0761455981 □ Pages: 32 □ Publisher: Amazon Children's Publishing □ Age Range: 6+

*Her Mother's Face*—Roddy Doyle (More appropriate for older children) Following the death of her mother, a young girl “Siobhan” is left with a father so sad he never speaks to her about her mother. By the time she is 10, Siobhán can no longer remember her mother's face; it's an “empty space” that causes painful unhappiness. One day, she meets a beautiful woman who recognizes the girl's sadness and listens to her story. The woman tells her to look in the mirror to find her mother's face. The story embodies the message that life goes on and so can individuals.

Product Details □ ISBN- 10: 0439815010 □ Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books □ Pages: 40 □ Age range: 4+

*I Miss You: A First Look At Death*—Pat Thomas When a close friend or family member dies, it can be difficult for children to express their feelings. This book helps boys and girls understand that death is a natural complement to life, and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings for them to have following a loved one's death. Titles in this sensitively presented series explore the dynamics of various relationships experienced by children of preschool through early school age. Kids are encouraged to understand personal feelings and social problems as a first step in dealing with them.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780764117640 □ Publisher: Barron's Educational Series- 2001 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 4+

*The Invisible String*—Patrice Karst Children of all ages (And yes! Adults too!) feel a great sense of peace and joy realizing that we are all connected to the ones that we love... (Pets, friends, grandparents, cousins etc... and especially those that have passed on)...through the Invisible String. A string that can never be lost, cut, or torn. A string that can reach all the

way to the moon or down to the ocean floor. Strings that anger, time, or bad feelings can ever make go away

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780875167343 □ Publisher: DeVorss & Company- 2000 □ Pages: 36 □ Age range: 3+

*Jenny Is Scared: When Sad Things Happen in the World*—Carol Shuman A comforting, coping story for children who are aware of the threats of violence and terrorism in the world. A range of fears, feelings and questions are explored. The child reader is encouraged to talk to parents, friends and other caregivers.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9781591470038 □ Publisher: Magination Press- 2003 □ Pages: 28 □ Age range: 4+

*Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children*—Bryan Mellonie Page When the death of a relative, a friend, or a pet happens or is about to happen . . . how can we help a child to understand? Lifetimes is a moving book for children of all ages, even parents too. It lets us explain life and death in a sensitive, caring, beautiful way. Lifetimes tells us about beginnings. And about endings. And about living in between. With large, wonderful illustrations, it tells about plants. About animals. About people. It tells that dying is as much a part of living as being born. It helps us to remember. It helps us to understand

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780553344028 □ Publisher: Bantam- 1983 □ Pages: 40 □ Age range: 5+

*The Next Place*—Warren Hanson This is the book that has brought healing to the many families and friends who have lost loved ones in our recent national tragedies. The Next Place is an inspirational journey of peace, comfort and hope, to a place where earthly hurts are left behind. It is a picture book for all ages, a beautifully illustrated celebration of life, and an immeasurable comfort to those who have lost someone dear. Its gentle message makes The Next Place an excellent gift book for the bereaved, and an inspirational book for the dying.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780931674327 □ Publisher: Waldman House Press- 1997 □ Pages: 36 □ Age range: 5+

*Old Pig*—Margaret Wild Old Pig and her Granddaughter have lived together for a very long. As she accepts her impending death, Old Pig put her affairs in order. She then takes a last walk with Granddaughter savoring and reminding Granddaughter of the many joys of their life together. Old Pig and Granddaughter say goodbye to each other in the best way they know. Old Pig dies and Granddaughter lives on surrounded by memories of what they shared together.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-1741757064 □ Pages: 32 □ Publisher: Allen & Unwin □ Age Range: 4+

*Pearl's Marigolds For Grandpa*—Jane Breskin Zalben When Pearl's grandfather dies, she decides not to attend his funeral. ("She wanted to remember Grandpa playing checkers.") Instead, she thinks of him while she is at school. Later, at his house, she tries on his hat and slippers, sits in his chair, and wonders who could possibly replace him in her life. On Pearl's next visit, Grandma offers her some comfort by saying, "Grandpa's still alive...through you." Pearl discovers a way to keep her grandfather's memory alive--by bringing life to marigolds, as he did every year. This book is built around the ritual of sitting shiva.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780689604489 □ Publisher: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing- 1997 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 2+

*Saying Goodbye to Lulu*—Corrine Demas The portrayal of a young child learning to understand and cope with the mixed emotions that come with the loss of a loved one. A young girl and her lovable dog, Lulu, are the best of friends. Lulu is the best dog a girl could ever hope for, but when she grows older and gradually becomes weak, the girl must face the sad possibility of losing her dear friend, and inevitably, cope with the death of her canine companion. Though she is deeply saddened by Lulu's passing and misses her very much, over time the little girl discovers that the sweet memory of her beloved Lulu will live on forever... in her heart.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 978-0316047494 □ Pages: 32 □ Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers □ Age Range: 3+

*Sometimes I'm Scared*—Jane Annunziata Kids can be afraid of lots of things—it's normal. But these fears can seem really big! This book outlines easy steps kids can use to overcome their everyday fears. An extensive Note to Parents gives parents additional information on why fears naturally develop and how to help their kids understand and deal with common fears.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9781433805509 □ Publisher: Magination Press- 2009 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 5+

*When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death (Dino Life Guides for Families)* — Laurie Krasny Brown Unlike many books on death for little ones, this one doesn't tell a story. Instead, it addresses children's fears and curiosity head-on, and in a largely secular fashion, by answering some very basic questions: "Why does someone die?" "What does dead mean?" "What comes after death?" Other questions deal with emotions, and there's a section about death customs (the weakest part of the book). The forthright approach makes the subject seem less mysterious and provides kids with plenty to think about and discuss with their parents. It's the brightly colored artwork, however, that will really enable children to relax with the concept.

Product Details □ ISBN-13: 9780316119559 □ Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers- 1998 □ Pages: 32 □ Age range: 5+

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