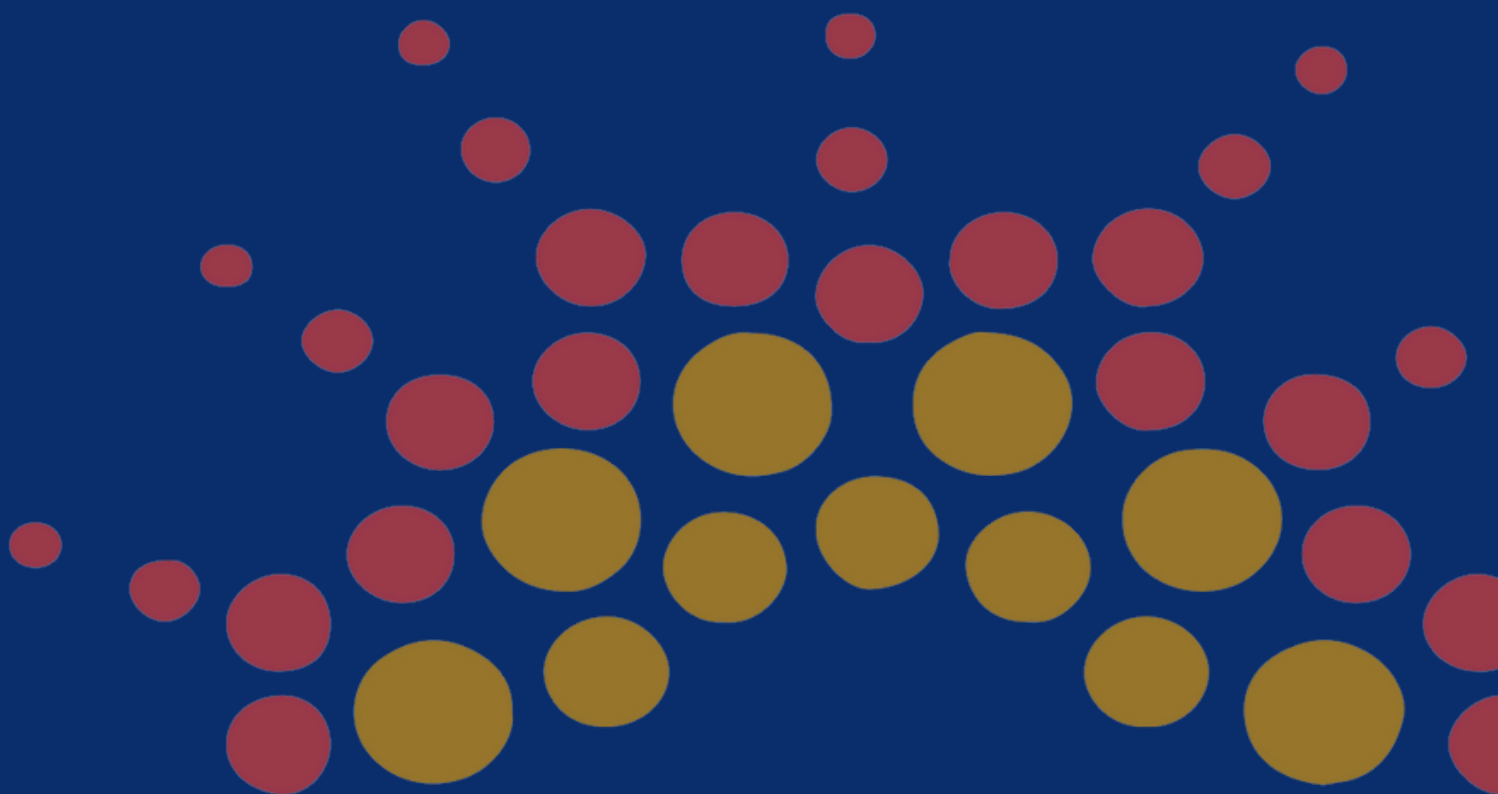




Healing Hearts

A Grief Workbook for Kids



Dear Little Heart,

Sometimes losing someone we love can feel like carrying a backpack. This isn't an ordinary backpack—it's filled with all the feelings you have about that person. Some days, it feels really heavy, and you might feel sad, angry, or tired. Other days, it might feel a little lighter, and you might even feel okay. That mix of feelings is called grief, and everyone carries it in their own way.

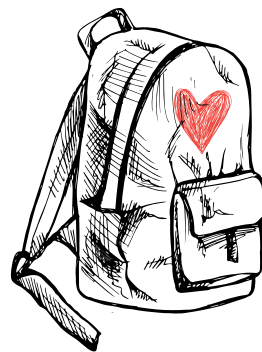
Even though your backpack can feel heavy, **you don't have to carry it alone.** Some days, it helps to take a little out by talking to someone you trust, drawing, writing, or doing something that makes you feel better. These are like little tools that make your backpack easier to carry.

Even though you can't see or talk to the person you lost anymore, the love you shared and the memories you made are still with you. They are treasures you can carry in your heart, and they can give you comfort when your backpack feels too heavy.

This workbook is here to help you explore your feelings and find ways to take care of your heart. Inside, you'll find activities, ideas, and stories to help you while you grieve. Remember: you are not alone, and it's okay to ask for help and share your feelings.

With care,

Your friends at CareFirstNY

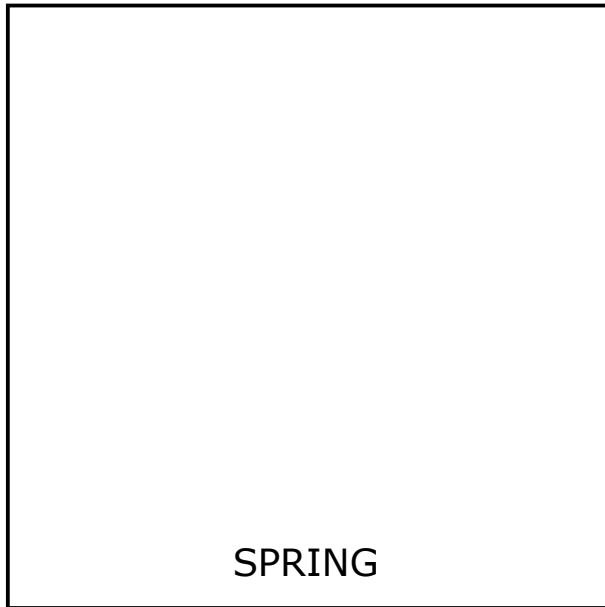


Change

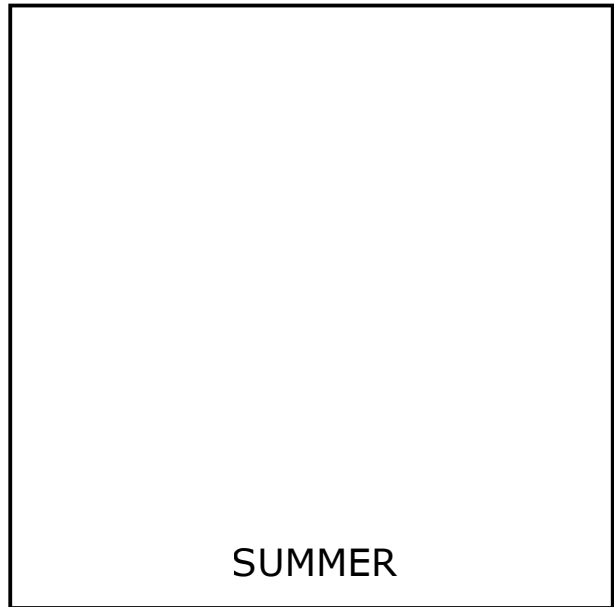
Change is when something or someone becomes different from before. Sometimes change can feel small, like leaves turning colors in the fall. Other times, it can feel big, like a caterpillar curling up in a cocoon and coming out as a beautiful butterfly.

Change happens all around us—in nature, in our families, and even in our hearts. Some changes are exciting, some feel a little scary, and some can make us feel sad. That's okay—every feeling is part of the journey.

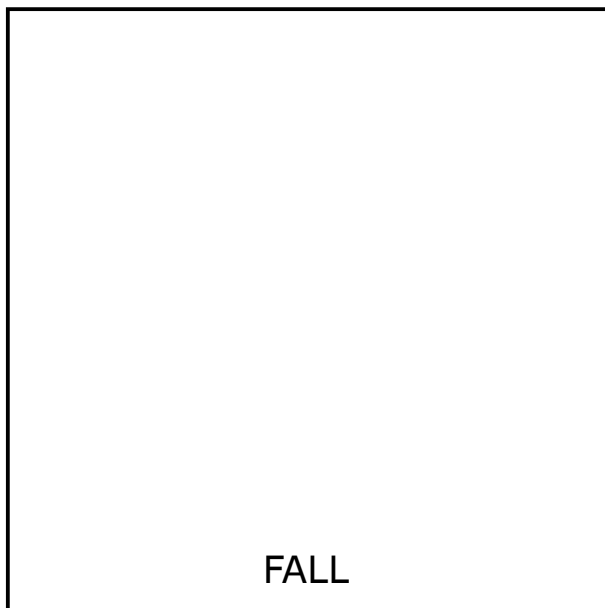
Let's explore change! Draw how the seasons change in the boxes below:



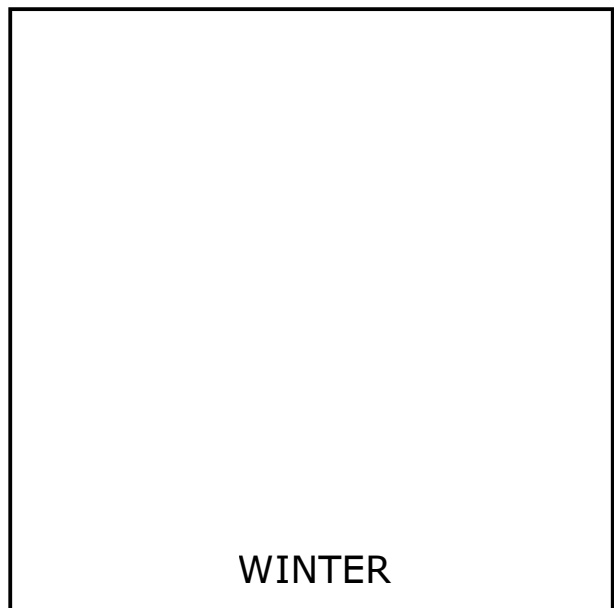
SPRING



SUMMER



FALL



WINTER

People Change Too

Change doesn't just happen around us—it happens to us, too!

Every day, you grow and learn new things. You might do things differently than you did when you were younger, think about the world in a new way, feel different emotions, or believe in things you didn't before.

Take a moment to think about yourself. How have you changed?

Draw or write some ways you have grown, learned, or felt differently.

Living, Growing, & Changing

Just like you, the people around you are always changing, too. Friends, brothers, sisters, and family members grow taller, learn new things, have babies, get married, move to new homes, or even change the way they look, like cutting their hair or trying new clothes.

Some changes are big, and some are small, but all of them are part of life. Thinking about how people around you are changing can help you notice how you are growing, too.

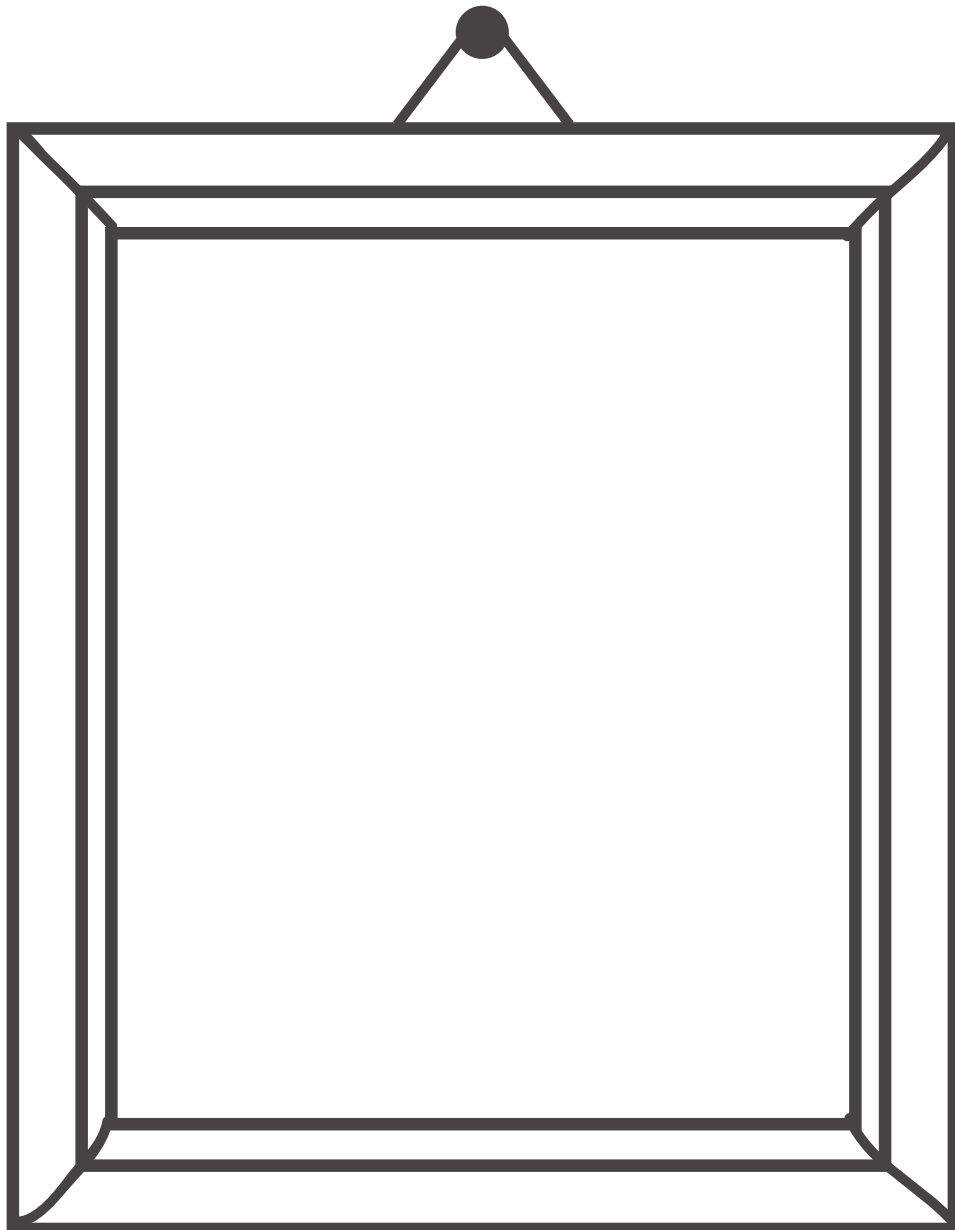
Draw or write some ways your friends or family members have changed. You can include big changes, like moving to a new city, or little ones, like learning a new hobby or trying something new.

Life & Death

One kind of change that happens in life is death. Death is a natural part of living—it happens to plants, animals, and people. When someone dies, their body stops living, but the love, memories, and special moments you shared with them can stay with you forever.

Thinking about someone who has died can bring many feelings—sadness, confusion, or even remembering happy times. All of these feelings are normal. Take a moment to remember your loved one who has died.

Draw a picture of them, or something that reminds you of them, to keep their memory close in your heart.



What is Death?

When a person dies, their heart doesn't beat, they stop breathing, and their body doesn't work anymore. They no longer eat, sleep, think, or feel.

There are many things that cause death. Sometimes people die suddenly, like in a car accident. Other times people know they are going to die, like when they get very sick with a disease that doctors cannot fix or cure.

You might hear people say that someone “passed away” or is “gone.” These words can be confusing because they make it sound like the person just left the room and might come back. But when someone dies, it means their body stopped working and they cannot come back.

It's okay to feel many different emotions—sadness, confusion, or even anger. Talking, drawing, or writing about your feelings can help you feel better.

You can also talk with an adult you trust about your loved one—they could be a parent, grandparent, teacher, counselor, or someone else you feel safe with.

Think of three people who can listen and help you with your questions or feelings about your loved one and write their names below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Questions About Death

We often have questions when someone dies. You might wonder things like:

Why did my loved one die?

Will I ever stop feeling sad?

What happens to people after they die?

Can I still talk to or remember them?

Is it okay to laugh or have fun even though I feel sad?

Why do people grieve in different ways?

How can I feel close to my loved one now?

Think about the adults you wrote down on the last page—the people you trust. You can ask them these questions, or share other things you are wondering about.

Write your own questions below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Funerals, Burials, & Memorials

When someone dies, there are plans for what happens to their body. Sometimes people make these plans themselves before they die. Other times, their family makes the decisions.

Some people are buried in a casket, which is placed into the ground in a cemetery. The place where the casket is buried is called a grave. Families sometimes place flowers, pictures, or other special items at the grave to remember their loved one.

Other people choose to be cremated, which means their body is turned into ashes. The ashes may be kept in a special container, placed in a cemetery, or scattered in a place that was meaningful to the person who died.

Families often have a funeral or memorial. This is a special time when friends and family gather to remember their loved one, say goodbye, and celebrate the life they lived. Funerals and memorials can happen in many different places—such as a funeral home, a church, a synagogue, or even outside at a cemetery.

Different families, cultures, and religions have their own ways of honoring people after they die. All of these traditions are ways of showing love and remembering someone special.



Take a moment and color the flower wreath for your loved one.

Spirit

When someone dies, their body stops working. What made them *special*—their laugh, their smile, their love, their spirit—is no longer in their body. It can feel hard, because the spirit is the part of them we miss the most.

People have different beliefs about what happens to a person's spirit after death:

- Some people believe the spirit goes to Heaven to be with God and loved ones who have died before. They may say, "I know I'll see them again someday."
- Some people believe in something called *reincarnation*. This means that after someone dies, their spirit begins a new life in another body. They believe the spirit gets to keep growing and experiencing new things in each life.
- Some believe a spirit becomes part of nature, like a star in the sky, the wind, or even the hearts of those they loved.
- Others believe that when someone dies, their spirit does not continue on.

Because people believe different things, it's important to talk with an adult you trust about what *your family* believes. No matter what you believe about spirits, the love, kindness, and memories of your special person stay with you.

Draw or write your favorite thing about your loved one's spirit below:

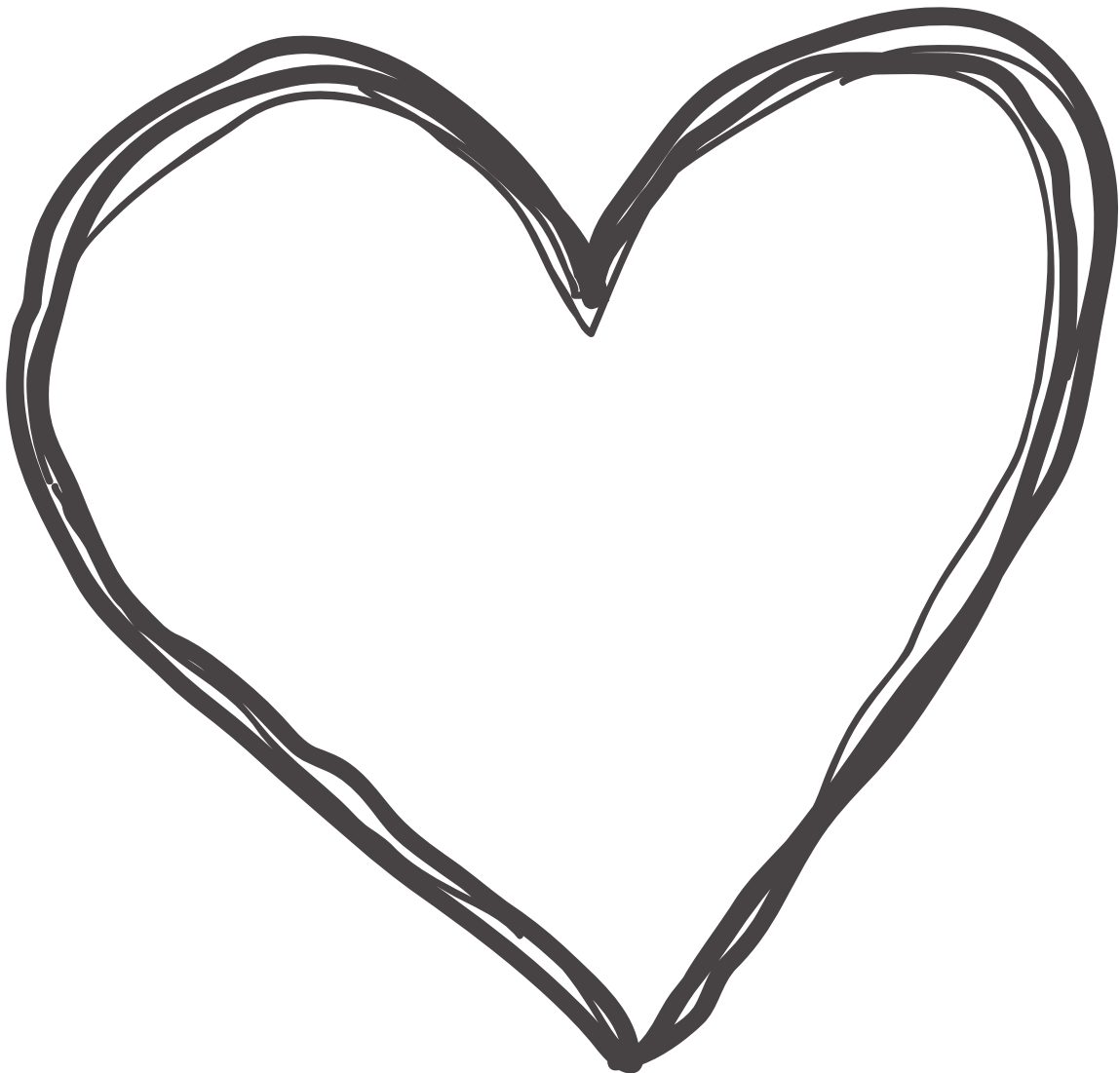
Loss

When someone we love dies, people sometimes say that we have “lost” them. You might hear things like, “She lost her grandfather,” or “they suffered a loss,” or “I’m sorry for your loss.”

This can be confusing. Usually, when we lose something—like a toy or a shoe—we can go find it again. But when someone dies, we can’t bring them back.

Even though we can’t see or hug our loved one anymore, we never truly lose them. The memories we shared, the love we felt, and the special things about them stay with us. We carry them inside our hearts forever.

Fill in this heart with the things you will always hold in your heart about your loved one. You can draw pictures, write words, or even add colors that remind you of them.



Remembering Our Loved Ones

One special way we keep our loved ones with us is by remembering them. When we think about the ways they touched our lives, it can help us feel close to them, even though they are not here.

Sometimes we notice that we share things with the person who died. Maybe you have the same smile, the same laugh, or a talent they had. Maybe you act in ways that remind you of them, like being kind, silly, or brave.

Draw or write about the ways you think you look or act like your loved one. This can be something on the outside (like your hair, eyes, or smile) or something on the inside (like your kindness, humor, or courage).

Grief

When someone you love dies, you may feel many different emotions. This is called grief. **Grief is what we feel inside when we lose someone or something important to us.** When people are going through this, we say they are grieving.

Grief can happen in many situations—not just death. You might feel grief if a friend moves away, if your parents get divorced, or if something important in your life changes.

When a loved one dies, grief can feel very strong and may last a long time. There is no “right” way to grieve, and everyone’s grief looks a little different.

Some common feelings are:

- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Fear
- Anger
- Guilt
- Confusion

You may also feel other things, like relief or even numbness - all of these feelings are completely normal.

What are some other feelings you are having right now?
Write or draw them here:

Life After Loss

When someone we love dies, it doesn't just change how we feel inside. It also changes the world around us.

Life after loss means getting used to life without your loved one, and it can show up in many ways:

- Special days feel different, like birthdays, holidays, or family traditions.
- Your routines may change, like who takes you to school, makes dinner, or tucks you in.
- You might notice changes in your family, like people acting differently or feeling sad more often.

These changes can feel strange, unfair, or really hard to get used to. At the same time, over time, you may find new routines, make new traditions, and discover ways to keep your loved one's memory close.

Are there any changes you've noticed already? Are there any upcoming things you are worried about, like birthdays, holidays or school events? Write or draw about them here:

Feelings

Feelings are the “ups and downs” we feel inside when things happen. Everyone has lots of different feelings—and **they are all okay**.

When someone you love dies, your feelings might feel bigger or stronger than usual. You might go from sad one moment, to angry the next, to okay again, all in the same day. That’s normal. Feelings are also called emotions.

The way we handle our feelings is called **cop**ing.

Everyone copes in different ways. Some people try to hide or ignore their feelings. Some people talk about their feelings with someone they trust. Some people learn more about what they are going through, and some people draw, play, write, or move their bodies to let their feelings out.

There are many healthy ways to cope with our emotions. The first step is noticing what you are feeling.

Look at the faces below. Circle or color the ones that match how you’ve been feeling. You can even add your own!



Happy



Sad



Angry



Scared



Confused



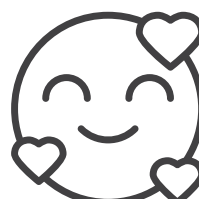
Tired



Surprised



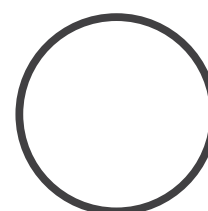
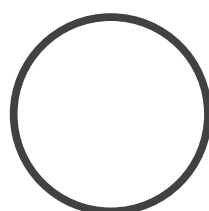
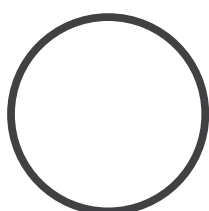
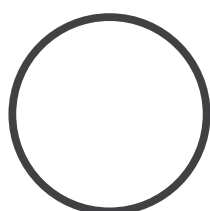
Lonely



Loved



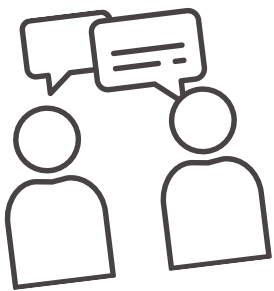
Numb



Coping with Anger

When you feel angry, it can be hard to know what to do with that big feeling. Sometimes anger feels like it's stacking up inside, ready to burst. That's normal—but it's important to let it out in safe ways that don't hurt yourself, other people, or things around you.

Here are some healthy ways to LET OUT YOUR ANGER.
Circle or check the ones that feel right for you—or add your own ideas!



Talk with someone you trust



Punch or squeeze a pillow



Run, dance, or do jumping jacks until you feel calmer



Scribble hard on paper, then crumple it up and throw it



Take 10 big breaths, blowing your anger out like a dragon



Draw a picture of your anger, then tear it up



Stretch your arms and legs as long as you can, then shake them out



Write down how you feel in a journal



Yell or sing loudly into a pillow

My Anger Toolbox

Anger can feel big, but you can carry tools to help you manage it—just like carrying a backpack full of helpful things. Your **anger toolbox** is full of safe ways to let your feelings out and calm down.

1. Draw a toolbox or backpack below.
2. Inside the box, draw or write the coping tools you picked on the last page that work best for you when you feel angry. For example:
 - a. Punching a pillow
 - b. Drawing or writing your anger
 - c. Talking to someone you trust
 - d. Taking deep breaths
 - e. Running, jumping, or stretching
3. Keep your toolbox in mind whenever you feel your anger building. You can try different tools until you find what works best.

Tip: *Your toolbox is personal—no two toolboxes are the same. You can add new tools anytime you discover ways that help your anger feel smaller.*

Fear

Fear is the feeling you get when something feels scary or uncertain. After someone you love dies, some things in life might feel different, and that can make fear show up.

Sometimes fear feels like:

- A shadow following you around
- A storm cloud over your head
- A monster hiding in your room

Remember: it's okay to feel afraid. Feeling fear doesn't mean you are weak—it is a normal way your body and mind react to big changes.

You can try ways to make fear smaller or easier to handle:

- Draw or color your shadow, storm cloud, or monster, and imagine it shrinking or floating away
- Talk with a trusted adult about what scares you
- Give your fear a name and tell it to go away

Draw or write about your fear. You can use colors, shapes, or symbols to show it. Then try one of the ways above to make it feel smaller.

Guilt

Guilt is the feeling you get when you wish you had done or said something differently. After someone you love dies, it's normal to feel guilty sometimes.

You might feel guilty if you think you:

- Should have spent more time with your loved one
- Didn't tell them you loved them enough
- Said or did something that hurt someone's feelings
- Even feel guilty just because they died

It's very important to remember: your loved one's death was not your fault. You didn't cause it. No matter what you said or didn't say, or did or didn't do, they knew you loved them—and you still do.

Talking helps. If you are feeling guilty about something, it can help to talk with an adult you trust, like a parent, teacher, or counselor.

When you feel sorry or guilty about something that you didn't say or didn't do before your loved one died sometimes it can be helpful to say goodbye in a different way.

Write a letter or draw a picture for your loved one to say everything you didn't get a chance to say:

Dear _____,

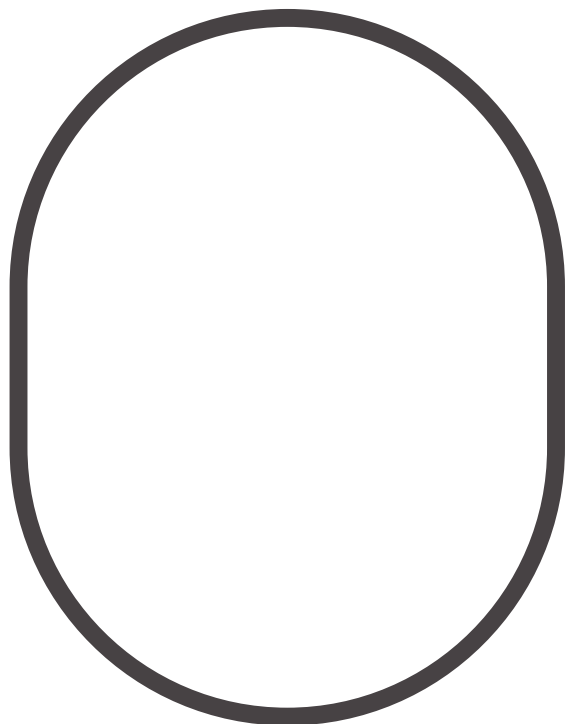
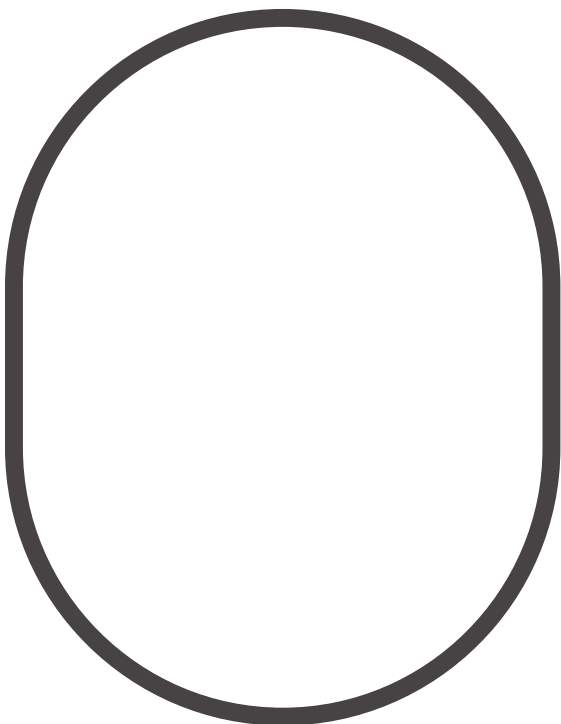
Love, _____

Masks

Sometimes people don't want others to see how they are feeling. They might put on a mask—not a real mask you wear on your face, but a “mask” that hides your true feelings from others.

It's like smiling when you feel sad, or acting okay when you feel angry. Even when you hide your feelings, they are still inside, and it's okay to find safe ways to show them.

- 1. In the first circle, draw a feeling you've had recently—the emotion you really felt inside.**
- 2. In the second circle, draw a “mask face”—the expression or mask you might have shown to others to hide that feeling.**
- 3. Be creative! Your mask can be silly, serious, colorful...anything you like.**



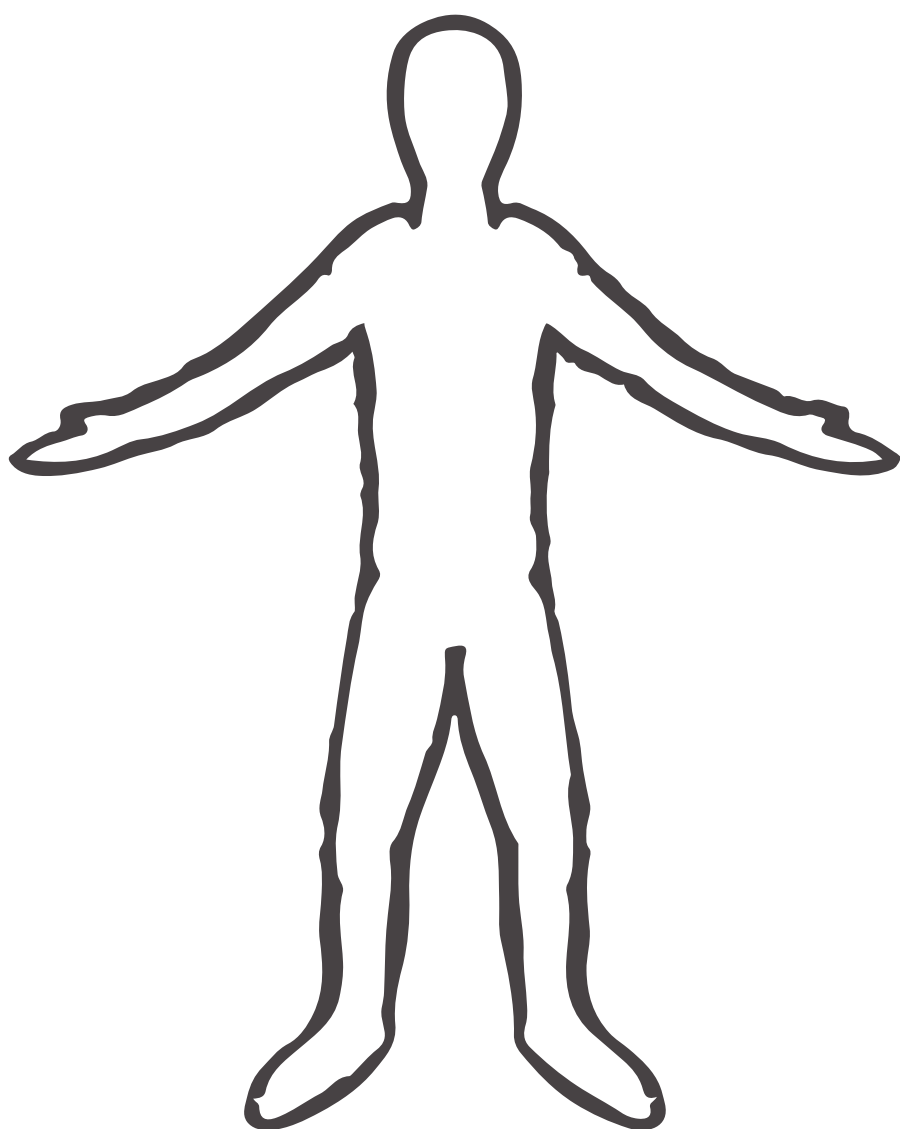
Feelings Inside

Feelings are something you experience **inside your body**. Sometimes your body can tell you how you are feeling, even before your mind notices.

For example:

- Sadness might feel like a heavy weight in your chest or a lump in your throat.
- Anger might feel like heat in your stomach or like your fists want to clench.
- Fear might feel like butterflies in your tummy or a tightness in your shoulders.
- Happiness might feel like warmth in your heart or a bounce in your steps.

Use the colors below to show where you feel your feelings inside your body—if you have a feeling that isn't listed, choose a new color and add it:



- **Sadness – Blue**
- **Fear – Purple**
- **Guilt – Gray**
- **Anger – Red**
- **Jealousy – Green**
- **Nervous – Orange**
- **Happy – Yellow**

My Feelings Book

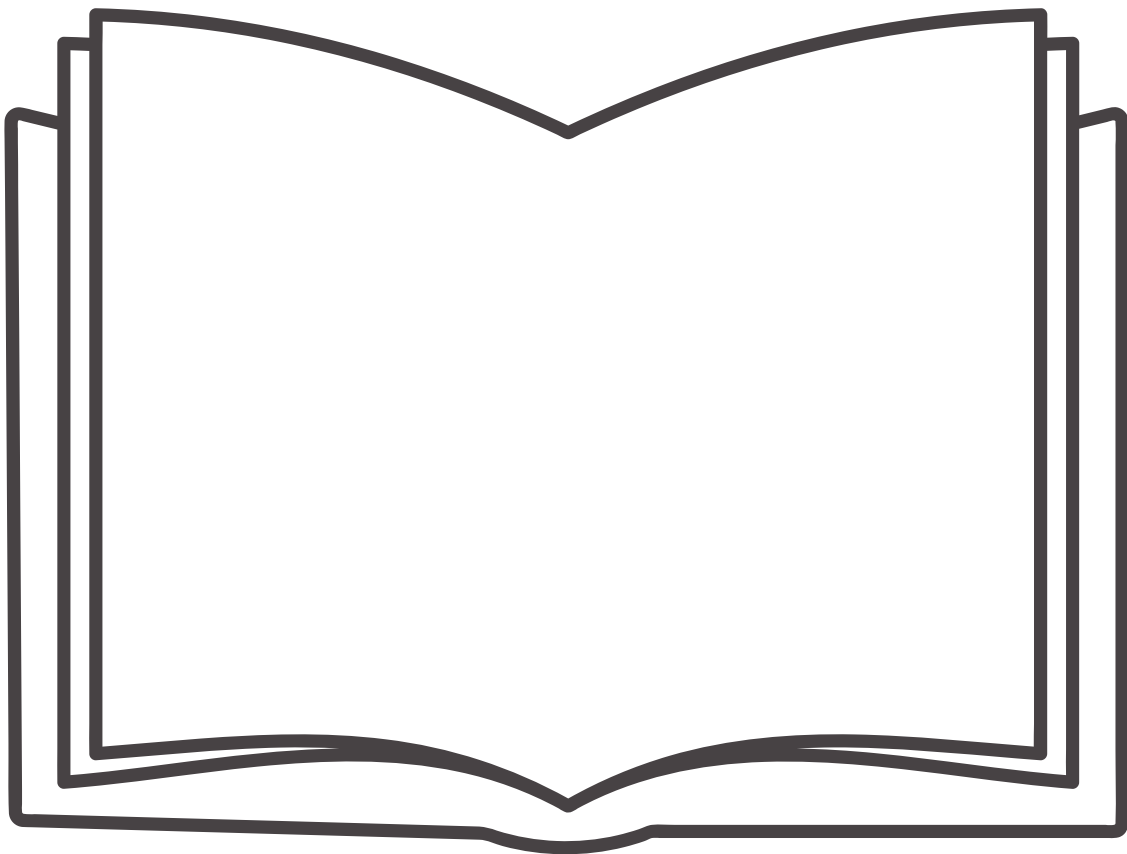
One way to help yourself cope with feelings is to write them down. A feelings book can be your special place to share whatever is inside—both the hard things and the things that make you feel safe, loved, or happy.

Your feelings book is yours alone. You can write in it, draw in it, or even add colors and doodles to show how you feel. There is no wrong way to make it!

Tips for your Feelings Book:

- Write the date on each page so you can look back and see how your feelings change over time.
- Include both hard feelings (like sadness, anger, or fear) and comforting things (like favorite memories, things you're thankful for, or what makes you feel safe).
- Try writing or drawing at the same time each day, like before bed, so it becomes a calming habit.
- Use as many colors, shapes, or pictures as you want—it doesn't have to be just words!

Write some ideas here of things you could include in your Feelings Book:

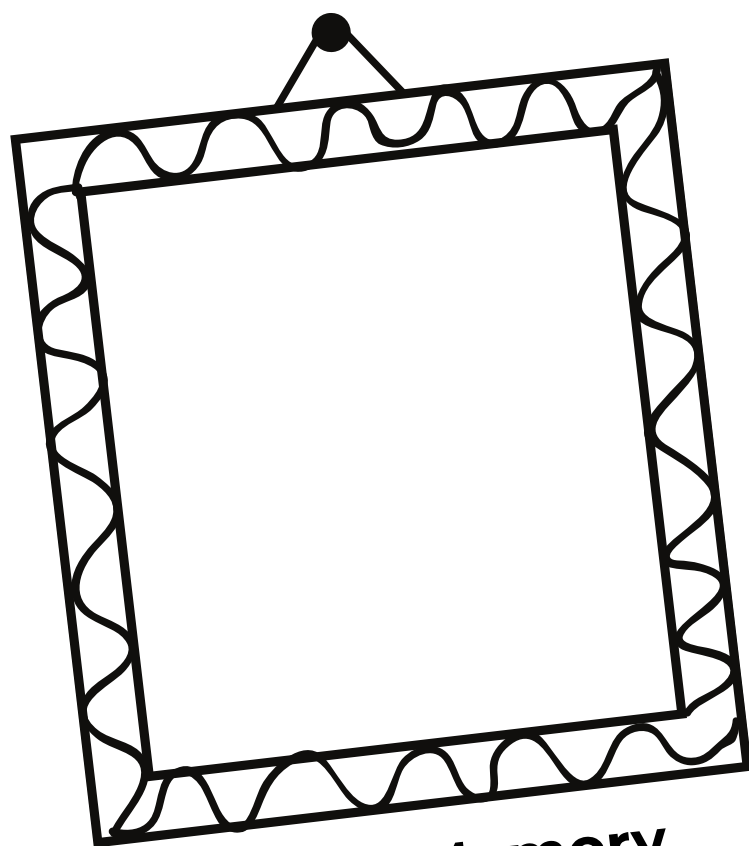


Memories

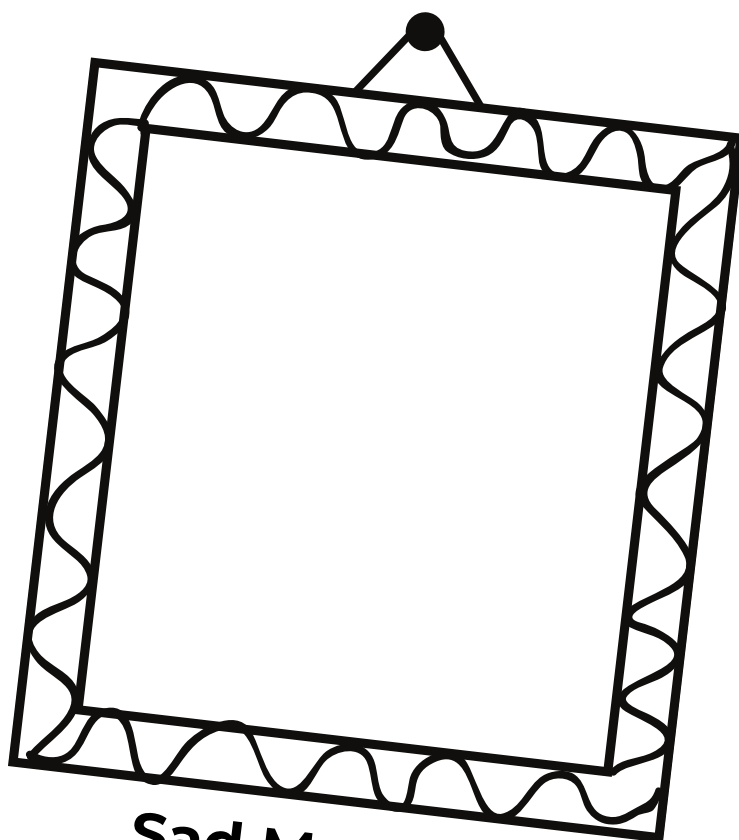
Memories are the special moments you remember. You probably have lots of memories about your loved one who died. Maybe you remember how they taught you to play softball, how they smelled or looked, or how they made your favorite meal on your birthday.

Memories can feel happy, sad, or even a mix of both. That's okay—your memories are part of how you carry your loved one in your heart.

Draw or write about a happy memory and a sad memory of your loved one in the frames below.



Happy Memory



Sad Memory

Ways to Remember

When someone you love dies, it can help to find ways to remember them and keep their memory close. These can be simple, everyday things or special activities you do once in a while. There is no right or wrong way—what matters is that it feels meaningful to you.

Keepsakes and Memory Boxes

- Keep something that belonged to your loved one so you can hold it and remember them.
- Find or decorate a box to store photos, letters, or small objects that remind you of them.

Special Routines

Special routines are small things you can do over and over to remember your loved one. Families also have regular routines, like brushing your teeth every morning or reading a book before bed. Special routines after someone dies can help you feel connected to them:

- Place flowers on their grave.
- With an adult's help, light a candle for them on special days.
- Write them a note at the end of the day, telling them something about your life.

Memory Jar

A memory jar is a special way to gather and share stories. With your family, decorate a jar, can, or box. Cut small pieces of paper, and whenever you remember something about your loved one, write it down and put it inside. Later, you can take out the notes and read them together.

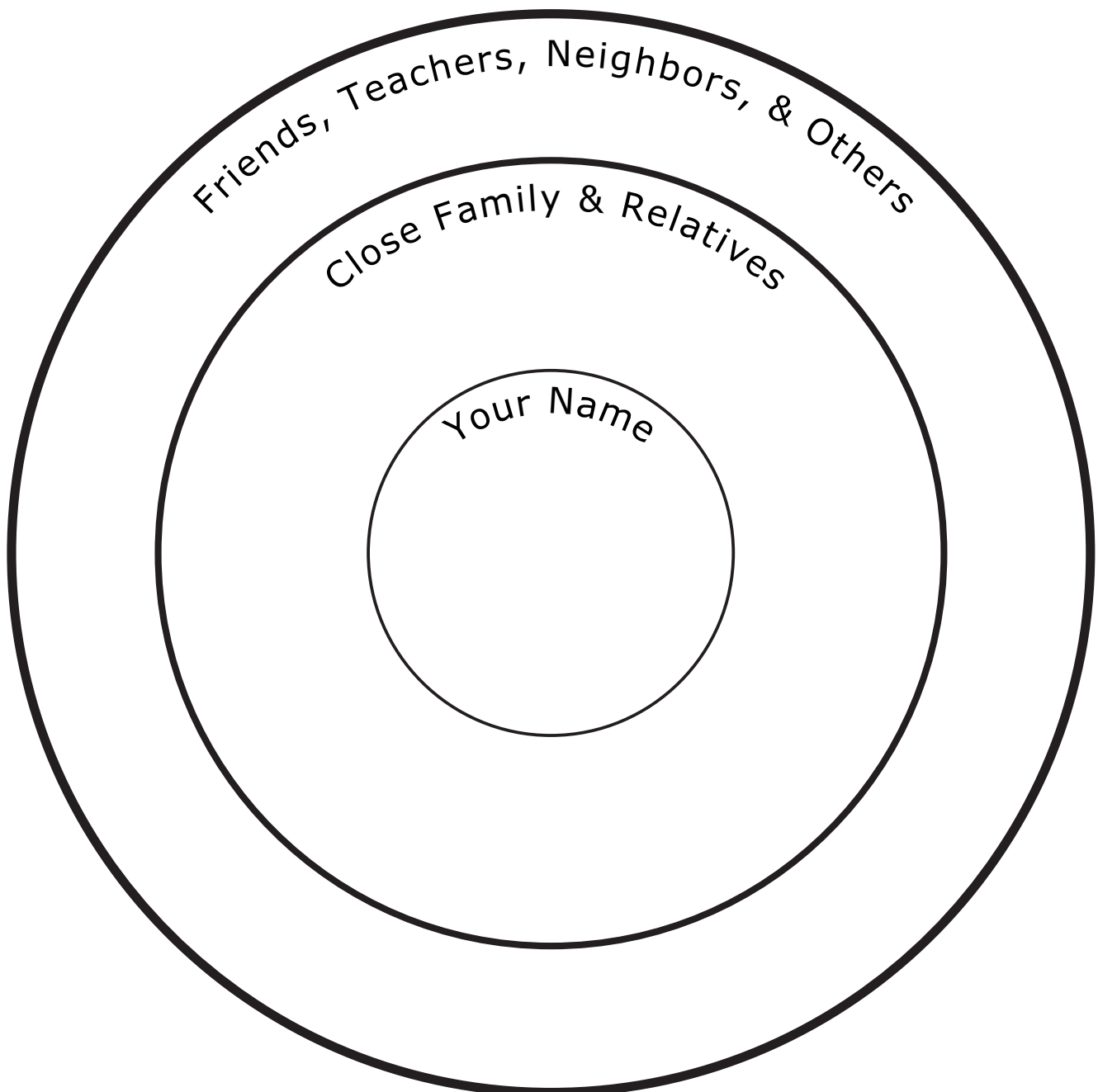
Begin a memory jar by writing a few memories below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My Support Circle

Support means having people in your life who care about you, listen to you, and help you when things feel hard. These can be family members, friends, teachers, coaches, neighbors, or other adults you trust—anyone who makes you feel safe and cared for. Everyone needs support, especially when someone you love has died.

Fill in your support circle below—write your name in the center circle, the people closest to you in the next circle, and other supportive people in the outer circle. This way, you can see who is there for you and remember that you are not alone.



Moving Forward

Coping with a loss can feel really hard. One of the most important things is learning how to move forward while still carrying your loved one in your heart.

Doing special activities, like memory jars, keepsakes, or routines you've created to remember your loved one, can help you feel connected to them even as you live your life.

Moving forward doesn't mean forgetting your loved one—it means **finding ways to keep their memory with you while still enjoying your life.** You can still have fun, laugh, play, and feel happy, even though you miss them.

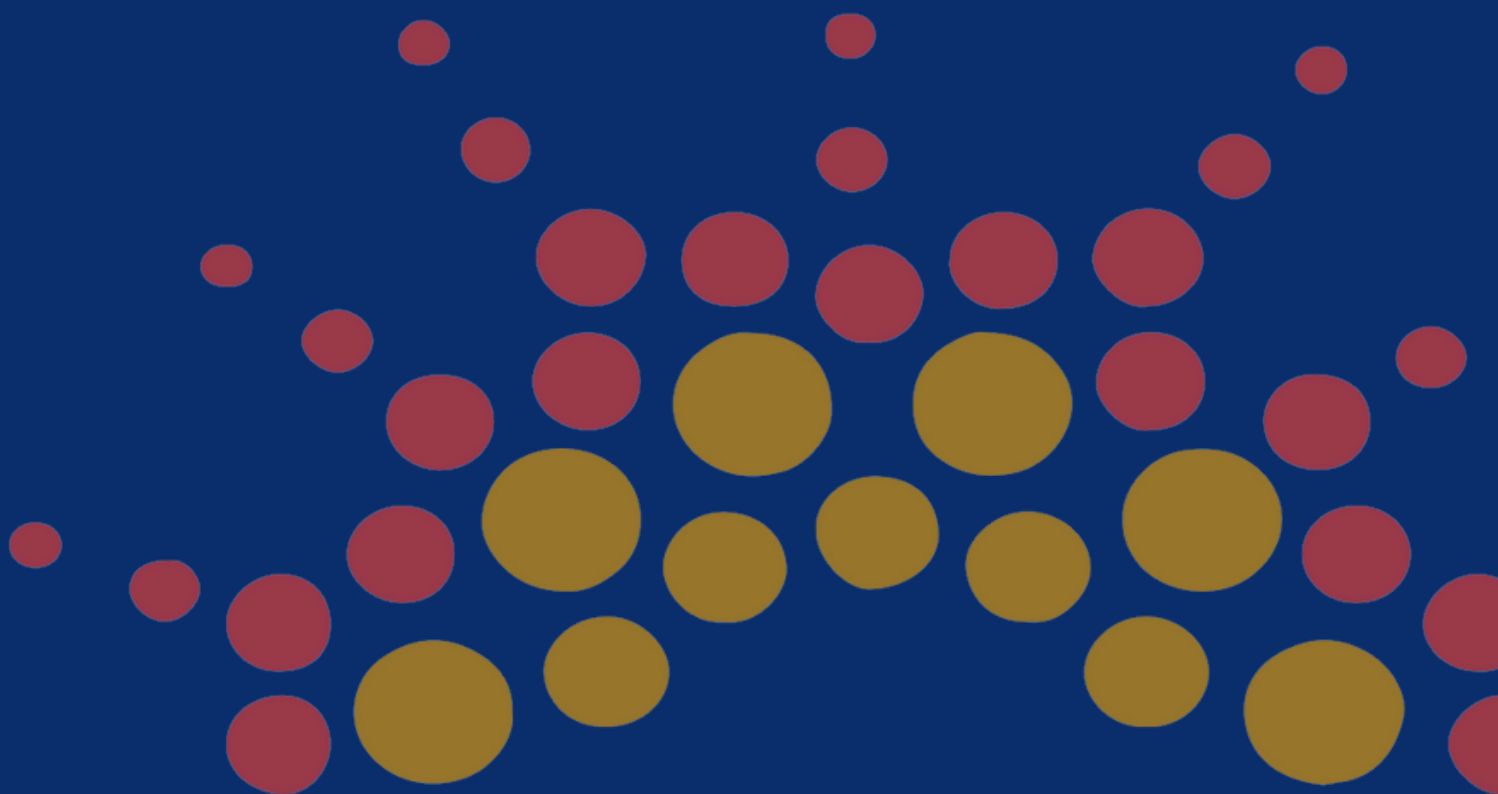
Draw or write about something below that makes you happy or something you enjoy doing. You can also think about ways to include your loved one's memory in things that bring you joy.

Things to Remember

You have learned a lot about feelings, grief, and ways to remember the people you love. **Here are some important things to keep in your heart:**

- **It's okay to feel your feelings.** Sadness, anger, guilt, fear, and happiness can all happen at the same time. Your feelings are normal and important.
- **You are not alone.** There are people in your life who care about you and can support you. Remember your support circle!
- **You can remember your loved one in special ways.** Memory jars, keepsakes, and routines help you feel connected to them.
- **Change is a part of life.** Life may feel different after a loved one dies, but over time, you can find new routines, traditions, and ways to feel happy again.
- **Moving forward is possible.** You can carry your loved one in your heart while enjoying life and finding joy in everyday moments.

Is there something you want to carry with you from this workbook—a feeling, a memory, or something you learned that helps you feel strong? Draw or write about it below!





Hospice | Grief Support | Mental Health Counseling

*For additional guidance and support, please reach out to
GriefSupport@carefirstny.org | (607) 962-3100*