The Wonders & Worries Family

receive a special introductory offer. Check it out! and be notified when the Activity Book is available for sale. You will
fingertips to use with the children and teens you serve.
that has gone into this project and will enjoy having creativity at your
goals where applicable. We are confident you will value the work
teen, and groups. We have included modifications for different age
have chosen dozens of our favorite activities to use with children,
impacted by illness. Our amazing team of seasoned child life specialists
Wonders & Worries is excited to announce the upcoming release of
Activity Book
SINCERELY,
WONDERS & WORRIES

The mission of Wonders & Worries is to provide professional support for children through a parent’s illness.

https://tinyurl.com/wnwactivitybook
HELPING CHILDREN CREATE RITUAL AND SACRED SPACE
When They Cannot Say Goodbye to a Loved One Who Has Died
To Caregivers and Professionals,

We are in a unique time as we help families and loved ones navigate loss during a global pandemic. Families are not able to be at the hospital bedside or say goodbye in person. Some families are unable to proceed with funeral arrangements or feel that they must wait to honor their loved one properly. Though we have not lived through a time like this before, we do know how to help families grieve when they cannot carry out traditional rituals. There are many circumstances where loved ones are unable to say goodbye due to geography, military status, or their own illnesses. We hope you find this booklet helpful as we find new and creative ways to walk this journey together!

Suggested Activities

1. Hospital Considerations at End of Life
2. Talking to Children About Death
3. Helping Children Create a Funeral Service at Home
4. Cremation
5. Head Stone
6. Memory Garden
7. Rock Garden
8. Memory Bears and Art
9. Family Memorial Box
10. Memory Trees
11. Forgiveness Heart
12. Coping Basket
13. Ideas for Helping Families from Afar
14. Bereavement Resources
IDEAS ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH LOVED ONES

• Sometimes nurses can use FaceTime, Skype, or the phone on speaker mode to allow families to say last words.
• Some families can drive to the hospital and sit in their car outside (facing patient’s window is possible) just to let loved one know they are near. Families may use this time to play music for loved one, pray, wave, write letter to loved one or simply sit in solidarity.
• Ask medical professional to take a picture of patient that can be texted. This can be extremely important to some family members, but not all. Give children the choice as to whether they would like to see a final picture of their loved one or not. Prepare them for what they will see in the photo before i.e. Dad will have his eyes closed or have a tube in his mouth. He will look pale. His body has stopped working.
Talking to Children

ABOUT DEATH

INITIAL TIPS

• Start with what child knows or thinks
• Provide honest information in small doses
• Use clear and concise language
• Avoid euphemisms such as “passed away” or “gone to a better place”
• Validate child’s questions and reflect feelings
• Follow child’s lead—what are they curious about, what are they scared about, what do THEY want to know!

GOALS THAT GUIDE OUR THERAPEUTIC GRIEF ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN:

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<td>Help child honor their person by making memorials</td>
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<td>Help child remember their person by creating rituals</td>
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<td>Help child express things they did not get the chance to say or do</td>
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<td>Help child reconcile any “guilty feelings” they may have</td>
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<td>Help child acknowledge the reality of death using clear language such as “The doctors and nurses worked hard to fix your Dad’s body, but his body has stopped working and he has died. When a person’s body stops working the heart stops beating, the lungs stop breathing, and the person can no longer think or feel.”</td>
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<td>Prepare child for any ceremony, burial, or funeral</td>
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<td>Help child label and express feelings of grief</td>
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<td>Help child identify and practice coping skills</td>
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<td>Help child identify hopes and goals for the future</td>
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<td>Help child identify things they learned from their person that will always be with them</td>
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<td>Help child acknowledge the parts of himself or herself that are like their loved one and the parts that make them unique</td>
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Helping Children Create

A FUNERAL SERVICE OR CEREMONY AT HOME

A funeral is a gathering of people to acknowledge, honor, and celebrate the life of a loved one who has died. Some families have a party to remember their loved one. Some families meet at a funeral home or grave site where they can say goodbye to the body of the person who has died. We are all practicing social distancing right now to help keep one another healthy and safe. Some of the things that families usually do when a person dies may look different right now. You can still plan a ceremony to honor your loved even though you are at home. You can even video it or take pictures for other family members who cannot be there. Here are some things to think about if you would like to do this at home.

• Place—outside in the yard, inside, a parade of cars
• Music—playlist of favorite songs, playing of an instrument, family member singing
• Readings—share a poem or a memory or a picture
• Candle—You can pick a candle to be a memory candle that you can light at every family gathering to symbolize your loved one being remembered (like at birthday parties or holidays)
• Balloons
• Flowers or greenery
• Pictures—slideshow, photo albums, or framed photographs
• Memory Wall—use post its to create a wall of memories where each person can write down a memory and stick it to the wall
• Food—you can make your loved one’s favorite dish
• Game—you can play a game you liked to play with your loved one
• Memorial T-shirts
• You can include the following worksheets that guide you in making a memory garden, rock garden, memorial, or way to share stories.
Cremation

Once a body stops working, it cannot feel anything. The body no longer breathes, thinks, or feels pain. Some people choose to have their body cremated once it stops working. The body is put in an extremely hot container in a building called a crematory until it turns into soft, powdery ashes called cremains. This process is very quiet and peaceful. Many families like to keep those ashes in a container called an urn or they may choose to spread them in a special place that their loved one enjoyed like the beach or a garden. You can decorate this urn with words or pictures that remind you of your loved one or you can draw a picture of a place your loved one enjoyed.
Burial

Other people may choose to have their body buried in a large box called a casket or a coffin which then goes in the ground and is covered by dirt. A large stone or marker is often placed on top with the person’s name. Some stones have pictures or phrases that the person was known for. You can use the space below to write things you would like others to know about your loved one.
Memory Garden

Nature can provide a peaceful place to sit and think about your loved one. Find a place in your yard where you can go when you are wanting to feel your feelings and remember the person that was special to you. You may want to plant a flower there or carve their name in a tree. You can also use this picture to color this kind of place. Write the things you wish you could have said to your loved one on the wishing well. Then write the things you are thankful you did get to say and do with your loved one around the flowers. You can also do this on popsicle sticks or rocks and place them in your memory garden outside.
Rock Garden

You can honor your loved one by finding rocks outside and writing memories or characteristics about your loved one on them. You can decorate the rocks with markers or paint and place them in a special place in your home or yard. Here are some rocks to help you get started.
Memory Bears & Art

At Wonders & Worries, we have a wonderful volunteer who makes bears for children who have a family member who has died by sewing together a special t-shirt or clothing item that the family member wore. A variation of this can be helping the child choose their favorite clothing item of their loved one and placing it on their largest stuffed animal. You can also do this with jewelry like earrings, necklaces, tie tacks etc. For older children, allowing them to create a work of art out of jewelry pieces or buttons off the clothing of their loved one can be very therapeutic as well. This can be done with a hot glue gun and put on canvas, a wooden box, dominoes glued together into desired shape, or a wooden letter that represents their loved one’s name.
Family Memory Boxes

It may not be possible to gather at a funeral home right now or visit a cemetery where your loved one is buried. Some families like to create a special place in their home where they place a picture of their loved one, a candle, and objects that remind them of their loved one. This can be in a jar, a suitcase, a shoebox, a cabinet, on a table, or even in an altoid case. Each family member can make their own or the family can make one altogether. Draw a picture of what you would put in your memorial box.

WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN YOUR BOX?
Memory Trees

In our Wonders & Worries teen group, we started the new year off with having the teens make a variation of a hope tree. We took a branch and then encouraged each of our teens in the group to take ribbon, beads, markers and create their own hope to hang from the tree. Some of our teens chose to make paper beads and wrote their hopes on the inside of the paper beads and then strung them on their ribbon. A variation of this activity is to make a memory tree. Each participant can craft and decorate a ribbon to hang on an outside tree as a memory they held with that special person or even that special place (specifically if mourning ancillary loss such as graduations, special events, etc.) There will then become a visual representation of all the color and memories that person or place offered to the lives of others. This provides a great visual so that their memory and legacy lives on through those that loved them.

Possible supplies to have on hand: various colored ribbons, beads, scrapbook paper, modge podge, skewer (for paper beads), feathers and markers.
Forgiveness Heart

Sometimes we didn’t get along with the person who died. We may have been fighting with them or may have been hurt by them. We may even have said unkind things to them. We may not understand all the feelings we have about the person. Use this heart to draw or write things that you would like to say or that you would have liked the person to say to you. You can tear the paper up when you are done or shred it or place a band aid between the two sides to help you release it from your heart.
Coping Basket

One of the best loved activities at Wonders & Worries is when the children get to make their own coping kit filled with reminders and tools to help them release their stress and feel better—bubbles to blow those negative feelings away, stress balls to squeeze, journals to draw or write in, a pinwheel to practice deep breathing with, bubble wrap to pop your angers out, and tissues to use for our tears.

This is a great tool to transfer to home! It is important for children to know that grief can cause all kinds of feelings, sometimes at the same time. They may feel fine one minute and angry the next. We can empower children by helping them know this is normal and by making a coping plan with them for what they can do when this happens.

Place a box, basket, or bag in a central location in your house filled with stress relieving items. When you see your children reaching their limit or acting out, validate the emotion you see and encourage them to pick something from the coping basket to help them release those emotions. Some other examples may include a game, something musical, art supplies, play dough, lotion, or something scented, books, headphones etc. A book that can help children (and adults) build positive coping skills is *Don’t Pop Your Cork on Monday* by Adolph Moser. Enjoy creating a coping kit together and identifying what helps each member of your family feel better.
Ideas for Helping Families

FROM AFAR

Despite social distancing, there are ways we can reach out to families to help them know they are not alone, and we are thinking of them. Bereaved people rarely know how to answer the question “What can we do to help?” so just SHOW UP AND DO!

- Organize a zoom call where family members can gather to share memories.
- Use apps like Marco Polo or Facebook to send videos sharing your favorite memory of the person who died.
- Do a drive by parade to show the family all the people who support them. Write encouraging notes on your windows.
- Leave an encouraging message in chalk on their driveway or sidewalk.
- Ribbons have been hung in the trees of the neighborhood where a first responder has died to show support. A similar thing could be done in the family’s neighborhood as a show of support.
- “Mail a hug” to the family with your favorite memory of the person who died written on it. Have a person lie down on the ground, trace just their neck/arms/hands and fingers open wide, cut out, and write a message on.
- Send meal gift cards or offer to drop groceries on their doorstep.
- Do yard work or outside chores
- Mail a care package with self care or coping items
  - **Adults:** bath items, candy, journal, book, hand massager, Amazon gift card
  - **Children:** stress ball, bubbles, journal, game, favorite candy, children’s book, playdough, markers, stuffed animal
CHILDREN’S BEREAVEMENT BOOKS YOU CAN WATCH/LISTEN TO ON YOUTUBE

I Miss You: A First Look at Death by Pat Thomas
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= EyM97X4lhEo&t=106s

Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Describe Death to Children
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwwGBVaa1j9A

When Dinosaurs Die—a children’s guide to understanding death
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fs7xcqFwNuo

Badger’s Parting Gifts
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRTRABhJTbo

Till we Meet Again, A Children’s Book about death and grieving
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eBjmcsXwe0

What’s Heaven
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMFLTicQnV4

Tear Soup
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USN8GGbC4Ck

The Memory Box
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF-Izl668l

Sesame Street Workshop-When Families Grieve
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2YpflpbOmk

OTHER RESOURCES FOR HELPING BEREAVED CHILDREN

Hamilton’s Funeral & After Life Services

Wonders & Worries
https://www.wondersandworries.org/services/#parenting-support

National Alliance for Grieving Children
https://childrengrieve.org/

New York Life Foundation Bereavement Resources
https://www.newyorklife.com/foundation/bereavement-support

The Dougy Center
https://www.dougy.org/

The Centering Corporation Grief Resource Center
https://centering.org/

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