

I AM CONFIDENT • I AM INTELLIGENT
I AM UNIQUE • I AM LOVABLE
I AM A SURVIVOR • I AM FINDING SUPPORT
I AM HEALING • I AM THINKING POSITIVE
I AM LOVED • I AM UNDERSTANDING
I AM COURAGEOUS • I AM LOVING
I AM ABLE TO EXPRESS MYSELF • I AM OK
I AM NOT ALONE • I AM FINDING HOPE
I AM CREATIVE • I AM EXPLORING
I AM ABLE TO Cope • I AM SPECIAL
I AM FINDING JOY • I AM COPING
I AM SELF-CONFIDENT • I AM STRONG
I AM REMEMBERING • I AM CAPABLE
I AM TAKING GOOD CARE OF MYSELF
I AM GETTING THROUGH THIS LOSS
I AM CREATING MY FUTURE
I AM THE BEST I CAN BE • I AM GROWING
I AM FINDING COMFORT



HAVEN
HOSPICE

Grief Journal for Teens



HAVEN HOSPICE

www.BeYourHaven.org

GAINESVILLE

4200 N.W. 90th Boulevard
Gainesville, FL 32606

E. T. York Hospice Care Center:

352.379.6210

Administrative Office:

352.379.2929

Corporate Office:

352.378.2121

--

CHIEFLAND

311 N.E. 9th Street
Chiefland, FL 32626

Tri-Counties Hospice Care Center:

352.493.9898

Administrative Office:

352.493.2333

--

DELAND

929 North Spring Garden Avenue
Suite 135, DeLand FL 32720

Administrative Office:

386.734.7600

--

JACKSONVILLE

9143 Philips Highway, Suite 480
Jacksonville, FL 32256

Administrative Office:

904.733.9818

LAKE CITY

6037 W. US Highway 90
Lake City, FL 32055

Suwannee Valley Hospice Care Center:

386.961.0155

Administrative Office:

386.752.9191

--

ORANGE PARK

745 Blanding Boulevard
Orange Park, FL 32065

Custead Hospice Care Center:

904.213.2506

Administrative Office:

904.213.2639

--

PALATKA

6400 St. Johns Avenue
Palatka, FL 32177

Roberts Hospice Care Center:

386.326.4544

Administrative Office:

386.328.7100

--

ST. AUGUSTINE

Support provided by Palatka office

Administrative Office:

904.810.2377



About Your Journal

If someone has given you this journal, you have experienced the death of someone you love or care deeply about. To grieve is somewhat like finding yourself in a foreign country without knowing the language. It can be a challenge to deal with the volcano of feelings that may be pushing up within you.

It may seem like there is never a good time to deal with grief, but it will be waiting to grab you when you least want or expect it. Your grief may take the form of anger, sadness, guilt, fear, and/or regret. It may leave you questioning life's meaning or a host of other thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.

And, it may change from moment to moment. At a time when you are in the process of learning who you are and what you want to do with your life, the death of someone you care about can really throw you off-center. Thoughts and feelings you thought you left behind may resurface.

Many young people have found that writing or drawing can be a useful way to express and/or explore what they are going through. This journal is intended to be a private space where you can say whatever you want to whomever you want. Even if you never write a word in it, give yourself permission to think about the topics this journal offers. Please know you will get through this. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, but keeping it all inside of you can be very lonely. You will learn how to live with your loss. Remember to seek out the people who care about you and will listen to you.



It is here that I will begin to remember the person who has died.



Place photo or draw person here

What is a Loss?

Loss is something that happens that changes the way things have been - someone or something that was there before, is no longer. One moment, your life was one way and the next moment it is another. Some losses are easy to adjust to. Others are much more difficult and life-changing. In a way, life is a whole series of big and little losses - beginnings and endings - ever changing.

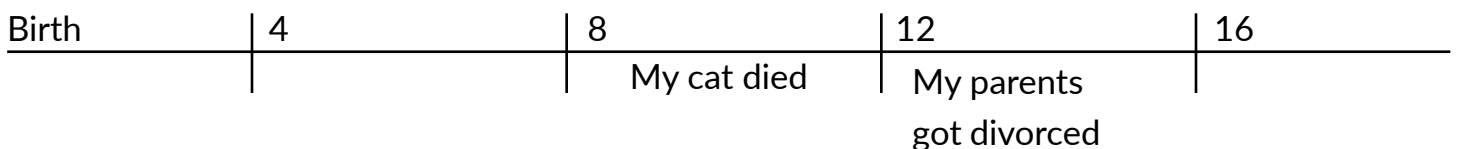
Examples of losses include:

- Moving to a new place
- Not getting something you wanted
- A friend moves away
- Death of a pet
- Breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Divorce
- Injury or illness of someone you care about
- Death of a friend or classmate
- Death of a parent, sibling or other close relative

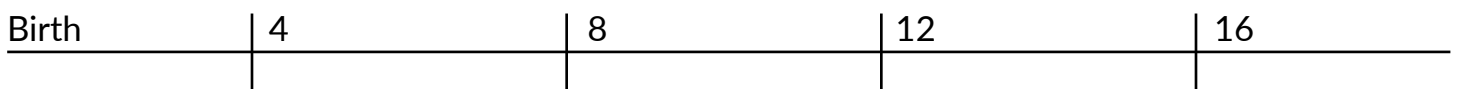


It might be useful for you to think about what losses you have had in your life so far. Use this lifeline or make one of your own.

Sample:



Your timeline:



What is Grief?

Grief is what you experience after a loss. It is a combination of feelings, thoughts and sensations. We will explore these later in this journal.

I Have Lost Someone Special

"I loved my Dad. He was strong, brave, and laid back.
Everyone loved him."
-Chandelle, age 14

When I look back and think about you, I remember that you were:

The thing I think best describes you is:

Our relationship was special...

We shared so many favorite things, like:

This is what you meant to me:



“When a person is born, we rejoice, and when they’re married we jubilate, but when they die, we pretend that nothing happened.”
- Margaret Mead

About Death

Death is not a popular subject in our culture, which is surprising given that the daily news is full of reports about people dying in all kinds of ways. Violent death is the theme in many movies and video games. We can become desensitized to it. Death happens “out there” to other people, not us. When someone we know dies, most of us are uncomfortable talking about it - especially to those closest to the person. We struggle with finding the right words or knowing what is the best thing to do to help.

Different Kinds of Death

- **Anticipated or expected:** Sometimes, we have some time or warning before a person’s death. For instance, we might know someone has a terminal illness and that he or she will die. We know that someone who is elderly is more likely to die than a younger person.
- **Unanticipated or sudden:** Sometimes, we have no warning at all before someone dies. Accidents, suicides or heart attacks are examples of unexpected deaths.
- **Both:** Sometimes even though we knew someone was going to die, we didn’t expect it to happen when it did. Perhaps we thought that a cure would be found or that the person would live longer than he or she did.





Your Death

What I know about where, when, and how you died:

How I found out and what I felt:

What I was thinking:

What I did right after I found out you died:

My body reacted to the pain of losing you. This is what it felt like:



A drawing of what my pain looks like:



Your Funeral/Memorial Service

What your service was like, who was there, and the special touches you would have liked:

What it was like being there (or why I didn't go):

If I could have planned the service, it would have been like this:

Memorial Service program, prayer cards, and other things (newspaper clippings, etc.) can be attached to this page.



Going Back to School

If you haven't gone back to school yet, you may be looking forward to it or dreading it. Being in school may bring some sense of normal routine back into your life. But you may worry about how others will treat you. Will they mention the death? Will they treat you differently? What if you start crying? Share with your friends how you are doing. You might also want to let your teachers know what is going on.

What it was like to go back to school after you died:

Family Changes

When someone in a family dies, the day-to-day routines and roles may change too. It's important to remember that it is not your responsibility to become the "mom" or "dad" of the family, but each family member may take on some additional chores.

Some changes in my family have been:

Holidays and Special Days

Each holiday, birthday or other special occasion can bring an aftershock of grief. Your first impulse might be to try to ignore or pretend it's ok. That usually doesn't work well. Some ideas to consider are talking with your family about what changes you might want to make or which rituals or activities you would like to keep the same. Find a way to honor or celebrate the person's life on those days too. See page 33 for some ideas.

Some thoughts I have about holidays and special days are:

Watching the Members of Your Family Grieve.

In addition to your own grief, it can be very difficult to see members of your family grieving. You might feel like you should do or say something to make them feel better. But as you know, there are no magic words. The best gift you can give may be to simply listen and be willing to give a hug or just spend time with them.

My family has been:



Grief Feels Like...

"The most difficult thing was not seeing my dad every day-
expecting to see him walk through the door and knowing he
would never walk in again."

-Susan, age 16

The Emotions

Circle what you are experiencing. Add more.

Sadness

Fatigue

Shock

Anger

Vulnerable

Despair

Disbelief

Anxiety

Numbness

Confusion

Embarrassment

LOSS OF CONTROL

Emptiness

Relief

Scared

Loneliness

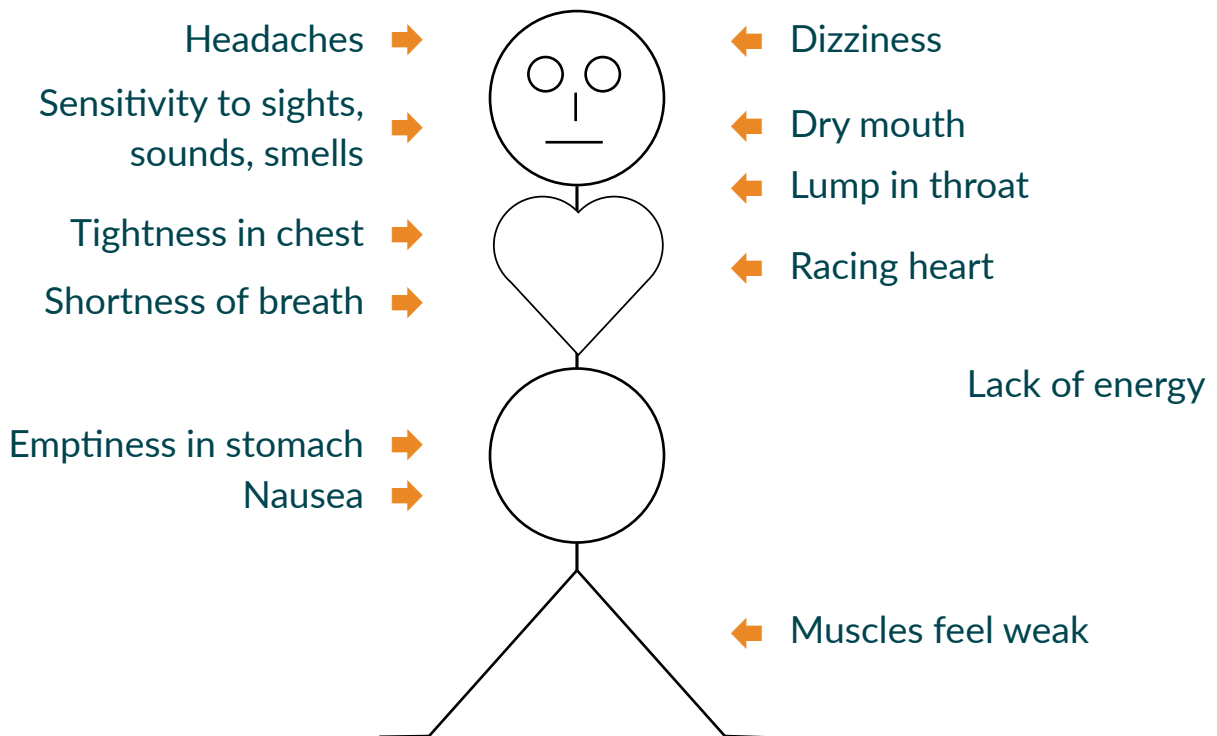
Irritable

My Body Reactions to Grief...

When my dad died, my chest felt so tight, I almost couldn't breathe. My stomach tightened and my thoughts were racing.
-Kevin, age 11

Grief is stressful and can affect a person's health and immune system. Grief can be felt in the body. Your heart can feel like it has truly been broken.

My body is experiencing...



Add what else is happening in your body...

Sometimes I Wear a Mask to Hide What I'm Feeling

Draw what your mask looks like:



Draw what you really feel on the inside:

Anger

Anger is a normal part of grief- neither good nor bad. You may find yourself angry with people, illness, the unfairness of life, or even God. It's important to find nondestructive ways to express it. You can talk about it, write about it, listen to music, kick a ball around, scream in the shower, pound nails- whatever works for you.

I know I am feeling angry when I...



What makes me angry:

I feel frustrated when...

This is my favorite music when I feel angry:



Here are some ideas of physical activities I can do when this happens:

This experience may have shattered some of your assumptions about the world. Most of us like to think that the world is a safe place, or that bad things don't happen to good people. Everything may seem different now.

I can't believe this has happened...

Sometimes I Feel Guilty

After a death, we often struggle with what happened and look for someone or somewhere to place blame. “What if...” and “If only...” run through our minds. Sometimes we may feel guilty that we are still alive when the person we cared about is not (survivor guilt). Since we cannot change what has already happened, work to change guilt to regret. Guilt can gnaw away at us and erode our self-esteem. Guilt places blame on us, but regret says, “I may have made mistakes, but I did the best I could with what I knew.”

Things I feel guilty about

Things I feel good about

Use this page to write a letter to your loved one about anything you feel guilty about and/or regret. Then, consider tearing out the page. Fold it, rip it, shred it, burn it, or bury it. Whatever feels right to you.

(Letter, page 2)

Some things I wish I had said to you or that I wish we had talked about are:

What I think you would say back:

Sometimes I lie awake thinking about...

I worry about...



Sometimes, I feel empty inside...



I'm scared of...

Sometimes, I feel misunderstood...

You may have noticed that many people are unsure what to say or how to act around you since your loss. If your friends have not experienced a major loss, they may not understand what you are going through. Some people may say things that aren't helpful. It can be an awkward time.

Sometimes I feel really alone...



Sometimes people don't understand because I act one way when I'm feeling a different way.

Songs I listen to when I'm sad:

Triggers

A trigger is something that suddenly reminds you of the person who died. It could be something you see, hear, smell, taste or remember. For example, a song might come on the radio that reminds you of the person. You can see a car that looks exactly like the one your person drove, and for an instant you think it's her or him. This can trigger a "grief attack." Probably the toughest part is not knowing when and where these triggers will occur. They can really catch you off guard.

Some things that have triggered "grief attacks" for me are:

I feel out of control when...

"Don't be afraid to show feelings. Don't keep them bottled up. Many people care about you. You will learn who your friends are."

-Cheyenne, age 12

Our Thoughts

Most people are surprised to find that grief also affects their thinking processes. For example, you might be more likely to have an accident because you are preoccupied and not paying close attention as usual. Perhaps you are having trouble concentrating at school. Below are some common experiences. Check the ones that you have noticed.

- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Forgetfulness
- Can't concentrate
- Worrying
- Hard to make decisions
- Lose track of time
- Preoccupation
- Disorganization



Add others you have experienced:

In addition to feelings, thoughts and physical sensations, grief can affect us in other ways also. We may also experience changes in our behavior, interactions with others and even in our spiritual beliefs.

Here are some other ways grief has affected me:

- o Sleeping too much or not being able to sleep
- o Eating too much or too little
- o Absentmindedness
- o Dreams about the person
- o Avoiding things that remind me of the person
- o Sighing a lot
- o Feeling restless
- o Carrying or wearing objects that belonged to the person
- o Not wanting to celebrate holidays or other special days
- o Fear of being alone
- o Wanting to be alone with memories
- o Loss of interest of things you used to like
- o Changing or questioning your spiritual beliefs
- o Being angry at God
- o Strengthening your relationship with God
- o Need to forgive or be forgiven for something

What other changes have you experienced?

Coping and Finding New Meaning

We have looked at many of the characteristics of grief, and you have had the opportunity to write about what your grief has been like so far. Now we will explore some things that can help and begin to find meanings.

Talk, talk and talk!

Find someone you trust who knows how to listen. Talking to friends and people who are good listeners is one of the most useful things you can do to help yourself.

- Talk to them about the person who died
- Share stories
- Let your friends know what you need from them
- Join a teen grief support group if one is available
- Ask for help if you need it

Here are the people I can talk to about my thoughts and feelings:

Remember that the goal is not to “get over” or forget the person who died. The goal is to learn to live with the loss and to find a way to remember and honor his or her life.

What if I feel like hurting myself?

Sometimes people can experience thoughts that they want to die too. It can be difficult to imagine living with the amount of pain you feel now; or perhaps you can't imagine how you could ever be happy again. Those thoughts and feelings can come and go. But if you really are thinking about hurting yourself, please talk to an adult you trust or call/text the national suicide LifeLine at 988 any time. Your conversations are free and confidential.

**Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
It is going to get easier.**

Circle What Helps You

Call a friend

Have a good cry

Run

Sleep

Explore your spiritual beliefs

Write about your grief

Get a massage

Ask for help

Play video games

Shoot hoops

Scream

Read a book about grief

Dancing

Laugh

Draw or paint your feelings

Play with a pet

Watch a funny movie

Go shopping

Listen to music

Talk to the person who died

Learn relaxation techniques

Read a good book

Go for a walk

Meditate

Volunteer to help someone else

Attend a grief group

Don't use alcohol or drugs to numb your pain. That will make it worse in the long run.

Some things I can do:



Spending time with my animals helped. We have 2 dogs,
4 horses, and 2 hermit crabs.

-Cheyenne, age 12

Remembering and Honoring

The connection you had with the person who died will always be there. He or she, to some extent, contributed to making you who you are. By remembering and honoring, that connection lives on. The next part of this journal looks at how we can keep and nurture that connection.

Some ideas are:

- Make a scrapbook or collage about the person's life
- Write a poem or song dedicated to the person
- Write down memories of things you did together
- Keep or wear something that belonged to the person
- Do something special to remember and honor the person on his or her birthday or other special days
- Talk with your family about starting some new rituals for holidays
- Plant a little garden and place a small statue in it
- Watch old videos of the person if you have them
- Create a memorial web page
- Light a candle in remembrance
- Eat some of the person's favorite food in his or her honor
- Volunteer some time to a group or cause that was important to him or her
- Go online and talk to other grieving young people
- Make a small quilt out of clothes that belonged to the person



Other ideas:

I see much of you in me...

What I have discovered and learned from your life and death...

Take every minute you can. You never know when you will die.
Life is special - live it to the fullest.
-Susan, age 16

What I am looking forward to in my life...

The strengths I carry with me are...

The biggest challenge I may face is...

I learned to never give up. You never heal completely,
but it gets better.

-Chandelle, age 13

Because of you, I will:

Don't think it's the end of the world.
There are things to look forward to.
Be optimistic.

-Susan, age 16



A Member of Our Teen Grief Group Wrote her Version of the “I Am” Poem

“I am” by Brandi, age 13

I Am a granddaughter who has lost her grandfather

I Wonder if he watches over me

I Hear his voice in my dreams

I See flashbacks of good times together

I Want to be with him

I Am a granddaughter who has lost her grandfather

I Pretend that we are talking together

I Feel his love inside me

I Touch his cross I wear on my neck

I Cry when I hear certain songs on the radio

I Am a granddaughter who has lost her grandfather

I Understand I will see him again

I Say why me, why him?

I Dream of him holding me

I Try to remember the good times

I Hope he is proud of me

I Am a granddaughter who has lost her grandfather.

Write Your Own Poem Using the Stems Below

“I am” by

I Am

I Wonder

I Hear

I See

I Want

I Am

I Pretend

I Feel

I Touch

I Cry

I Am

I Understand

I Say

I Dream

I Try

I Hope

I Am

The journey through grief can change a person in many ways. Although it may be difficult to even imagine in the beginning, there actually can be some positive changes. Much depends on your willingness to be open to your grief and the possibility of transforming it. You will never be quite the same, but you can grow, develop new strengths and most importantly, develop your own unique sense of who you are or want to be.

In mythology the hero always faces a challenge that includes facing peril. Like the phoenix that rises from the ashes, the hero survives this challenge and is transformed. Some of the “gifts” of grief can be:

- Self awareness
- Finding qualities within yourself that you never knew you had
- Becoming more compassionate towards others who are vulnerable
- Being more aware of what is really important in life
- Knowing that you can survive and handle life’s challenges

Life is a mystery. As you get further along in your journey, you will begin to feel stronger. It is ok to look forward to the future, to have fun and to live and love fully. Your loved one would want you to.

The best thing you can do to honor someone you love is to live your life to the very fullest.



*“Life can only be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards.”
-Soren Kierkegaard*

Haven's Healing Hearts program offers grief support and counseling for people of all ages. If you would like to learn more, please call our grief line at 1.844.LIGHTEN.

**Additional resources can also be found on our website:
BeYourHaven.org/bereavement**



**Scan to go to
our website**

Notes

Notes



HAVEN HOSPICE

If you need further support or have questions, please contact your social worker or our Healing Hearts program at 1.844.LIGHTEN or visit BeYourHaven.org.