

COMPASSION IN ACTION

Activities for Finding Hope in Grief

Book & Activity Pairings





BOOK & ACTIVITY PAIRINGS

This special section of activities was developed by Caring Place staff to highlight the significant role books can play to invite conversation in peer support groups with children and adults who are grieving.

Each book corresponds with an activity either already included in the manual or new ones designed to help peer support group facilitators connect the theme of each story to an engaging activity that will lead to a meaningful dialogue between group members.

The grid on the following pages will help you locate activities that flow well with books or provide additional activities or suggestions that complement the books.

Books can be used with any age, but for younger group members, reading a book each meeting before starting with an activity provides structure and routine, which is so helpful for children who are grieving.

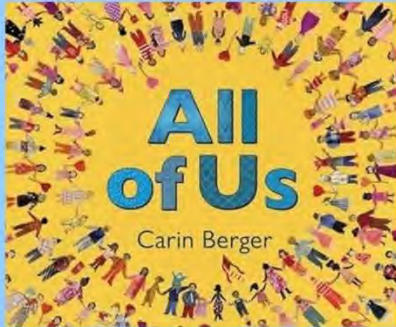
If you would like to use one of the book pairings, please give staff advance notice. Materials and book availability may differ by site.



BOOK/ ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY/ NOTES	AGE GROUP	TASK/ NEED	CATEGORY
<i>All of Us Mosaic</i>	Heart Puzzle	Y • M • T	Group Building	Expressive Arts Connecting through Play
<i>Always and Forever</i>	Gifts from the Person Who Died	Y • M • T • A	Sharing Memories & Continuing Bonds	Expressive Arts Beginning & Ending Rituals
<i>Always Remember</i>	Memory Lane	Y • M • T	Sharing Memories & Continuing Bonds	Expressive Arts Writing Activities Connecting Through Play
<i>Chocolate Chipped</i>	Giant Chain	Y • M • T	Telling Their Story	Expressive Arts
<i>The Color Monster</i>	Critters <i>Can make a feelings Critter</i>	P • Y	Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Creative Outlets for Grief; Book-Paired Activities
<i>Everybody! You Me and Us</i>	Our Group Identity: What We Have in Common	Y • M • T	Group Building	Group Discussion & Question-Focused Activities
<i>The Goodbye Book</i>	Feelings Fishing <i>Can use Questions from Question & Answers in Appendix</i>	P • Y	Telling Their Story	Group Discussion & Question-Focused Activities Book-Paired Activities
<i>The Hare Shaped Hole</i>	5 Senses Worksheet <i>(with activity)</i> <i>Can also use to prepare for or on same night as Mementos</i>	P • Y • M	Sharing Memories & Continuing Bonds	Creative Outlets for Grief Book-Paired Activities
<i>I'm Happy Sad Today</i>	Sand Jar Story: Exploring Feelings and Memories	Y • M • T • A	Making Meaning of the Loss	Expressive Arts Beginning & Ending Rituals
<i>In My Heart: A Book of Feelings</i>	Critters Feelings Barometer	P • Y • M	Group Building Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Expressive Arts

BOOK/ ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY/ NOTES	AGE GROUP	TASK/ NEED	CATEGORY
<i>Inside Out Box of Mixed Emotions</i>	Wooden (Jenga) Change Game	Y • M	Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Book-Paired Activities Connecting Through Play
<i>The Invisible String</i>	Yarn Web Sharing	Y • M • T	Telling Their Story	Group Discussion & Question-Focused Activities Movement & Active Engagement Activities
<i>Keeping it Cool</i>	Coping Kits	Y • M • T	Developing Coping Skills & Supports	Expressive Arts
<i>The Memory Box</i>	Memory Boxes	P • Y • M T • A	Sharing Memories & Continuing Bonds	Creative Outlets for Grief Book-Paired Activities
<i>My Blue is Happy</i>	Inside Outside Feelings Masks	Y • M • T • A	Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Expressive Arts
<i>My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood</i>	Feelings Pizza	Y • M	Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Expressive Arts
<i>My Favorite Color is Blue. Sometimes</i>	Art Grab	M • T • A	Group Building	Group Discussion & Question-Focused Activities
<i>My Yellow Balloon</i>	Balloon Pop	Y • M	Telling Their Story	Group Discussion & Question-Focused Activities Movement & Active Engagement Activities
<i>The Rabbit Listened</i>	Who Helps You Caterpillars	P • Y	Developing Coping Skills & Supports	Creative Outlets for Grief Book-Paired Activities
<i>The Rhino Suit and Coping Shields</i>	<i>Can pair with Coping Skills Game</i>	Y • M	Developing Coping Skills & Supports	Creative Outlets for Grief Book-Paired Activities
<i>Star Wars Search Your Feelings</i>	<i>Can pair with many Feelings activities Color guide from Inside Outside</i>	Y • M	Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Creative Outlets for Grief Book-Paired Activities

BOOK/ ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY/ NOTES	AGE GROUP	TASK/ NEED	CATEGORY
	Feelings Masks <i>can be used</i>			
<i>The Way I Feel</i>	Feelings Charades	Y • M • T	Identifying & Expressing Feelings	Movement & Active Engagement Activities Connecting Through Play
<i>When I Feel Worried</i>	Body Drawings	P • Y • M	Telling Their Story	Creative Outlets for Grief Movement & Active Engagement Activities
<i>Will We Always Hold Hands</i>	Helping Hands	P • Y • M	Developing Coping Skills & Supports	Creative Outlets for Grief

*All of Us*

Carin Berger

Award-winning illustrator Carin Berger's beautiful and timely picture book celebrates the power of community, family, and most of all, love. Her beautiful collage art and lyrical text offer a message of hope in the face of adversity.

~ Sharing Our Hearts: A Collaborative Mosaic of Remembrance and Hope ~

Materials:

- Book—All of Us. By Carin Berger
- Mosaic puzzle pieces made of poster board or construction paper (enough for one for each group member)
- Large heart image drawn on poster roll paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, and other decorating supplies

Goals:

- Facilitate group collaboration and shared reflection.
- Enhance group cohesion and support.
- Create a space for memorialization and hope for the future.

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to build connection, encourage remembrance, and offer messages of hope within individual peer support groups and the collective Caring Place community through collaborative mosaic puzzle-making.

Individual Group Activity:

Explain to each group that they will be creating individual mosaic pieces in response to the following prompts:

- "What is something you liked about being in the group?"
- "What is something you will remember about being in the group?"
- "Share a memory of your special person who died."
- "Share a message to a future Caring Place family."

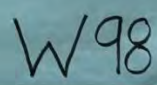
Distribute one puzzle piece and decorating supplies to each group member. Instruct group members to write on and decorate their puzzle pieces in response to the prompts.

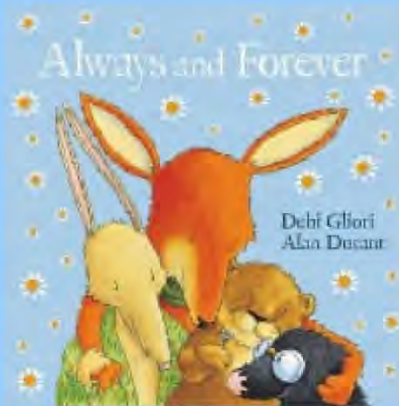
Once the puzzle pieces are complete, instruct group members to bring them to the closing ceremony.

- "What stood out to you about the book?"
- "How is what the book is describing like The Caring Place?"

- Invite each group member to share their mosaic piece with the larger group, if they feel comfortable.
- As each person shares, have them add their piece to a pre-made large heart image (created from poster roll paper) to create a collective mosaic of messages.

- "What was it like to reflect on these memories and messages?"
- "Did anything surprise you as you were working on your puzzle piece?"
- "How does it feel to know you're part of The Caring Place community?"





Always and Forever

Debi Gliori and Alan Durant

When Fox dies, the rest of his family are distraught. How will Mole, Otter and Hare go on without their beloved friend? But months later, Squirrel reminds them all of how funny Fox used to be, and they all realize that Fox is still there in their hearts and memories.

~ Gifts from the Person who Died ~

Materials:

- *Always and Forever* by Debi Gliori and Alan Durant
- Small gift boxes (jewelry size, or slightly larger)
- A variety of gift wrap, gift tags and ribbon (optional)
- Small strips of paper (either blank or with prompts to help the children identify the gifts from their loved ones- see description below for ideas)
- Markers or Pens

Activity Description:

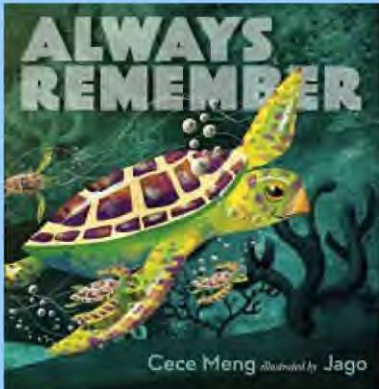
The purpose of this activity is to encourage the children to identify the non-material gifts that the person who died gave them. Begin by reading the story *Always and Forever*. Some discussion prompts include:

1. What was something Fox's friends remembered about him?
2. What was something Fox's friends learned from him?
3. What did Fox's friends do to remember him?

Next, explain to the kids that they are going to have a chance to identify some of the "gifts" their loved one gave them. Provide the kids with strips of paper on which they can write the gifts from their loved ones. Some prompts you can provide to the kids are:

1. A memory that makes me laugh or smile is...
2. A food or recipe that reminds me of my loved one...
3. I remember my person saying....
4. My family member taught me...
5. A trait I have that is similar to my loved one is...
6. A special item I have from my person is....

Invite the kids to share the gifts they identified and any related stories. Give the kids a gift box in which to place their strips of paper. If they would like, they can add wrapping paper, ribbon, etc. Remind the kids they can revisit what they wrote when they are missing their person.



Always Remember

Cece Meng

After Old Turtle swims his last swim and breathes his last breath the waves gently take him away. His friends lovingly remember how he impacted each and every one of them. As the sea animals think back on how much better Old Turtle made their lives and their world, they realize that he is not truly gone, because his memory and legacy will last forever.

~ Memory Lane ~

Materials:

- *Always Remember* by Cece Meng
- Approximately 4-6 feet of butcher paper or a space on a wall to tape the pieces of paper
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils
- Glue or tape
- Small pieces (approx. 3x5 or 4x6) of various colors of construction paper

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to provide children with the opportunity to share memories about their person who died. Start by drawing a path on a piece of butcher paper prior to the group starting and write "Memory Lane" across the top of the paper. Hang up the butcher paper on a wall in your space.

Begin the meeting by reading the story *Always Remember* to the group. Talk with the kids about how the other sea animals remembered their friend, Old Turtle. Some questions that might be helpful include:

1. What are some of the ways old turtle was remembered by the sea animals?
2. What are some of Old Turtle's traits that showed he was a good friend?
3. What is your favorite memory of Old Turtle?

Upon completion of the story, talk with the group members about memories that they have about or with their person that died. Talk about all kinds of memories — funny ones, sad ones, happy ones, scary ones, etc. and avoid asking them to share only their happy or favorite memories. Remind the group members that all different kinds of memories make up this person to you. Encourage the group members to draw memories about their person that died on the small construction paper pieces (one memory per paper). Group members may also depict their memories with words or stories if they prefer.

Give each group member the opportunity to share their drawings or writings. When they have finished sharing, have the group glue or tape their construction papers to the "Memory Lane" path. Ask for the kids' thoughts about their path when all of the memories have been added.



Chocolate Chipped

Shelley Gilbert and Vicky Baruch

Chocolate Chipped tells the unique story of a young boy named Charlie grieving the death of his dad. Using real smells and Scratch&Sniff in the pages to help evoke memories, this book explores the sensitive subject of grief in an honest, engaging - and sometimes even humorous - way. *Chocolate Chipped* can help adults to talk openly to children about the loss of a loved one. It can be read by bereaved children to help them understand their own feelings and also by other children to help them appreciate what a friend is going through.

~ Giant Chain ~

Materials:

- *Chocolate Chipped* by Shelley Gilbert and Vicky Baruch
- Long strips of construction paper
- Markers
- Magazines
- Crayons
- Glue/Glue Sticks
- Scissors
- Stapler

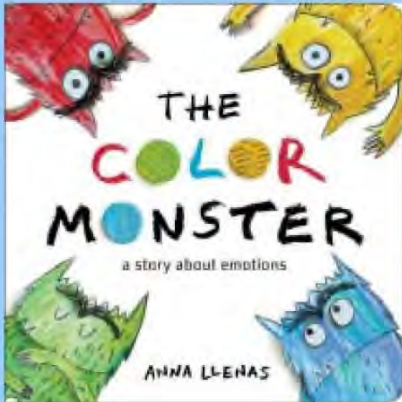
Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help the kids get to know each other and introduce the people that died in their lives. Begin by reading the story *Chocolate Chipped*. As Charlie goes through his experiences, some questions to pose throughout the story or at it's conclusion could include:

1. Are there certain smells that remind you of your person that died?
2. Are there certain things or events that make you think of your person that died?
3. What is a memory that you have about your person that died?

Upon completion of the story, provide each child with a long strip of paper. Let them know that they will each child be creating one link for a "giant chain." Encourage them to decorate one side in a way that represents them and the other side in a way that represents their person that died. They may want to draw or find pictures representing favorite interests, hobbies, activities, sports, colors, foods, TV shows, music, games, animals, etc.

Invite the children to share their individual chain links about themselves and their person who died. Let the children know we are going to create a chain out of the “links” they created. Have the kids work to staple the links together. Ask the children why they think we created this chain? Help them to acknowledge that we are all connected through the losses they have experienced. You may want to hang the chain as a representation of the group and the connection among the members. Be sure to let the kids take home their chain links at the conclusion of group.



The Color Monster: A Story about Emotions

Anna Llenas

One day, Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place; he feels angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at once! To help him, a little girl shows him what each feeling means through color. As this adorable monster learns to sort and define his mixed-up emotions, he gains self-awareness and peace as a result.

~ Feelings Monsters ~

Materials:

- *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas
- Monster Pieces – Body, horns, eyes, arms, legs and mouths
- Paper Plates
- Scissors
- Glue/Glue Sticks
- Paper Fasteners
- Markers or Crayons
- Monster Feelings Cards

Activity Description:

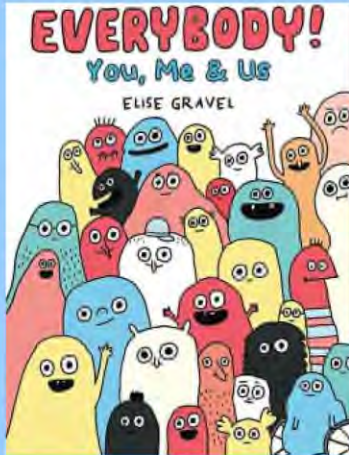
The purpose of this activity is to give kids a fun and creative way to understand and share their feelings. Begin the group by reading the story *The Color Monster*. As the story progresses, ask the kids to share:

1. If they have ever experienced similar feelings
2. A time they have felt angry, sad, happy, etc.
3. What they think the monster is feeling at the end of the book

Upon completion of the book, let the kids know that they are going to be creating their own monsters. Provide each child with a paper plate that will be used as the body of the monster. Pass out the various monster pieces (bodies, eyes, horns, mouths, arms, and legs). Help the kids “fasten” the arms and legs and allow them to glue on their various monster pieces. When completed, pass out the Monster Feelings cards. Allow the kids an opportunity to share their finished monsters with the group. Some questions you can ask include:

1. Tell us about your monster
2. Which of the feelings on the cards does your monster have? Any other feelings?
3. Have you had any of the same feelings as your monster since your person died?

You can also use the Monster Feelings Cards as a way to complete a feelings “check-in” or “check-out” of group by asking the kids to pick the feelings card that matches their mood that day and place it on their monster.



Everybody! You, Me & Us

Elise Gravel

Everybody! is a touching and funny exploration of empathy and unity. Everybody is unique and different. But we are all more similar than we think. Just like you: Everybody has fears. Everybody has moments of joy... and moments of sadness. Young readers will enjoy all the different sizes, shapes, and colors of the monsters in *Everybody!*, and realize that, in the end, we are all the same.

~ Our Group ~

Materials:

- *Everybody! You, Me & Us* by Elise Gravel
- Large piece of paper
- Markers
- Tape measure

Activity Description:

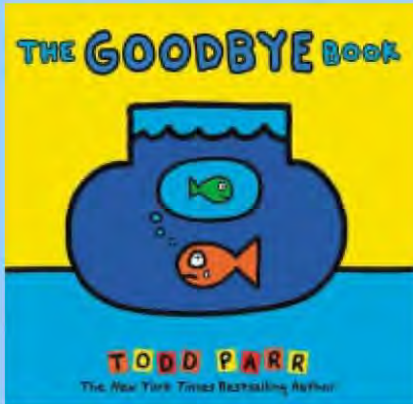
The purpose of this activity is to facilitate group building through sharing, asking questions, and learning more about one another. Prior to your meeting, create a chart on a large piece of paper. Begin by writing the questions you will be asking the kids across the top of the chart. Example questions are below.

- How old are you?
- How many pets do you have?
- How many people are in your family?
- How tall is our group in inches?
- How many different states have you traveled to?
- How many years of school have you had/What is your grade?
- How many movies have you seen this year?
- How many pieces of pizza have you eaten this year?
- How many minutes does it take you to get to school?
- Kids choice question! Let the kids decide what they would like to know about their group.

Read the story *Everybody! You, Me & Us*. Have a discussion with the kids about what they learned about the characters. Some questions could include:

1. What were some of the things the characters shared in the story?
2. How were the characters unique and different?
3. What are some ways you are all different?
4. What are some things that you all have in common?

Invite the kids to write their names in the boxes on the left side of the prepared chart. Have group members take turns answering each question and recording their answers on the chart. Allow for discussion among group members as they answer each question and get to know one another. When all the questions are answered, tally the answers in the bottom row to show your group's totals. Ask the kids what sticks out the most to them about their group. What did they notice with the totals? Help to point out any characteristics you notice about the group, including one way they are all the same— they have all had someone important to them die.



The Goodbye Book

Todd Parr

Through the lens of a pet fish who has lost his companion, Todd Parr tells a moving and wholly accessible story about saying goodbye. Touching upon the host of emotions children experience, Todd reminds readers that it's okay not to know all the answers, and that someone will always be there to support them. An invaluable resource for life's toughest moments.

~ Grief Fishing ~

Materials:

- *The Goodbye Book* by Todd Parr
- "Fishing Pole": This could be a toy fishing pole with a magnet attached to the end or a dowel rod with a piece of yarn or string attached to one end and a strong magnet tied to the end of the string serving as "bait"
- Fish: colorful paper fish cut from construction or other colorful paper. Attach a paperclip to the body of each fish somewhere. Write a grief related question on each fish.

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity to allow kids an opportunity to share about their experience of grief and answer questions related to their loss. Begin by reading the story *The Goodbye Book* and have a discussion with the kids. Talk about the various feelings the fish experiences due to the loss of their friend. Some questions could include:

1. How do you think the fish felt losing their friend?
2. Can you relate to how the fish is feeling?
3. What were some ways that the fish remembered the other fish?

Upon completion of the story, let the kids know that they will be playing a fishing game. Have the group members sit in a circle to form a "pond." You can lay down some blue paper to represent the water if you would like to. The question fish can be scattered in the center of the circle. Group members take turns "fishing" for a fish out of the "pond." (The magnet must touch the paperclip of the fish for successful fishing to occur!) The question on the back of the fish can be read by the child or a group facilitator and then the child can be invited to answer the question. Allow other group members to also answer the questions if they would like to. When all group members have had a chance to answer, the next child can "fish" for a new question. Continuing playing until all the "fish" have been caught and questions have been answered. Be sure to thank the children for participating and answering the questions.

Some questions that you can ask include:

What makes you angry about someone dying?

What do you worry about since your person died?

What is different at your house since your person died?

What do you wonder about since your person died?

Did you attend your person's funeral or memorial service? What was it like?

Who told you your person died or how did you find out?

Share something that you would like your person to know about you?

How have you changed since your person died?

What is hard to understand about someone dying?

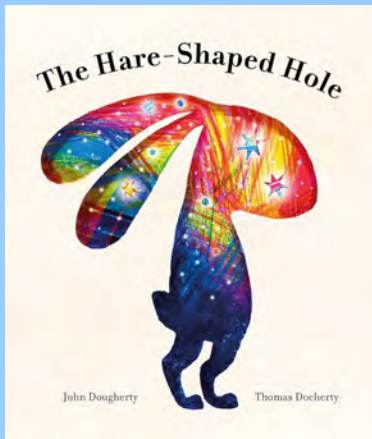
Do people at school treat you differently since your person died?

How have your holidays or traditions changed since your person died?

In the future, what do you think will be hard for you without your person here?

Share a memory about your person.

Ask the group a question that you have.



The Hare-Shaped Hole

John Dougherty and Thomas Docherty

When Hertle the Hare vanishes, leaving nothing but a dark, empty hole in the air, Bertle the turtle is distraught. How can he send the emptiness away and bring his friend back? And what if he can't? *The Hare-Shaped Hole* is a soothing picture book that gently explores themes of love, loss and remembering those we love.

~ 5 Senses Worksheet ~

Materials:

- *The Hare Shaped Hole* by John Dougherty and Thomas Docherty
- Five Senses Worksheet

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help the group members engage and utilize all five senses when describing, remembering and mourning their person who died. For younger children, it may be helpful to have a short discussion about the five senses. Invite them to share an example of something they can see, hear, smell, touch and taste.

Begin by reading the *Hare-Shaped Hole*. Engage the group with some of the following questions, either during the story or at it's conclusion.

1. How did Bertle and Hertle spend their time together at the beginning of the story?
2. What did Bertle notice after Hertle disappeared? How did this make him feel?
3. What did Gerda the bear suggest to Bertle to help him with his feelings about losing Hertle?
4. How did Bertle use his senses to remember things about the times he shared with Hertle?
5. What happened when Bertle found ways to fill the empty hole left behind by Hertle?

Explain that there are many ways to describe and remember our person who died. We can think about and help others learn more about our person using our five senses. As a group, review the five senses and how each of our senses helps us experience the world in a unique way. Ask group members for examples of ways that we can describe and remember our loved ones who have died through each of our five senses. (If they need help, examples include the smell of their clothing or a scent they wore; the taste of their favorite food; the feel of a sweater or blanket they used; the sight of photos or items that remind us of them; the sound of their favorite song).

Explain that they will have a chance to write or draw some ways they can use each of their senses to experience memories of their loved ones. Pass out the worksheet and provide time for the group to work with it before processing using the following prompts and questions.

When the group members have finished writing or drawing, ask if anyone would like to share anything that they wrote or drew. Consider using some of the following questions to deepen the conversation:

1. What did you notice when you thought about your loved one using each of your five senses?
2. Did this make you think of a new or different aspect of your person than you've thought about before? If so, were you surprised by this?
3. Can you imagine how you might talk with others who also remember your loved one to ask questions or hear more stories than the ones that came to mind for you?

This activity and book pairing can be adapted for different age and interests. Consider using a journal to write or draw about sensory memories, or make a 'zine (booklet made from a single sheet of paper) that group members can use for this purpose. Another option is to decorate a box or jar and invite group members to write their responses to sensory prompts on small pieces of paper to place in the jar or box.

This activity can be a nice lead-in to asking group members to bring memorabilia to a subsequent group night.

The five senses can also be used to teach grounding skills.

Special Circumstances:

Some children may not have any or many memories of their person. Some prompts for children who do not have memories could include:

1. What are some things you wish you knew?
2. Who can you ask to learn more about your person?
3. What were you hoping to do with your person that you may not have had a chance to do?
4. What have they missed that you wish they were here for?
5. Is there anything you wish you could tell them?

Remember that not all memories are pleasant or easy to talk about. It is important to be sensitive by not only asking for "happy" or "favorite" memories. Some other prompts include:

1. Does anyone have a memory they want to share?
2. What is a memory you often think about?
3. Are there any memories that are difficult to talk about or that you wish you could forget?

I'm Happy Sad Today

Lory Britain



This friendly picture book helps young children make sense of mixed-up emotions. Happy, and also sad. Excited, but nervous too. Feeling friendly, with a little shyness mixed in. Mixed feelings are natural, but they can be confusing. With gentle messaging and charming illustrations, a little girl talks about her many layered feelings, ultimately concluding, “When I have more than one feeling inside me, I don’t have to choose just one. I know that all my feelings are okay at the same time.”

~ Sand Art ~**Materials:**

- *I'm Happy-Sad Today* by Lory Britain
- Feelings Color Guide
- Markers, Crayons or Colored Pencils
- Sand Art Bottles
- Various Sand Colors

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help kids see that sometimes they can have more than one feeling at once. Begin by reading the story *I'm Happy-Sad Today*. Throughout the story or at it's conclusion, invite the kids to share:

1. If they have ever had two feelings at once.
2. Different feelings they have had when they tried something new.
3. Who they can share their feelings with.
4. The feelings they have had since their person died.

As a group, create a list of feelings they have experienced since their person died. Provide each child with a color guide. Have the kids list their feelings and assign a color that represents each feeling.

Have the kids add sand to their sand bottle to represent the feelings on their color guide. Let them know that the amount of sand that they pour will represent the amount of that feeling that they have had, i.e., if they have been feeling angry a lot and red was their angry color, they would put in more red. When they are finished, invite the kids to share their sand art with the group.

Some processing questions for the kids can include:

1. Tell me about the colors you chose.
2. What colors/feelings do you have the most? The least?
3. Do you notice anything about the same? Just like in the story, we can have mixed up feelings too. Note that the sand colors mix as they are in the bottle.
4. Help the kids see commonalities in their feelings



In My Heart: A Book of Feelings

Jo Witek

Our hearts can feel so many feelings! Some make us feel as light as a balloon, others as heavy as an elephant. *In My Heart* explores a full range of emotions, describing how they feel physically, inside, with language that is lyrical but also direct to empower readers to practice articulating and identifying their own emotions.

~ Model Magic Critters *and* Feelings Barometer ~

Materials:

- *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek
- Model Magic
- Markers
- Beads, googly eyes, pipe cleaners, jewels, etc.
- Feelings Barometer

Activity Description:

The purpose of these activities is to give children a creative way to begin sharing while also creating a routine for the group. Begin the group by reading the story *In My Heart*. As the character experiences different feelings throughout the book, pause to invite the kids to share...

1. If they ever felt the same way
2. A time they felt happy, sad, brave, etc.
3. The last page asks, "How does your heart feel today?" Give the kids a chance to share how they are feeling today and if they want to elaborate on why.

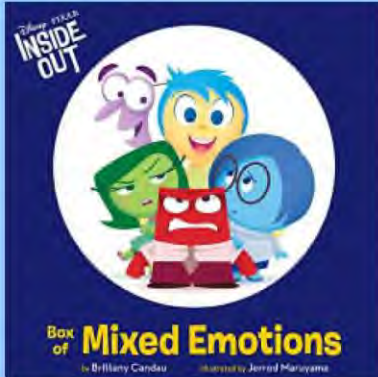
Model Magic Critters

Upon completion of the story, provide a package of model magic to each child. Encourage group members to share different colors with one another. Invite each group member to create a "critter" using the model magic. The critter can be a real creature or something imaginary. Provide beads, googly eyes, jewels, pipe cleaners or other items to enhance their critter. When complete, give each person an opportunity to share their creation. Some questions you may want to ask about their critters are:

1. Tell us about your critter
2. What is your critter's name?
3. Where does your critter live?
4. What characteristic(s) does your critter have?
5. What does your critter eat?
6. What does your critter like to do for fun?
7. In what way(s) is your critter like you?
8. Has your critter ever had someone in it's family die?

Feelings Barometer

After every child has an opportunity to share their critter, introduce the feelings barometer and explain that we will use the model magic critters to indicate how our hearts are feeling each day when we begin group. Let the kids know that you will keep their critters safe for them and they can take them home on the last night of group. Invite the kids to place their critter on the barometer to show how they are feeling. For each subsequent group meeting, invite the kids to share where they placed their critter and why. Let the kids know that they are welcome to move their critter if how they are feeling changes throughout the group.



Inside Out Box of Mixed Emotions

Brittany Candau

Dive inside Riley's mind and get to know the emotions that know her best with this unique format. With five fun story-books, each devoted to a different emotion, as well as a die-cut slipcase, fans of Pixar's film, *Inside Out*, will treasure this special collection of Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger, and Disgust.

~ Emotion and Core Memory Jenga ~

Materials:

- Inside out emotion books by Brittany Candau
- Multicolored block tower game
- Color coded questions (attached)

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to allow the kids to share and explore the various feelings they have experienced since their person died. Begin by reading one or all of the books in the *Inside Out Box of Mixed Emotions* book set. As the stories introduce and describe various feelings, engage the kids in a discussion with the following prompts:

1. When is a time you felt joy?
2. What is something that makes you angry?
3. What was something that Fear was afraid of? Are you afraid of that too?
4. How do you know if someone is disgusted?
5. How did Sadness express her emotions?

Following the story, set up the multicolored block tower. Play Jenga as usual, allowing each child to remove a block from the tower and place it on the top. As each child takes their turn, ask them a question from the corresponding colored questions. Either you, or another child can ask the question. Give each person a chance to answer the question that was asked and allow space for natural discussion between group members before moving on to the next person's turn. Continue with the game until the tower falls.

Another version of the game can be played using questions focused on sharing core memories.



The Invisible String

Patrice Karst

In this relatable and reassuring contemporary classic, a mother tells her two children that they're all connected by an invisible string. "That's impossible!" the children insist, but still they want to know more: "What kind of string?" The answer is the simple truth that binds us all: *An Invisible String made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love.* Does everybody have an Invisible String? How far does it reach? Does it ever go away? This heartwarming picture book for all ages explores questions about the intangible yet unbreakable connections between us and opens up deeper conversations about love.

~ Web of Sharing ~

Materials:

- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst
- A ball of yarn

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to allow children an opportunity to identify and share ways that they are connected. Begin the meeting by reading *The Invisible String* to the group. Throughout the story or at it's conclusion, talk with the kids about the places and ways the children are staying connected by their *Invisible String*. Some questions that might be helpful include:

1. Have you ever heard about the *Invisible String*?
2. What are some ways you stay connected to your loved ones when you are apart?
3. Do you think you can still be connected to your loved one(s) even though they have died?
4. Invite the kids to share who their Invisible String(s) are connected to.

Upon completion of the story, have the group members form a circle, either standing or sitting in chairs. Begin with a sharing topic (see below) and ask the group members to share something on that topic one by one as they pass the ball of yarn from person to person. A web is formed as group members hold on to the yarn with one hand while tossing the ball of yarn to other group members with the other hand.

Potential Sharing Topics:

- Interests and hobbies
- Favorite food/ice cream/candy/movie/game/sport/pizza topping, etc.
- Number of family members, pets, siblings, etc.
- School they attend, grade level
- Who died in your family
- Kids can come up with their own questions!

Point out common "threads" that connect the group members and were found through their sharing. Invite the kids to share commonalities that they notice. If no one acknowledges that they are connected through their experience of loss, help them make this connection. You can hang the completed web as a symbol of the connections between the group members.



Keeping it Cool: Skills for Coping with Change

Melissa Boyd

Keeping it Cool explores numerous ways children can adjust to change, express feelings, and practice healthy coping skills. This enjoyable and relatable book teaches effective coping strategies and how adjusting to change impacts feelings, time spent with others, and daily routines. Keeping it Cool offers ideas for children to model and is an excellent choice to encourage social emotional skills and emotional awareness in children.

~ Coping Kits ~

Materials:

- *Keeping it Cool: Skills for Coping with Change* by Melissa Boyd
- Small Stones
- Stress Balls (pre-made or create your own using balloons and sand)
- Individual containers of bubbles
- Sand
- Small plastic containers or cardboard boxes (ex- a small shoe box) for Zen Gardens
- Small forks or chop sticks
- Stones, seashells, glitter
- Foam door hangers
- Feeling Stickers
- Clothespins or paperclips
- Punching Balloons
- Markers
- Decorative duct tape
- Bags or boxes to house the coping kits

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help children identify tools for coping with difficult emotions. Begin by reading *Keeping it Cool* and having a discussion about the various ways the kids cope with challenging times or difficult feelings. Some discussion prompts include:

1. What are some of the ways the child in the book copes with his sadness and worry?
2. Do you use any of the same coping skills?
3. Is there anything else you like to do when you feel sad or worried?

Next, explain that each child is going to be able to create a coping kit that will include various tools to help them express and manage their emotions. Items that can be included in the coping kit include **worry stones, stress balls, punching balloons, mood door hangers, bubbles and zen gardens**. It may be helpful to create “stations” around the room with the various items that can be included in the kit so that the child can choose what they would like for theirs. Provide each child with a bag or box in which to create their kit.

Mood Door Hangers

Discuss with the children that sometimes we want others to know our feelings without telling them. Sometimes, we want to be left alone and other times we might want to be with someone when we are experiencing difficult feelings. Explain that the kids will be making door hangers so they can share their feeling(s) without verbal expression. Suggest that they hang it on the door of their room. Have children write various feelings or use feelings/emoji stickers on each side of the foam door hanger and decorate as desired. Provide a way for children to indicate their current mood on the door hanger (ex- paper clip or clothes pin)

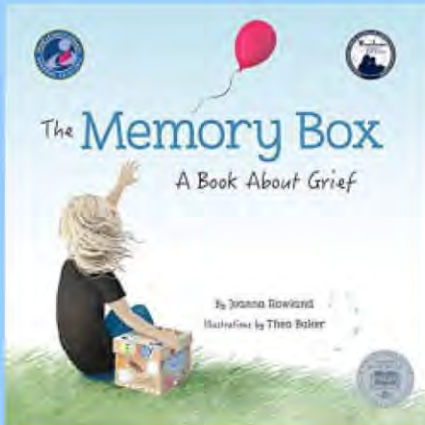
Punching Balloons

Explain that sometimes we need a physical way to express some of the big feelings inside of us. Allow the children to write some of the big feelings they have on their punching balloon so they can use it to punch the feelings away.

Zen Gardens

Show the children an example of a Zen Garden and explain that many people find playing with the sand in a Zen garden very relaxing.

Provide each child with a small container (takout containers with a lid work well), sand and a variety of items they can add to their zen garden (ex- stones, seashells, beads, glitter). The kids can decorate their box using duct tape, stickers, markers, etc. Once it is decorated, help them add sand to their container and then allow them to add the stones, seashells, etc. if they would like. Explain that they can use the small rake or chopsticks to play with and make patterns in the sand.



The Memory Box: A Book About Grief

Joanna Rowland

Our hearts can feel so many feelings! Some make us feel as light as a balloon, others as heavy as an elephant. *In My Heart* explores a full range of emotions, describing how they feel physically, inside, with language that is lyrical but also direct to empower readers to practice articulating and identifying their own emotions.

~ Memory Boxes ~

Materials:

- *The Memory Box* by Joanna Rowland
- Boxes (cardboard or wooden)
- Paint, paint brushes, paint cups
- Markers and Glue
- Embellishments – Glitter, pom-poms, letter stickers, stickers, gems, etc.
- Magazines, tissue paper, mod podge, scissors

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to provide children with a place to keep mementos and other special items and to share stories about these items. Begin by reading the story *The Memory Box* to the group. Talk with the kids as the story progresses about how the girl in the story remembered the person in her life that died. Some questions that might be helpful include:

1. Has anyone ever worried they will forget their person?
2. What type of things did she put in her memory box?
3. Do you have a special place that you keep your mementos?

Next, let the group members know they will be creating their own memory boxes. Allow each group member to decorate a box in which they can store mementos and memorabilia related to the person who died. If the children need ideas, have them think of the hobbies and interests of the person, their favorite color(s) and other things that bring their person who died to mind.

Some questions you can ask while the kids are working include:

1. Tell me more about how you are decorating your memory box?
2. Do you have things that belonged to the person who died?
3. Where do you keep those items?
4. What kinds of things can you save?
5. What if a special item doesn't fit in the box?

When completed, allow the group members to share their boxes, why they designed it the way that they did and where they plan to keep it. Invite the kids to bring some of their special mementos or photos to share with the group next time.



My Blue is Happy

Jessica Young

My Blue is Happy follows one girl's journey through her neighborhood as she explores what colors mean to different people. Is red angry like a dragon's burning breath? Or brave like a fire truck? Is pink pretty or annoying? What about black and orange and green? It explores the concept that colors have feelings attached to them and those feelings can vary from person to person.

~ Inside Outside Feelings Masks ~

Materials: (note: this activity takes 2 meetings to complete because of time required for the plaster to dry)

Meeting #1

- *My Blue is Happy* by Jessica Young
- Feelings Color Grid
- Mask molds
- Plaster fabric
- Water
- Lightweight paper
- Markers/Crayons

Meeting #2

- Paint, Paint Brushes
- Glitter

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help kids identify and share feelings, both those that they express to others and those that they hold on the inside. Begin by reading the story *My Blue is Happy*. As the character experiences different feelings throughout the book, invite the kids to share:

1. If they have ever felt the same way
2. A time they felt happy, sad, brave, etc.
3. Do they have a feeling that is their blue, red, orange, etc.
4. What are some of the different feelings they have felt since their person died?

Upon completion of the book, ask the group members:

1. Are there feelings that you don't share with many people, if any since your person died?
2. Are there feelings that you are more comfortable sharing with people?
3. Do you ever feel like you are wearing a mask as you grieve?

Meeting #1:

As a group, create a list of feelings they have experienced since their person died. Provide each child with a color guide. Have the kids list their feelings and assign a color that represents each feeling. Discuss that we all have “inside feelings” (feelings that we generally keep to ourselves) and “outside feelings” (what we generally show everybody around us.)

Explain that we are going to create a mask that they can decorate to show how they are feeling on the inside and on the outside. Give group members a mask mold and a supply of plaster strips to create their mask. Have them dip the plaster strips in water and place them on the outside of the mask mold. Continue until the mold is fully covered. Allow the masks to dry until the next meeting.

Meeting #2:

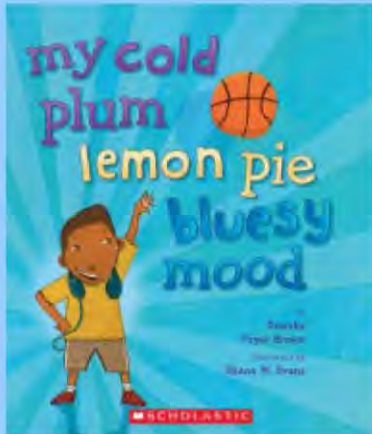
Reintroduce the activity with another brief conversation about inside and outside feelings. Assist the group members in removing their masks from the molds. Have the group members decorate both the inside and outside of their masks as they wish to represent the feelings that they show to the world and those that they keep inside. Refer to the color guides they created during the previous meeting. As the painting happens, encourage discussion of these two types of feelings and those in between. Some prompts to consider are:

- Are there feelings you only share with certain people?
- Who are the people you feel most comfortable sharing with?
- What makes it hard to share or express some of your inside feelings?

Encourage the group members to share their masks and discuss the feelings represented.

Suggestions:

- It may work better for children to paint the inside of the mask first, to avoid smearing the wet paint on the outside of the mask.
- In place of the plaster mask and molds, this activity can be done using paper plates or cardboard masks.



My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood

Tameka Fryer Brown

What color is your mood? On a really good day, Jamie feels purple like the first bite of a juicy cold plum. And with a crayon in his hand, Jamie eases into a green feeling--like a dragon dancing through a jungle made of green jello. But when his brothers push him around and make fun of his drawings, Jamie feels like a dark gray storm brewing. What will it take to put Jamie back in a bright-feeling mood? Through Jamie, young readers will learn to describe how they're feeling in a unique way.

~ Feelings Pizza ~

Materials:

- *My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood* by Tameka Freyer Brown
- Paper cut into pizza shaped slices
- Paper cut into various pizza toppings (ex- cheese, pepperoni, mushrooms, peppers, etc) that will represent different feelings
- A guide indicating which feeling each pizza topping represents
- Glue sticks

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to give kids a creative way to express their feelings and visually identify ways in which their feelings are similar to their group members. Begin by reading *My Cold Plum Lemon Pie Bluesy Mood*. Engage the kids with the following questions:

1. What kind of mood are you in today?
2. Do you have a feeling that is purple like a plum, yellow like a lemon or blue like the sky?
3. What are some of the different feelings you have felt since your person died?

After reading the story, let the kids know we are going to use pizza topping to represent different feelings for this activity. On a large piece of paper, have the various pizza toppings listed. As a group, decide which feeling each pizza topping will represent. Then provide each group member with a blank slice of pizza and encourage them to represent their feelings using the pizza toppings. Use more or less of a topping depending how much or how intensely experience that feeling.

Once everyone is done allow them to share their individual slices of pizza and the feelings represented. Then, have everyone place their slice together in the pizza box, creating a whole pizza. Ask the kids what they notice about the pizza. Help them identify the similarities and differences between the feelings represented on the pizza slices. Acknowledge that while everyone's grief looks different, there are similarities in the feelings we experience when grieving.



My Favorite Color is Blue. Sometimes.

Roger Hutchison

The text and illustrations of this lushly colored picture book guide the reader through different emotions and reactions related to grieving, including shock, tears, anger and hope. *My Favorite Color is Blue. Sometimes.* Is a children's picture book by design, but accessible to people of all ages.

~ Art Grab ~

Materials:

- Book—*My Favorite Color is Blue. Sometimes.* By Roger Hutchison
- Art Grab Cards (prints of various art pieces in the abstract expression style — this type of art style emphasizes free, spontaneous, and personal emotional expression)

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to provide an opportunity for group members to use art and color as a way to identify, reflect upon, and express feelings and/or grief experiences.

Prep for the activity by spreading the art cards out in the middle of the table. Begin by reading *My Favorite Color is Blue. Sometimes.* Invite the group members to share:

- What colors in the story stood out to you/what colors in the story do you identify with?
- Do you agree with the way the author describes the colors or do you identify differently with the colors?

Just as the book describes feelings and grief experiences through colors, invite the group members to sort through the cards and select one (or several) cards that represent or speak to:

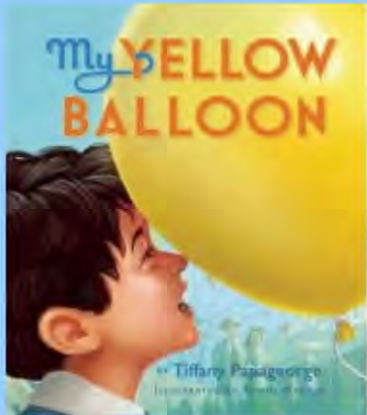
- Their feelings

Or

- Their grief journey

Allow each group member to share. Point out commonalities and themes.

Suggestions: A follow up activity can be for the group to create their own abstract expressionist art on canvases



My Yellow Balloon

Tiffany Papageorge

It all started at the carnival. That's where Joey makes a new friend: a bright yellow balloon. Joey and his beloved balloon do everything together, until the balloon accidentally slips off Joey's wrist and flies far, far away. What will Joey do without his special friend? Tiffany Papageorge has crafted a poignant tale of love, loss, and letting go that will serve as a comforting guide to children who are navigating the complicated emotions of grief.

~ Balloon Pop ~

Materials:

- *My Yellow Balloon* by Tiffany Papageorge
- Balloons
- Questions written or printed on small strips of paper

Activity Description:

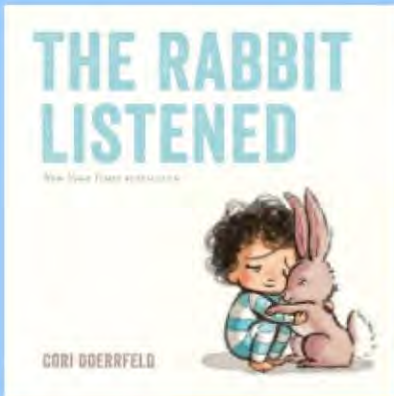
The purpose of this activity is to provide an opportunity for the group to share their experiences of grief and discuss questions they may have after someone dies while having an opportunity to release physical energy. Prior to group, blow up the balloons, inserting a question into each balloon before tying it. Begin by reading *My Yellow Balloon*. Talk with the kids about the book, either during or after the story. Some prompts that might be helpful are:

1. What do you think the balloon represents?
2. How do you think Joey felt when the balloon slipped off of his wrist?
3. Did you notice how the pictures changed from being colorful to black and white? Why do you think this happened?

Explain that after someone dies, we can be left with lots of questions. Some questions don't have a right or wrong answer, but it can be helpful to discuss these with others. Show the kids the balloons and explain that each balloon contains a question for them to answer. Have them take turns choosing a balloon and popping it, either by sitting on it, using a toothpick, or by cutting the end of the balloon off. (Do not force any child who is afraid to pop a balloon to do so.) Have the child retrieve the question and read it to the group, or read it for them if they need help. Give each child an opportunity to answer the question before moving on to the next one. Be sure to thank the children for participating and answering the questions.

Some questions you can ask include:

- 1. What makes you angry about someone dying?**
- 2. What do you worry about since your person died?**
- 3. What is different at your house since your person died?**
- 4. What do you wonder about since your person died?**
- 5. Did you attend your person's funeral or memorial service? What was it like?**
- 6. Who told you your person died or how did you find out?**
- 7. Share something that you would like your person to know about you?**
- 8. How have you changed since your person died?**
- 9. What is hard to understand about someone dying?**
- 10. Do people at school treat you differently since your person died?**
- 11. How have your holidays or traditions changed since your person died?**
- 12. In the future, what do you think will be hard for you without your person here?**
- 13. Share a memory about your person.**



The Rabbit Listened

Cori Doerrfeld

When something sad happens, Taylor doesn't know where to turn. All the animals are sure they have the answer. The chicken wants to talk it out, but Taylor doesn't feel like chatting. The bear thinks Taylor should get angry, but that's not quite right either. One by one, the animals try to tell Taylor how to act, and one by one they fail to offer comfort. Then the rabbit arrives. All the rabbit does is listen . . . which is just what Taylor needs. With its spare, poignant text and irresistibly sweet illustration, *The Rabbit Listened* is about how to comfort and heal the people in your life, by taking the time to carefully, lovingly, gently listen.

~ Who Helps You Caterpillars ~

Materials:

- *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld
- Construction Paper
- Pre-Cut Round circles cut from different colors of construction paper
- Glue
- Markers

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help kids identify the supportive people in their lives that can help them when they are missing their person who died or having difficult feelings. Begin by reading the story *The Rabbit Listened*. Following the story, have a discussion about the various suggestions offered to Taylor. Discussion points might include:

1. The different ways all of the animals tried to help Taylor in comparison with the rabbit.
2. Discuss what happens with Taylor when they process all of the earlier ideas.
3. What did the rabbit do that was helpful? Ask the kids who listens to them when they need to talk.

After the story, ask the kids if they felt like Taylor after their person died. Were they able to talk to anyone? How did that person help? What are the benefits of having someone to talk to? Ask the kids to identify all the different people they can go and talk with. Are there friends, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbors, or others that you can talk to? Help the kids to identify people they can speak with at home, school and in the community.

Ask the kids to identify positive things they can do if those people aren't around to talk. What are the things they can do to feel better if they are having difficult feelings? You can make a list for the group as they are identifying both the people they can go to and their positive coping skills.

Explain to group members that having support can help us get through hard times. It is good to know the people who will listen to us and help us feel better. This activity will help them remember who they can turn to when they are having a hard time. Have the group members choose the different colored circles that they would like to use to create a caterpillar. Have the kids write the names of their supportive people on the circles, assisting those who need help with writing or spelling. Also encourage them to write their coping skills on other circles. Then have the kids glue the circles on a large piece of construction paper to make a caterpillar. Allow the kids to add a face, feet, antennae, and any other drawings to their picture. If the kids have a hard time coming up with people and coping skills, you can assist them in reviewing the list from earlier. Invite the kids to share their completed pictures with the group.



The Rhino Suit

Colter Jackson

For one little girl, the weight of the world feels like too much to bear. She feels everything so deeply, it makes her want to hide. One day, when the tenderness and pain of the world feel like they are more than she can handle, she has a grand idea. She decides to build a rhino suite to keep herself safe. Inside the rhino's armor, the pain of the world is easy to ignore, but the beauty and joy the world has to offer are hidden too. *The Rhino Suit* is about moving from fear to courageousness, from brokenness to wholeness and from feeling shut down to letting all of life in.

~ Coping Shields ~

Materials:

- *The Rhino Suite* by Colter Jackson
- Cardboard Shields
- Paint, paint brushes, paint cups
- Markers and Glue
- Embellishments – Glitter, pom-poms, letter stickers, stickers, gems, etc.

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help children identify ways to manage and cope with all of the intense feelings and experiences that are a part of their grief journey. Begin by reading *The Rhino Suit* and engage the kids in a discussion with the following questions:

1. Why did she make a Rhino suit? How did the Rhino suit help her?
2. What were some of the problems with wearing the Rhino suit?
3. What did she decide to do about the Rhino suit?
4. What did she do when her feelings were overwhelming?
5. What are some things that could help us manage hard or scary feelings/experiences?

Next, explain that sometimes we need ways to manage big, overwhelming feelings. It is important to find ways to do this that don't stop you from letting feelings and experiences that are important to you in. A shield can provide some protection when you need it, and still will let you keep your heart open to feelings and experiences.

As a group, brainstorm some positive coping skills and ways to manage hard or overwhelming feelings and experiences. Give examples if they need help thinking of ideas (take a walk, journey, color/draw, talk to a trusted friend or adult, listen to music) Then, provide each child a shield and explain that they are going to create a shield that represents the coping skills they might use throughout their grief journey.

Once everyone is done creating their shields, invite the kids to share their shields and the coping skills they will try to use. You can help them think about how they might use different coping skills by asking some of the following questions:

1. When is a time you might use that coping skill?
2. Are there any of these coping skills or activities that you would prefer to do alone? With a friend or adult caregiver?
3. How will you know when you need help managing your feelings? *You may want the kids to draw/write times they need to use their coping skills on the back side of the shield*



Star Wars Search Your Feelings: Galactic Basic Edition

Caitlin Kennedy and Calliope Glass

Search Your Feelings features fun poems and illustrations about different emotions that tie to iconic moments from across the *Star Wars* saga.

~ Feelings Lightsabers ~

Materials:

- *Star Wars Search Your Feelings: Galactic Basic Edition* by Caitlin Kennedy and Calliope Glass
- Feelings Color Guides
- Light Saber Coloring Sheet
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help kids identify different feelings experienced since their person died while using color to express their identified feelings. Read the book *Star Wars Search Your Feelings*. Throughout the story or at it's conclusion, invite the kids to share:

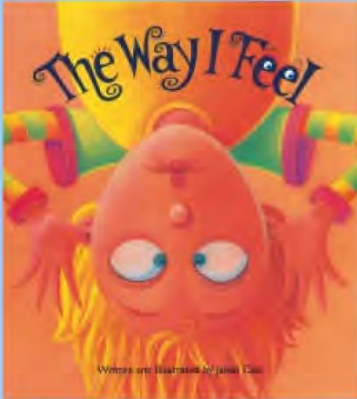
1. If they have had feelings like the Star Wars characters were experiencing.
2. Times that they have experienced those feelings.
3. Feelings they have felt since their person(s) died.

As a group, create a list of feelings they have experienced since their person died. Provide each child with a color guide. Have the kids list their feelings and assign a color that represents each feeling.

Pass out the Lightsaber coloring sheet and let them know they will be coloring the sheet to represent the different feelings they have listed on their color grids. Let them know that the amount of color they use will represent the amount of that feeling that they have had, i.e., if they have been feeling angry a lot and red was their angry color, they would color more of their Lightsaber red. When they are finished, allow the kids to share their Lightsabers with the group.

Some processing questions for the kids can include:

1. Tell us about the colors you chose.
2. What colors/feelings do you have the most? The least?
3. Help the kids in group see commonalities in their feelings.



The Way I Feel

Janan Cain

Helping children identify and express their feelings in a positive manner is important for their social-emotional learning, developing empathy, and building resilience. Feelings are neither good nor bad, they simply are. Kids need words to name their feelings, just as they need words to name all things in their world. *The Way I Feel* uses strong, colorful, and expressive images which go along with simple verses to help children connect the word and

~ Feelings Charades ~

Materials:

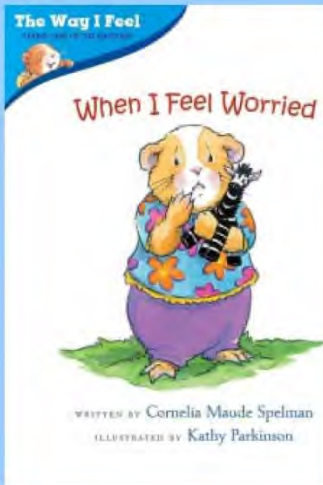
- *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain
- Cards with various feelings words, pictures or emojis on them

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help group members identify and express feelings, while also recognizing them in others. Begin by reading *The Way I Feel*. Engage the kids with some of the following questions either during or after the story.

1. When is a time you felt disappointed?
2. How would someone else know if you were angry?
3. What does your face do when you are excited?

Next, ask the children if they have ever played charades. If someone has, ask them to explain how it works, and if they haven't, explain that someone will pick a card with a feeling word (or picture) on it and then act out that feeling while the other group members guess the feeling they are portraying. Once the feeling is identified, invite the children to share a time when they experienced that feeling and how they expressed it to others.



When I Feel Worried

Cornelia Maude Spelman

Everyone feels worried sometimes, but there are always ways to feel better! Join a cuddly hamster and her toy zebra as she learns to manage feelings of worry. With a focus on identifying the causes of an emotional reaction, and coming up with ways to feel calm and happy again, this book offers simple strategies to help kids understand and take care of their emotions.

~ Body Tracings ~

Materials:

- *When I Feel Worried* by Cornelia Maude Spelman
- Large pieces of butcher paper- long enough to trace the bodies of the group members.
- Markers

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to explore feelings and how these feelings might be experienced physically as we are grieving. Begin by reading *When I Feel Worried*. During the story or at its conclusion, ask the kids to share:

1. A time when they felt worried
2. How their body feels when they are worried
3. If there is anything that helps them feel less worried

Ask if anyone has ever noticed that their body feels different when they have certain feelings (ex- they belly feels funny when they are nervous or their knees feel weak when they are sad). Explain that we are going to trace the outlines of our bodies and draw or color feelings they have experienced in their bodies since their person died. Have each child lie on a large piece of butcher paper and trace the outline of their body. Then allow them to draw something on the body to represent the different feelings and the physical sensations that they create. It may be helpful to ask some of these questions to guide them:

1. Is there a color that you associate with a particular feeling (e.g. black for sadness)
2. Or a picture that best represents that feeling (e.g. butterflies in the stomach for nervousness.)
3. Or a word that best fits (e.g. yuck for a tough feeling)
4. Let the children add their feelings to the body tracing and discuss those feelings and physical sensations.

Let the children add their feelings to the body tracing and discuss those feelings and physical sensations. Invite group member to share their body drawing, the meanings of what was added to the drawing and the feelings associated with it.



Will We Always Hold Hands?

Christopher Cheng and Stephen Michael King

A universal story about the everlasting bonds of friendship and love. There are some things that only a best friend can do—hold your hand when reading a scary story, carry you safely across a river, bandage your hurts, say it's okay if you're grouchy, and best of all, forever hold you in their heart. Through a series of questions and answers, Bear tells his friend Rat that best friends will always be together, in rain or shine, in good times and bad, forever and ever.

~ Helping Hands ~

Materials:

- *Will We Always Hold Hands* by Christopher Cheng and Stephen Michael King
- Paper/Construction paper
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils

Activity Description:

The purpose of this activity is to help kids identify the supportive people in their lives that can help them when they are missing their person that died or having difficult feelings. Begin by reading the story *Will We Always Hold Hands*. Have a discussion with the children throughout the story or at it's conclusion about the relationship between Bear and Rat . Discussion points might include:

1. Do you think Bear is good friend to Rat?
2. How does Bear support Rat?
3. Who is someone in your life that supports you?

After the story, ask the kids if they have had questions like Rat had for Bear. Were they able to talk to someone? How did that person help? What are the benefits of having someone to talk to? Ask the kids to identify all the different people they can talk with. Are there friends, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbors, or others that you can talk to? Help the kids to identify people they can speak with at home, school and in the community.

Ask the kids to identify positive things they can do if those people aren't around to talk. What are the things they can do to feel better if they are having difficult feelings?

You can make a list for the group as they are identifying both the supportive people they can go to and their positive coping skills.

Have each child trace two hands on a piece of paper. In one hand, have them list the people in their lives they can go to when they need to talk or are having difficult feelings. In the second hand, have the kids list the positive coping skills and things they can do to feel better during times that they don't have a person to talk to. They can decorate the rest of their paper if they would like to as well. Let the kids share their completed hands with the other group members.

HIGHMARK.

CARING PLACE 

finding hope in grief

COMPASSION IN ACTION

Activities for Finding Hope in Grief

