



# Children in Grief

A Curriculum created by



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## Section One: our mission

*Breakway's* group support programs are designed to have families overcome the waves that crash through life's journeys. Finding support is the first step in discovering a redemptive perspective about life's experiences. Our program provides coordinators and facilitators the essential tools needed to equip participants in embracing the journey to recovery.

*Breakway* offers two programs that are designed to give churches and counseling centers with the needed materials to start a support group for children ages five to 18.

### What is *Breakway*?

*Breakway* is a safe, supportive place for children who experience the death of a significant person in their lives. With ongoing group support, through *Breakway*, children and their parents can share their experience and express their feelings through play, drama, art and other creative activities under the supervision of trained, caring listeners.



# our mission

## Why provide support services for children of mourning?

Our society places value on happiness, access and health by promoting an attitude of “be strong” and “get over it” when children and families experience death, Children may also feel pressure to not tell anyone (even in their family) how they think or feel. At *Breakway*, the shared circumstances of loss and major changes in their lives allow children to explore, identify and express themselves and to heal from the trauma and emotional upheaval of loss. Mourning children who internalize their personal experience and do not have adequate support may experience depression, school adjustment problems, substance abuse, risky behavior or other coping problems.

## Who should participate in our Kids In Grief program?

Children ages five through 18, and adults who are trying to cope with the effects of death and loss, will find others like themselves in *Breakway* groups. Groups are divided by ages five to eight, nine to 12, 13 to 18 and adults. It is important that parents or guardians of the children attending also come in order to discuss the special needs of their children, some effective parenting skills and their own needs as they struggle with the aftermath of a death and their feelings of grief.

## What types of activities will participants be doing?

Smaller children will create art, engage in therapeutic play with one another and enjoy group sharing. Older children will create art as well, but they will also learn to journal and share thoughts with one another. Parents in the adult group will learn helpful tips to use with their children, and will share their stories with other parents.



# our mission

## What is the difference in support provided by *Breakway* and counseling for *Breakway*?

Support services are not treatment. They are also not counseling or in-depth therapy. Support is listening, being present to the children and their parents as they share thoughts and experiences, express feelings and ask important questions. Support includes trusting that a child will share and heal when given a safe environment in which to do the work. The time in group can even be fun. *Breakway* participants are not broken and do not need to be fixed. Children in grief need to be given a place where they feel comfortable enough to express their deepest hurts and grief experiences.

Children and families needing additional special services should be referred to a licensed professional counselor.

## Why is *Breakway* our ministry?

*Breakway* programs and groups are formed out of the call of Scripture to address the needs of those who are helpless, hurting and in need:

*Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*  
James 1:27 (NIV)

*Breakway* programs and groups are formed also out of the call of Scripture to come alongside those who are experiencing a dark time in their lives to provide comfort and support that others have provided to us in the past:

*All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel! He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.*

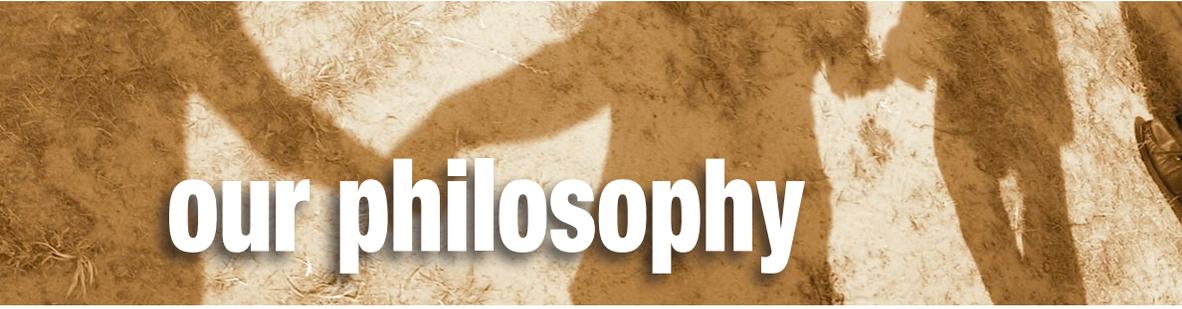
2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (The Message)



## our mission

*Breakway* groups seek to come alongside children, teens and their adult family members to walk with them in their grief after the loss of a loved one or significant person in their lives.

*Breakway* programs and groups work to help children and their families grieve in healthy ways and heal in a safe, supportive environment.



# our philosophy

## What is our philosophy?

We believe that children old enough to love are old enough to mourn.

C.S. Lewis said:

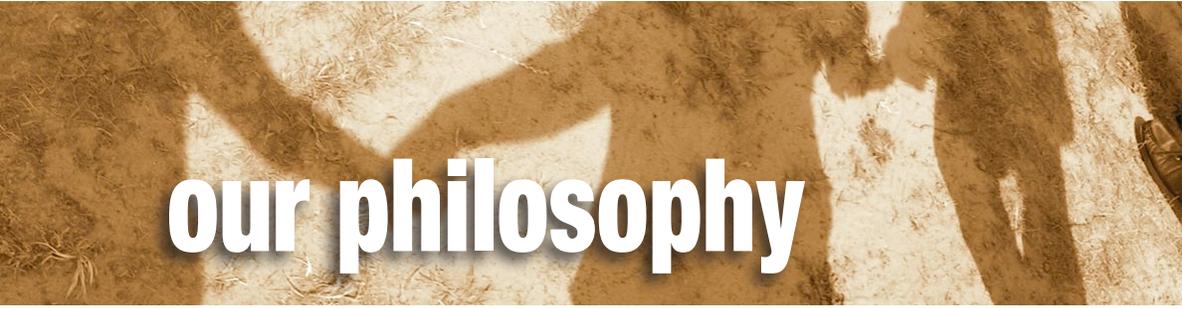
*To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully around hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket-safe, dark, motionless, airless-it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.*

Most people have allowed themselves the luxury of being vulnerable to love and attachments and possess hearts that are breakable. When loss occurs, grief follows. We acknowledge our society's expectations of taking three days or so to mourn, and we created a safe place for children so they can take the time they need to express themselves freely, to know they are not alone, to have special listeners who care about them and who aren't afraid to let them talk about their loved one who has died.

We believe children will want to love again after loss and experience healthy relationships in life. So we created *Breakway* to help them on their grief journey.

We believe that bereaved children are not doomed to go through life addicted, depressed or suicidal, but we acknowledge that they are at risk for these problems.

We believe that children could use some support as they grieve because it is likely they have adults in their lives who are grieving as well and who may be unable to be present for them emotionally. Children need to learn healthy coping skills so that they handle their losses rather than allowing their losses to handle them.



# our philosophy

We do not believe in dragging a child to some conclusion about his or her grief.

We do not believe that we recover, get over or resolve our grief. We believe that grief changes us forever, that we can be reconciled to our loss and heal in time. We also believe that no matter how long ago the loss, grief comes in waves. Part of the journey is learning how to manage the waves.

We believe that each person grieves uniquely and try not to put time limits or other expectations on anyone experiencing grief.

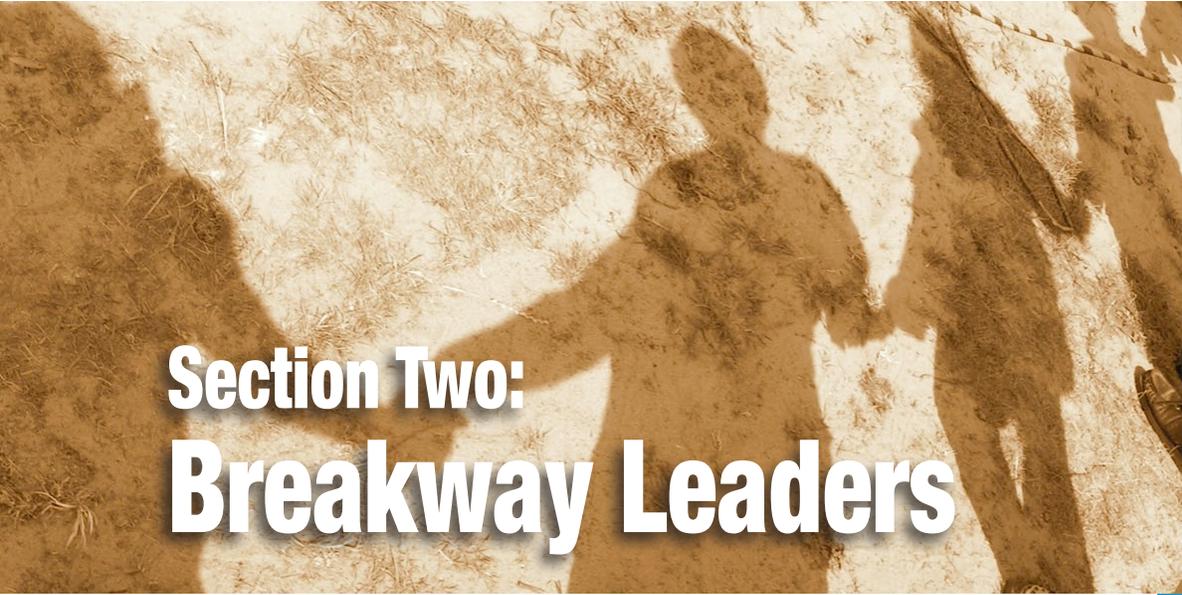
We don't want to be a secret in this community.

We are passionate about what we do. We want to promote healthy mourning in every way that we can. We are aware that mourning rituals are scarce, and we try to provide ways to remember the people who have died in the lives of the children we serve.

We play, draw, color, cut, paste, read, dress-up, play puppets and games, write, compose poetry, paint, listen to music and let our imaginations live. We want children to want to choose to dance rather than sit out life. We know there is a time to sing and dance and a time to cry and mourn. We allow a heart to do as it needs to make that choice. Helen Keller said:

*The world is full of sorrow, but it is full also of the overcoming of it.*

So, our message is one of hope.



## Section Two: Breakway Leaders

### Who leads *Breakway*?

When you are ready to implement the *Breakway* program, it is important to first assign a person in the role of program coordinator. This role will ensure that you have a person overseeing every aspect of the program. The program coordinator will recruit facilitators for each group and be responsible for training those facilitators and maintaining accountability.

*One hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.*

*Author Unknown*



# The Role of Program Coordinator

Dear Program Coordinator,

We are thrilled you have chosen to be a part of the healing journey for children who mourn the loss of a loved one and their parents. Your role as a *Breakway* Program Coordinator is an important one. You are training facilitators of children and/or their parents to help restore their hearts and bring the hope of healing that can ultimately only come from our Lord Jesus. He is the Mighty Counselor.

Our program has been designed to provide children and parents who mourn with tools to walk through a season of grieving with understanding and support. Like all programs, we recognize that we cannot ensure every participant will be a success story, but our hope is to mitigate the negative effects of the loss of a loved one to the best of our ability.

As you train your facilitators to take a group through our curriculum, please make preparation and accountability a priority. Your role as an overseer is no small task, and each task carried out plays a significant role in the success of the program.

We believe this work is a rescue mission—to rescue hearts that the enemy would like to kill, steal and destroy.

We wish you and your facilitators the best as you go through this process together.

Blessings,

The *Breakway* Staff

# Program Coordinator Responsibilities

The Program Coordinator will:

- Send out the curriculum to facilitators before each session;
- Conduct the pre-meeting and post-meeting sessions each time their team meets;
- Circulate a sign-in sheet for team members to record those present;
- Conduct evaluations and orientations for all families entering Breakway and assign each family to the appropriate group session;
- Remind families to RSVP for the group sessions in a timely fashion;
- Provide direction and a spirit of teamwork and cooperation;
- Rotate among the groups during the sessions, if staffing allows, and share observations and suggestions with the team or individual team members, especially during the post-meetings;
- Serve as a role model for team members and occasionally take an active role in the group process of the various age-level groups to demonstrate skills and procedures;
- Respond to any reported cases of suicidal ideation, child abuse (as defined by state statute), or chemical dependency on the part of a child, adolescent or adult at the site and make the decisions about when to refer a client and family for additional help;
- Be trained in CPR and provide leadership to help the team handle special situations as they arise.



# Program Coordinator Responsibilities

The coordinator will: (Cont'd.)

- Help provide ongoing training to their team by engaging in group reflection and instruction, or by meeting with individual team members.
- Offer support and encouragement to the group facilitators as they work with the families who participate in our support groups; and
- Learn the family history, keep up with the status of family members who are a part of the group and serve as the liaison to families as needed.



# The Role of the Facilitator

Our goal is to develop facilitators who are informed, equipped and prepared to step into the group and begin implementing the curriculum with confidence. Specifically, we seek to develop facilitators who:

- Understand children, the group setting and the special needs of those who mourn the loss of a loved one;
- Are comfortable facilitating and adapting provided sessions;
- Understand fully the curriculum, our purposes and practices; and
- Understand and share our mission and commitment to providing resources and love to children and parents who mourn the loss of a loved one.

## Your Role as a Facilitator

- Be a positive role model. Facilitators should be incredible listeners and model sensitivity and compassion to their group.
- Be an effective facilitator. Facilitators should come equipped and able to enforce times and rules with the group.
- Be an advocate for children. Facilitators should understand children, their development, their needs, and be able to communicate on their behalf.

*How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!’*

Romans 10:15 (NAS)



# The Role of the Facilitator

Dear Facilitator,

We are thrilled you have chosen to be a part of the healing journey for children who mourn the loss of a loved one and their parents. Your role as a *Breakway* Facilitator is a meaningful role. You are guiding children and/or their parents to the hope of healing that can ultimately only come from our Lord Jesus. He is the Mighty Counselor.

Our program has been designed to provide children and parents in mourning with tools to walk through a season of grief with understanding and support. Like all programs, we recognize that we cannot ensure every participant will be a success story, but our hope is to mitigate the negative effects of grief to the best of our ability.

As you lead a group through our curriculum, please make preparation a priority. Your preparedness will be translated as the hands and feet of God, so do this work prayerfully and thoughtfully. We believe this work is a rescue mission—rescuing hearts that the enemy would like to kill, steal and destroy.

We wish you and your group the best as you go through this process together.

Blessings,

The *Breakway* Staff

# General Guidelines for Facilitator

1. The activities for each session are pre-planned by the program coordinator. Additional ideas and resources can be submitted to the leaders for possible use in future sessions but should never be implemented without approval from the on-site program coordinator.
2. Whatever takes place in the support group is confidential, except for information pertaining to harming oneself or others. (See the next page for Seven Exceptions to Privacy.) It is important for the children's facilitators to interact with adult family members for the purpose of building trust. Generalized statements about the children's progress are appropriate between a facilitator and a parent. For example: "Jacob is doing well. He has made some important strides. He is expressing himself more and more." Or, "Jacob seems troubled. Is there anything you could share with me to assist him in any way?"
3. If adults have specific concerns with regard to the progress of their children or the activities in the children's group, facilitators should encourage them to check with the program coordinator on site.
4. Confidentiality must be observed with regard to any and all information disclosed by participants and facilitators in group meetings, pre-meetings and post-meetings. (See the next page for Seven Exceptions to Privacy.) Discretion must be used so that meetings can remain safe for telling personal truths.
5. The on-site program coordinator should be available to address any adult group meetings and/or concerns for children's groups while the program is being implemented.

*"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

1 Peter 4:10 (NAS)



# Seven Exceptions to Privacy

1. Typically anyone working with children is required by state law to report to the appropriate governmental agency any revealed or suspected abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional or neglect. The report should be made as soon as possible.
2. If we learn that someone with whom we are working has a specific intent to bring harm to him- or herself, we reserve the right to inform the other family members and/or make appropriate referrals if necessary.
3. If we have reason to be concerned about the drug or alcohol use or abuse by a child or teen, we reserve the right to inform the parent.
4. If the court orders information, including a subpoena, we will attempt to contact the parties involved. If the release of information is opposed, the court may still require our compliance with the order.
5. If we learn that someone participating in the program may commit a violent act, we may take steps to protect the intended victim from such danger, or inform the police, or both.
6. The rights and exceptions to privacy apply to information disclosed in support groups. All group members are encouraged to keep such information confidential, but Breakway is not liable if confidence is broken.
7. At times, Breakway uses case examples of children or teens and their families in publishing articles, conducting professional training, community education, and in fundraising efforts. We may anonymously refer to your situation in those circumstances. Your child, teen or family's complete name will never be used without your specific written approval.

*“Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise,” says the LORD; “I will set him in the safety for which he longs.”*

Psalm 12:5 (NAS)



# Top Ten Facilitator Rules

1. Be on time.
2. Notify your on-site program coordinator in advance if you are not able to attend.
3. Read over each session before you come.
4. Share responsibilities if you are working with a co-facilitator.
5. Listen to your group participants.
6. Compliment group participants whenever possible.
7. Say encouraging words to parents.
8. Talk directly with another facilitator or the program coordinator if a conflict arises.
9. Maintain the confidentiality of the children and their parents.
10. Do not give unsolicited advice, no matter how tempting.

*Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.*

Proverbs 19:21 (NAS)



# Expectations

## What should children and parents expect from the *Breakway* program?

**A Safe Place.** Children and teens in mourning need a place they can go where it is okay to be themselves. As a part of the group, they can laugh or cry, play or vent anger without feeling pressure to “get over it” or “straighten up.”

**Safe People.** Trained, caring group facilitators serve as companions as kids walk through their grief. The volunteer staff should be available to guide and nurture, not to teach, direct or fix people.

**Understanding Peers.** One of the benefits of a grief program for children is the regular association with other children who have experienced a death in their family. Children helping children is a key element to the program.

**Opportunities to Play.** Adults who are mourning often are so consumed with their grief that it makes things more difficult for their children. Sadness and pain are hard for kids to handle. The Breakway program gives them a place and an opportunity to play—to be kids again.

**Validation of Experiences and Feelings.** The death of a loved one can conjure up a vast array of emotions for children. The support groups at your site will allow experiences and feelings to be expressed and validated in a non-threatening setting of acceptance.

**Listening Ears that Promote Healing.** Genuine listening is therapeutic; it helps us heal. Young people don’t care how much we know, they want to know how much we care. Listening ears should always be available.

**Lots of Affirmation.** Kids who are grieving often feel that important people in their lives are pulling away from them, whether it be a parent who died or a parent who is grieving the loss of the one who died. They need reassurance that they are okay, that they are still loved. Affirmation should be plentiful.

# Breakway Rules: 9 Rules for Physical & Emotional Safety

**Stop Rule:** “*Stop and I mean it.*” When someone is doing something that feels unsafe to anyone, that child or teen needs to stop the activity immediately.

**Throwing Rule:** Only soft objects may be thrown. Hard objects may not be thrown at any time in the group. When objects are thrown, they must hit below the shoulders.

**Put-Down Rule:** No hurting other people’s feelings by making fun of them, name calling or put-downs. Respect each other and one’s self.

**Hitting Rule:** Children or teens may hit pillows or stuffed animals, but they may not hit another person.

**Adult Rule:** Children or teens must be with an adult at all times while at the site. They may not leave the building unless accompanied by an adult.

**Blood Rule:** Children or teens are instructed not to touch blood. In the event that bleeding occurs, children or teens are to tell an adult who will clean up the spill.

**Privacy Rule:** What is said in the group is private and confidential and stays here (exceptions are state-required reporting laws).

**I Pass Rule:** Children or teens can always pass if they do not want to talk.

**Listening Rule:** We respectfully listen to each other, being considerate enough to allow everyone to have an opportunity to talk, if they so choose.

# Helpful Hints: Communicating with Children

Children typically respond well to reflective listening, which is mirroring or repeating their verbal or non-verbal message.

## Ways to Reflect Verbally:

Feelings: “I can see how upset you are.”

Behaviors: “You are drawing with different colors on that page.”

Wishes: “You wish you could talk to her right now.”

Reflective listening responses convey the message: I am here. I hear you. I understand. I care.

Reflective Phrases: I see. Oh. I understand. Hmmmm. Interesting.

(Not: I always agree. I must make you happy. I will solve your problems.)

## Non-verbal Ways to Listen:

Make eye contact. Nod.

## Responses Which Encourage Further Communication:

- Silence accompanied by a look that says, “Tell me more. I am waiting to listen.”
- Door Openers with a tone showing interest and involvement
  - “Would you like to talk about it?”
  - “Sounds like you have some pretty strong feelings about this.”
- Paraphrase or repeat in your own words.
  - “So, you’re saying that if you had a chance to do it over again, you would do it differently.”
- Active Listening by repeating the thoughts and feelings you heard expressed
  - “It sounds like you feel both angry and guilty about losing a loved one.”
- Observations of Non-Verbal Feelings
  - “You must seem anxious about the time.”
- Responding Directly to Needs when no hidden problems need to be dealt with
  - “Where do you live now?” “You live in an apartment.”

# Helpful Hints: Communicating with Children (cont'd)

## Negative Responses Not to Use:

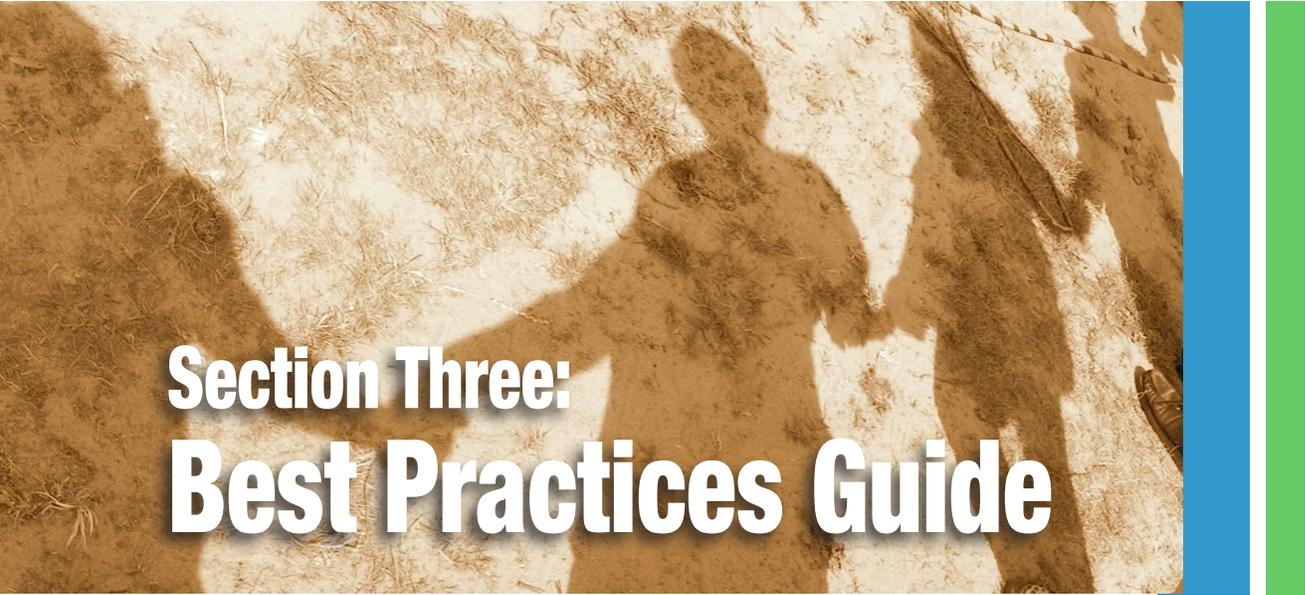
- “You must stop \_\_\_\_.”
- “It was God’s will.”
- “There’s a reason this happened.”
- “The best thing to do is \_\_\_\_.”
- “But you’re wrong.”
- “Try not to think about it.”
- “It’s a beautiful day, isn’t it?”
- “If only you had \_\_\_\_.”
- “You’re doing so well.”
- “That was a stupid thing to say.”
- “You are obviously \_\_\_\_.”
- “Try and see it from this point \_\_\_\_.”
- “I know just how you feel.”
- “There, there, everything will be okay.”
- “Wasn’t anyone available?”
- “Are you sure you’ve told me everything?”

## Use a Talking Stick:

The talking sticks used in the Littles and Middles groups are tools to help group facilitators allow each child to speak, to not be interrupted by others in the group and to know that they have been heard by the group. Only the child in possession of the talking stick (given to them by one of the facilitators) can speak. Everyone else is to be listening to the person with the talking stick. In order to get the talking stick, a group member must indicate that he or she would like to speak. Only after they have possession of the talking stick can the child begin to speak.

The Breakway staff can use their imagination and creativity to construct talking sticks that will be colorful, fun and kid-friendly. It is best to make the talking stick out of light-weight, sturdy material that will stand up to being handled by several children during each session. It is also advisable to make the talking sticks out of material without any sharp or rough surfaces. In fact, wrapping the sticks in some soft material would be ideal.

Facilitators should use the talking sticks, while observing the talking and listening rules, to be a fun learning experience in good communications skills.



## Section Three: Best Practices Guide

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NAS)



## Best Practices: Personnel

All *Breakway* staff, volunteers and services should be directed and supervised by a child development or mental health professional with a minimum of a master's degree. Licensure by the state of residency of the staff supervising the groups is advantageous and recommended, such as licensed professional counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed master level social worker or licensed clinical social worker.

Staff should be knowledgeable in the special needs of children ages five through 18 and their adult family members who are going through grief. Staff and volunteers leading all services must be trained in the *Breakway* curriculum.

*Breakway* staff and materials will be used to train group facilitators in the special needs of families experiencing grief, group facilitation skills, the purpose and objectives of *Breakway* services, the use of *Breakway* curriculum and the job description and ethical guidelines for a *Breakway* group facilitator. Group facilitators should also be trained in CPR and First Aid.

*Breakway* group facilitators will be required to complete a facilitator application packet, which will include a formal application form and a form for personal and professional references.

*Breakway* staff and facilitators will maintain a professional relationship only with the children, teens and adults participating in groups. Staff and facilitators can have no organized or intentional social contact outside of *Breakway* with the children or their families participating in the program.

Staff and group facilitators are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and to go through a criminal background check and formal training before participating in any group sessions.



## Best Practices: Program

Each age group will have at least two, trained (volunteer or staff) group facilitators during all sessions. No facilitator for the child or teen groups can be alone with group participant(s) for liability reasons and for the protection of both the facilitators and the staff.

*Breakway* group facilitators will sign, at minimum, a release for Criminal Background Check and a Confidentiality Statement. All groups will be held to the standards of confidentiality required for group therapy sessions although the services provided in sessions will not be intensive therapy or counseling.

*Breakway* sessions provide group support only. Each *Breakway* group session will be started with a review of the *Breakway* Rules of Safety.

All the age groups at *Breakway* will meet in their sessions concurrently for approximately an hour to an hour and 15 minutes.

At least one additional *Breakway* staff member or volunteer will act as a floater outside groups. The floater can be called in to handle disruptive group participants or unexpected emergencies.

*Breakway* curriculum sessions are designed to meet the needs of families in grief. Each session covers issues that *Breakway* and their parents face while experiencing the hurt of loss. Each session provides group support and teaches coping skills to deal with the changes in their lives.

*Breakway* is an ongoing, open-ended support group that mourning children and their families can attend as long as they, and the *Breakway* staff, think the children and their family benefit from attending. It is suggested that staff allow the families to determine when they will “graduate” from the *Breakway* sessions. It is recommended that staff and volunteers coordinate a formal or informal graduation ritual allowing both the group and the family leaving to say goodbye to one another.



## Best Practices: Program

*Breakway* curriculum sessions are designed to be flexible to the needs of the families in grief. All children and families participating in *Breakway* must go through an evaluation and orientation conducted by *Breakway* staff before attending any *Breakway* sessions. Staff should determine the special needs of the family going through an orientation. Staff should also determine if the group would meet those needs as discovered during the evaluation and orientation to the program.



## Best Practices: Participants

*Breakway* participants must have experienced the death of a family member or significant person in their lives.

Children, teens and families wishing to participate in *Breakway* must complete the *Breakway* forms and turn those in before they can begin group sessions. Participants are then to attend a group session as determined during the evaluation and orientation done by the *Breakway* staff member. A parent and their children can enter the *Breakway* program at any stage of their grief. Curriculum sessions are created so that there is no formal beginning or end to the material covered in the group sessions. A family can enter *Breakway* at any point during that curriculum and still receive the full benefit of the program.

Participants are encouraged to attend *Breakway* sessions regularly to get the most benefit from the program. *Breakway* staff should determine requirements of attendance for participants to remain in the *Breakway* program.

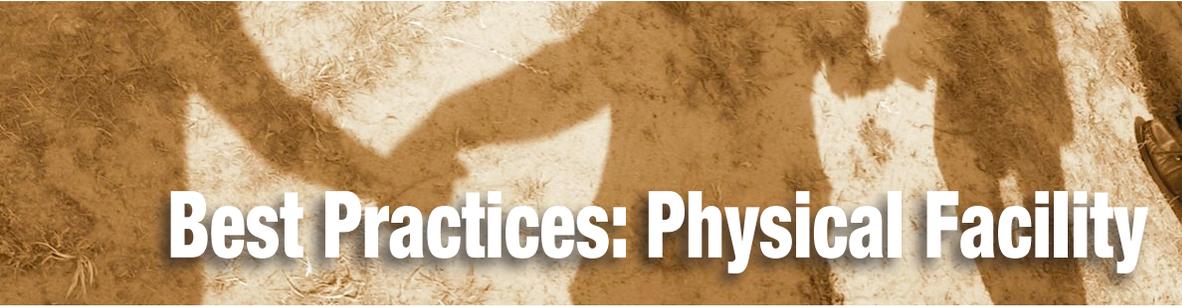
An adult family member or guardian must accompany each child or teen in *Breakway*. It's recommended that the accompanying adult attend the adult group session. The *Breakway* curriculum is designed to address issues that families in grief are facing, along with teaching healthy coping skills. Accompanying adults attending the adult group will receive help for themselves, as well as important information that they can use to help their children and teens adjust to the changes in their lives due to the loss.



## Best Practices: Intake Packet

It is best to complete an Intake Packet for all willing participants during the evaluation and orientation appointment with a *Breakway* staff member. The necessary forms to be completed in the Intake Packet are:

- Initial Intake Form
- Family Orientation Questionnaire
- Adult's Form (one for each parent/guardian accompanying the child to *Breakway*)
- Child's Form (one for each child ages five to 12)
- Teen's Form (one for each teen ages 13-18)
- Family Agreement Form
- Permission Form
- *Your Rights to Privacy and Exceptions to Privacy*
- *Seven Expectations to Privacy* (The sample provided in this handbook is based on requirements in the State of Texas. Your form should be based on federal, state and local requirements in your state of residency. The copy goes home with the family after orientation.)
- *Authorization for Release of Information*
- *Rules for Safety* (The copy goes home with the family after orientation.)
- *My Grief Rights* (The copy goes home with the family after orientation.)



## Best Practices: Physical Facility

Facilities used for *Breakway* group services should have at least five meeting areas – a large general meeting room and four rooms providing adequate space for at least five to 10 group participants according to the following age divisions:

- Ages five to eight – The Littles
- Ages nine through 12 – The Middles
- Ages 13-18 – The Teens
- Adults

The large room for the entire group to assemble together before and after the separate age group sessions helps to build community among the *Breakway* families. The times before and after the separate age group sessions serve the families, staff and volunteers as a time to share news, make important announcements and to set the tone for activities that session. If possible, an additional room for all groups to use for arts and crafts is very beneficial.

The facility and decor should invoke a sense of security, safety and enjoyment for all participants. The children's rooms should be fun, comforting and a place where children can feel normal and engage in normal activities for children their age. Similarly, the teen's room should be fun, comforting and a place where teens feel at ease to be themselves and to share experiences and activities with their group members. The rooms should be stocked with items that supply comfort, such as pillows, comfy chairs and couches, or plush animals. Rooms used by all of the *Breakway* participants should be child safe.

As much as possible, the overall atmosphere for the *Breakway* facility needs to be kid-friendly, look kid-friendly and feel kid-friendly.



## Best Practices: Promotion

All marketing materials should carry the name *Breakway* prominently, in addition to the local sponsor and contact information for the *Breakway* services. Target audiences for the promotion of *Breakway* should include churches, schools, community organizations serving families and children, counselors and local government agencies providing services and support for children and their families.

Websites should be used to raise awareness of the program services with:

- An explanation of what *Breakway* is and the services provided;
- Contact information for the *Breakway* services locally, including sponsor, street address, phone number, email address(es) and name(s) of contact person(s); and,
- A schedule of upcoming events, including volunteer training requirements and training dates.



## Section Four: Grief 101

*But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*

Matthew 19:14 (NAS)



# Grief 101

## Why Mourning Children Need Help from Others in their Lives

Understanding the development of children is critical when working with them after a death of a loved one. Being with them is also important as they express their grief emotions. Children who are not given an opportunity to receive adequate support and to have healthy role models for mourning their loss may develop unhealthy coping skills that they will carry with them into their adult lives. Unaddressed grief as a child or teen can later cause serious problems that will negatively affect them mentally, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually, both in their lives and in their relationships with others.

Just because a child or teen has a devastating loss caused by the death of a significant person in their life does not condemn the child or teen to a troubled future, but the loss unaddressed and unsupported by others in the child's life puts the child at greater risks of difficulties later on. With proper support and encouragement during grief, a child or teen learns important coping skills and life lessons that can help them throughout their lives when losses occur.



# Grief 101

With support and understanding, bereaved children usually learn early in life that human beings cannot have complete control over themselves and their world. They learn that faith and hope are central to finding meaning in whatever one does in this short life. They learn a true appreciation for life and what it has to offer. They learn that it's the little things that sometimes matter the most. They learn a growing sense of gratefulness for all that life has to offer. They learn to look for the goodness in others. They learn an empathetic appreciation for the suffering of others. And, perhaps most of all, they learn to meet not only their own needs, but to help others meet theirs.

### *Healing the Bereaved Child*

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D

Director, Center for Loss & Life Transition

Fort Collins, Colorado

<http://www.centerforloss.com>

The goal of *Breakway* is to supply children and teens with support, comfort, encouragement and education during grief that will allow them to mourn in healthy ways as children and later as adults.



# Grief 101

## Children & Grief By Ages & Stages

### Birth to age three

*View of Death.* The child sees death as a loss, separation or abandonment. Death is just a word to them and as a concept is hard to understand. There is no sense of the death or separation from the loved one as being permanent.

*Warning signs.* Children, just like adults, can be depressed in their grief, but their behavioral responses in depression can vary and appear very different than those symptoms of depression shown by an adult. Seek help if you see that the child is unresponsive, quiet and sluggish, or has changes in sleep patterns. Conversely, a child can act out and become aggressive, hard to settle and irritable.

*Help the child.* Keep schedules normal and remind the child of boundaries and limitations. The child needs to know that there are still consequences to his or her choices and behavior.

### Ages three to six

*View of Death.* At this stage, a child sees life events, such as death, as reversible and temporary. Death and life are hard to separate. They don't have the ability to think in the abstract and their logic of cause and effect in life has not developed. They may believe in "magical thinking" and that their thoughts, actions or words can cause things to happen, such as a death or bringing someone back to life.

*Warning signs.* Children at this age in grief can exhibit nightmares, confusion, eating, sleeping, bladder or bowel problems or regression to behavior from an earlier stage of development. Sometimes they may even seem to be unaffected by the death. Do not hesitate to get help as soon as possible if the child's behavior changes greatly and continues.

*Help the child.* Talk about the death using books and stories. Explain to the child that they did not "think" the death or make it happen. Teach the child that what happened to the loved one is not controlled by his or her behavior.



# Grief 101

## Children & Grief By Ages & Stages

### Ages seven to eight

*View of Death.* Children start seeing death as permanent at this age. The concept for many kids is that death happens to the old but not to someone their age. Therefore, when death occurs to someone they love – especially someone they consider “not old” – many questions will emerge about death. Death is seen as a person or being. They often see death as a form of punishment for the loved one who died or for the family around them.

*Warning signs.* Children may have problems in school or they may become aggressive, quiet, clingy or think they have numerous health problems. Behavior like not feeling safe sleeping in their bed is common. Always be honest with children about the death and their emotions surrounding the loss. Encourage them to talk, and take what they say seriously. Again, do not hesitate to seek help if their behavior changes greatly and continues.

*Help the child.* Talk about the death in an open and honest manner. Encourage the child to express their feelings in creative ways – through drawing, writing or story telling. If the child asks complicated questions, answer them fully. At this age the child is able to handle deep concepts and generally has a healthy curiosity.

### Ages nine to 12

*View of Death.* By now the child understands that death is going to happen. By age 12, children know that death is final and irreversible. They not only know it can happen to anyone else, but it can also happen to them.

*Warning signs.* Children may exhibit a wide range of feelings and behavior, such as shock, denial, anxiety, fear, anger, depression and withdrawal. Their reactions begin to be much more like an adult’s. However, they may act out their grief in behavioral changes at home and school. Take their behavior and expressions seriously. Do not hesitate to get help if their behavior changes and continues.



# Breakway Grief 101

## Children & Grief By Ages & Stages

### Ages nine to 12 (Cont'd.)

*Help the child.* Talk about the death openly and honestly. Answer their questions completely to meet their needs. Be forthright about your own emotions. Encourage them to talk and listen patiently. Do not try to correct their feelings. Encourage the child to interact with other children their age in order to receive encouragement and support during their grief.

### Ages 13-18

*View of Death.* Teens have almost achieved an adult understanding of death but not quite. They can think abstractly and understand that death is permanent and universal. They know they will die also. They experience very intense emotions about death and spend time thinking about it. They are very emotionally vulnerable to grief, but at the same time they feel invulnerable to risk. They want to be taken care of but not treated like young children.

*Warning signs.* Teens in grief can experience problems at school and home, depression, hypochondria, and uncontrolled mood swings. Often grieving teens will become involved in risky behavior, such as drugs, alcohol, promiscuity and/or crime.

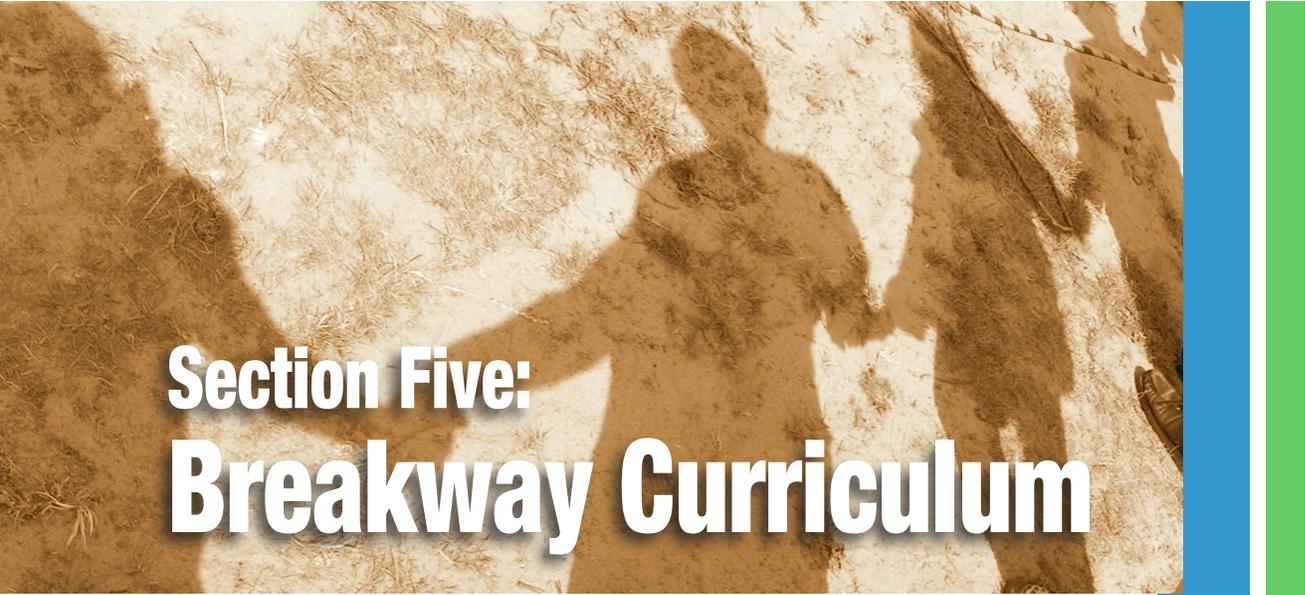
*Help the teen.* Teens need to know that supportive adults are available for them, but they don't need adults to hover over them. They need to be able to speak about their feelings and experiences without being judged or given unsolicited advice. They need to feel normal and be involved in normal teen activities.



# Grief 101

## What Children and Teens in Grief Need Adults To Do:

- Be available;
- Listen and don't judge;
- Validate their feelings and give reassurance;
- Share your own feelings of loss;
- Create a safe atmosphere for children to express themselves;
- Provide a quiet, private place when grieving children need to be alone;
- Respect that grief can cause problems in the child's concentration and attention span;
- Do not try to protect or shield the child from painful emotions;
- Understand that subsequent losses can trigger emotional grief events;
- Be flexible with the rules when necessary and be firm with the rules when necessary;
- Give the child time to grieve in a healthy manner;
- Understand that as the child goes through each life development stage, s/he will revisit his or her grief;
- Maintain a daily routine, if possible;
- Find resources for your child and for yourself; and,
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement.



## Section Five: Breakway Curriculum

*Everywhere I looked I could find readily available grief support programs and groups for adults. Even for specific groups of adults like those that had lost their mother, a child, an unborn child, or a husband. But in a metropolitan area of six million people I could find only three support programs for children or teens grieving the death of someone they loved and one of those was Breakway. God's direction to develop and make available the Breakway curriculum for other organizations to use will benefit thousands of children, teens and their families we could have never reached through our Breakway ministry. It is a blessing to know help will be available for them.*

Rob Pine

Executive Director of Christian**Works** for Children



# Session One: The Need for Hope

## Growing through Grief

*The need for hope poses a difficult problem. Grief undermines hope. It makes one feel empty and without. One's self-esteem is diminished and one's belief systems challenged. When the person who is grieving enters the valley, it is a deep abyss. Often dark, it is lonely there. In the valley of grief there is no future, only the present, the longing, and the pain. To these people whose losses are intense, the notion that they will someday stop hurting may not be enough incentive to continue. They need hope, and they need assurance that something can be gained. We should not be ashamed to teach this hope to our children. Perhaps we should even be mandated to teach hope. In a world full of fear of annihilation and destruction, can we ethically withhold evidence of personal growth through adversity? This is not fancy but fact. There is clear evidence that people can and do complete the work of grief, and that the work has its rewards. People do grow from their painful baptisms of fire.*

Jake Harris

After reading the quote above, I hope you understand the importance of covering this topic. I think it will be a fun and uplifting session for the kids. This is a much harder topic for the adults to cover, but I think that's what makes it even more necessary for the children's sake.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

Jeremiah 29:11



# Session One: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking stick
- Copy of *Breakway Rules*
- Book: *Aary Aardvark Finds Hope* by Donna O'Toole (Find in *Resources*)
- Poem: "Celebrate YOU!" (Find in *Resources*)
- Dry Erase Board Activity: dry erase board and markers
- Art Activity: Star cut-outs, hole punch, pieces of yarn to hang stars and markers



# Session One Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing him- or herself.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Explain that tonight we will be talking about the need for hope in our lives.

Read *Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope*: (10 minutes)

Discuss the following questions:

- What happened to Aarvy that made him feel bad?
- How did he feel at first?
- How did he feel at the end?
- What happened to make him feel better?
- Do you think Aarvy will ever play again?
- How is this similar to what happened to you?

Say: Aarvy discovered that he felt better as more time passed. Ralphy Rabbit was able to tell Aarvy what he learned and this gave Aarvy hope that he would feel better too. It's good to have hope that in the future things will be better.



## Session One: Littles Group

### Dry Erase Board Activity (Five minutes)

Ask: What hopes or wishes do you have for the future? What do you hope you will be doing? How do you hope you will feel? What or who can help you do these things? Write down the hopes they talk about on the dry-erase board so they can use them in the Art Activity.

Ask:

- What hopes or wishes do you have for the future?
- What do you hope you will be doing?
- How do you hope you will feel?
- What or who can help you do these things?

Write down the hopes they talk about on the dry-erase board so they can use them in the Art Activity.

### Art Activity (20 minutes)

Stars for this activity should be prepared in advance of the session. Stars cut from construction paper should be large enough for each child to write messages and do artwork that expresses their personalities and grief experiences.

Say: We are going to make wishing stars.

Give each member a star, a piece of yarn and markers to write on the star.

Say: In the center of these stars, you can draw or write a wish you have for your life. It can be for the next day or sometime in the future, whatever is most important for you. Go ahead and draw pictures of people, symbols or activities that will help make this wish come true. When you are finished with your wishing star, bring it to me so we can punch a hole at the top of the star and tie some yarn through it. If you would like, you can leave your star here so we can hang it up in the room and everyone can see it the next time you come.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so that you can join the other groups.



# Session One: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Copies of the Poem: “Celebrate YOU!” (Find in *Resources*)
- Copies of “Stories of Hope” (Find in *Resources*)
- Skittles Activity: Skittles in a bowl, instructions (Find in *Resources*)
- Dry Erase Board Activity: dry erase board and marker
- Art Activity: Star cut-outs, hole punch, pieces of yarn, markers



# Session One: Middles Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips.

Say: Welcome to our group. We are going to form a sharing circle. Please fill out the Introduction Slips and then share with us as much detail as you can comfortably offer about yourself and/or the death that brought you to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Skittles Activity (10 minutes)**

Say: We are going to do an activity called Skittles. (See instructions in Resources). Pick three to five Skittles from the Skittles bowl that is being passed around the room. Now that you have your Skittles, let me explain what each color represents. I would like for you to share according to the colors you picked. Who would like to go first? Remember that you can always pass until you are ready.



## Session One: Middles Group

Say: Tonight's theme is "Hope for the Future." We're going to start by reading a true story about a person who had hope after they experienced a loss. We need you to divide into two groups. Give each group one of the stories from "Stories of Hope."

Questions (Five minutes):

- What losses did this person have during their lifetime?
- What helped them through these losses?
- How did these losses contribute to their accomplishments?
- What examples did you see of growth?
- What do you think this person did that helped them grow through their grief?
- Why do you think it's so important to have hope for the future?
- Can you think of ways you have changed since your loss?
- What hopes do you have for the future?

List these on the dry-erase board.

### **Art Activity (20 minutes)**

Say: We are going to make wishing stars.

Give each member a star, a piece of yarn and markers to write on the star.

Say: In the center of these stars, you can draw or write a wish you have for your life. It can be for the next day or sometime in the future, whatever is most important for you. Go ahead and draw pictures of people, symbols or activities that will help make this wish come true. When you are finished with your wishing star, bring it to me so we can punch a hole at the top of the star and tie some yarn through it. If you would like, you can leave your star here so we can hang it up in the room and everyone can see it the next time you come.



# Session One: Middles Group

Say and Read: Here are copies of the poem “Celebrate YOU!” Take a copy and let’s read it together. Take it with you this week so you can be reminded of how very special you are.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session One: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Art Grab Cards: 3 x 5 index cards, art images, glue
- Stories of Hope: Copies of stories (Find in *Resources*)
- Conversation: Dry Erase Board/Dry Erase Marker, paper, pens
- Art Activity: Star cut-outs, hole punch, pieces of yarn, markers



# Session One: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* rules, emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

### **Art Activity (20 minutes)**

Create Art Grab Cards by downloading an eclectic collection of images representing different art styles and moods. Print the images in color and glue them on 3x5 index cards. Be sure to make more than enough art grab cards to accommodate everyone participating in this activity.

Say: We are going to do an activity called Art Grab. You will be able to walk around this table that has art cards on it. Pick pictures that represent the following three times in your life:

1. How you felt when you first heard the news of the death
2. Your life now
3. What you would like for your life to be like in the future



# Session One: Teen Group

## Stories of Hope (10 minutes)

Say: Tonight's theme is "Hope for the Future." We're going to start by reading a true story about a person who had hope after they experienced a loss. Make sure each one gets a copy of "Stories of Hope."

Say: Each of you will need to be ready to answer the following questions about the person in your story:

- What losses did this person have during their lifetime?
- What helped them through these losses?
- How did these losses contribute to their accomplishments?
- What examples did you see of growth?
- What do you think this person did that helped them grow through their grief?

(The teens can keep copies of "The Stories of Hope" to put in their binders and read later.)

## Conversation (20 minutes)

Questions:

- What has changed since the death of your loved one?
- What are your dreams and aspirations?
- What priorities have changed since the loss?
- Are there any ways in which you have grown?
- What beliefs, values, and/or expectations have changed?

Say: Each of you is going to write a letter to yourself as though ten years have passed. What would you tell yourself? What do you see?

Questions:

- Why do you think it's so important to have hope for the future?
- Can you think of ways you have changed since your loss?
- What hopes do you have for the future?
- What does each one see him- or herself doing then, and what qualities did it take to get there?

How can each one develop these qualities? Include what priorities have changed since the loss, in what ways they have grown, and what beliefs, values and expectations have changed.

List these on the dry-erase board. While they are writing, you may want to play some music in the background. The silence of the group may make them rush through it.



# Session One: Teen Group

## Optional Art Activity (10 minutes)

Give each teen a star, a piece of yarn and markers to write on the star.

Say: In the center of these stars, you can draw or write a wish you have for your life. It can be for the next day or sometime in the future, whatever is most important for you. Go ahead and draw pictures of people, symbols or activities that will help make this wish come true. When you are finished with your wishing star, bring it to me so we can punch a hole at the top of the star and tie some yarn through it. If you would like, you can leave your star here so we can hang it up in the room and everyone can see it the next time you come.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session One: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Then, invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Tell the adults that the theme for tonight's session is "Hope for the Future."

Explain what the children are doing in their session using the front memo page:

- The Littles will be reading a shortened version of *Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope*. From here, they will be able to talk about hope and wishes they have for the future. They will use what they discussed to make wishing stars, an art project that has a wish, hope or intention as the focus.
- The Middles and Teens will be reading short inspirational biographies on famous icons that have shown growth through adversity. These icons include Stevie Wonder, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dan Jansen and Clara Barton. They will be separated into groups to discuss the life events and growth that each icon experienced. The kids will then talk about their own hopes and aspirations.



## Session One: Adult Group

Discuss what dreams and aspirations each member has for their family since the death of their loved one. Include what priorities have changed since the loss, in what ways they have grown, and what beliefs, values and expectations have changed.

If you have some extra time, ask each member to think of him or herself as though ten years have passed. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- What would the future you tell yourself?
- What do you see yourself doing then and what qualities did it take to get there?
- How can you develop these qualities?

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Two: What is Grief?

### What is Grief?

Growth in grief is a lifelong process of exploring how death challenges us to examine our assumptions about life. When someone we loved dies, we naturally question the meaning and purpose of life. Religious and spiritual values also come under scrutiny. Bereaved children may ask questions like, ‘If God is so good, why did he make Mommy go away?’ or simply, ‘Why do people have to die?’ Finding answers to these questions is an ongoing process for the bereaved child. Indeed, children often don’t form such philosophical stances until long into adulthood. Initially, we as caregivers can best help by not providing ‘pat’ answers (‘God knows best’) but instead allowing the bereaved child to explore her unique, appropriately childlike thoughts and feelings about life and death.

#### *Healing the Bereaved Child*

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D

Director, Center for Loss & Life Transition

Fort Collins, Colorado

<http://www.centerforloss.com>

*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb.*

John 11:33-36



## Session Two: Littles Group

### GOALS

- To understand that even though we have all had losses, we don't feel exactly the same way as another person who has had the same loss because of who we are and how we felt about that person
- To learn to listen to each other to know how the other person is grieving and how we can learn from them

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Book: *After Charlotte's Mom Died* by Cornelia Spelman (Find in *Resources*)
- "I Wonder" Activity: Marker, poster board that says in two columns, "I wonder . . ." and "I Believe . . ."
- Heads or Tails Feeling Game: Instructions in *Resources*, a quarter, prizes or candy
- Art Activity: Paper, crayons, markers



## Session Two: Littles Group

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing him- or herself:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_.

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Then, continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes).

Say: Tonight we will be talking about grief.

Ask: Does anyone know what grief is?

Once they are finished talking, say: Grief is when we feel sad and lonely because someone we loved died and is not with us anymore.

Read *After Charlotte's Mom Died* (Five minutes)

### **“I Wonder” Activity (10 minutes)**

In the sharing circle, each child will have a turn to ask a question they have about death or grief. Remind them that they can pass if they would like. As the children state their “wonder”, write it down under the “I Wonder” column on the poster board. (This is a time to be prepared for difficult questions and especially, to be able to say: I don't know but I can find out for you.)

### **Heads or Tails Feeling Game (15 minutes)**

Please follow the instructions found in *Resources*.



## Session Two: Littles Group

### Art Activity (15 minutes)

Pass out paper, crayons, and markers.

Say: You are going to draw a picture of what you think grief looks like. Everyone grieves differently. We all have different feelings and different memories. Even though someone important to each of us has died, we don't have the same feelings about their death that others have. Whatever you feel is okay.

Invite conversation about their drawings as they are coloring them. When completed, invite them to share their thoughts with the other group members.

Ask: What did you learn tonight? Tell me something that you believe.

As they go around, write their beliefs down in the "I Believe" column.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you started so you can join the other groups.



## Session Two: Middles Group

### GOALS

- To understand that even though we have all had losses, we don't feel exactly the same way as another person who has had the same loss because of who we are and how we felt about that person.
- To learn to listen to each other to know how the other person is grieving and how we can learn from them.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- “I Wonder” Activity: Marker, poster board that says in two columns, “I wonder . . .” and “I believe . . .”
- Art Activity: Paper, pencils, crayons, markers
- Twister Game: Twister mat, Twister questions (Find in *Resources*)
- Sensory Poem Activity (Find in *Resources*)



## Session Two: Middles Group

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members. Pass out Introduction Slips.

Say: Welcome to our group. We are going to form a sharing circle. Please fill out the Introduction Slips and then share with us as much detail as you can comfortably about yourself and/or the death that brought you to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Ask: Does anyone know what grief is?

Let them speak, then say: Grief is when we feel sad and lonely because someone we loved died and is not with us anymore.

### **I Wonder Activity (10 minutes)**

In the sharing circle, each child will have a turn to ask a question they have about death or grief. Remind them that they can pass if they would like. As the children state their “wonder,” write it down under the “I Wonder” column on the poster board. (This is a time to be prepared for difficult questions, and especially to be able to say: I don’t know but I can find out for you.)



## Session Two: Middles Group

### Art Activity (10 minutes)

Pass out paper, crayons, and markers.

Say: You are going to draw a picture of what you think grief looks like. Everyone grieves differently. We all have different feelings and different memories. Even though someone important to each of us has died, we don't have the same feelings about their death that others have. Whatever you feel is okay.

### Twister Game (15 minutes)

Have the group move down to the floor so that everyone is together. Ask if everyone knows how to play Twister and then proceed to explain how they're going to play Grief Twister.

The directions can be found in *Resources*. (If this goes over really well, they can skip the next activity and keep playing.)

### Sensory Poem Activity (15 minutes)

Say: We are going to write a sensory poem.

Ask: Does anyone know what the word "sensory" means? It has to do with the senses. What are the five senses?

Say: That's right – sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Each of you will have the chance to describe what grief feels like to you.

Read the example at the bottom of the activity sheet found in *Resources*.



## Session Two: Middles Group

In the last five minutes of group, circle back up and discuss what they have learned tonight. Use the same format as in #4 but have them state something they believe. As they go around, write their beliefs down in the “I Believe...” column. (Five minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Two: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To understand that even though we have all had losses, we don't feel exactly the same way as another person who has had the same loss because of who we are and how we felt about that person.
- To learn to listen to each other to know how the other person is grieving and how we can learn from them.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Ball of Yarn Activity: Ball of yarn, scissors
- Twister Game: Twister questions (in Resources)
- Pens/ note cards for compiling list for the adults

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members. A facilitator should model how they can introduce themselves:

“My name is \_\_\_\_\_. The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_.”  
(Five minutes)

Ask: Does anyone know what grief is?

Let them speak, then say: Grief is when we feel sad and lonely because someone we loved died and is not with us anymore.



## Session Two: Teen Group

Go over Breakway' Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Say: Tonight we are talking about grief. Does anyone want to tell us what you think grief is?

Let them speak, then say: Grief is all of the thoughts, feelings and reactions we have when someone we love dies.

Discuss how everybody grieves differently. We all have different feelings, different memories. Even though someone important to each of us has died, we don't have the same feelings about their death that someone else does. Whatever each of us feels is okay.

### **Ball of Yarn Activity (15 minutes)**

Say: We are going to use a ball of yarn to show where we are with our grief. Take this ball of yard and cut a piece of yarn that represents how long you think your grieving will be. Now, lay the yarn on the floor and graph your grief showing the highs and lows of how it has been so far.

Say: Next, we are going to let you show what you think of your grief. For example, you might stuff it in your pocket, which could be to represent that for you it's better if it's out of sight. Others might wad it in a ball and stick it under a cushion where no one can see it to show that you want to avoid it altogether. Another might tie it to his shirt for all to see or possibly tie it in knots.

Ask: What are other ways you can show what you are experiencing in your grief?



## Session Two: Teen Group

### **Twister Game (15 minutes)**

Have the group move down to the floor so that everyone is together. Ask if everyone knows how to play Twister and then proceed to explain how they're going to play Grief Twister.

(The directions can be found in *Resources*.)

### **Conversation (15 minutes)**

Say: A lot of the questions in Grief Twister were about how you and your family have handled your grief. Grief is a hard topic and we don't always know how to handle things correctly, even with our own family members.

Ask them if there is anything they think they could improve on when interacting with their parents or siblings. After a little discussion, tell them that they are going to make a list of things that adults in the adult group should know. This list will be given to the adult group to discuss and become aware of concerns or problems that teens are experiencing. The list is anonymous so that confidentiality is honored. This list can be positive as well. It's important that adults know what they're doing right too.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Two: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To understand that even though we have all had losses, we don't feel exactly the same way as another person who has had the same loss because of who we are and how we felt about that person
- To learn to listen to each other to know how the other person is grieving and how we can learn from them

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Then, invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to Breakway.

Tell them what the other groups are doing at this time:

- The Littles will be discussing the meaning of grief and using art to visualize what grief means to them. They also will be making a list of questions (for us to answer in future sessions) and beliefs about death.
- The Middles will also be discussing the meaning of grief and using art to visualize what their grief means to them. They will make a list of questions (for us to answer in future sessions) as well as what beliefs they have about death. We have a grief game for them to play and then, to wrap up, they will create a short poem about grief, using the five senses, in order for them to see that grief is holistic.
- The Teens will be discussing grief and the differences in how people grieve. They will answer questions on death and grieving in a new grief game we've created and then will make an anonymous list of things they think adults should know.

Say: The theme for tonight's session is "What is Grief?"



## Session Two Adult Group

Ask: What is your definition of grief?

Once everyone has had a chance to give their idea of grief, tell them the definition we're giving the kids groups is: Grief is all of the thoughts, feelings and reactions we have when someone we love dies. Grief is a healing process. The loss of someone is like a wound inside you. And just like a wound, it takes time to heal.

You may ask the following questions to get a discussion going:

- In what ways grief has affected you and your family?
- What do you think your children would say your perception of grief is?
- What qualities have you and your family drawn upon to start healing?

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Three: Anger

## Anger

Anger is a healthy feeling.

Anger serves a constructive purpose and has a healthy message.

Anger can tell you what you don't want.

Anger can tell you when, how and in what ways you are hurt.

Anger can tell you how deep that hurt is.

Anger can tell you how to heal that hurt.

Knowing how to manage anger can help you know how to set limits and determine boundaries in your relationships.

Knowing when you are angry can teach you what you need.

Knowing what you are angry about can teach you what you want.

You are likely coping the best you know how with the skills you have learned.

We all do the best we can with the tools we have learned. That does not make you wrong. It does not make the people who taught you wrong. It does mean you are responsible to learn to stop the behavior. It does mean you have to learn how to stop reacting if you want to stabilize your life and be a healthy part of the lives of those around you.

### *Healing the Bereaved Child*

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D

Director, Center for Loss & Life Transition

Fort Collins, Colorado

<http://www.centerforloss.com>

*...for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

James 1:20

*I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.*

1 Tim. 2:8

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*

Ephesians 4:31



## Session Three: Littles Group

### GOALS

- To learn that it is all right to be angry
- To learn that hurtful things should not be said or done to ourselves or to someone else when we are angry
- To learn helpful things to do when we feel angry

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Book: *When I Feel Angry* (Find in *Resources*)
- Anger Cloud Activity: Anger Clouds (Find in *Resources*)
- Markers, crayons and yarn
- Positive Ways To Handle Anger Wheel (Find in *Resources*)
- Positive Ways to Handle Anger Wheel (Find in *Resources*)
- Poem: “Mean Soup: (Find in *Resources*)

# Session Three: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing him- or herself:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Then, continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Explain that tonight we will be talking about anger.

### **Read When I Feel Angry (Five minutes)**

Have one facilitator read the script while another facilitator shows the pictures.

Say: Tonight we are going to be talking about being angry. There are three ways people express their anger:

1. Using their hands (hitting, throwing)
2. Using their feet (kicking, tripping), and
3. Using their mouth (yelling, sarcasm, etc.).

Some people express their anger in one of these ways. Others use more than one way.



## Session Three: Littles Group

Ask: Do any of you ever get angry? How does it feel when you get angry? Where do you feel anger?

Say: What are some of the reasons some people get angry? I'm going to tell you what to do if you ever become angry at the things I am going to say.

Allow time between each statement for them to respond. (Five minutes)

- If you have ever become angry when someone hit you, raise your right hand.
- If you have ever become angry when someone lied to you, stand up and hop on one foot.
- If you have ever become angry when someone broke something of yours, pull your right ear.
- If you have ever become angry when you didn't get your own way, bark like a dog.
- If you have ever become angry when you were told to stop playing and do your chores shake your head up and down.
- If you have ever become angry when someone you loved died, stand up and turn around one time.
- If you have ever become angry when you felt lonely and someone told you to stop crying, cover your eyes.
- If you have ever become angry when your parents said "No," raise your left hand.

## Session Three: Littles Group

### Anger Cloud Activity (15 minutes)

Pass out paper, crayons, and markers.

Say: Is it sometimes hard to say you're angry? Sometimes adults get upset with children when they are angry because the children don't know how to tell them they are feeling angry. To help our adults know when we are upset about something, we are going to color and take home an Anger Cloud. Anger can be like a big, black cloud right before it rains. Our anger can come out of us just like rain comes out of the big black cloud.

Seat them at a table and pass out the Anger Clouds.

Say: The Anger Cloud is on cardstock and has three holes punched at the top. When you've finishing coloring it, come and get some yard to string through the holes. You can take them home and show your parents or grandparents. You can even hang them on your door when you feel mad so your family will know when you're having a bad day.

### Positive Ways to Handle Anger Wheel Activity (10 minutes)

Show them the Positive Ways to Handle Anger Wheel. Go through the ideas with them about acceptable ways to help them when they are mad about something.

### Read "Mean Soup"

In the last five minutes of group, have members sit down and read the poem "Mean Soup."

Have one facilitator read the script while another facilitator shows the pictures.

Say: Next week there will be a show-and-tell where you can bring something that reminds you of your loved one who died.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so that you can join the other groups.



## Session Three: Middles Group

### GOALS

- To learn that it is all right to be angry
- To learn that hurtful things should not be said or done to ourselves or to someone else when we are angry
- To learn helpful things to do when we feel angry

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Things That Make Me Angry Activity worksheet (Find in *Resources*)
- What Pushes Your Buttons Activity: Person outline, crayons
- Heart Button Activity: Buttons, fabric hearts, fabric glue, stuffing

# Session Three: Middles Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) which seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Say: Tonight, we will be talking about anger. There are three ways people express their anger:

1. Using their hands (hitting, throwing)
2. Using their feet (kicking, tripping), and
3. Using their mouth (yelling, sarcasm, etc.).

Some people express their anger in one of these ways. Others use more than one way.

Discuss these concepts with your group.

### **Things That Make Me Angry Activity (10 minutes)**

Distribute Things That Make Me Angry worksheets.

Say: This activity is to help us reflect on our attitudes and behaviors to look at how they may have changed following the death of our special person.

Take a few minutes to reflect and write.

# Session Three: Middles Group

## What Pushes Your Buttons Activity (20 minutes)

Say: In the previous activity we showed some examples of common situations. With our next activity we'll be getting more specific about what pushes our buttons.

Ask: Do you know what “push your buttons” means? (If not, use it in a phrase or sentence to help explain.)

Say: You will be drawing a person and you can decorate this person however you would like.

Ask:

- Do you struggle with forgiving those with whom you're angry?
- Are you ever angry at yourself?
- Do you have any other feelings before you get angry? (Embarrassed, hurt, scared, etc.)
- What are some things that are not okay for you to do when you are angry?
- What are some ways you keep from doing those things?
- What are some ideas about how you let out your angry feelings?

Once they've finished decorating their person, pull out the tub or bag of buttons and explain that we will pass this around with the glue. Each member can pick out a button, glue it on the heart and share something that pushes their buttons, especially things they might be feeling angry about related to the death of their loved one. Keep circling the group until the members run out of things to share.

Refer back to any answers made regarding the question prompted earlier: “ways to keep from doing things that are ‘not okay’ and ways that are ‘okay’ to express their anger.” If they haven't already mentioned any, you may want to discuss the benefits of journaling, talking to a friend or physical exercise.



## Session Three: Middles Group

### Heart Button Activity (20 minutes)

Say: You're going to make a button heart. It will be small enough to keep in your pocket or backpack. You can push the button whenever you feel yourself getting angry. It will help you focus on why you're angry and what you can do to release that anger.

Let them choose three fabric hearts and a button that reminds them of their loved one. Have them glue (use tacky glue rather than the super glue) the button onto one of the hearts. Glue the hearts together but leave a little room to stuff a little quilt batting inside. Then, finish gluing the hearts together.

If there is extra time, let the members get really creative brainstorming ways to release anger in appropriate ways (i.e. Smashing empty pop cans, ripping up an old phonebook, throwing ice cubes against a wall...).

Say: Next week there will be a show-and-tell where they can bring music, a video clip or a poem that reminds them of their loved one who died.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Three: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To learn that it is all right to be angry
- To learn that hurtful things should not be said or done to ourselves or to someone else when we are angry
- To learn helpful things to do when we feel angry

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Sentence Completion Letters (Find in *Resources*)
- What Pushes Your Buttons Activity: Person outline, crayons
- Heart Button Activity: Buttons, fabric hearts, fabric glue, stuffing

# Session Three: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) which seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Say: Tonight, we will be talking about anger. What are some ways people express their anger? For example: using their hands (hitting, throwing), using their feet (kicking, tripping), and using their mouth (yelling, sarcasm, etc.). Some people express their anger in one of these ways. Others use more than one way.

Take time to discuss this with your group then read the goals.

### **Sentence Completion Letter Activity (10 minutes)**

Say: There are various ways we can work with the emotion of anger following a death. Some people deny any anger over the death, but sometimes they are surprised by a wave of anger that might come over them at any one time. One way to work with our emotions is to put our thoughts down on paper.

Hand out the Sentence Completion Letter worksheets with pens and/or pencils.



## Session Three: Teen Group

### What Pushes Your Buttons Activity (20 minutes)

Ask: Do you know what “push your buttons” means? (If not, use it in a phrase or sentence to help explain.)

Say: You will be drawing a person and you can decorate this person however you would like.

Ask:

- Do you struggle with forgiving those with whom you’re angry?
- Are you ever angry at yourself?
- Do you have any other feelings before you get angry, such as embarrassment, hurt or fear?
- What are some things that are not okay for you to do when you are angry?
- What are some ways you keep from doing those things?
- What are some ideas about how you let out your angry feelings?

Once they’ve finished decorating their person, pull out the tub or bag of buttons and explain that we will pass this around with the glue. Each member can pick out a button, glue it on the heart and share something that pushes their buttons, especially things they might be feeling angry about related to the death of their loved one.

Keep circling the group until the members have run out of things to share. Refer back to any answers made regarding the question prompted earlier. If they haven’t already mentioned this, you may want to discuss the benefits of journaling, talking to a friend or physical activity.



## Session Three: Teen Group

### Heart Button Activity (20 minutes)

Say: You're going to make a button heart. It will be small enough to keep in your pocket or backpack. You can push the button whenever you feel yourself getting angry. It will help you focus on why you're angry and what you can do to release that anger.

Let them choose three fabric hearts and a button that reminds them of their loved one. Have them glue (use tacky glue rather than the super glue) the button onto one of the hearts. Glue the hearts together but leave a little room to stuff a little quilt batting inside. Then, finish gluing the hearts together.

If there is extra time, let the members get really creative brainstorming ways to release anger in appropriate ways, such as smashing empty pop cans, ripping up an old phonebook, throwing ice cubes against a wall, etc.

Say: Next week there will be a show-and-tell where you can bring music, poetry or a video clip that reminds you of your loved one who died.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Three: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To learn that it is all right to be angry
- To learn that hurtful things should not be said or done to ourselves or to someone else when we are angry
- To learn helpful things to do when we feel angry

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- List prepared from teen group last session

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Then, invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Tell the adults that the theme for tonight's session is "Anger" and the children will be doing the following:

- The Littles will be reading books about anger and how to use it appropriately. They also will take home Anger Clouds they have made to alert family members when they've had a bad day.
- The Middle will complete a worksheet that has them brainstorm what has made them angry and how they normally respond to that anger. Afterwards, they will do an activity that discusses what pushes their buttons and take home a button heart that they've made.
- The Teens will be doing a different sentence completion letter to their loved one. They will also do the activity on what pushes their buttons and take home a button heart that they've made.



## Session Three: Adult Group

Say: Tonight all the groups are talking about anger. The children are being told that there are three ways people express their anger: using their hands (hitting, throwing); using their feet (kicking, tripping); and, using their mouth (yelling, sarcasm, etc.). Some people express their anger in one of these ways. Others use more than one way.

When about five minutes remain in your group time, start wrapping things up for the evening. Invite comments from the group members about the activity of the evening and close.

Important for next week: Let the parents know the kids will be doing a show-and-tell next week, and the Littles are to bring an object while the Middles and Teens need to bring music, poetry or a video clip that reminds them of their loved one.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Four: Finding Comfort

### FINDING COMFORT THROUGH FAVORITE MUSIC, VIDEO CLIPS, OR POEMS

#### Growing through Grief

*Real grief is not healed by time. If time does anything, it deepens our grief. The longer we live, the more fully we become aware of whom she or he was for us and the more intimately we experience what that love meant to us. Real, deep love is very unobtrusive, seeming easy and obvious, and so present that we take it for granted. Therefore, it is often only in retrospect that we fully realize its power and depth. Yes, indeed, love often makes itself visible in pain.*

Henri Nouwen

This week's theme is touching because music plays such an important role in the lives of those in mourning. It is a very powerful form of communication as it can help release tension and bring important feelings to the surface. Research has shown there are seven functions of using music in a setting like support groups:

1. To evoke emotions
2. To call forth memories
3. To stimulate discussion
4. To aid with coping
5. To enhance rituals
6. To enable the bereaved to share the deceased person with others, and
7. To enable the bereaved to feel the presence of the deceased.



## Session Four: Littles Group

### GOALS

- To encourage an awareness of feelings
- To identify various feelings they have
- To offer ways to express feelings and help them feel comfortable expressing those feelings in the group

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Show and Tell Activity
- Warm Fuzzy Activity: Pom poms, bag of prickly seed pods
- Hopscotch Favorites Activity: Bean bags, (Find in *Resources*)
- Book: *The Loveables* (Find in *Resources*)



## Session Four: Littles Group

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love to death that brought you to Breakway. Then, continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the Breakway Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

### Show-and -Tell Activity (10 minutes)

Say: Tonight the theme is “Remembering our Loved Ones.” Each of you gets to share with us what you brought to remember your loved one and why that reminds you of them.

### Warm Fuzzy Activity (15 minutes)

While still in the sharing circle, ask: Can you think of a way that you can make another person feel good (give another person comfort)? Help them brainstorm ways they can do this. (i.e. giving hugs, listening to them, sharing toys, etc.).

After everyone has had a chance to share ideas, ask: Does anyone know what a “warm fuzzy” is? (If they don’t know, you may tell them it is when someone does something nice for you or someone says something that makes you feel good.)



## Session Four: Littles Group

Ask: Can you think of a time when someone has given you a “warm fuzzy” or a time when you wished they had given you a “warm fuzzy?”

Show them the pom-poms. Then say: We will use these pom-poms to help us think about “warm fuzzies.”

Ask: Do you know what opposites are? What would be the opposite of a “warm fuzzy?” (If they don’t know, you can say: when someone says or does something hurtful to you.)

Show them the seedpods in the plastic bag and let the kids feel them.

Say: These are sharp and can hurt. When a person says or does something that is hurtful, that is called a “cold prickly.” We cannot keep another person from giving us “cold pricklies” but we can choose to give them “warm fuzzies.”

Starting with the facilitator, invite each group member to give a verbal “warm fuzzy” to another group member while giving them a pom-pom. When everyone has received a “warm fuzzy” discuss how each person felt when they gave and received them.

### **Hopscotch Favorites Activity (15 minutes)**

Have the children go outside of the room to where there is enough space to play Hopscotch Favorites (see handout in Resources for directions).



## Session Four: Littles Group

### **Before closing (10 minutes)**

Ask: Do you have someone you can go to and cry or just talk to when you feel something that doesn't make you feel good – like when you feel sad about your special person not being with them anymore? Getting a hug or a smile from someone is called getting comfort. There are many other ways too. Tonight, you will be given something that is just for you – something that may give you comfort when you feel sad or bad that you may take home with you.

### **Read *The Loveables* as children hold their comfort items (Five minutes)**

Emphasize the different feelings named. Invite them to talk about how they felt when those feelings were named and talked about.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Four: Middles Group

### GOALS

- To encourage an awareness of feelings
- To identify various feelings they have
- To offer ways to express feelings and help them feel comfortable expressing those feelings in the group

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Stress ball
- Paper and pens
- DVD/tape player

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (10 minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite anyone who has had something happen in their life since the last session – or any new feelings or insights – that they would like to share with the other group members to do so. Be sure to try to keep the focus on grief issues since that is our purpose in this setting.



## Session Four: Middles Group

### Art Activity (15 minutes)

Say: The theme for tonight's group is "Finding Comfort Through Favorite Music or Videos." Some people find comfort in music, reading poetry or looking at video clips that remind them of their special person. For that reason, you were invited to bring a CD, audiotape, poem or video clip to this session to share. (If several items have been brought, devise some way to determine whose music will be played first.)

As each piece is shared, everyone needs to listen attentively. It's important that private conversations not take place during the music to demonstrate respect for the person in whose honor the music is being played.

Invite each member to introduce their musical piece and explain the reasons for making their selection. Ask them to explain the significance of the music as it relates to the person who died.

Following each selection, offer some time for discussion.



## Session Four: Middles Group

### Optional Activities (15 minutes)

If only a few group members brought music, poetry or video clips, there are two options for activities in which finding comfort can be stressed. You may want to do one or both. Paper is available for them to have the opportunity to share their thoughts on how Breakway groups help them or they can play with the blue Stress Ball.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. Choose one or more of the facilitators to summarize the activities of the night. Talk with your group members to understand their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Four: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To encourage an awareness of feelings
- To identify various feelings they have
- To offer ways to express feelings and help them feel comfortable expressing those feelings in the group

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Stress ball
- Paper and pens
- DVD/tape player

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (10 minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite anyone who has had something happen in their life since the last session – or any new feelings or insights – that they would like to share with the other group members to do so. Be sure to try to keep the focus on grief issues since that is our purpose in this setting.



## Session Four: Teen Group

### Art Activity (15 minutes)

Say: The theme for tonight's group is "Finding Comfort Through Favorite Music or Videos." Some people find comfort in music, reading poetry or looking at video clips that remind them of their special person. For that reason, you were invited to bring a CD, audiotape, poem or video clip to this session to share. (If several items have been brought, devise some way to determine whose music will be played first.)

As each piece is shared, everyone needs to listen attentively. It's important that private conversations not take place during the music to demonstrate respect for the person in whose honor the music is being played.

Invite each member to introduce their musical piece and explain the reasons for making their selection. Ask them to explain the significance of the music as it relates to the person who died.

Following each selection, offer some time for discussion.



## Session Four Teen Group

### Optional Activities (15 minutes)

If only a few group members brought music, poetry or video clips, there are two options for activities in which finding comfort can be stressed. You may want to do one or both. Paper is available for them to have the opportunity to share their thoughts on how Breakway groups help them or they can play with the blue Stress Ball.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. Choose one or more of the facilitators to summarize the activities of the night. Talk with your group members to understand their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Four: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To encourage an awareness of feelings
- To identify various feelings they have
- To offer ways to express feelings and help them feel comfortable expressing those feelings in the group

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Stress ball
- Paper and pens
- DVD/tape player

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Then invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.



## Session Four: Adult Group

Say: The theme for tonight's group is "Finding Comfort Through Favorite Music or Videos." Explain that some people find comfort in music, reading poetry, or looking at video clips that remind them of their special person. This week's theme is touching because music plays such an important role in the lives of those in mourning. It is a very powerful form of communication as it can help release tension and bring important feelings to the surface.

Research has shown there are seven functions of using music in a setting like support groups:

1. To evoke emotions
2. To call forth memories
3. To stimulate discussion
4. To aid with coping
5. To enhance rituals
6. To enable the bereaved to share the deceased person with others, and
7. To enable the bereaved to feel the presence of the deceased.

Say: This is the reason your children were invited to bring a CD, audiotape, poem or video clip to this session to share.



## Session Four: Adult Group

As a group member shares each piece, insist that all members listen attentively. You may need to remind them that it is important that private conversations not take place during the music to demonstrate respect for the person in whose honor the music is being played.

Invite each member to introduce their musical piece and explain the reasons for making their selection. Ask them to talk about the significance of the music as it relates to the person who died. Following each selection, offer some time for discussion.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening by finding out the group members' thoughts and feelings about the night.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Five: Helping Ourselves, Helping Others

## Growing through Grief

*With support and understanding, bereaved children usually learn early in life that human beings cannot have complete control over themselves and their world. They learn that faith and hope are central to finding meaning in whatever one does in this short life. They learn a true appreciation for life and what it has to offer. They learn that it's the little things that sometimes matter the most. They learn a growing sense of gratefulness for all that life has to offer. They learn to look for the goodness in others. They learn an empathetic appreciation for the suffering of others. And, perhaps most of all, they learn to meet not only their own needs, but to help others meet theirs.*

### *Healing the Bereaved Child*

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D

Director, Center for Loss & Life Transition

Fort Collins, Colorado

<http://www.centerforloss.com>

*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4



## Session Five: Helping Ourselves, Helping Others

This session's activities are pretty similar across the groups. They will be discussing ways that help them cope when they are having an especially difficult day. They will also be identifying people around them that can act as a support system. Once everyone has generated some ideas, we will move on to helping those around us. We will talk about the importance of sharing what you've learned along your grief journey while making cards for children who have recently lost a loved one.



# Session Five: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To learn key coping skills
- To identify those around us that can act as a support system
- To use our experience to help others

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Book: *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. (Find in *Resources*)
- Cards: Blank greeting cards and crayons
- Kissing Hand Activity: One large paper heart, paint that easily washes off hands
- *Breakway* Rules



## Session Five: Littles Group

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to Breakway.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to Breakway. Then, continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes).

### Act Out a Feeling Activity (10 minutes)

Say: We are going to pretend that we are detectives and we are looking for clues that tell us how someone is feeling.

Ask: Is there a volunteer who would like to act out a feeling or emotion?

Select someone and whisper an emotion to them that they will act out. They cannot say what the emotion is. When someone guesses the correct emotion, they will tell us what clues they saw that gave it away. You may want to model the activity once.

Explain that we can feel several emotions while we are grieving. Sometimes when we grieve, we think bad things about ourselves or other people. Sometimes we need to do something to feel better and sometimes other people make us feel better. Explain that tonight we will be talking about the need for hope in our lives.



## Session Five: Littles Group

Ask and discuss the following questions:

- Has anyone felt the emotions that we used in our detectives game?
- What happens in your body when you feel that way?
- Who makes you feel better?
- What do you do to make yourself feel better?
- How can you share what you've learned?

Explain that it is important to share good things that we have learned.

### **Card Making Activity (35 minutes)**

Say: Today we are going to decorate some cards to give to other children who are grieving. Think really hard of a picture that you think represents hope. This can go on the front of the card and then you can write a message inside to the child whom the card will go to. When we have finished it, we will give it to new kids coming into *Breakway*.

Encourage the members to do as many as they can so that they will have enough to give to all the other hurting children.



## Session Five: Littles Group

### The Kissing Hand Activity (10 minutes)

Say: We also have something just for you that we'll make room for at *Breakway*. It will remind you that we are all friends here and that we will always help each other.

(Most likely, there will be very little time left so have the children come up and do their handprints while a facilitator reads the story.)

Read *The Kissing Hand*.

While the book is being read, have each child come up one at a time and put a handprint on the heart.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Five: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To learn key coping skills
- To identify those around us that can act as a support system
- To use our experience to help others

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Ping Pong Phooey Activity: six Ping-Pong balls, table
- Card Making: Blank greeting cards, crayons or markers

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (10 minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully, emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)



## Session Five: Middles Group

### Activity: Ping Pong Phooey (10 minutes)

Have everyone sit around the table.

Say: We will be playing a game called Ping Pong Phooey. Have any of you played Ping-Pong before? We are going to play a game of group Ping-Pong without using paddles or our hands. Do you have any ideas about what else we can use to move the Ping-Pong ball around? We are going to use only our breath to pass the Ping-Pong ball around. The goal is to not let the ball fall off the table as we pass it to each other. (Passing the ball doesn't have to occur in a circle. It can be random.)

As the participants get familiar with the activity, add another Ping-Pong ball into the game. Keep on gradually adding additional Ping-Pong balls until all six are in play.

Say: We can feel several emotions while we are grieving. Sometimes when we grieve, we may feel depleted, guilty or that it is our fault. Our self-esteem can fall and we may need a boost. Sometimes we need to do something to feel better and sometimes other people make us feel better.

Ask: What are some feelings we have when we grieve or when we experience a bad change? What happens in our bodies when we feel these emotions?

# Session Five: Middles Group

## Activity: Something That Helped Me... (Five minutes)

In the small group circle, model the activity Something That Helped Me Was... Going around the circle, each student finishes the sentence:

“Something I can do for myself when I feel sad or lonely is \_\_\_\_\_”.

Before the next person completes the same sentence, he/she first repeats what the other person said: “\_\_\_\_\_ (person’s name) does \_\_\_\_\_ when he/she is sad or lonely and I can do \_\_\_\_\_”.

Repeat the circle sharing by finishing the sentence: “I could help another person who is grieving by \_\_\_\_\_.”

## Activity: Card Making (35 minutes)

Say: Today we are going to decorate some cards to give to other children who are grieving. Think really hard of a picture that you think represents hope. This can go on the front of the card and then you can write a message inside to the child whom the card will go to. When we have finished, we will give it to new kids coming into *Breakway*.

Encourage the members to do as many as they can so that there will be enough to give to all the other hurting children.

Say: Just like in the game Ping Pong Phooey, we all work together to keep the balls on the table. Whether it’s our ball or someone else’s ball, we are all here for each other.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Five: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To learn key coping skills
- To identify those around us who can act as a support system
- To use our experience to help others

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Cup Stacking Activity: Rubber band, two foot-long strands of yarn (one per person), 12 paper cups
- Positive Adjective Activity: Index cards, make copies (one per person) of Positive Adjective Sheet (Find in *Resources*)
- Card Making Activity: Blank greeting cards, markers



## Session Five: Teen Group

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (5 minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

#### **Activity: Cup Stack (15 minutes)**

Say: We will be playing a game called Cup Stack.

Tie one two foot-long piece of yarn per participant on a rubber band, as evenly spaced out as possible. For larger groups, you may need to divide into two smaller groups. If this is the case, you will need to prepare a second rubber band. Lay six cups (per group) out on the table.

Say: The first step is to stack all the cups on top of each other without using your hands. Each of you should hold onto one of the strings that is attached to the rubber band. You should be able to pick up the cups by pulling the rubber band apart.

#### **Activity: Positive Adjective (15 minutes)**

Say: We can feel several emotions while we are grieving. Sometimes when we grieve, we often feel depleted, guilty, or to blame. Our self-esteem can fall and we may need a boost. Sometimes we need to do something to feel better and sometimes other people make us feel better.



## Session Five: Teen Group

Discuss the following questions:

- What happens in your body when you feel that way?
- Who makes you feel better?
- What do you do to make yourself feel better?
- How can you share what you've learned?

Pass out a Positive Adjective Sheet to each group member.

Say: In the game Cup Stack we realized every group member had an important role in completing the task. It is the same with our grief journey. Every person in the teen's room is someone we can turn to for help.

Have each student circle three adjectives from the Positive Adjective list that describe him or her. Then, have each student choose three adjectives for the group member sitting to the right of them. After each person has had a turn, give the students an index card for each member of their family. Ask them to write each family member's name on the card and three positive adjectives for that person.

After they have finished, discuss possible ways of sharing the cards with their family if they want to. (If you are running short on time, have the last step be a take-home activity.)



## Session Five: Teen Group

### Activity: Card Making (35 minutes)

Say: Today we are going to decorate some cards to give to other children who are grieving. Think really hard of a picture that you think represents hope. This can go on the front of the card and then you can write a message inside to the child whom the card will go to. When we have finished it, we will give it to new kids coming into *Breakway*.

Encourage the members to do as many as they can so we will have enough to give to all the other hurting children.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Five: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To learn key coping skills
- To identify those around us that can act as a support system
- To use our experience to help others

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Then, invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Say: Tonight the children are making cards that represent hope. These cards will be shared with other grieving children in the community.

- The Littles will talk about emotions and how to recognize those emotions in others. They will make cards with some help from the facilitators to write the words for them. They will close by reading *The Kissing Hand* and doing a special activity for their classroom.
- The Middles and Teens will be starting out with some fun warm-up activities that focus on team building. After talking about emotions and ways to handle them, they will work on their cards.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so that you can join the other groups.



## Session Six: Remembering and Honoring

### Growing through Grief

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,  
We remember them;  
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
We remember them;  
In the warmth of the sun and the peace of summer,  
We remember them;  
In the rustling of the leaves and the beauty of autumn,  
We remember them;  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
We remember them;  
When we are weary and in need of strength,  
We remember them;  
When we are lost and sick at heart,  
We remember them;  
When we have joys we yearn to share,  
We remember them;  
So long as we live, they too shall live,  
For they are now a part of us,  
As we remember them.

“We Remember Them”  
From the Jewish Book of Prayer

*Always remember what you have been taught, and don't let go of it. Keep all that you have learned;  
it is the most important thing in life.*

Proverbs 4:13



## Session Six: Littles Group

### GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief, and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- Book: *Rachel and Her Grandma* by Denise Beverlin Kern (Find in Resources)
- Memory Chair Activity: Chair (or floor pillow) and a crown
- Art Activity: Picture frames (one per person), gel pens, stickers and glitter markers, Badges of Honor (Find in Resources)
- *Breakway* Rules



## Session Six: Littles Group

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Read *Rachel and Her Grandma* (10 minutes)

Have one facilitator read the script while another facilitator shows the pictures.

### Activity: The Memory Chair (15 min)

Say: Tonight we are talking about things we remember about our special person who we no longer have with us. Do you know what a memory is? It is something you think about that happened to you or someone else yesterday, or the day before yesterday, or the day before that, or the day before that, or when you were really young.

Place the special chair or floor pillow in the circle for the Memory Chair.

Place the Memory Crown on one of the group members to start the sharing of some memories.

When that group member has shared their memories, another group member will sit in the Memory Chair and wear the Memory Crown to share with group members.



## Session Six: Littles Group

### Art Activity: (20 minutes)

Pass out the frames, gel pens, stickers and glitter markers. Tell them that they can decorate their frames however they would like. After about 15 minutes, close the activity with an invitation for everyone to tell:

The most important thing I learned from the person who died is\_\_\_\_\_.

Circle back up and pass out the Badges of Honor.

Say: We know it can be hard to talk about the death of your loved one. We want you to know that we admire your courage and all the hard work that you do.

Ask:

- Why might it be hard to come to a support group?
- How did you feel about coming?
- How has coming to support group helped?

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so that you can join the other groups.



## Session Six: Middles Group

### GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- I Remember Poem Activity: Sheet of paper, pen or pencils (one per person)
- Art Activity: Picture frames (one per person), gel pens, stickers and glitter markers
- Dealing for Memories Activity: Deck of cards, Statements and Questions Sheet (Find in Resources)
- *Breakway* Rules

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)



## Session Six: Middles Group

### Activity: “I Remember” Poem (15 minutes)

Say: The theme for tonight is “Remembering.”

Invite group members to define remembering or memories. Discuss why memories are important. Talk about or read the goals for tonight’s session. (Five minutes)

Say: We are going to write an “I Remember” poem as a group (The activity sheet is in Resources).

Read the directions to the group and have a facilitator start the poem.

Pass the paper around in a circle folding the paper as they go. Have the poem circle as many times as they want to write a memory. When it is completed, read the poem to the group.

Say: If you would like, we can type up the poem and give you copies at the next session.

(Facilitators, you may be prepared to help some members write what they remember).

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)



## Session Six: Middles Group

### **Art Activity: (20 minutes)**

Pass out frames, gel pens, stickers and glitter markers. Tell them that they can decorate their frames however they would like.

While they are working on this project, invite someone to begin sharing. Encourage each group member to be respectful of the one who is sharing.

After about 15 minutes, close this activity with an invitation for everyone to tell:

“The most important thing I learned from the person who died is \_\_\_\_\_.”

### **Activity: Dealing For Memories (15 minutes)**

Sitting in a circle on the floor, introduce Dealing For Memories game. (Statements/questions are found in *Resources*.)

Put the cards in the center of the group. Let each person draw a card. The person who draws the highest numbered card is the starter.

Gather all the cards and shuffle them. Deal five cards to each person. The starter is to turn to the person on their right. That person will draw a card from the starter’s five cards.

The person who drew the card will answer the question on the card or is allowed to ask another group member to answer the question. When the question has been answered, the game continues with the next person on that person’s right drawing a card from their hand.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Six: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- I Remember Poem Activity: Sheet of paper, pen or pencils (one per person)
- Art Activity: Picture frames (one per person), gel pens, stickers and glitter markers
- Dealing for Memories Activity: Deck of cards, Statements and Questions Sheet (Find in Resources)
- *Breakway* Rules

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)



## Session Six: Teen Group

### “I Remember” Poem Activity (15 minutes)

Say: The theme for tonight is “Remembering.”

Invite group members to define remembering or memories. Discuss why memories are important. Talk about or read the goals for tonight’s session. (Five minutes)

Say: We are going to write an “I Remember” poem as a group (The activity sheet is in Resources). Read the directions to the group and have a facilitator start the poem.

Pass the paper around in a circle folding the paper as they go. Have the poem circle as many times as they want to write a memory. When it is completed, read the poem to the group.

Say: If you would like, we can type up the poem and give you copies at the next session. (Facilitators, you may be prepared to help some members write what they remember).



## Session Six: Teen Group

### **Art Activity: (20 minutes)**

Pass out the frames, gel pens, stickers, and glitter markers. Tell them that they can decorate their frames however they would like.

While they are working on this project, invite someone to begin sharing. Encourage each group member to be respectful of the one who is sharing.

After about 15 minutes, close this activity with an invitation for everyone to tell:

“The most important thing I learned from the person who died is \_\_\_\_\_.”

### **Interview Activity: (15 minutes)**

Break them into pairs (no siblings together).

Have them go to a separate place and interview each other using the questions found in Resources.

When they come back to the group, they will tell the group what they found out about each other.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so that you can join the other groups.



## Session Six: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To provide evidence that loss, grief and change can result in recovery and growth
- To encourage them to set goals or wishes for themselves in the future

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and go over the *Breakway* Rules. Invite them to introduce themselves and tell which children they have in groups.

Say: The theme for tonight is “Remembering.” We want each one to be able to tell their story of loss and to associate feelings with memories.

Each group will decorate a frame for a picture of their loved one.

We will be discussing the meaning of grief and emotions that come at different times. In order for group members to connect with the losses of other group members, go around the circle again or invite anyone who feels comfortable offering more detail about the death of their special person.

Others may want to discuss something significant that has happened in their life since the last session or new feelings or insights about the grief process.



## Session Six: Adult Group

Ask each adult to contribute to a master list of how they help children honor their loved one. The focus should be on what the child feels and how connected they chose to be, not an adult planned event. One example might be an adult suggesting a picnic and the child suggesting what food to have or what games they to play, based on what they know their special loved one enjoyed.

Another might be allowing the child to have a special ritual helping them connect to their lost one, such as displaying dad's tie in their room, or writing an ongoing letter to dad about their life on a weekly basis. Again, this should be child centered and initiated.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Seven: Double Dip Feelings

## Growing through Grief

*Not only should we be unashamed of grief, confident that its expression will not permanently hurt us, but we should also possess the wisdom to talk about our loss and through that creative conversation with friends and companions begin to reconstruct the broken fragments of our lives . . . We should not resist the sympathy and stimulation of social interaction. We should learn not to grow impatient with the slow healing process of time . . . We should anticipate these stages in our emotional convalescence: unbearable pain, poignant grief, empty days, resistance to consolation, disinterestedness in life, gradually giving way under the healing sunlight of love, friendship, social challenge, to the new weaving of a pattern of action and the acceptance of the irresistible challenge of life.*

Rabbi Joshua L. Liebman

This week is all about expressing and accepting our feelings. This task in grief is an ever changing process and we want our families to embrace it. It is important for individuals to share and express their feelings.

*Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.*

Psalm 61:1-4



# Session Seven: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To revisit discussion on emotions and solidify their understanding of feelings
- To normalize experiencing several feelings at one time
- To discuss and brainstorm ways to handle overwhelming emotions

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Chart of emotions (Find in *Resources*)
- Feelings Song: handout (Find in *Resources*)
- Book: *Double Dip Feelings* by Barbara S. Cain
- Double Dip Activity: Rice cakes, peanut butter or marshmallow and candies to decorate

# Session Seven: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Explain the theme for the evening and go over the goals.

### **The Feelings Song: (Five minutes)**

Ask: What do you know about feelings?

Say: Today we are going to learn a song about Feelings (handout in Resources).

You can either designate someone to lead the group in this song or all facilitators can sing together. Sing the song a couple times through until the group has it down.

### **Activity: Emotion Chart (10 minutes)**

Pull out the poster board and the chart of emotions.

Say: There are four kinds of feelings: positive, negative, strong and weak.

Ask: What do you think positive feelings mean?

# Session Seven: Littles Group

Have them name all the feelings they think are positive and write these under the positive column.

## **Read: *Double Dip Feelings* (10 minutes)**

Say: Can you think of a time when you experienced more than one feeling? Some examples could be the first time you came to *Breakway*. You may have felt anxious about coming but happy when you made new friends. Or, sometimes we show one feeling and hide the other. We might feel sad at home but act happy so we don't make our family sad too.

Ask: What do you do when you have two different feelings?

Discuss what they can do when they have conflicting emotions (i.e. think about which feeling will make you feel better and talk about your feelings).

## **Activity: Simon Says (10 minutes)**

Have everyone stand up and tell them we're going to play Simon Says. Instead of having them do different tasks, have them act out an emotion. Play as many times as they'd like or as much as time will allow.

Briefly discuss the different ways we all show our emotions.

Repeat these steps for each category. (For negative, you may want to make a point that the feelings are negative because of the way they make us feel, not because they are bad feelings.)

Remind the members of the theme for the evening and ask them if they can have two feelings at the same time (Positive and strong? Weak and negative?).

# Session Seven: Littles Group

## Double Dip Activity (20 minutes)

Say: We have a special craft for you to do tonight. You won't get to take it home because you're going to eat it! Instead of drawing double-dip facemasks on paper, we're going to make it with food!

Use the rice cake as the face and the peanut butter to hold on the facial features.

Have the children think of two emotions that they have the most and decorate each side, one at a time. You can help them stick the tongue depressors into the rice cake for a handle.

Once they've finished, go around the room and let them explain their double dip faces. Afterwards, they can enjoy their snack.

Invite group members to think about a good feeling, squeezing the hand of the person next to them, symbolically passing that feeling on to the person whose hand they are squeezing.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Seven: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To identify feelings that each of the members are experiencing
- To normalize experiencing several feelings at one time
- To discuss and brainstorm ways to handle overwhelming emotions

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Emotion Chart Activity: Poster board, Chart of Emotions (Find in *Resources*)
- Feelings Web Activity: Yarn,
- Roller Coaster Activity: Mural paper with a roller coaster drawn on it, markers or pens
- Puzzle Shuffle Activity: Puzzle sheets (one per person), Instructions (Find in *Resources*), markers or pens

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

# Session Seven: Middles Group

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

## **Activity: Emotion Chart (10 minutes)**

Pull out the poster board and the chart of emotions.

Say: There are four kinds of feelings: positive, negative, strong and weak. What do you think positive feelings mean?

Have them name all the feelings they think are positive and write these under the positive column. Repeat these steps for each category. (For negative, you may want to make a point that the feelings are negative because of the way they make us feel, not because they are bad feelings.)

Remind the members of the theme for the evening and ask them if they can have two feelings at the same time (Positive and strong? Weak and negative?)

Ask the members what they do when they have two different feelings? Discuss what they can do when they have conflicting emotions (i.e. think about which feeling will make you feel better, talk about your feelings, etc.).

Once they have covered most emotions, tell them that we are going to practice making faces. Explain that each child will get to show us what a feeling of their choice looks like. They can call it whatever they want. The others can guess what feeling their face shows.

# Session Seven: Middles Group

## Activity: Feelings Web (10 minutes)

Say: I am going to throw you a ball of yarn. When you catch it, you need to give me two feelings that you are struggling with most at this time. Once you have shared our feelings, continue to hold the yarn and throw the ball of yarn to someone on the other side of the group circle. That person tells his feelings and does the same. The idea is to create a web in the middle of the group from passing the ball of yard back and forth with each person still holding on to their part of the yarn. After everyone has had a chance to share, we will roll up the yarn. Each person will then share how he or she handles or could handle those feelings. They will throw the yarn ball back to the person who is holding the yarn until everyone has had a turn.

## Activity: Roller Coaster (20 minutes)

Pull out the mural paper that has the roller coaster on it and have the members sit around it with their lapboards.

Say: The ups and downs of a rollercoaster represent the different feelings we can have as we are grieving. Come and draw a picture that represents you and your feelings now.

After everyone has finished, go around and give them an opportunity to explain their drawing.

Discuss with group members that a family often struggles after a loss because each person has a different way of grieving and expressing their grief.

Ask:

- Where would you place each of your family members right now?
- Who is happy? Who is angry? Withdrawn? Scared?
- What does it feel like to be on this roller coaster with your family?



## Session Seven: Middles Group

### **Activity: Puzzle Shuffle (15 minutes)**

Pass out copies of the puzzle to each member. Use the handout in Resources to explain the Puzzle Shuffle.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then find out from the group members their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Seven: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To identify feelings that each of the members are experiencing
- To normalize experiencing several feelings at one time
- To discuss and brainstorm ways to handle overwhelming emotions

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Emotion Chart Activity: Poster board, Chart of Emotions (Find in *Resources*)
- Insider Tug-of-War: Rope, tape for center line, index cards, Instructions (Find in *Resources*) Emotions Game Activity: Life size game board made out of red, green, yellow, blue and black constructions paper, color dice, question handouts (Find in *Resources*)

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

# Session Seven: Teen Group

## Activity: Emotion Chart (10 minutes)

Pull out the poster board and the Chart of Emotions.

Say: There are four kinds of feelings: positive, negative, strong and weak. What do you think positive feelings mean?

Have them name all the feelings they think are positive and write these under the positive column.

Repeat these steps for each category. (For negative, you may want to make a point that the feelings are negative because of the way they make us feel, not because they are bad feelings.)

Remind the members of the theme for the evening and ask them if they can have two feelings at the same time (Positive and strong? Weak and negative?)

Ask: What do you do when you have two different feelings?

Discuss what they can do when they have conflicting emotions (i.e. think about which feeling will make you feel better or talk about your feelings).

## Activity: Insider Tug-of-War (20 minutes)

Explain that they're going to do an exercise called Insider Tug-of-War (see handout in Resources).

Pass out index cards for each member to write down a time since the death when they have felt two conflicting emotions. Have someone volunteer to let the group use their example for Insider Tug-of- War.

After the group has acted out that example, let someone else have a turn.

Remember that participants can pass if they would like. If no one volunteers, there are examples you can use on the handout. (If there is a small group, facilitators may need to participate for sides).



## Session Seven: Teen Group

### **Activity: The Emotions Game (20 minutes)**

Say: This last activity may have been a little dramatic or intense so we'll lighten the mood by playing The Emotions Game (see handout in *Resources*).

This game will ask questions categorized by the four types discussed earlier.

Take the group out to the Breakway common area where the program coordinator will have a life-sized board game set up.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Seven: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To identify feelings that each of the members are experiencing
- To normalize experiencing several feelings at one time
- To discuss and brainstorm ways to handle overwhelming emotions

### INTRODUCTION

Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to Breakway. (Five minutes)

Say: Tonight we will be discussing ways to express and accept our feelings. This task in grief is an ever-changing process and we want our families to embrace it.

- The Littles group will be reading a book addressing times when we feel more than one emotion at a time. They'll do a few crafts and will need a little extra time at the end to eat one of them.
- The Middles group will be discussing having multiple feelings at once and where they feel like they are right now.
- Teens will be doing a dramatic exercise to encourage discussion of the conflicting messages they feel on different topics.



## Session Seven: Adult Group

Read the following quote to get the discussion started:

*Not only should we be unashamed of grief, confident that its expression will not permanently hurt us, but we should also possess the wisdom to talk about our loss and through that creative conversation with friends and companions begin to reconstruct the broken fragments of our lives . . . We should not resist the sympathy and stimulation of social interaction. We should learn not to grow impatient with the slow healing process of time . . . We should anticipate these stages in our emotional convalescence: unbearable pain, poignant grief, empty days, resistance to consolation, disinterestedness in life, gradually giving way under the healing sunlight of love, friendship, social challenge, to the new weaving of a pattern of action and the acceptance of the irresistible challenge of life.*

Rabbi Joshua L. Liebman

Discuss the topic of dealing with multiple emotions at once. Some questions to encourage discussion are:

- What emotions do they consistently see in your own journey?
- How do you choose to deal with these emotions?
- Do you hide one over the other?
- Do you talk with someone?
- Do you see your children struggle with several emotions?
- How do you model or encourage them to handle it positively?

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then find out from the group members their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you so you can join the other groups.



## Session Eight: Guilt & Regrets

*The idea of having guilt or regretting something can be a hard concept for some children – whatever their age. The guilt theme follows the anger theme for a reason. There can be a connection. Guilt and regrets can be explained in the following way: “Some memories are happy. Some memories are sad. Some memories are about things we wish we had done or said differently. We may remember times when we were angry at the person who died or times when we didn’t like that person or times we maybe wished he or she was dead. Also, sometimes we think about something we WISH we HAD done before the person died. These are regrets. Although we may feel bad or guilty for having these thoughts, it’s often helpful to share these memories rather than keep them hidden inside where they can make us feel really sad and make us feel tired.”*

Growing Through Grief  
by Dr. Tom Morris

*On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days... Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”*

John 11:17 – 21 (NIV)

# Session Eight: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To have an opportunity to talk about some things they wish had happened differently
- To feel safe to express any feeling they have

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Book: *Liplap's Wish* by Jonathan London (Text in *Resources*)
- Making Faces Activity: Feelings Chart, dry erase board and markers
- Balloon People Activity: Balloons, cardboard cut in shape of feet, washable markers
- Star Activity: Glow in the dark stars

## INTRODUCTION:

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)



## Session Eight: Littles Group

### **Go over the Breakway Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)**

Say: Many times, we think about memories here at Breakway. Some memories are happy, some memories are sad, and some memories are about things we wish we had done or said differently. We may remember times when we got mad at the person who died or times when we didn't like that person very much (because we weren't getting our way) or maybe we thought we wanted that person to go away and never come back. These are called regrets (big word – ask them to say the word with you).

Say: Sometimes, we have a feeling called guilt, a hard word that means we feel really bad about some things. Although we may feel bad about having these thoughts, it can be helpful to talk about these memories rather than keep them hidden inside where they can make us feel sad or even make us sick. Does anyone have any happy memories or any sad memories they would like to share? (Five minutes)

### **Read Liplap's Wish (10 minutes)**

This story deals with guilt and death.

Ask: What were some of the ways the rabbit was feeling? What special things about Grandmother did Liplap remember? Why are the stars significant? (10 minutes)

## Session Eight: Littles Group

### **Making Faces Activity (10 minutes)**

Say: We can have lots of different feelings – sometimes at the same time. Take a look at the feeling chart (in Resources) to look at all the different feelings you may be experiencing.

Talk about how we can (and do) have lots of different feelings – sometimes all at the same time. Ask them if they remember the faces from the Feelings Chart (have a copy ready to look at if they don't remember) and ask them to name different feelings they have. Write these feelings on the dry erase board.

### **Balloon People Activity (15 minutes)**

The idea is that they will make this balloon person to show how they are feeling tonight. Each child will get balloon feet (cardboard cut in the shape of feet) and a balloon.

First have each child decorate their feet with markers. Next, help the children blow up a balloon and tie it. Push the knotted end of the balloon into the feet so that the balloon person will stand up. Finally, have each child use washable markers to draw the facial features on the balloon, encouraging them to draw how they feel tonight.

### **Star Activity (10 minutes)**

Calm the group down (you may have them place the Balloon People against one wall and then have them circle up on the floor) and tell them that we are going to end with a special activity.

Place a large glow-in-the-dark star in the children's group room. Turn out the lights and give each child a chance to make a wish on the star or use the star to say what they would like to say if they had one more chance to talk to the person who died. The stars will remind us that our loved ones always remain in our hearts. Then give each child a star to take home and put on the ceiling of his or her bedroom and use it to talk to the person who has died. This star can be an opportunity to say what they wanted to say.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you so you can join the other groups.

# Session Eight: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that feelings are neither good nor bad, but simply an expression of what is happening inside us
- To have an understanding that just as we have the ability to feel the good feelings of love, pleasure and happiness, we also have the ability to feel great pain, anger, loneliness, and guilt
- To acknowledge that sometimes we feel guilty because of something we wish we had done differently, and at other times we feel guilty because we cannot take away the sadness of people who are important to us

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chain Activity: Strips of construction paper to make a chain three to four feet long, staplers, extra staples, pen to write their names (start before the Introduction and rules)
- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Book: *Geranium Morning* by E. Sandy Powell (Text in *Resources*)
- Worksheet: “Things over which I have and don’t have control” (Find in *Resources*), pens or pencils

Before you begin Introduction and rules give each group member a stapler and a bag of strips of construction paper to start making into a chain. (They need to write their name on one end of the chain so they won’t get mixed up with the others.)

The group members do not need to know at this point what the chain is for, but it needs to be about three to four feet long because they will be wrapping it around their body and breaking it (but don’t tell them that yet). Allow them to continue making the chains as you do the introduction, read the rules and the story for the evening.

# Session Eight: Middles Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Read *Geranium Morning*: (10 minutes)**

You may want to continue with the chain making during the reading of the book depending on how much they were able to complete before the session began. (This activity can be a little distracting during the reading.)

Facilitators need to take turns reading the book, so there will be variety in the voices. Make sure there are a couple of boxes of tissue available. After reading, encourage comments about the book, helping them to identify with some of the guilt expressions felt (if there are any guilt and/or regretful feelings).

## Session Eight: Middles Group

Say: Many times, we think about memories here at *Breakway*. Some memories are happy, some memories are sad, and some memories are about things we wish we had done or said differently. We may remember times when we got mad at the person who died or times when we didn't like that person very much (because we weren't getting our way) or maybe we thought we wanted that person to go away and never come back.

Ask if anyone knows what this is called (regrets).

Say: Sometimes, guilt can be associated with regrets. Although we may feel bad about having these thoughts, it can be helpful to talk about these memories rather than keep them hidden inside where they can make us feel very sad or even make us sick.

Ask: Does anyone have any happy memories or any sad memories they would like to share? (10 minutes)

### **Chain Activity (10 minutes)**

Direct the group members to wrap the guilt chains (as much as possible) around their bodies. Sit for a few moments, letting them feel the restrictions of the chains. Then, let them break out of the chains.

Discuss feeling the impact of breaking the chains of guilt.

### **Things Over Which I Have and Don't Have Control (10 minutes)**

Pass out the Things Over Which I Have and Don't Have Control sheets (found in *Resources*) to work on and discuss if there is time remaining.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you so you can join the other groups.



## Session Eight: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To understand that feelings are neither good nor bad, but they are simply an expression of what is happening inside of us
- To have an understanding that just as we have the ability to feel the good feelings of love, pleasure, and happiness, we also have the ability to feel great pain, anger, loneliness and guilt
- To acknowledge that sometimes we feel guilty because of something we wish we had done differently, and at other times we feel guilty because we cannot take away the sadness of the people who are important to us

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Hand in Basket: Worksheet (one per person, found in *Resources*), pens or pencils
- Message in a Bottle Activity. Bottles with lids, markers and other items to decorate the bottle, paper, pens or pencils
- Cycle of Anger and Guilt Worksheet (one per person, found in *Resources*)



## Session Eight: Teen Group

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Say: Over the last few months, we have talked about several different feelings. A feeling that is common to have when someone we love dies is the feeling of guilt or regret over something we did or did not do, or said or did not say to them.

Read the goals for the evening to them and invite their thoughts. In your own words, tell them some of the effects guilt can have on us. Then invite discussion by asking what effect hanging on to guilt can have. (10 minutes)

Hanging onto guilt can...

- Justify our feelings of anger toward ourselves or someone else;
- Diminish our self-esteem and confidence;
- Make us feel depressed and empty; or
- Weaken our sense of peace.

Say: We know it's helpful to share regrets or guilty feelings rather than keep them hidden inside where they can affect everything we do or say. Many of you are convinced there is something they could have done differently that would have made a difference, or you are taking responsibility for the feelings of other family members since the death.



## Session Eight Teen Group

### **Hand and Basket Activity (20 minutes)**

Pass out the Hand and Basket worksheets. Give them time to write down some regrets they may have.

Invite them to share the regrets they feel comfortable letting others know about. When everyone who wants to share has had an opportunity to do so, invite them to share how they have dealt with their regrets so far and to brainstorm about what they think they can do now with the regrets they may still have.

If they have no regrets or guilt, invite them to talk about the feelings some of their friends might have following a loss.

### **Message in a Bottle Activity (15 minutes)**

Tell the group that they are going to do an activity called Message in a Bottle. Each teen will get a bottle to decorate. Then they will write a message to the person who died and place it in this bottle. This message can be something they didn't get a chance to say, a regret or just an update on how their life is without their loved one. Encourage the teens to add to their bottle when they want to relay a message or if they think of something else they need to say to their love one.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you so you can join the other groups.



## Session Eight: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To understand that feelings are neither good nor bad, but they are simply an expression of what is happening inside of us
- To have an understanding that just as we have the ability to feel the good feelings of love, pleasure, and happiness, we also have the ability to feel great pain, anger, loneliness and guilt
- To acknowledge that sometimes we feel guilty because of something we wish we had done differently, and at other times we feel guilty because we cannot take away the sadness of the people who are important to us

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Illustration of a Possible Cycle of Anger and Guilt
- Helping the Children Who Know They Made It Happen Worksheet

### Introduction

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)



## Session Eight: Adult Group

Say: Tonight's theme is "Guilt and Regrets" about something we may not have done that we wish we had done or something we did that we wish we hadn't done.

- The Littles will be discussing the meaning of guilt or regret. As mentioned above, this can be a big concept for little ones. We will hopefully explain and explore these feelings by adding these words to our list of feelings, making balloon people and discussing guilt or regrets that they may have.
- The Middles will start by reading a book "If Only" which will lead into discussion on any guilt or regrets they feel toward their loved one's death. They will also do an activity to represent breaking free from the guilt they may feel.
- The Teens will discuss the effects of holding onto guilt and regrets. They will also name regrets they have and will do an activity where they can write a message to their loved one. This message can be something they wish they could have said to their loved one or just an update on how their life is after their loved one's death.

Ask: How does guilt or regret sometimes show itself in families after a death?

Give them time to think and respond.

Then say: In your own words, summarize some of the effects guilt can have on us and on our children.

Hanging onto guilt can...

- Justify our feelings of anger toward ourselves or someone else;
- Diminish our self-esteem and confidence;
- Make us feel depressed and empty; and
- Weaken our sense of peace.



## Session Eight: Adult Group

Tell them you have a sheet that may be helpful to them as their children are dealing with many different feelings on their grief journey. Distribute the sheet titled, Helping The Children Who Know They Made It Happen, along with the sheet titled, Cycle of Anger and Guilt.

Talk about how often there is a connection between anger and guilt. Pause a minute or two to allow time for assimilation of the information. Invite discussion between group members about how the two emotions may be connected in their lives.

When about five minutes remain in your group time, start wrapping things up for the evening. Invite comments from the group members about the activity of the evening, if you choose, and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Nine: Worries

Fear is a significant emotion on the grief journey. Developmentally, younger children typically fear many things, such as separation from their parents, being alone, monsters, the dark or being lost. They have difficulty identifying any other kind of fear.

Taking the fears they are aware of and trying to tie those fears to fears related to the unknown factors following the death of someone important to them is an opportunity you have as facilitators. You may find that many children and adults either are not aware of the fear factor after the death of an important person in their life, or they attempt to ignore it. You can be instrumental in awakening that awareness with activities, such as the ones planned for this session. Talking about worries we sometimes have may help them reflect on how things may be different since their special person died and that perhaps there are things that they never thought of prior to the death that worry them now.

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.*

Psalm 23:4 (NIV)

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.*

II Timothy 1:7 (NIV)

# Session Nine: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To know that feeling fearful can be a part of a person's response to loss
- To understand that we all feel afraid about something at some time
- To realize the importance of finding a trusted adult with whom to talk when we are feeling fearful

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Finding *Nemo* Activity: *Finding Nemo* DVD (Start at Scene 9: "The Tank Gang" and end when Nemo wiggles out of the tube.
- Fearless Fish Lanterns Activity: Cutouts of fish (Find in *Resources*) six strips of paper for each child (for lantern), markers, yarn pieces – 2-1.5 ft and 1-6 inch piece for each child

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

## Session Nine: Littles Group

### Finding Nemo Activity (10minutes)

Say: We are going to watch a short clip from Finding Nemo! (Introduce this clip by summarizing the movie so far: Nemo is a little fish that was separated from his father in the ocean. A dentist who was scuba diving took him. They dentist put Nemo into an aquarium with other fish).

Start the clip at scene 9: “The Tank Gang” and end when Nemo wiggles out of the tube.

Say: Sometimes kids and adults feel scared or worried about how things are changing since the person who was so important to them died. Tonight, we are going to talk about being afraid (reference the information on the front page).

Say: You may be feeling scared or have some worries since your loved one died. Everyone has those feelings at times. It’s important for you to tell someone who cares about you that you have some worries. Explain to that person just how you feel. That way they can help you feel better by listening to you, and perhaps they can give you some ideas about how you can help yourself. You may find out that just telling someone how you feel will make some of the scared, worried feelings not seem so bad.

Ask: Can you think of a time when you’ve been scared or worried since your loved one died? What made you feel better? (Five minutes)

### Activity: Fearless Fish Lanterns (25 minutes)

Say: Tonight we are going to make Fearless Fish Lanterns. In the movie Finding Nemo, Gill teaches Nemo how to be brave and believe in himself, even when Nemo was really scared. Think like a big fish in a gigantic ocean! Pretend to be a fearFUL fish swimming into a new part of the ocean (give them a second to play it out).

Say: Now pretend you’re a fearLESS fish.

## Session Nine: Littles Group

Give the kids each a fish to color and design. Since the fish will be hanging, encourage them to color both sides. Once they've finished with their fish, pass out six strips to create the lantern-shaped ocean. Each strip should have a worry they have or something they are afraid of. They can decorate these with words or pictures of their worries. Attach each strip to the bottom and top borders with glue.

To hang the lantern, punch three holes in the top border and attach string or yarn to each hole. Tie the ends of the strings together and punch a hole in the fish. Tie a string to the fish and knot the end in with the lantern strings so that the fish hangs inside the lantern.

If time allows, watch another clip from the movie. Select scene 17: "News Travels," and fast-forward to when the pelican reaches the dentist's window. In this clip, Nemo has just heard how brave his dad has been and how he has been looking across the whole ocean for him. Nemo decides to try and stop the filter again so that he can find his dad. You can end when the scene returns to Nemo's dad Marlin on the turtle. (10 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Nine: Middles Group

### GOALS

- To know that feeling fearful can be a part of a person's response to loss
- To understand that we all feel afraid about something at some time
- To realize the importance of finding a trusted adult with whom to talk when we are feeling fearful

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Four Boxes Worksheet (Find in *Resources*), pens and markers
- Worry Doll Activity: Clothespins, toothpicks, embroidery floss, felt scraps, tacky glue, scissors

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Introduce the theme of the evening. Consider reading the goals if that works well with your group.

Say: Fear is a common part of grief and death. Everyone who has experienced grief has felt afraid of something at some time. Even adults express fear about the future.



## Session Nine: Middles Group

One reason for the fear is because the future is unknown. Sometimes, we don't identify a feeling as one of fear, but know we are worried or feel anxious about something. Many times that worry has something to do with the death of the person who was so important to us, or it could be other changes in our lives.

Invite discussion by asking them to name any worries they had after the death of their loved one or how they dealt with those fears. (10 minutes)

### **Four Boxes Worksheet (10 minutes)**

Pass out their white notebooks (for a hard surface on which to write) and give them the sheet with four boxes. The boxes are for writing about or drawing pictures of things they may be afraid of or worry about. Their biggest worry goes in the biggest box, and so on. Having sections in which to draw a picture may feel safer for expression of their fears. Invite sharing of their sheets.

### **Activity: Worry Dolls (20 minutes)**

Say: We are going to do an ancient craft that children in Guatemala have been doing for years.

Ask: Do you know where Guatemala is? In Guatemala, children believe that if you tell your Worry Doll your worries before you go to bed at night, your doll will worry for you so that you can sleep at night.

Pass out the supplies needed to create the worry dolls and follow the instructions on the page found in *Resources*. Encourage discussion while the children work on their worry dolls.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, find out from the group members their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Nine: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To know that feeling fearful can be a part of a person's response to loss
- To understand that we all feel afraid about something at some time
- To realize the importance of finding a trusted adult with whom to talk when we are feeling fearful

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Book: *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* by Maya Angelou (Text in *Resources*)
- Worry Warrior Activity: Boxes or cardboard pieces, markers, decorations (googley eyes, sequins, badges, pieces of material, etc.), scissors and hot glue
- Paper and pencils to write worries

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)



## Session Nine: Teen Group

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Introduce the theme of the evening. Consider reading the goals if that works well with your group. Read the statements about fear (on the front memo page).

Say: Fear is a common part of grief and death. Everyone who has experienced grief has felt afraid of something at some time. Even adults express fear about the future. One reason for the fear is because the future is unknown. Sometimes we don't identify a feeling as one of fear, but know we are worried or feel anxious about something. Many times that worry has something to do with the death of the person who was so important to us, or it could be other changes in our lives. (Five minutes)

Say: We don't normally read children's books in our group, but Maya Angelou is a very well known author because her books and poetry are simplistic and beautiful. We are going to read one of her most famous books called *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* (Text in *Resources*). After we read it we will talk about how the book made you feel.

Read *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* by Maya Angelou. (Five minutes)

### **Activity: Worry Warrior (30 minutes)**

After reading the story, present all the materials to the group and tell them that we are going to make a Worry Warrior to go in our Teen Room. They are to use their creativity as a group to create it. The Worry Warrior is an imaginary creature that eats your worries so it will need a mouth. The rest of the creation is up to them. (If the group works together, it can prove to be a bonding activity for them. Let the group decide if they would like to make them individually or as a group.)



## Session Nine: Teen Group

While the members are working on their warrior, invite discussion by asking if there have been times they've been worried since the death of their loved one.

Say: Sometimes we put up shields or masks so that people don't know we're worried or scared. For example, we often hear the phrase "put on a brave, happy face." (Other shields or masks they might name are: constant talking, silence, pretending, blaming or being sick.)

Ask: What are ways you mask your fears? What are some ways they get rid of their worries?

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. Tell the members that their Worry Warrior will stay here in the room and anytime they have worries, we will have paper slips here that they can write them on before group.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Nine: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To interact with other group members and to develop a sense of comfort and peace at *Breakway*.
- To be able to express some thoughts and feelings about the upcoming summer.
- To be able to talk with other group members about the death of their special person.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

If you think it is necessary, go over Principles Which Guide Our Adults, or the ones that might be most pertinent to your group.

Introduce the theme of “Fear” that is being discussed in all the groups. Tell them in your own words:

- The Littles will watch a clip from Finding Nemo where Nemo gets scared and has to find a solution to a difficult situation. Afterwards, they make Fearless Fish Lanterns as reminders for them to be brave in the face of change.



## Session Nine: Adult Group

- The Middles will have a sheet with different sized boxes on it in which they will write their worries or fears. Then, they will make Guatemalan Worry Dolls and learn about the culture and legend that goes with it.
- The Teens will be reading a Maya Angelou book about fears in life. After introducing the topic, the teens will work together to create a Worry Warrior – a creature who devours worries. This will be a group effort and the Worry Warrior will stay in the teens’ room so that it can continue to be used.

Say: Fear has many faces and is a common part of grief and death. Almost everyone who has experienced grief has felt afraid of something at some time. Sometimes we don’t identify a feeling as one of fear because it’s not always something we are frightened about. It could be something we are anxious or worried about (perhaps the future). At times, we don’t feel emotionally safe enough with people to share our fears. It may even be difficult to acknowledge those fears to ourselves.

Many times, that worry has something to do with the death of the person who was so important to us, or it could be other changes in our lives that may cause the worry.

Invite discussion about the things you have just stated.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. Invite comments from the group members about the activity of the evening, if you choose to, and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Ten: Making Memories

*“My grandma died when I was four.”*

*“My baby sister died before she was one year old.”*

*“Our dad was murdered.”*

*“My father died after a long battle with cancer.”*

*“My mother died in a car wreck.”*

*“Dad shot himself and died.”*

*“I was driving the car when we were hit head-on by another car, killing my mother.”*

*“My dad died from a heart attack.”*

Each of these comments represents grieving children who come to *Breakway* for support. Because of various factors, everyone experiences loss in a different way, but they find a common bond in the support groups. The need for listening ears and your time commitment as volunteers at *Breakway* is vital to our grieving families. Hearts are touched and lives are changed as we witness children and adults sharing their grief journeys with each other and with us.

This night of remembering and sharing will be powerful for all group members.

*In Joppa, there was a disciple named Dorcas who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. When Peter arrived, he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.*

Acts 9:36-39



## Session Ten: Littles Group

### GOALS

- To focus on memories that made that person who died special
- To think about how that special person influenced our lives
- To remember in a positive way the life of the special person who died

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- Breakway Rules (page 26)
- Feelings Wheel
- Book: *A Book of Hugs* by Dave Ross (Text in Resources)
- Memories Bracelet/Key Chain: Beads in a bowl, key chain for beads

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Encourage the use of the Feelings Wheel to express their feelings. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)



## Session Ten: Littles Group

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

While standing in a circle, invite them to sing “If you’re Happy And You Know It, Clap Your Hands.” You can add more verses if the children seem to enjoy it. (Five minutes)

### **Read *A Book of Hugs*. (Five minutes)**

One facilitator can hold the book so the group members can see the pictures while another facilitator can read from the enclosed text. Be sure to use lots of expression and discuss when finished. Invite comments on the book, asking the group members if and when they ever had feelings like those in the book.

Many of the children in the group will have experienced a different death than the death in the book, so you will need to relate the book to all of their losses.

### **Memory Bracelet or Key Chain Activity (20 minutes)**

Seat the Littles at the table. Put a large shallow bowl filled with different sizes, shapes and colors of beads in the center of the table. (If you have a large number of group members and are seated at two tables, use two bowls.)

Show them the bag of beads. For every memory they talk about they may select a bead of their choice so they can string it on to their bracelet or keychain. Attempt to guide the conversation with the following statements:



## Session Ten: Littles Group

Say: I would like to invite you to talk about the experiences that your special person told you about their life. What are things you did together with your special person? What are the good things you remember about that special person – things they liked or appreciated?

Give them free playtime.

As you prepare to close, get in the sharing circle to do a progressive hand squeeze. Invite group members to think about a good feeling, squeezing the hand of the person next to them, symbolically passing that feeling on to the person whose hand they are squeezing. Invite them to say their good feeling out loud if they feel comfortable doing so.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Ten: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To focus on memories that made that person who died special
- To think about how that special person influenced our lives
- To remember in a positive way the life of the special person who died

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Ceramic Hearts
- Memories Discussion: Paper, pen or pencils
- Mobile Memories: Hangers, construction paper, magazines, glue, markers, stickers, scissors, colorful yarn

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)



## Session Ten: Middles Group

### Activity: Feeling Hearts (15 minutes)

Pass the bag of ceramic Feeling Hearts around the circle. Each child is to stick their hand inside and select a heart based on the texture that they feel represents them. Invite the group member to rub the stone and explore its texture and shape.

Use the following questions to stimulate their creativity, keeping the focus on grief issues:

- Do any pictures or memories come into your mind as you feel the Feeling Heart?
- As you rub the heart, is there a feeling you are having that you'd like to share with us?
- What does the color remind you of?
- Does this Feeling Heart remind you of something that has been going on in your life?

### Memories Discussion (10 minutes)

Pass out paper, pens and pencils.

Say: Tonight's theme is "Memories." We are going to talk about the memories you have of your loved one. I am about to ask a few questions to get us started. As we talk, make a note of five or six outstanding memories.

- Where was your special person was born and raised?
- What are some of the experiences that special person told you about their life?
- What are their characteristics?
- What experiences did you share with them?
- What are unexpected reminders of that special person that come from time to time?
- How can you continue to express and develop the positive characteristics your special person brought out in you?



## Session Ten: Middles Group

### **Activity: Mobile Memories (25 minutes)**

Say: We are going to make Mobile Memories. Take your list of five or six favorite memories of the person who died. Look through the magazines and find pictures that represent those memories. You may also cut out words to describe the memories. If you can't find a picture, draw one. Glue the pictures or the magazine cutouts on pieces of construction paper. Attach them to the hanger with the colored yarn. Use a large rectangle cut from colored construction paper and print the name of the person who died. Attach it within the triangle of the hanger.

When all group members are nearing completion, invite each group member to discuss their mobiles.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, find out the group members' thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Ten: Teen Group

### GOALS

- To focus on memories that made that person who died special
- To think about how that special person influenced our lives
- To remember in a positive way the life of the special person who died

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Feeling Hearts Activity: ceramic feeling hearts (Find instructions in Resources)
- Memory Boxes Activity: Shoe box, markers, ribbon, tape, paint, magazines, other decorative materials

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)



## Session Ten: Teen Group

### Activity: Feeling Hearts (10 minutes)

Pass the bag of ceramic Feeling Hearts around the circle. Each child is to stick their hand inside and select a heart based on the texture that they feel represents them. Invite the group member to rub the stone and explore its texture and shape.

Use the following questions to stimulate their creativity, keeping the focus on grief issues:

- Do any pictures or memories come into your mind as you feel the Feeling Heart?
- As you rub the heart, is there a feeling you are having that you'd like to share with us?
- What does the color remind you of?
- Does this Feeling Heart remind you of something that has been going on in your life?

Say: Tonight's theme is "Memories." We are going to talk about the memories you have of your loved one. I am about to ask a few questions to get us started. As we talk, make a note of five or six outstanding memories.



## Session Ten: Teen Group

- Where was your special person was born and raised?
- What are some of the experiences that special person told you about their life?
- What are their characteristics?
- What experiences did you share with them?
- What are unexpected reminders of that special person that come from time to time?
- How can you continue to express and develop the positive characteristics your special person brought out in you?

Ask: Does anyone want to share one of your memories?

### **Memory Box Activity (30 minutes)**

Say: Tonight we are going to make a memory box. Look over your list of memories and think about these memories as you decorate it. When you take your box home, you can use it to hold special keepsakes.

Let each of the members discuss their memory box.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye gathering time, start closing the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, find out from the group members their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Ten: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To focus on memories that made that person who died special
- To think about how that special person influenced our lives
- To remember in a positive way the life of the special person who died

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Feeling Rock basket
- Soothing CD

### INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members. Pass out the Introduction Slips and choose a “Feeling Rock” to identify the feeling you have tonight. As the basket of rocks is passed around, group members will introduce themselves and select a rock that has the feeling written on it with which they can identify.

Their chosen rock will indicate either today’s feeling or one they have experienced since their special person died. After they have identified the feeling, invite them to talk briefly about the reason for the feeling and put the rock back into the basket, passing it on to the next person.

Remind them of the **I Pass** rule option.



## Session Ten Adult Group

Say: The theme for tonight is “Memories.” We will be helping the children remember and define their memories.

Discuss why memories are important. Talk about or read the goals for tonight’s session.

Say: The children will be doing the following activities in their groups:

- The Littles will be discussing memories of their loved one and why it is good to have memories. Each member will make a memory bracelet or keychain.
- The Middles will be making Mobile Memories to display their favorite memories with their loved one.
- The Teens will create a Memory Box.

Play a soothing CD if that is something your group likes.

Tell them that the following questions will be used to guide their children. You may want to use these as well (not necessarily these words or in the order listed):

- Where was your special person born and raised?
- What are some of the experiences that special person told you about their life?
- What are their characteristics?
- What experiences did you share with them?
- What are unexpected reminders of that special person that come from time to time?
- How can you continue to express and develop the positive characteristics your special person brought out in you?

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Eleven: Grief Games

## GRIEF GAMES – TO LEARN COPING SKILLS AND EMPATHY

Tonight's focus will be on playing games that instill basic coping skills for emotional self-care following the losses these children have experienced. Children often know how to use an iPod or a DVD player, but they don't know how to calm themselves when they are frustrated. Also, they may not have developed the necessary skills to deal with sadness, disappointment or stress.

Children who can identify and accept their feelings will be more able to verbalize their needs and have them met in an acceptable manner, rather than acting them out dangerously or disruptively. Our goal is that, with your guidance, our group members' sense of self will be strengthened. Also, as they become increasingly aware of their own emotions, they will be more aware of the emotions their peers may or may not be demonstrating.

The instructions for each of the games are in Resources.

*In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.*

Ephesians 4:26

*Love is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

1 Corinthians 13:5

*In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.*

Psalm 4:4

# Session Eleven: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can feel several different feelings at the same time when someone important to us dies
- To know it is a good thing to learn ways to express all our feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Today I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis (Text in *Resources*)
- Hopscotch Memories Game: Hopscotch board, bean bags
- Grief Twister

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_.”

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Encourage the use of the Feelings Wheel to express their feelings. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)



## Session Eleven: Littles Group

### **Read Today I Feel Silly. (10 minutes)**

Say: Today we are going to think and talk about some of the feelings you have.

Have one facilitator read the script while another facilitator shows the pictures.

Ask: Do you have any of the feelings mentioned in the book?

Say: Tonight all the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since our special person died.

### **Activity: Hopscotch Memories Game (15 minutes)**

Explain the Hopscotch Memories game according to the directions and play it (Instructions can be found in *Resources*). Be sure to create an indoor hopscotch board for them to play the game.

Once the members have all had a turn, bring them in for the next game.

### **Activity: Grief Twister (20 minutes)**

Ask if everyone knows how to play Twister. Tell them we are going to play a grief version of Twister. (Check the *Resources* tab for the handout with directions.)

When they tire of the game, give them free playtime.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Eleven: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can feel several different feelings at the same time when someone important to us dies
- To know it is a good thing to learn ways to express all our feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Skittles Game: Skittles and Instructions (Instructions can be found in *Resources*.)
- The Good Mourning Game

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)



## Session Eleven: Middles Group

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Say: We are going to explore grief in a different way tonight. Explain that tonight all the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since our special person died.

Read or talk about the goals for this evening. (Five minutes)

### **Activity: Skittles Game (20 minutes)**

The members will be playing a memories version of Skittles (Instructions can be found in *Resources*).

Pass around the bag of Skittles and let them grab five pieces. Be sure to limit the number so that everyone has time to talk and no one person monopolizes the time.

### **Activity: The Good Mourning Game (30 minutes)**

Explain the Good Mourning game and play (Instructions can be found in *Resources*). You may want to get on the floor to play.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye time, start closing the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, ask the group members to share their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Eleven: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can feel several different feelings at the same time when someone important to us dies
- To know it is a good thing to learn ways to express all our feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- CD
- You're on the Ball Game: Instructions (Find in *Resources*), ball
- The Good-bye Game: Paper, crayons

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)



## Session Eleven: Teen Group

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Activity: You're On the Ball (15 minutes)**

Say: Tonight all the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since our special person died.

Read or talk about the goals for this evening. Explain the You're on the Ball Activity (Instructions can be found in *Resources*) and play. (15 minutes)

### **Activity: The Goodbye Game (30 minutes)**

Introduce The Goodbye Game.

You may want to get on the floor to play the game.

Crayons and paper will be used in the game as some of the cards are responded to.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye time, start closing for the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, ask the group members to share their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close. (10 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Eleven: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To know we are all on this grief journey individually and together
- To feel comfortable sharing that grief journey
- To recognize strengths and weaknesses within ourselves

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Then, invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Say: Tonight's focus will be on playing games that instill basic coping skills for emotional self-care following the losses these children have experienced.

- The Littles will play a little of Hopscotch Memories and then some Grief Twister.
- The Middles will be playing the memories version of Skittles and The Good Mourning Game.
- The Teens will be playing You're On the Ball and The Goodbye Game.



## Session Eleven: Adult Group

Children often know how to use an iPod or a DVD player, but they don't know how to calm themselves when they are frustrated. Also, they may not have developed the necessary skills to deal with sadness, disappointment or stress. Children who can identify and accept their feelings will be better able to verbalize their needs and have them met in an acceptable manner rather than acting them out dangerously or disruptively. Our goal is that – with your guidance – our group members' sense of self be strengthened. And as they become increasingly aware of their own emotions, they will be more aware of the emotions their peers may or may not be demonstrating.

The Adult Group members will have an open discussion on their current concerns.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

## Session Twelve: Surviving Grief

*The encounter of grief awakens us to the importance of utilizing our potentials – our capacities to mourn our losses openly and without shame, to be interpersonally effective in our relationships with others, and to continue to discover fulfillment in life, living and loving. Rather than “dragging us down,” loss often helps us grow. Loss seems to free the potential within. Then it becomes up to us as human beings to embrace and creatively express this potential. However, in our mourning-avoiding culture, more and more people are invited not to grow in their grief journeys. Some people do not seem to know how to grow or have conditions surrounding them that prevent such growth. They may remain emotionally, physically and spiritually crippled for years. For children, this is strongly influenced by what the helping adults in their lives do or don’t do to help them with their grief. Our challenge as facilitators is to fight this cultural tendency and instead extend bereaved children this invitation: Teach me about your grief and let me help you discover how this experience can enrich your life. A large part of the “art” of caregiving to the bereaved child is to free them to grow and live until they die.*

### *Healing the Bereaved Child*

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Fort Collins, Colorado

<http://www.centerforloss.com>

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11



## Session Twelve: Littles Group

### GOALS

- To assist children in recognizing and learning ways they can help themselves during grief
- To identify support systems available to them when they need extra help
- To promote team building and group cohesion among members

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway Rules*
- Book: *My Grief Animal* (Text can be found in *Resources*)
- Copies of the book for each child
- Totem Poles Activity: Recycled cardboard rolls (toilet paper or paper towels), white paper, color construction paper, rubber bands, scissors, glue
- Grief Island Maps: Construction paper, markers, yarn

# Session Twelve: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Encourage the use of the Feelings Wheel to express their feelings. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Say: This week's theme is "Surviving Grief." Do you think grief is hard?

Call on someone who raised their hand to name the hardest part for them.

Ask: What helps you get through it?

Give other members a chance to answer.



## Session Twelve: Littles Group

### **My Grief Animals (15 minutes)**

Say: There are lots of times when grief is hard and it is important to know how to help yourself. Sometimes, it's even so hard that you have to ask others for help. And that's okay!

Read the book and emphasize the grief skill each animal represents.

Ask: Are there any other animals you can think of that represent skills needed to survive grief?

Pass out their copies of the book and tell them they can color a book to take home. On the last page they can create their own grief animal.

### **Activity: Totem-Pole Treasures (15 minutes)**

Say: Now that we know what grief skill each animal represents, we are going to create Totem-Pole Treasures.

Ask: Does anyone know what totem poles are? Has anyone ever seen one?

Say: Native American Indians made totem poles to represent their families. Think of what animal characteristics describe you and your family. For example: if a family moved a lot, they might have a flying bird while an owl could represent a very smart family.



## Session Twelve: Littles Group

### **Activity: Grief Island (15 minutes)**

Once the members have finished their totem poles, tell them that we are going to take a trip to an island. You can get as creative as you want, even having them pretend to be airplanes flying to their destination.

Say: You are at a Grief Island. Grief Island is a place where you can go when someone you know has died. Think of all the important things you need with you on your trip to help you survive and make you feel better. It can be your favorite things, people, hobbies, thoughts or anything else that has been a comfort to you since your loved one died. Take this piece of paper and draw a picture of your island and put all the survival tools in the picture as well.

When they have completed their island, help them roll their maps and secure with yarn if they want.

Say: Let these be a reminder to keep in mind that you are on a grief journey and you need lots of tools to make you feel better.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Twelve: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To assist children in recognizing and learning ways they can help themselves during grief
- To identify support systems available to them when they need extra help
- To promote team building and group cohesion among members

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- A Lot of Feelings Worksheet (Find in Resources)
- Pens
- Skills for Hard Times Worksheet
- Survivor Games Activity: Bandanas (two colors to represent teams), Hula Hoop, rice box, Affirmation Cards hidden, poster board, tape, yarn, and Fight or Flight Cards (Find in Resources)

# Session Twelve: Middles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

“My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Encourage the use of the Feelings Wheel to express their feelings. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **A Lot of Feelings Worksheet (15 minutes)**

Say: Tonight we will be talking about surviving grief. If you want, you can read and discuss the goals for the group. To warm up use the A lot of Feelings worksheet.

Once they’ve finished, give them an opportunity to share. (10 minutes)

In your own words, explain to the members that grief can be a long, hard process. Some of us have been here longer; some of us are new. We’re all at different places in our grief journey, but we’re also all here for the same reason. Although grief can be hard, it can also teach us some skills for surviving.

# Session Twelve: Middles Group

## **Activity: Skills for the Hard Times (15 minutes)**

Read through the handout Skills for the Hard Times. Have the members pick which skills are right for them. Then, in the space provided, have them write ways they can implement that skill in their life.

They can keep these in their binder or take them home and finish them if it looks like you're running short on time.

## **Activity: Survivor Games (20 minutes)**

Say: Since our theme is "Surviving Grief," we thought it might be fun to play some Survivor games.

Split the members into two groups. Give each team their own color of bandanas to distinguish themselves from each other and have them come up with a team name. Go over each of the games that they are going to compete in. (Games and instructions can be found in Resources.) Ask if they have any questions.

Because the Teens are also competing in Survivor games, your group will play the games in this order: Hula Hoop Circle, Jewel Find and Rope of Reaction.

Whoever finishes each game first wins that game. There are three games altogether, so best out of three is the surviving team.

If there is time at the end of the Survivor games, discuss each game and what the members think the goals of the games were. (10 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Twelve: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To assist children in recognizing and learning ways they can help themselves during grief
- To identify support systems available to them when they need extra help
- To promote team building and group cohesion among members

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- Ball of Grief: Worksheet (Find in *Resources*), pens
- Skills for Hard Times: Worksheet (Find in *Resources*), pens
- Dry erase board and markers
- Welcome Letter Activity: Paper, pencils or pens
- Survivor Games Activity: Bandanas (2 colors to represent teams), Hula Hoop, rice box, Affirmation Cards, poster board, tape, yarn, Fight or Flight Cards (Find in *Resources*)

# Session Twelve: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

“Ball of Grief” Worksheet (15 minutes)

Say: Tonight we will be talking about surviving grief.

If you want, you can read and discuss the goals for the group.

To warm up, pass out crayons and markers and the Ball of Emotions worksheet. Have them follow the instructions underneath. Once they’ve finished, give them an opportunity to share.

Say: Grief can be a long, hard process. As we saw in the last activity, there are still several emotions that we’re all working through. Some of us have been here longer; some of us are new at this. We’re all at different places in our grief journey but we’re also all here for the same reason. Although grief can be hard, it can also teach us some skills for surviving.

## Session Twelve: Teen Group

Have the group think of skills or survival tools they've gained on their grief journey.

Ask: What has helped you make it this far?

Write all ideas on the dry erase board.

### **Activity: Welcome Letter (15 minutes)**

Say: You are now going to work together to create a group welcome letter for new teens that come to *Breakway*.

### **Activity: Survivor Games (20 minutes)**

Say: Since our theme is "Surviving Grief," we thought it might be fun to play some survivor games.

Split the members into two groups. Give each team their own color of bandanas to distinguish themselves from each other and have them come up with a team name. Go over each of the games that they are going to compete in and ask if they have any questions. (Games and Instructions can be found in *Resources*.) Because the Teens are also competing in Survivor games, your group will play the games in this order: Hula Hoop Circle, Jewel Find and Rope of Reaction.

Whoever finishes each game first, wins that game. There are three games altogether, so the best out of three becomes the surviving team.

If there is time at the end of the Survivor games, discuss each game and what the members think the goals of the games were. (10 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Twelve: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To assist children in recognizing and learning ways they can help themselves during grief
- To identify support systems available to them when they need extra help
- To promote team building and group cohesion among members

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and invite them to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Say: Tonight's theme is "Surviving Grief." All the groups will be discussing feelings they struggle with and the coping skills they have gained throughout their grief process.

- The Littles will be discussing important skills they need to help them through grief. They will then use those skills, along with family characteristics, to create a totem pole that reflects their growth through their loss.
- The Middles will warm up by talking about emotions they have dealt with and those they are still dealing with in their grief journey. They will go through a handout that will help them think of ways to implement survival skills into their daily lives. They will wrap up by competing in Survivor games.



## Session Twelve: Adult Group

- The Teens will also warm up by naming emotions they have dealt with and those they are still dealing with. They will write a Welcome Letter to give to new group members. They will end by also competing in Survivor games.

Say: We all know grief can be a long, hard process. There are still several emotions that we are all working through. Some of us are new at it, while others have been here longer. We are all at different places in our grief journey but we're also all here for the same reason. Although grief can be hard, it can also teach us some skills for surviving. What are some skills or survival tools you've gained on your grief journey? What has helped you make it this far?

When about five minutes remain in your group time, start wrapping things up for the evening. Invite comments from the group members about the activity of the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Thirteen: My Loss Story

## What Did The One Who Died Leave Me?

- They proved to me that life truly is fragile and helped me know how to handle it more carefully now.
- They taught me that not all problems in life are monumental and to remember to put things in perspective.
- They allowed me to reassess my spiritual beliefs and to know that I need to do this from time to time.
- They showed me that each person leaves a mark in this world, regardless of how long or short his or her life is.
- They gave me a reason and a need to help other people.
- They reminded me to show and tell the people I love how I feel about them as often and as openly as I can.
- They inspired me to take stock in what I have, who I am today and to give thanks so I have a renewed decision to live life to the fullest every day.

*My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.*

Psalms 73:26

*My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

Psalms 62:1-2



# Session Thirteen: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can learn from people even when they are no longer with us by remembering the way that person did things when they were alive
- To feel safe to express all feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills to access when we feel badly

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Book: *Veggie Memories* by (Text in *Resources*)
- Book Follow-up Activity: Flower pot, soil and seeds

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

# Session Thirteen: Littles Group

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

## **Read Veggie Memories. (Five minutes)**

Have one facilitator read the script while another facilitator shows the pictures.

## **Activity: Flower Pot (25 minutes)**

Say: Life involves things growing – people, plants and animals. However, we know that everything will die at some point. We are going to decorate a flower pot and plant some seeds to grow a plant, like in the book.

Ask: What does this seed need to grow? Will this seed live forever?

Part of this activity is that everything will die (even a seed), but another part of this activity is that we will make this flower for someone special in our lives.

Say: We will decorate the flower pot and plant a seed. Then we can watch it grow and give this to a special person.

Leave this open to the children. It could be something that they could bring to the cemetery, it could be for a surviving parent, or it could be for a special friend who has helped them in their grief journey.

## **Activity: Simon Says (15 minutes)**

Invite them to stand up. Make up a game of Simon Says, explaining carefully that just like the last rule about listening, it is important to listen very carefully because if they hear something they are supposed to do and you didn't say "Simon Says," they are out of the game if they do that thing. Invite them to repeat back to you what you just said so no one goes into the game not understanding the rules.

# Session Thirteen: Littles Group

## Activity: Simon Says (Cont'd.)

- Simon says, “Touch your toes if it is a good thing to be happy.”
- Simon says, “Sit down on the floor if you do something like the person who died did it.”
- Simon says, “Stand up real straight if you like ice cream.”
- Simon says, “Anyone who has ever been mad at somebody in their family touch their toes.”
- Anyone who has ever felt like crying, stretch your arms way up high.
- Hold both hands up in the air.
- Simon says, “Anyone who has ever felt lonely, stand on one foot.”
- Anyone who has ever felt like no one understands what it feels like to lose a loved one, cover your ears with your hands.
- Simon says, “Anyone who has ever been scared of losing someone else, put a hand on your knee.”
- Simon says, “Anyone who has ever felt like screaming, rub the top of your head.”
- Anyone who has ever dreamed about the person that died, stick out your tongue.
- Simon says, “Anyone who has ever needed someone they could talk to about their loved one that died, turn all the way around.”
- Simon says, “Anyone who is glad they can come to *Breakway*, clap your hands loud.”

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Thirteen: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can learn from people even when they are no longer with us by remembering the way that person did things when they were alive
- To feel safe to express all feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills to access when we feel badly

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- Meet the Press Activity: play microphone, interview questions, trench coat and reporter hat
- Cards: construction paper, markers
- Tibetan Prayer Flags Activity: blocks of material, string, markers and/or stamps

# Session Thirteen: Middles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

“My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*. The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_.”

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*. Encourage the use of the Feelings Wheel to express their feelings. Then continue around the sharing circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their lives since the last meeting.

### **Activity: Meet the Press (15 minutes)**

Say: Tonight we will be talking about memories of our loved ones. To start off, we’re going to play a game called Meet the Press. (See instruction sheet in *Resources*.) Everyone will take turns interviewing each other.

In your own words, explain to the members, no matter how long it’s been since your loved one died, how you will miss them everyday. Sometimes it’s little things that remind of us of them, such as a joke they would have liked or a smell of their perfume or cologne. Sometimes it is something bigger, like holidays or birthdays.



## Session Thirteen: Middles Group

### **Cards (15 minutes)**

Pass out construction paper and tell the kids to decorate it as a card, but don't tell them what they are decorating it for. Once they've finished making their card, have them write themselves a note from their loved one. Have them brainstorm what they think their loved one would say to them, what they'd like their loved one to say to them and any advice they might have for them.

Give them an opportunity to share.

### **Activity: Tibetan Prayer Flags (25 minutes)**

Ask: Why do you think it's important to remember your loved one? Are you ever scared that you'll forget them? How do you feel when you get to talk about them?

Say: We're going to do an activity to help you remember your loved one. (See the Tibetan Prayer Flags handout in *Resources*).

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Thirteen: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can learn from people even when they are no longer with us by remembering the way that person did things when they were alive
- To feel safe to express all feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills to access when we feel badly

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Memories Web Activity: ball of Yarn
- Cards: construction paper, markers
- Tibetan Prayer Flags Activity: blocks of material, string, markers and or stamps

# Session Thirteen: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the others in their group any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Activity: Memories Web (25 minutes)**

Say: Tonight we will be talking about our loss stories.

If you want, you can read and discuss the goals for the group.

Say: To warm up we're going to create a Memories Web. Take a ball of yarn and when the ball of yarn is thrown to a member, he is to tell something that he misses most about his loved one. The first person holds the end of the yarn, shares his memory and, while still holding the yarn, throws the ball of yarn to someone on the other side of the group circle. That person tells his memory and holds the yarn and throws the ball of yarn to another member. The idea is to create a web in the middle of the group from passing the ball of yarn back and forth with each person still holding on to their part of the yarn. After everyone has had a chance to share, go back and roll up the ball by having the person who went last now share a favorite memory, letting go of the string, and throwing it back to the person who first threw it to them.



## Session Thirteen: Teen Group

Explain: No matter how long it's been since your loved one died, you will miss them everyday. Sometimes it's little things that remind of us them, like a joke they would have liked, or a smell of their perfume. Sometimes its bigger things like holidays or birthdays.

### **Cards (20 minutes)**

Pass out construction paper and tell the kids to decorate it as a card (but don't tell them what they're decorating it for). Once they've finished making their card, have them write themselves a note from their loved one. Have them brainstorm what they think their loved one would say to them, what they'd like their loved one to say to them, and any advice they might have for them.

Give them an opportunity to share.

### **Activity: Tibetan Prayer Flags (25 minutes)**

Ask: Why do you feel it's important to remember your loved one? Are you ever scared that you'll forget them? How do you feel when you get to talk about them?

Say: We're going to do an activity to help them remember your loved one. (See the handout on Tibetan Prayer Flags in *Resources*.)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Thirteen: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To understand that we can learn from people even when they are no longer with us by remembering the way that person did things when they were alive
- To feel safe to express all feelings

### MATERIALS

- Introduction Slips
- Copies: “The Need to Remember” by Alan Wolfelt (find in *Resources*)

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Start introduction routine with a facilitator. Then invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Each of the groups will be talking about memories of their loved ones tonight.

- The Littles will be reading a story about how a child remembers her grandfather by planting a garden. They will also be decorating flowerpots to take home in order to grow their plants.
- The Middles will warm up by interviewing each other on their loss stories. They will also write a card from their loved one to themselves and create prayer flags to remind them of their special person.

## Session Thirteen: Adult Group

- The Teens will also warm up by creating a Memories Web. They also will write a card from their loved one and decorate prayer flags.

Say: Tonight all the groups are talking about loss stories. No matter how long it's been since your loved one died, you will miss them everyday. Sometimes it's little things that remind of us them, like a joke they would have liked or a smell of their perfume. Sometimes it's bigger things, like holidays and birthdays.

Ask: Why do you feel it's important to remember your loved one? Are you ever scared that you'll forget them? How do you feel when you get to talk about them?

Discuss the importance of remembering your loved one and being able to talk about them. Pass out the excerpt from Wolfelt's *Healing the Bereaved Child*. (Find in *Resources*.)

When about five minutes remain in your group time, start wrapping things up for the evening. Invite comments from the group members about the activity of the evening, if you choose to, and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Fourteen: Handling Change

### **When Someone Close To You Dies, Lots Of Things Change**

You change. All of a sudden, you no longer take life for granted. When one death happens, it does not mean another death is going to happen soon. It can just make us worry more. It is common to have extreme, strange and sometimes indescribable feelings. It can be hard to let these intense feelings out, but it is much better than trying to keep them stuffed inside. You can feel really different. You can even wonder if you look different, but you know you are just changing inside.

Your family changes. That person is always missing. You see their empty chair, you miss their big bear hugs, and you wish you could hear their laugh again. You even miss some of the things about that person that used to bug you. Maybe there are lots of household jobs that need to be done by someone else now. That means more work and responsibility for all family members. It seems like fun times are gone forever because everyone is so sad. After a while though, you can start doing enjoyable activities together again. Even though it won't be the same, it can still be fun.

School changes. Your friends seem to understand at first, but they go back to their lives after a while and seem tired of hearing about you being sad. Sometimes you try to help your old friends understand and sometimes you discover new, more valuable friends. Sometimes, it is hard to concentrate, and it just doesn't seem important at times to get good grades anymore. Somehow, you know you need to keep trying and decide to ask for help.



## Session Fourteen: Handling Change

When one change happens, it often brings other changes to your life. Maybe your family moves to a new place or your Mom starts working, or maybe your brother or sister gets in trouble more. Maybe you just discover something new about yourself. The world keeps going on like nothing has happened, but it seems everything has changed.

- Coping with change means not pretending as if everything is still the same.
- Coping with change means searching for a new beginning.
- Coping with change means rebuilding and finding new ways to live.
- It's important to remember that we are here on earth to continue to grow.
- When we learn to cope with change, we're growing in all sorts of ways.

### Coping with Changes

Adapted for *Breakway* from material supplied by

The Kids' Place, Oklahoma City OK

<http://www.edmondkids.org>



# Session Fourteen: Handling Change

I, the Lord, do not change.

Malachi 3:6 (NIV)

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like the shifting shadows.

James 1:17 (NIV)



# Session Fourteen: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To have an understanding that changes happen in our lives. Some changes are happy while others are sad
- To have an understanding that everything that lives also dies
- To understand that although death is a natural part of the cycle of life, we still miss the person we love...alot.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Change the room: Make some silly changes to the room, most likely the children will ask what's going on. You can say that you're just making a few changes. Continue doing things differently while doing the welcome circle and the rules, such as speaking backwards or not getting in a circle.
- Book: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (Text in *Resources*)
- Caterpillar Puppets: Socks, wiggle eyes, wings, Velcro, scissors, glue and markers

# Session Fourteen: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. I wouldn't suggest changing the rules at all, but you might read one or two backward or find some other creative way to catch the kids' attention. (Five minutes)

When the children start laughing, begin the lesson by asking what happened differently today? Did you think some of the changes were fun? Confusing? Can some changes be scary? Uncomfortable?

Ask them about changes they've had in their lives. These can be related to the death of their loved one or can be about any other changes. Write these down on the poster board under Fun, Scary, Big or Little. (10 minutes)

Explain that all the groups are talking about change tonight. Read or talk about the goals.

# Session Fourteen: Littles Group

## Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. (Five minutes)

Discuss how the caterpillar changed. Discuss how change and loss can have negative as well as positive consequences. For the caterpillar, change – even though hard – had beautiful results.

## Caterpillar Puppets: (20 minutes)

Give each member a sock, pair of wiggle eyes, wings, Velcro, scissors, glue, and markers. The puppet is essentially a caterpillar shape (tube sock) with eyes and detachable wings. The kids can decorate the caterpillar and wings any way they like. While the members work on their caterpillar puppets, invite them to share their thoughts about the changes in the life of a butterfly.

Say: Just like we had no choice about the death of our special person, the butterfly has no choice in how long he stays in each of his life stages. However, unlike the butterfly, we do have a choice about our behavior after that change in our lives.

Allow the group members to give a “voice” to their caterpillar. Ask the caterpillar puppets:

- What does change feel like?
- What is hard about change?
- Why is change important?

Give each “puppet” a chance to answer. (5 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so that you can join the other groups.



# Session Fourteen: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To have an understanding that changes happen in our lives. Some changes are happy, while other changes are sad
- To have an understanding that everything that lives also dies
- To understand that although death is a natural part of the cycle of life, we still miss the person we love...a lot.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Color bag with two different color clay balls in them for each participant
- Sun Catchers Activity: coffee filter, cup of water, washable markers, paper towels
- Changes Worksheet (in *Resources*) and pencils
- Dry erase board and markers

# Session Fourteen: Middles Group

## INTRODUCTION

As the group members arrive, give them each a Color Bag with a minimum of explanation other than commenting on the different colors.

Say: Welcome to our group. We are going to form a sharing circle. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*. The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_.”

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting.

### **Activity: Color Bags (Five minutes)**

Back to the Color Bags...Ask the group members what they have noticed about their bags. (They have two different colored balls of clay.)

Now, instruct the members to smash the two colors together until they are all blended into one color. The important thing for them to internalize is that the mixture in the bag will never be two separate colors again, but the new color is good, too. It is the new normal. That is the way it is with our lives.

# Session Fourteen: Middles Group

Explain that all the groups are talking about change tonight.

Read or talk about the goals.

On the dry erase board, list aspects of life that have changed.

Examples:

Normal: Dad coached my team; mom was at home

New normal: I don't even play sports; I have a babysitter

New normal (what can be): I could join a team; set aside special time with parent.

Process with group members those changes that have occurred. Brainstorm ideas for the new normal and how to continue on in the midst of grief and change. (15 minutes)

## **Activity: Sun Catchers (20 minutes)**

Set up a table, and seat the group members around it. Explain the Sun Catchers Activity.

- Give everyone a coffee filter and bright colored washable markers.
- They are to flatten the filter.
- With the markers, they are to draw a picture of something that represents the person who died.
- When the picture is finished, they are to fold the coffee filter in half, then in half again. Keep folding it in half until it becomes too thick to fold and is cone shaped.
- Place the cup (2/3 full of water) in the middle of the table. One by one, the tip of each cone is to be dipped into the water. The water will spread through the filter and blend the colors. (It is important for each filter to be watched for a period of time.)
- Talk about how death is like the water moving through the filter. It changes everything, but the basic pattern and colors are still there – just changed.

## Session Fourteen: Middles Group

- The wet, messy filters can be compared to how it may feel when someone you love dies.
- Roll out several layers of paper towels onto a table.
- Unfold the filters and place them on the paper towels to dry. (Move the table out of the way, if possible.)

Invite them to remember to hold their Sun Catcher up to the sun the next day to see the beauty of it.

Tell the group members we now have an opportunity to write down some of our thoughts about changes. Distribute pencils and the Changes worksheet and their notebooks.

- Changes that have occurred in my family since my loved one died...
- Changes that have occurred in myself since my loved one died...
- Some changes that I don't like are...
- Changes which my family has made since the death that I do like are...



## Session Fourteen: Middles Group

No later than five minutes before the goodbye time, start closing the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then find out the group members' thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Fourteen: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To have an understanding that changes happen in our lives. Some changes are happy, while others are sad
- To have an understanding that everything that lives also dies
- To understand that although death is a natural part of the cycle of life, we still miss the person we love...a lot.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Color bag with two different color clay balls in them (for each participant)
- Sun Catchers Activity: coffee filter, cup of water, washable markers, paper towels
- Pencils and the Changes Worksheets (Find in *Resources*)
- Dry erase board and markers

# Session Fourteen: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

As the group members arrive, give them each a Color Bag with a minimum explanation other than commenting on the different colors.

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most relevant to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite individuals to share with other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Activity: Color Bags (Five minutes)**

Back to the Color Bags...Ask the group members what they have noticed about their bags. (They have two different colored balls of clay.)

Now, instruct the members to smash the two colors together until they are all blended into one color. The important thing for them to internalize is that the mixture in the bag will never be two separate colors again, but the new color is good, too. It is the new normal. That is the way it is with our lives.

# Session Fourteen: Teen Group

Explain that all the groups are talking about change tonight.

Read or talk about the goals.

On the dry erase board, list aspects of life that have changed.

Examples:

Normal: Dad coached my team; mom was at home

New normal: I don't even play sports; I have a babysitter

New normal (what can be): I could join a team; set aside special time with parent.

Process with group members those changes that have occurred. Brainstorm ideas for the new normal and how to continue on in the midst of grief and change. (15 minutes)

## **Activity: Sun Catchers (20 minutes)**

Set up a table, and seat the group members around it. Explain the Sun Catchers Activity.

- Give everyone a coffee filter and bright colored washable markers.
- They are to flatten the filter.
- With the markers, they are to draw a picture of something that represents the person who died.
- When the picture is finished, they are to fold the coffee filter in half, then in half again. Keep folding it in half until it becomes too thick to fold and is cone shaped.

## Session Fourteen: Teen Group

- Place the cup (2/3 full of water) in the middle of the table. One by one, the tip of each cone is to be dipped into the water. The water will spread through the filter and blend the colors. (It is important for each filter to be watched for a period of time.)
- Talk about how death is like the water moving through the filter. It changes everything, but the basic pattern and colors are still there – just changed.
- The wet, messy filters can be compared to how it may feel when someone you love dies.
- Roll out several layers of paper towels onto a table.
- Unfold the filters and place them on the paper towels to dry. (Move the table out of the way, if possible.)

Invite them to remember to hold their Sun Catcher up to the sun the next day to see the beauty of it

Tell the group members we now have an opportunity to write down some of our thoughts about changes. Distribute pencils and the Changes worksheet and their notebooks.

- Changes that have occurred in my family since my loved one died...
- Changes that have occurred in myself since my loved one died...
- Some changes that I don't like are...
- Changes which my family has made since the death that I do like are...

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start the group so you can join the other groups.

# Session Fourteen: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To have an understanding that changes happen in our lives. Some changes are happy, while others are sad
- To have an understanding that everything that lives also dies
- To understand that although death is a natural part of the cycle of life, we still miss the person we love...a lot.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pencils
- I Did Not Choose to Become Bereaved Worksheets (Find in *Resources*)
- CD

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and invite them to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

- The Littles will be reading the story the Very Hungry Caterpillar. They will then be making caterpillar puppets and discussing how change can be good and what changes have occurred since the loss of their loved one.
- The Middles will start out with the Color Bag Activity where they will receive bags with two colors of clay in them and will be asked to smash them together until the two colors become one. The important thing for them to internalize is that the mixture in the bag will never be two separate colors again, but the new color is good, too. It is the new normal. They will then discuss ways that life has changed since they lost their special person. The will close with the Sun Catcher Activity where they will draw a picture of something representing their loved one onto a coffee filter. They will then wet the filters causing the marker to bleed. The point is to show them that change can be beautiful.



## Session Fourteen: Adult Group

- The teens will also start out with the Color Bag Activity and then move to the Sun Catcher Activity. They will spend the evening discussing changes in their lives since they lost their loved ones and how those changes, although, difficult can be beautiful.

Say: For some of us, the concept of change is very difficult, and we resist it, because the familiar is comfortable. However, when an important person in our life dies, change is forced upon us. We don't have a choice. (This will lead into the activity for the evening.)

Hand out pencils and pens and the I Did Not Choose to Become Bereaved worksheets. Start the CD and play it softly while the group members work on the worksheets. When most have completed their worksheets, invite sharing. If you choose to invite them to take turns reading the sentences, it may work well for a facilitator to read the sentences without blanks.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Fifteen: Depression

*To be fully alive means to experience the full range of emotions, to struggle with the downs as well as to enjoy the ups. Life is certainly difficult and even unpredictable – full of meaning and purpose at one time and utterly meaningless and purposeless at another, sometimes so desirable that we wish to freeze it at a certain point and remain there forever, and at other times so undesirable that we may find ourselves wishing we had never been born... But it also has its own dynamics. There is no real happiness without the experience of depression to balance it. If we are not capable of happiness either. In a very real sense, depression keeps us alive.*

Leslie Hazleton, Coming to Terms With Normal Depression

*Friends, relatives, teachers, co-workers make up the front line of defense against suicide and they must help, even if they believe the suicidal person is manipulating them or using threats of suicide to gain attention. A person who must resort to suicide to get attention has lost the ability to communicate in normal ways. The person needs attention. Without it, the cry for help will be shriller, more desperate, more dangerous.*

Francine Klagsbrun, Too Young to Die: Youth and Suicide

Compiled from:

*When Living Hurts*, Sol Gordon;

*Too Young to Die*, Francine Klagsbrun; and

*Suicide in the Young*, Earl Grollman



## Session Fifteen: Depression

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted...To grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting so they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:1 & 3



# Session Fifteen: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that feeling sad for long periods of time is normal for members, or their family, when in grieving
- To learn how to express that sadness in healthy and constructive ways
- To help children realize it is okay for anyone to cry – boys, girls, and adults

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking stick
- You're On the Ball Activity: ball, CD player, CD
- Greek Tear Jars Activity: clay, jewels, markers
- *The Lion King* Video
- Book: *Tear Soup* by Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen

# Session Fifteen: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

### **Read Tear Soup. (Five minutes)**

Have one facilitator read the script while another facilitator shows the pictures.

Say: Depression is an illness that makes people sad, sometimes for no reason. They might cry a lot, sleep all day and have trouble eating or talking to people. Sometimes depression takes a long time to get better, and our efforts to cheer up the person do not work.

Depression needs to be explained as an illness, just like having the chicken pox or a bad cold. Discuss depression or “the blues.” Children need to be reassured that they did not cause their loved one to be sad and unhappy because of something they did or did not do. (10 minutes)



## Session Fifteen: Littles Group

### **You're on the Ball Activity and Greek Tear Jars Activity (25 minutes)**

Tell the members that they're going to play a game called You're On the Ball. (Explain the directions by using the sheet in *Resources*.)

Explain to the children that in ancient times, tears were considered very precious. Continue to give history on the Greek Tear Jars by using the sheet in *Resources*. Tell the members that they are going to make their own tear jars to take home. They can use these tear jars in whatever way they choose.

While the members work on their tear jars, choose a few questions from You're on the Ball to discuss more in depth.

Have the members stay in their welcome circle as they watch a clip from *The Lion King*. The scene to be used for this activity from the *Lion King* is when Simba the cub meets Pumbaa and Timon. Discuss how sad Simba was and what his friends taught him. (15 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Fifteen: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that feeling sad for long periods of time is normal for members or their family when grieving
- To learn how to express that sadness in healthy and constructive ways
- To help children realize it is okay for anyone to cry – boys, girls and adults

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- You're on the Ball Activity: ball, CD player and CD
- Greek Tear Jars Activity: clay, jewels and markers
- Dry erase board and markers

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Tell the members the theme for the night and read the goals. (Five minutes)



## Session Fifteen: Middles Group

### **Activity: You're on the Ball (25 minutes)**

Ask: Can any of you define depression? (An easy to understand definition you can use is “Depression is an illness that makes people sad, sometimes for no reason. They might cry a lot, sleep all day and have trouble eating or talking to people. Sometimes depression takes a long time to get better and our efforts to cheer the person up do not work.”)

Begin discussion about the game You're on the Ball.

To dig a little deeper, use the dry erase board and have the group list pressures or changes that lead to the blues.

Pre-teens and teenagers are at a difficult stage in life to be coping with grief. There are so many changes happening around them, as well as within them. Therefore, these pressures or changes do not have to be grief related.

Next, ask members to name ways of dealing badly with depression. This is a great time to discuss self-destructive behaviors, such as drinking, drugs, cutting, wearing masks, trying dangerous things, as well as suicide.

# Session Fifteen: Middles Group

Finally, have the group come up with healthy ways to cope with depression. If a member mentions crying, it might be a good opportunity to expand more on gender stereotypes as well as seeing adults cry.

## **Activity: Greek Tear Jars (15 minutes)**

Explain to members that in ancient times, tears were considered very precious. Continue to give the history on the Greek Tear Jars by using the sheet found in *Resources*.

Tell the members that they are going to make their own tear jars to take home. They can use these tear jars in whatever way they choose.

While the members work on their tear jars, choose a few questions from You're on the Ball to discuss more in depth.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye time, start closing the evening. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then find out the group members' thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Fifteen: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of the prevalence of self-destructive behavior, suicide and suicidal thought in youth
- To learn to recognize the warning signals of a person at risk for suicide.
- To identify actions and attitudes that assist in suicide prevention.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Suicide Quiz (in *Resources*)
- Lyric Note Cards Activity: Note cards, white board white board markers
- Permission to Mourn Bookmarks: Bookmarks (Find in *Resources*), pens, glitter, glue, stickers, laminating machine and film

# Session Fifteen: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that seem to be most relevant to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their life since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Activity: Lyric Note Cards (25 minutes)**

Tell the members the theme for the night and read the goals.

Ask: How would you define depression? (An easy to understand definition you can use is “Depression is an illness that makes people sad, sometimes for no reason. They might cry a lot, sleep all day and have trouble eating or talking to people. Sometimes depression takes a long time to get better and our efforts to cheer the person up do not work.”)

As a warm-up activity, lay out each index card that has song lyrics written on it on the floor. Have the members read each card to themselves before going on with the activity. Once they’ve all read through them, tell them they are going to choose three cards each – one that reflects how they felt at the time of the death, one that reflects how they feel now, and one that reflects how they hope to feel in the future.



## Session Fifteen: Teen Group

After each member has chosen their three cards, have them share which cards they chose and why.

Use the dry erase board to dig a little deeper.

Have the group list pressures or changes that lead to the blues. Pre-teens and teenagers are at a difficult stage in life to be coping with grief. There are so many changes happening around them as well as within them. Therefore, these pressures or changes do not have to be grief related. Next, ask members to name ways of dealing badly with depression. This is a great time to discuss self-destructive behaviors, such as drinking, drugs, cutting, wearing masks, trying dangerous things, as well as suicide.

Last, have the group come up with healthy ways to cope with depression. If a member mentions crying, it might be a good opportunity to expand more on gender stereotypes as well as seeing adults cry.

### **Suicide Quiz (15 minutes)**

Pass out the Suicide Quiz to each member and have him or her complete it. Once everyone is done, read the correct answers and discuss any questions they may have.



# Session Fifteen: Teen Group

## Permission to Mourn Bookmarks (15 minutes)

Say: Sometimes we forget to mourn or we feel like we have to be strong and so we push away our grief. As a reminder that it's okay to grieve, we are going to make Permission to Mourn cards or bookmarks.

Say: I'm going to read you an example (see below).

Say: You can make yours similar to that one, or different. You can make just one or several. You may take one or give them to us and we will make copies. You could take one home or you can give them to us and we will make copies, laminate them and hand them out with our information packets to the schools.  
(15 minutes)

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Fifteen: Adult Group

### GOALS

- To increase awareness of the prevalence of self-destructive behavior, suicide and suicidal thought in youth
- To learn to recognize the warning signals of a person at risk for suicide
- To identify actions and attitudes that assist in suicide prevention

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Handout: Common Myths About Teenage Suicide and Suicide Warning Signs

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and invite them to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Say: The theme for discussion tonight is depression.

- The Littles will be reading *Tear Soup* and will be creating tear jars. They will define depression and discuss ways to express their sadness in healthy ways.
- The Middles will also be defining depression and how the pressures or changes they face now can lead to the blues. They will be learning about the ancient Greeks and the importance of tear jars.



## Session Fifteen: Adult Group

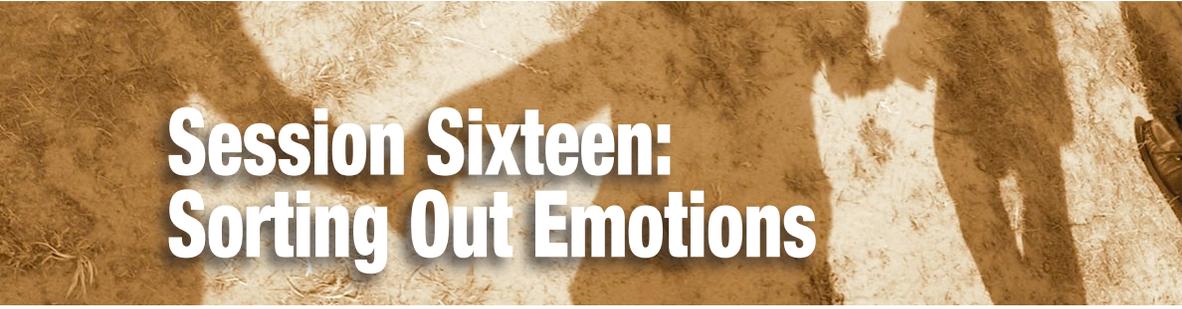
- The Teens will be discussing depression more in depth and self-destructive behavior. They will list pressures or changes, ways to cope badly and healthy ways to cope. The Teens will discuss ways to recognize depression in others and ways to help them.

Ask: What are ways that you've been affected by depression? How do you cope with it?

Say: Let's talk about what's normal and what are warning signs.

Hand out the Common Myths about Teenage Suicide and Suicide Warning Signs worksheets. Go over these and answer any questions the adults may have.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Sixteen: Sorting Out Emotions

### To All Facilitators:

Tonight will be slightly different for the kids' groups as it will be a game night. The purpose of playing these games is to help instill basic coping skills for emotional self-care following the losses these children have experienced. Children often know how to use a microwave or a VCR, but they don't know how to calm themselves when they are frustrated. And they may not have developed the necessary skills to deal with sadness, disappointment or stress. Children who can identify and accept their feelings will be more able to verbalize their needs and to have them met in an acceptable manner rather than acting them out dangerously or disruptively. Hopefully with your guidance, our group members' sense of self will be strengthened. Also, as they become increasingly aware of their own emotions, they will be more aware of emotions their peers may or may not be demonstrating.

Before breaking into the separate age groups, all of the children will play a scavenger hunt game for facts about others in the groups. The Littles may need some help with the writing so it would be great if each facilitator could help as needed. The scavenger hunt should take about 10 minutes. When it is finished split into your age groups and continue the curriculum.

# Session Sixteen: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can feel several different feelings at the same time when someone important to us dies
- To know it is a good thing to learn ways to express all our feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- *Today I Feel Silly* by Jamie Lee Curtis (Find in *Resources*)
- Feelings Charade Activity: Feelings chart
- How Would You Feel If... Activity: Scenarios (Find in *Resources*)

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)



## Session Sixteen: Littles Group

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Say: Tonight we are going to be thinking and talking about some of the feelings we have. Are there any feelings in the book that you've also had?

Say: Tonight all the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since our special person died.

Read or talk about the goals for this evening.

### **Activity: Feeling Charades (10 minutes)**

Feeling Charades is the first game. Use the feelings listed for each Little to act out an emotion.

### **Activity: How would you feel if... (25 minutes)**

The next game is How would you feel if... Use the made up scenarios or make up your own and give each participant a chance to answer how they would feel.

Encourage the group that people feel and react differently to each situation and to think about each scenario before answering.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Sixteen: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can feel several different feelings at the same time when someone important to us dies
- To know it is a good thing to learn ways to express all of our feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- The Goodbye Game: crayons, paper (Instructions found in *Resources*)

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)



## Session Sixteen: Middles Group

Say: We are going to explore grief in a different way tonight. All the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since our special person died.

Read or talk about the goals for this evening. (Five minutes)

### **The Goodbye Game (25 minutes)**

Introduce The Goodbye Game. (You may want to get on the floor to play the game.)

Crayons and paper will be used in the game as some of the cards are responded to.

No later than five minutes before the goodbye time, start closing. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, ask the group members to share their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Sixteen: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To understand that we can feel several different feelings at the same time when someone important to us dies
- To know it is a good thing to learn ways to express all of our feelings
- To have a good time while learning to express feelings and learning coping skills

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- The Healing Hearts Game: heart game pieces, game cards, game board, dice, comforting fuzzies or pom-poms (Instructions in *Resources*)

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)



## Session Sixteen: Teen Group

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their lives since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Say: Tonight all the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since our special person died.

Read or talk about the goals for this evening.

### **Activity: Healing Hearts (25 minutes)**

Explain the Healing Hearts game and play. (You may want to get on the floor to play.)

No later than five minutes before the goodbye time, start closing. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then, ask the group members to share their thoughts and feelings about the evening and close.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Sixteen: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To know we are all on this grief journey individually and together
- To feel comfortable sharing that grief journey
- To recognize strengths and weaknesses within ourselves

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and invite them to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to Breakway.

Say: Tonight all the kids' groups will be playing games about feelings and will be talking about different ways to think about things since their special person died.

- The Littles will play Feeling Charades where they get to act out an emotion. That will be followed by the How Would I Feel If... game.
- The Middles will play The Goodbye Game.
- The Teens will play the Healing Hearts game where they will have opportunities to talk about their grief journey and what comforts them.

In the adults group, tonight will be an open discussion about the grief journey.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Seventeen: Grief & the Holidays

## GRIEF AND THE HOLIDAYS – LONELINESS AND SADNESS

We readily think of the difficulty of the November and December holidays and know that traditions are an important part of that season. In addition, the anticipation and reality of the birthday of the deceased, as well as the anniversary of their death, can be very challenging for the grieving family. Mixed emotions, such as sadness and joy, mourning and celebration, grieving and moving on, can safely be expressed through rituals. There can be a lot of uncertainty about the future following the death of a loved one, so starting or repeating a tradition may help create a sense of safety and security for the grieving individual.

The holidays can be a conflicting time of emotions. The activities for tonight were chosen because every family has unique traditions of remembering and celebrating their loved one's life. We want children to know they are allowed to remember their loved ones and whatever emotions they have are acceptable.



# Session Seventeen: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that loneliness is a feeling we may experience after someone we love dies because they are important to us
- To know that talking about our feelings can make us feel better
- To know that we can always talk about our feelings at *Breakway*

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway* Rules
- Feelings Box Activity: box, and as many items as you can gather from the list provided in *Resources*
- Someone Special Died by Joan Singleton (Text in *Resources*)
- Scrapbook Page: drawings, magazine clippings and art supplies

# Session Seventeen: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

Go over the *Breakway* Rules slowly and carefully. (Five minutes)

Say: As much as we would like to, we can't do anything to bring back that person who died, and around the holidays this can be especially hard. Since they can't come back, tonight we are going to learn some ways to help ourselves when we miss them most and feel sad. We need to remember that all of our feelings are okay, but it's important to know that we don't have to feel sad all the time. It is a good thing to feel the happy feeling again.

### Activity: Feeling Box (10 Minutes)

Say: This box is Breakway's Feelings Box. The things inside this box help me remember things I can do to help myself when I'm feeling sad. Please feel free to share an item that will help you with your sad or lonely feelings, if you ever have any.

One facilitator can talk about each item as another facilitator slowly pulls them out of the box, one by one. Invite each child to talk about an item they think would help them with their sad or lonely feelings, if they ever have any.



## Session Seventeen: Littles Group

Ask: What holidays are coming up? What are your favorite holiday memories with your loved one? What will you miss most?

Say: Sometimes we miss that person so much during the holidays that it's hard to feel happy. Other times we can feel guilty for feeling happy. Tonight we want to encourage you to talk about all the special memories.

### **Read Someone Special Died. (10 minutes)**

This story explores all the emotions of grief and gives creative suggestions for remembrance.

### **Activity: Scrapbook Pages (20 minutes)**

Ask: What do you remember most about your loved one?

Help them to elaborate, so the group can understand the details.

Each child will have the opportunity to make a scrapbook page, using drawings, magazine clippings and other art supplies. They may take his page home to display or put somewhere special.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Seventeen: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To understand that loneliness is a feeling we may have after someone we love dies because they were important to us
- To know that talking about our feelings can make us feel better
- To know that we can always talk about our feelings at *Breakway*

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- I Miss Them Worksheet: (Find in *Resources*), pencils and journals
- It's Good to Remember (Find in *Resources*)

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

# Session Seventeen: Middles Group

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their lives since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Say: Today's theme is "Grief and the Holidays." Go over the goals with them and discuss what it means to be lonely.

Ask: Is it possible to be lonely even though you have people around you?

Say: This can be true especially around the holidays. As much as we would like to, we can't do anything to bring back that person who died who was so important to us. Since we can't do that, tonight we are going to learn some ways to help ourselves when we feel sad. We need to remember that all of our feelings are okay but it's important to know that we don't have to feel sad all the time. It is a good thing to feel happy again. (Five minutes)

Read or talk about the goals for this evening. (Five minutes)

## **I Miss Them Worksheet (25 minutes)**

Pass out I Miss Them worksheets, pencils and journals. Allow sufficient time to complete the sheets. (You may want to participate in this activity.)

Invite them to share their completed sheets with their fellow group members. (10 minutes)

Ask: What holidays are coming up? What are your favorite holiday memories with your loved one and what do you miss most?

Say: Sometimes we miss that person so much at the holidays that it is hard to feel happy or sometimes we feel guilty for feeling happy.



## Session Seventeen: Middles Group

### **Activity: It's Good to Remember (20 minutes)**

Say: We are going to talk about other ways we can remember our loved ones in the upcoming Holiday season.

Put a picture in your room to remind you of your loved one, or ask someone to help you make a photo album. Ask if you can have something that belonged to the special person, like a piece of jewelry, a cap or a dish. When you look at it or touch it, you will feel close to him or her.

Draw a picture of a special time you shared together. Or write a letter to the person to say how much you love and miss him or her. You may take it home or leave it here in your journal.

People you care about will always be a part of you. What things about life and love did you learn from this special person?

Encourage the conversation regarding traditions that may change or how things might be different.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Seventeen: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To understand that loneliness is a feeling we may experience after someone we love dies because they were important to us
- To know that talking about our feelings can make us feel better
- To know that we can always talk about our feelings at *Breakway*

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Facing Feelings Worksheet: (Find in *Resources*), pencils and notebook
- Soccer Ball Warm-Up: instruction sheet (in *Resources*), soccer ball
- Calendar Activity: handout (in *Resources*), pencils

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their lives since the last meeting. (Five minutes)



## Session Seventeen: Teen Group

Say: What does loneliness mean to you? What are ways that you've felt lonely?

### **Activity: Soccer Ball Warm-Up (10 minutes)**

Have the group circle up and explain that we are going to do a warm-up activity that deals a little more on this topic. Bring out the soccer ball and explain the directions. (10 minutes)

### **Facing Feelings Worksheet (10 minutes)**

Pass out pencils and the Facing Feelings Worksheet. Give them quiet time to work. Invite them to share and discuss. Distribute the white notebooks in which to place the worksheet.

Say: Sometimes we miss that person so much at the holidays it's hard to feel happy or sometimes we feel guilty for feeling happy.

### **Calendar Activity (20 minutes)**

Distribute the 12-month calendar and pencils. Explain that although we are coming up on a family-oriented holiday time, there are anniversaries and special days for each of us throughout the year.

Invite them to write down in the squares the days throughout the year that have been and are difficult, as well as the days that bring back happy times for them. Encourage sharing.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Seventeen: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To understand that loneliness is a feeling we may experience after someone we love dies because they were important to us
- To know that talking about our feelings can make us feel better
- To know that we can always talk about our feelings at *Breakway*

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Calendar Activity: handout (in *Resources*), pencils
- Help-A-Child
- Grief and The Holidays

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and invite them to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Say: The children's groups are talking about sadness and loneliness tonight. They have various activities to help them express their feelings to one another. In each group, the focus will be on sharing ways they can cope with those difficult times when they are overwhelmed with sadness. They will also be discussing how these feelings may increase during the holidays.



## Session Seventeen: Adult Group

- The Littles will have the Feelings Box available to talk about ways they can help themselves when they are feeling lonely or sad. They will also discuss how to remember their loved ones around the holidays.
- The Middles will have an activity sheet titled, “I Miss Them” to work through. They will also discuss remembrance gifts and how to prepare for the holidays.
- The Teens will open with a warm-up on grief and holidays. They also have a worksheet about things that make them lonely and/or sad, and what helps when they have those feelings. They will also make calendars.

### Calendar Activity

Distribute the 12-month calendar and pencils. Explain that although we are coming up on a family-oriented holiday time, there are anniversaries and special days for each of us throughout the year. Invite them to write in the squares the days throughout the year that have been and are difficult, as well as the days that bring back happy times for them. Encourage sharing.

### Help-A-Child Worksheet

From time to time, caregivers express questions about how to work with their grieving children. Distribute the “Help-A-Child” Worksheets.

Say: This sheet will be helpful to remind us about some of the needs of a grieving child. Invite comments about other things children need. For example: Spirituality modeled and discussed is not one on the list, but is very important to some families.



## Session Seventeen: Adult Group

### Grief and the Holidays Information

Distribute Grief and the Holidays worksheet. Randomly, go over parts of the sheet and invite discussion. Feel free to stray from the sheet if a good dialogue is underway. They may share various anxieties they have regarding the holidays or suggestions for other group members about how to make it through this time. The more conversational and flexible the discussion is, the more comfortable people will be to share.

### Optional Activity

If the mood seems appropriate, you may want to pass along some suggestions from former group members - do the Christmas shopping early. This is an almost impossible thought for the newly bereaved to hear, but shopping this time of the year could eliminate some of the difficult sights and sounds of the holiday season. Tell families that if the thought of Christmas shopping is unbearable for them at this point, a few of our facilitators have offered to do the shopping for them. We would need a Christmas list no later than (date).

No later than five minutes before the end of your group time, start closing. One or more of the facilitators needs to summarize the activities of the evening. Then invite the group members to express any closing thoughts about the evening. Remind them we also have prayer request basket. They are invited to write down any prayer requests for the staff or volunteers to be praying about.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



## Session Eighteen: Thanksgiving

*We reside yet in mortal flesh, but we ourselves are already members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), and ought to view our lives as they really are, exceedingly brief moments in which we are able to serve, laying up treasure against the day when we shall step physically into eternity as well as being already spiritually there. As we begin to view our lives as ending, not at the grave, but never; as we begin to see ourselves as the eternal creatures that we are, earthly troubles fall away into insignificance and we are able to deal with them through eyes of faith, and with hearts that truly do trust God, so that we are then able also to rejoice in everything. It is not possible to live earthly lives without crisis and tragedy, but it is possible to rejoice in everything, by living out the days of lives from an eternal perspective, able to trust God in everything.*

William Simpson, “Faith Amid the Trials”

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.*

Psalm 100:4 (NIV)



# Session Eighteen: Littles Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To discuss special memories of Thanksgiving with their loved ones
- To recognize “gifts” within others and within ourselves.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Talking Stick
- *Breakway Rules*
- *I'm Thankful Each Day* by P.K. Hallinan (Text in *Resources*)
- Invisible Gifts Activity: Blank paper, pencils, markers
- Thankful Ornaments Activity: sewing needles, felt star cutouts, embroidery floss, stuffing, pens, Thanksgiving Tree

# Session Eighteen: Littles Group

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the group members and form the sharing circle. Using the Talking Stick, a facilitator needs to model introducing themselves:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the death of \_\_\_\_\_ is what brought me to *Breakway*.  
The feeling I have now is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may also say that it is your passion to help children who have lost someone they love that brought you to *Breakway*.

Continue around the Sharing Circle and invite them to tell any part of their grief story they are comfortable sharing. (Five minutes)

### **Read *I'm Thankful Each Day*. (10 minutes)**

One facilitator reads from the enclosed text while another facilitator holds the book so the group members will be able to see the pictures. Then, invite comments during or after the book is read. Some suggestions are:

- What things in the book are you thankful for?
- Were there things not in the book that you are thankful for?
- Is it sometimes hard to be thankful?

### **Activity: Invisible Gifts (15 minutes)**

Say: There are invisible gifts that surround us every day. People can be gifts to us in our lives by the things that they teach us. For example, love is a gift that we can't see or unwrap. Other examples of invisible gifts are humor, encouragement, talents or they taught us how to do something, love, hugs, honesty, caring and bravery.

## Session Eighteen: Littles Group

Have the children write or draw the invisible gifts they were taught by their special person on blank paper and share with the rest of the group.

Ask: What invisible gifts do you give to the people around you?

### **Activity: Thankful Ornaments (20 minutes)**

Say: Every time you come to Breakway, there are wonderful people who give of their time to prepare the sessions. They give up time with their families to serve the Breakway families. We are going to show them that we are very grateful for their gifts by making them a Thankful Ornament.

Pass out the following: a set of stars, stuffing, a 24” piece of thread (the color of their choice) and a needle to each child. Thread needles, tying a knot at one end of the thread. Students can then begin to stitch a design or message onto one of their stars. (It may help to draw the design or message on the star first.)

Next, align the stars and begin sewing them together anyway you choose. Before the star is completely sewn together, use your finger to stuff it with a small amount of stuffing. Then, continue to sew the star completely shut.

Finally, use extra thread to make a 2” loop for the star to hang from on the Thanksgiving Tree. When students have completed this they may make another if there is time. All stars should be placed on a branch of the Thanksgiving Tree at the end of the night.



## Session Eighteen: Littles Group

Each child can sew a design or message on one of the felt stars, then begin sewing the two stars together while filling it with stuffing to make an ornament. When the kids are finished they can use extra string to make a hanger and then place it on one of the Thanksgiving Trees in the Art Room.

### **Grateful for Everyone Game (Optional)**

If there is free time, you can play the Grateful for Everyone game. Arrange the chairs in a circle (enough chairs for everyone) and have the children sit down. A facilitator can begin by saying “I’m grateful for people with \_\_\_\_\_. (Example: blue eyes).”

Everyone with blue eyes stands up and changes places. While everyone’s scurrying for a chair, a facilitator takes one away. The person left standing is out and the last person to sit down goes next... “I’m grateful for everyone \_\_\_\_\_(Example: wearing tennis shoes).” Repeat.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Eighteen: Middles Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To discuss special memories of Thanksgiving with their loved ones
- To recognize gifts within others and within ourselves

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Invisible Gifts Activity: Blank paper, pencils and markers
- “I Am” Poem: I Am Worksheets, pencils
- Thankful Ornaments Activity: Sewing needles, felt star cutouts, embroidery floss, stuffing, pens and Thanksgiving Tree

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

# Session Eighteen: Middles Group

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their lives since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

Say: We are talking about Thanksgiving tonight.

Ask: Do you have any special Thanksgiving memories you would like to share with the group. What does it mean to offer thanksgiving? Is it possible to be thankful even when you're sad? What things are you thankful for? (Five minutes)

## **Activity: Invisible Gifts (15 minutes)**

Say: There are invisible gifts that surround us every day. People can be gifts to us in our lives by the things that they teach us. For example, love is a gift that we can't see or unwrap. Other examples of invisible gifts are humor, encouragement, talents or they taught us how to do something, love, hugs, honesty, caring and bravery.

Have the children write or draw the invisible gifts they were taught by their special person on blank paper and share with the rest of the group. What invisible gifts do they give to the people around them? (This sheet can go in their binder.)

## **"I Am" Poem (15 minutes)**

Pass out copies of the "I Am" Worksheet along with pencils. Explain to the members that a girl named Keli Klecher – to celebrate who she became through her loss – wrote this poem. It is a very hard thing to have someone we love die but we can celebrate who we are because they were in our lives.

## Session Eighteen: Middles Group

Read her version of the poem out loud.

Tell the members to make their own version by filling in the blanks. If anyone would like to share at the end, please allow time for that. They may take this home or put it in their binder.

### **Activity: Thankful Ornaments (20 minutes)**

Say: Every time you come to Breakway, there are wonderful people who give of their time to prepare the sessions. They give up time with their families to serve the Breakway families. We are going to show them that we are very grateful for their gifts by making them a Thankful Ornament.

Pass out the following: a set of stars, stuffing, a 24” piece of thread (the color of their choice) and a needle to each child. Thread needles, tying a knot at one end of the thread. Students can then begin to stitch a design or message onto one of their stars. (It may help to draw the design or message on the star first.)

Next, align the stars and begin sewing them together anyway you choose. Before the star is completely sewn together, use your finger to stuff it with a small amount of stuffing. Then, continue to sew the star completely shut.

Finally, use extra thread to make a 2” loop for the star to hang from on the Thanksgiving Tree. When students have completed this they may make another if there is time. All stars should be placed on a branch of the Thanksgiving Tree at the end of the night.

Each child can sew a design or message on one of the felt stars, then begin sewing the two stars together while filling it with stuffing to make an ornament. When the kids are finished they can use extra string to make a hanger and then place it on one of the Thanksgiving Trees in the Art Room.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Session Eighteen: Teen Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To discuss special memories of Thanksgiving with their loved ones
- To recognize gifts within others and within ourselves

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Introduction Slips
- *Breakway* Rules
- Pipe Cleaner Activity: Pipe cleaners (two per person)
- Invisible Gifts Activity: Blank paper, pencils and markers
- *I'm Thankful Each Day* by P.K. Hallinan (Text in *Resources*)
- Thankful Ornaments Activity: sewing needles, felt star cutouts, embroidery floss, stuffing, pens and Thanksgiving Tree

# Session Eighteen: Teen Group

## INTRODUCTION

In the sharing circle, welcome group members and pass out Introduction Slips. Then, start the introduction routine with a facilitator. Invite group members to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*. (Five minutes)

Go over *Breakway* Rules, emphasizing the one(s) that are most pertinent to your individual group. (Five minutes)

Invite group members to share with the other group members any significant occurrence(s) in their lives since the last meeting. (Five minutes)

### **Pipe Cleaner Activity (Five minutes)**

Pass out two pipe cleaners to everyone in the group.

Say: You can bend these pipe cleaners into any object they want. It can be something that represents your loved one or something that represents how you're feeling tonight. (Continue as normal while they work on that.)

Say: We are talking about Thanksgiving tonight. (Go over the goals with them.)

Do you have any special Thanksgiving memories you would like to share with the group?

Ask: What does it mean to offer thanksgiving. What things are you thankful for?



## Session Eighteen: Teen Group

### **Activity: Invisible Gifts (15 minutes)**

Say: There are invisible gifts that surround us every day. People can be gifts to us in our lives by the things that they teach us. For example, love is a gift that we can't see or unwrap. Other examples of invisible gifts are humor, encouragement, talents or they taught us how to do something, love, hugs, honesty, caring and bravery.

Have the teens write or draw the invisible gifts they were taught by their special person on blank paper and share with the rest of the group. What invisible gifts do they give to the people around them? (This sheet can go in their binder.)

### **“I Am” Poem (15 minutes)**

Pass out copies of the “I Am” Worksheet along with pencils. Explain to the members that a girl named Keli Klecher – to celebrate who she became through her loss – wrote this poem. It is a very hard thing to have someone we love die but we can celebrate who we are because they were in our lives.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.

# Session Eighteen: Adult Group

## GOALS

- To increase awareness of positive outcomes from grievous losses
- To discuss special memories of Thanksgiving with their loved ones
- To recognize gifts within others and within ourselves

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome group members and invite them to introduce themselves, offering as much detail as they can comfortably offer about themselves and/or the death that brought them to *Breakway*.

Say: The theme for this evening is “Thanksgiving.”

- The Littles will be discussing the Thanksgiving holiday and special memories associated with it. They then will explore the meaning of thanksgiving and things they can be thankful for. We will introduce invisible gifts or character traits, which will help them recognize things to be thankful for in others as well as within themselves. The group will close by doing an art project to show their thankfulness for the meals they receive at *Breakway*.
- The Middles and Teens will also discuss Thanksgiving, special memories and invisible gifts. They will take it a step further by celebrating who they have become because of the things their special person taught them. The Middles and Teens will be participating in the art project as well.

Ask: Do any of you have special Thanksgiving memories you would like to share?



## Session Eighteen: Adult Group

Ask: Do any of you have special Thanksgiving memories you would like to share?

Say: One of the main activities in each of the children's groups is discussing invisible gifts that their loved one(s) taught them. It is a very tragic thing to have someone we love die but we can celebrate who we are because they were in our lives.

Say: The children are working on Thankful Ornaments to present to those who prepare the sessions. We won't make them decorate a felt heart but they can write a short message on one, if they would like.

Open the floor to anyone who would like to share what their loved one's gift is and how it has affected them today.

Finish no later than an hour and 15 minutes after you start so you can join the other groups.



# Section Six: References & Materials



# Books & Media used in Session One

***Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope:  
A Read Aloud Story for People of All Ages About Loving and  
Losing, Friendship and Hope***

by Donna O'Toole

Compassion Press

Burnsville, North Carolina 28714

<http://www.amazon.com/Aarvy-Aardvark-Finds-Hope-Friendship/dp/1878321250>



# Books & Media used in Session Two

***After Charlotte's Mom Died by Cornelia Spelman***

Illustrated by Judith Friedman

Albert Whitman & Company

6430 Oakton Street

Morton Grove, Illinois 60503

<http://www.amazon.com/After-Charlottes-Died-Cornelia-Spelman/dp/0807501964/>



## Books & Media used in Session Three

### ***When I Feel Angry***

by Cornelia Maude Spelman, A.C.W.W., L.C.S.W.  
Albert Whitman & Company  
6340 Oakton Street  
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

<http://www.amazon.com/When-Feel-Angry-Way/dp/0807588881>

### ***Mean Soup***

by Betsey Everitt  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich  
1250 Sixth Avenue San Diego, CA 92101

<http://www.amazon.com/Mean-Soup-Betsy-Everitt/dp/0152002278>



## Books & Media used in Session Four

***The Loveables in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem***

by Diane Loomans

Illustrated by Kim Howard

H. J. Kramer, Inc.

Novato CA 94949

<http://www.amazon.com/Lovables-Kingdom-Self-Esteem-Loomans-Diane/dp/0915811251>



## Books & Media used in Session Five

### *The Kissing Hand*

by Audrey Penn Illustrations

by Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak

Child Welfare League of America, Inc. 440

First Street, NW, Third Floor

Washington, DC 2001-2085

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Kissing-Hand-Audrey-Penn/dp/1933718102/>



## Books & Media used in Session Six

### ***Rachel and Her Grandma***

by Denise Beverlin Kern, Ph.D

Illustrated by Debra Beverlin

Mar\*co Products, Inc.

1443 Old York Road

Warminster, PA 18974

1-800-448-2197

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

San Diego, New York, London



# Books & Media used in Session Seven

***Double-Dip Feelings:***

***Stories to Help Children Understand Emotions***

by Barabara S. Cain

Illustrated by Anne Patterson

Magination Press®

750 First Street NE

Washington, DC 20002-4242

800-374-2721



## Books & Media used in Session Eight

### ***Liplap's Wish***

by Jonathan London

Illustrated by Sylvia Long

Chronicle Books

85 Second Street

San Francisco, CA 94105

<http://www.amazon.com/Liplaps-Wish-Jonathan-London/dp/0590519131>

### ***Geranium Morning***

by E. Sandy Powell

Illustrated by Renee Graef

Carolrhoda Books, Inc.

c/o The Lerner Group

241 First Avenue North

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

<http://www.amazon.com/Geranium-Morning-E-Sandy-Powell/dp/087614542X>



## Books & Media used in Session Nine

### ***Life Doesn't Frighten Me***

by Maya Angelou

Stewart, Tabori & Chang

115 West 18th Street

New York, NY 10011

<http://www.amazon.com/Life-Doesnt-Frighten-Maya-Angelou/dp/1556702884>

Movie:

### ***Finding Nemo***

Producers :

Jinko Gotoh, John Lasseter, Graham Walters

Directors:

Andrew Stanton, Lee Unkrich

2003 DVD

Walt Disney Pictures, 2003



# Books & Media used in Session Ten

## ***A Book of Hugs***

by Dave Ross

Illustrated by Laura Rader

Scholastic Inc. – a division of HarperCollins Children’s Books

555 Broadway

New York, NY 10012

<http://www.amazon.com/Book-Hugs-Dave-Ross/dp/0064435148/>



# Books & Media used in Session Eleven

## *Today I Feel Silly*

by Jamie Lee Curtis

Illustrated by Laura Cornell

HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

10 East 53rd Street

New York, NY 10022

<http://www.amazon.com/Today-Feel-Silly-Other-Moods/dp/0060245603/>



# Books & Media used in Session Twelve

*My Grief Animal Coloring Book*

Found in *Resources*



# Books & Media used in Session Thirteen

## ***Veggie Memories***

by Kim Daily

Contact *Breakway* for a copy



## Books & Media used in Session Fourteen

Excerpt from *The Bereaved Child*

by Alan Wolfelt

Companion Press

The Center for Loss and Life Transition

3735 Broken Bow Road

Fort Collins, CO 80526

<http://www.amazon.com/Healing-Bereaved-Child-Grieving-Heart/dp/1879651106/>

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

by Eric Carle

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

345 Hudson Street

New York, New York 10014

<http://www.amazon.com/Very-Hungry-Caterpillar-Eric-Carle/dp/0399226907/>

# Books & Media used in Session Fifteen

## “Common Myths About Teenage Suicide”

Compiled from:

*When Living Hurts*, Sol Gordon;

*Too Young to Die*, Francine Klagsbrun;

*Suicide in the Young*, Earl Grollman

## *Tear Soup*

by Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen

Grief Watch

2116 NE 18th Avenue

Portland, OR 97212

<http://www.amazon.com/Tear-Soup-Recipe-Healing-After/dp/0961519762/>

Movie:

## *The Lion King*

Directors

Rob Minkoff, Roger Allers

Performers

James Earl Jones, Jeremy Irons, Jonathan Taylor Thomas

Walt Disney Pictures, 1994.

DVD



# Books & Media used in Session Sixteen

## ***Healing Hearts – A Game for Children About The Journey Through Grief***

Rising Sun Center For Loss and Renewal

2848 Windsor Oaks Trace

Marietta, GA 20066-2243

[http://www.risingsuncenter.com/healing\\_hearts.htm](http://www.risingsuncenter.com/healing_hearts.htm)

## ***Today I Feel Silly***

by Jamie Lee Curtis

Illustrated by Laura Cornell

HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

10 East 53rd Street

New York, NY 10022

<http://www.amazon.com/Today-Feel-Silly-Other-Moods/dp/0060245603/>



# Books & Media used in Session Seventeen

## ***Someone Special Died***

by Joan Singletary

Carson-Dellosa Publishing, LLC

PO Box 35665

Greensboro, NC 27425-5665

<http://www.amazon.com/Someone-Special-Died-Joan-Prestine/dp/1577686829>

“It’s Good to Remember”

from ***Sad Isn’t Bad***

by Michaeline Mundy

Illustrated by R. W. Ally

Abbey Press

One Hill Drive

St. Meinrad IN 47577

[http://www.amazon.com/Sad-Isnt-Bad-Good-Grief- Guidebook/dp/0870294393/](http://www.amazon.com/Sad-Isnt-Bad-Good-Grief-Guidebook/dp/0870294393/)



# Books & Media used in Session Eighteen

## *I'm Thankful Each Day!*

by P.K. Hallinan

Ideals Children's Books |

535 Metroplex Dr. Ste 250

Nashville, TN 37211

<http://www.amazon.com/Im-Thankful-Each-Day-Hallinan/dp/o824953975/>



# Citations & References

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All Scripture used labeled (NAS):

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# Citations & References

## Activities Labeled & Cited

Feelings Chart: Kid's Place

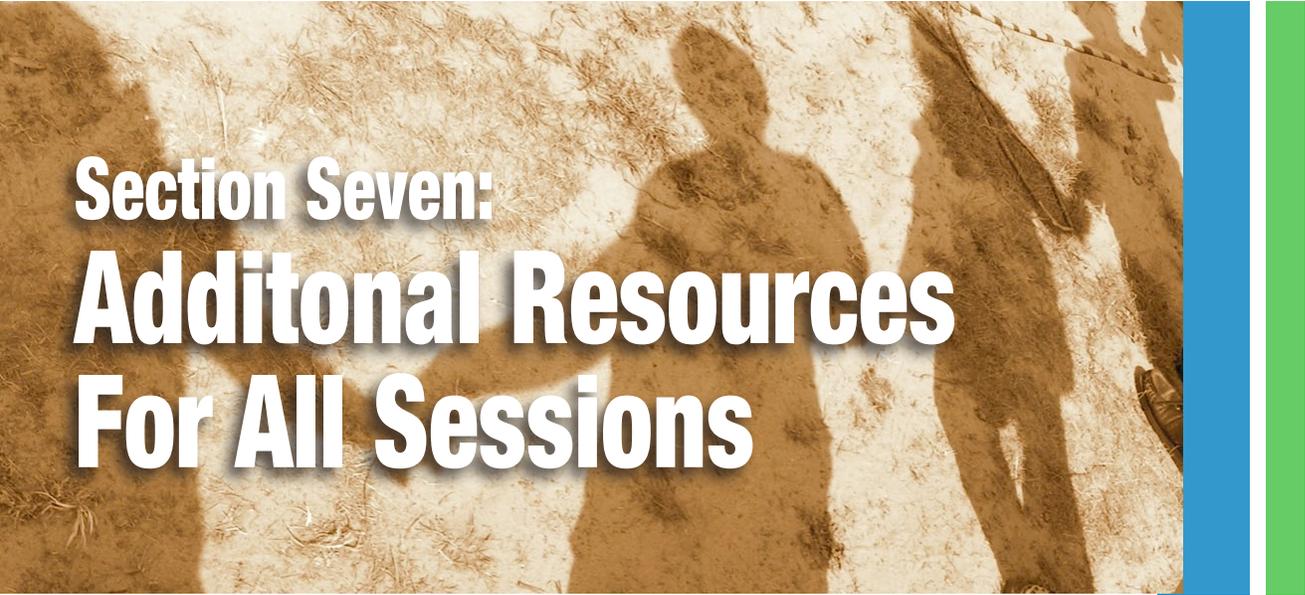
Sun Catcher Activity: Kid's Place

Color Bags Activity: Kid's Place

Feelings Web Activity: Kid's Place

Anger Cloud Activity: Kid's Place

Have You Ever Wondered What To Say Activity: Kid's Place



# Section Seven: Additional Resources For All Sessions

These resources are available for reviewing and reprint on the enclosed Breakway:  
Additional Resources DVD



# Section Seven: Facilitators Forms Intake Packet for Participants

These resources are available for reviewing and reprint on the enclosed *Breakway*:  
Additional Resources DVD

**Session One**

Text for Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope  
 “Stories of Hope”  
 Activity Sheet: Skittles  
 “Celebrate YOU!”

**Session Two**

Text for After Charlotte’s Mom Died  
 Activity Sheet: “The Heads or Tails Feeling Game”  
 Activity Sheet: Grief Twister  
 Activity Sheet: Sensory Poem

**Session Three**

Text for When I Feel Angry  
 Anger Cloud  
 Grief Works Wheel  
 Text for Mean Soup  
 Things that Make Me Angry  
 Sentence Completion Letter

**Session Four**

Text for The Loveables in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem  
 Activity Sheet: Hopscotch Favorites

**Session Five**

Text for The Kissing Hand  
 Positive Adjectives

**Session Six**

Text for Rachel and Her Grandma  
 Badges of Honor  
 Activity Sheet: “I Remember” Poem  
 Activity Sheet: Dealing with Memories  
 Interview Questions

**Session Seven**

Text for Double Dip Feelings  
 Activity Sheet: Feelings Song  
 Activity Sheet: Puzzle Shuffle  
 Activity Sheet: Insider Tug-of-War  
 Activity Sheet: The Emotions Game

**Session Eight**

Helping Children Who Know They Made It Happen  
 Worksheet  
 Text for Liplap’s Wish  
 Breakway Feelings Chart  
 Text for Geranium Morning  
 Things Over Which I Have and Don’t Have Control  
 Worksheet  
 Cycle of Anger and Guilt Worksheet

**Session Nine**

Text for Life Doesn’t Frighten Me  
 These Are Fears or Worries That I Have Had Since My  
 Special Person Died Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: Guatemalan Worry Dolls  
 Who Am I? Worksheet

**Session Ten**

Activity Sheet: If You’re Happy and You Know It  
 Activity Sheet: Fearless Fish Lantern  
 Text for A Book of Hugs  
 Feelings Wheel Worksheet

**Session Eleven**

Activity Sheet: Hopscotch Favorites  
 Activity Sheet: Grief Twister  
 Activity Sheet: You’re on the Ball  
 Activity Sheet: Skittles (Memories)  
 Activity Sheet: The Good Mourning Game  
 Activity Sheet: The Goodbye Game  
 Text for Today I Feel Silly

**Session Twelve**

A Lot of Things You Can Think or Feel When Someone Has  
 Died Worksheet  
 Text for My Grief Animal  
 Skills for the Hard Times Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: Survivor Games  
 Activity Sheet: Affirmations

**Session Thirteen**

Activity Sheet: Veggie Memories  
 Have You Ever Wondered What to Say? Worksheet  
 The Need to Remember Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: Meet the Press

**Session Fourteen**

Text for The Very Hungry Caterpillar  
 My Thoughts about Changes Worksheet  
 I Did Not Choose to Be Bereaved Worksheet

**Session Fifteen**

Common Myths about Teenage Suicide Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: Tear Jars  
 Activity Sheet: You're on the Ball  
 Text for Tear Soup  
 Teenage Suicide Fact Quiz  
 Suicide Warning Signs Worksheet

**Session Sixteen**

List for Feeling Charades  
 How would you feel? Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: Healing Hearts Game  
 Activity Sheet: The Goodbye Game  
 Session Seventeen:  
 Items for the Feeling Box  
 Text for Someone Special Died  
 I Miss Them Worksheet  
 Facing Feelings Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: Soccer Ball Warm-Up  
 Grief and The Holidays Worksheet

**Session Eighteen**

I'm Thankful Each Day Worksheet  
 Activity Sheet: "I Am" Poem

## Session One

### Text for *Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope*

Aarvy Aardvark moved slowly across the clearing. It was a sunny day. Aarvy hadn't noticed. Aarvy kept his snout to the ground. That snout was his friend. He could depend on it. He could depend on it to find food. He could depend on it to always be there. But today even Aarvy's snout being there didn't help. It didn't comfort him and he wasn't using it to gather food. Aarvy wasn't hungry again today.

It all started when Aarvy's mother and his brother Varky were taken by some humans to a place called Zoo. Aarvy's mother had told him about that place. The humans had taken Aarvy's father there when Aarvy was barely knee-high to a baboon. At first, Aarvy had been so lonely for Clarice and Varky that he cried all day long.

Lots of animals had come by to try to cheer Aarvy up. There were elephants and lions, a hippo and a gazelle. Even a giraffe and a rhino who lived far away joined the group that crowded around Aarvy. They said they wanted to make Aarvy feel better. But Aarvy didn't feel better. Even with all the animals there Aarvy felt all alone. The giraffe asked Aarvy what she could do to help. But Aarvy couldn't tell her. Aarvy didn't know.

"I know," said a big black buzzard who swooped down from his perch high above the others. The buzzard considered himself an expert on such things. "We don't have to worry, ... he's doing just as is to be expected." "You're depressed," he said to Aarvy. "Two months from now, you'll feel angry, boy. Real angry. But as for now, you should talk to me. Get your feelings out. You've got to talk!" Aarvy just stared. First at the buzzard, then at his dusty grey paws.

Later that day the other animals left too. "We tried," Aarvy heard an elephant whisper as he passed. "We did our best," he heard the gazelle reply. That made Aarvy feel even worse. So today, in the clearing, Aarvy was all alone. He was remembering what the mockingbird had said. He tried to remember the good times. He tried to remember rainbows. He had often told Clarice that someday he would climb one right to the top. Now he couldn't even remember their colors.

He even tried to remember playing with Varky. Once he puckered up his snout and tried to whistle the way her and Varky had done what they played but no sound came. "Oh, what's the use," said Aarvy. "I'll never have fun again anyway."

Aarvy found that Ralphy Rabbit was different from the other animals. He was different because he didn't stay away. In fact, Ralphy Rabbit came back every day and sat beside Aarvy. He would sit for hours.

Ralphy didn't seem to mind that Aarvy didn't talk. "It's OK," he said. "When my sister Shai-le got caught in a trap, and I couldn't get her out, and she died, I couldn't talk about it either. Not for a long, long time." Then he thumped the ground.

When some ants came to the surface he used his paw to move them closer to Aarvy's snout. "Go ahead. Eat some, Aarvy. It's OK," he said. When Aarvy moved so slowly that most of the ants ran away before he could eat them, Ralphy didn't even get mad. "You did fine, Aarvy, just fine!" he said. "Here, I'll help you find more."

Another day, even though Aarvy didn't ask, Ralphy told Aarvy more about his sister. "It was many years ago," Ralphy began, "but I still remember how bad I felt when Shai-le died." "But now," he said, "I mostly remember how much fun we used to have. Sometimes, when I'm playing in the grass by the mud hole, or when a breeze tickles my fur – just so – I remember Shai-le. I remember how she loved to tease and play. She used to sneak up behind me and yell 'Boo!' or 'Duck quick!' or 'Watch out Ralphy – the sky is falling!' Then she'd run and hide." At first, Aarvy felt sad when he heard Ralphy say all that. But his feelings changed when Ralphy said more. "But, you know what?" asked Ralphy Rabbit. "Sometimes I feel like Shai-le is really here. Not 'really' in the way grown ups know it – in another way. Those times I feel like Shai-le is alive again in a different way. Like being alive inside my skin, instead of outside of it." Ralphy told Aarvy that sometimes he even felt like Shai-le was laughing from somewhere deep inside himself. That made him want to stretch. It tickled him. It felt so good that sometimes Ralphy would jump right up! He'd jump very high ... until he'd feel like he was floating in a blue and purple and rainbow-colored sky. When he'd come down again, Ralphy Rabbit would feel warm all over. Like he'd been hugged by all the animals, and all the flowers, and all the stars, and all the planets in the whole universe. "Sometimes," Ralphy said the Aarvy, "I still wish I could talk to Shai-le in the old way. But mostly I'm happy when I think about her. I'm happy because I can remember her. I can still feel her. She's a part of me. Forever and ever." And Ralphy said that made him feel very full and very peaceful. "And," he said, kicking up his heels and clicking them in mid-air, "sometimes very playful too." "We'd better go now," said Ralphy. As Ralphy and Aarvy lifted their heads they saw the sky aglow with the last colors made by the setting sun. It made Aarvy think about rainbows and their beautiful colors. He could remember every one. Then he remembered something that until that very moment he had forgotten. He remembered that Clarice had told him that rainbows happen when the weather is changing. "Tomorrow," said Aarvy, when they were almost to their home, "tomorrow I will start practicing my whistling. And perhaps ... perhaps someday soon I will play again." Then he turned his toward Ralphy Rabbit. "Perhaps, someday soon, we will play together." "Yes indeed," said Ralphy Rabbit. "Yes indeed."

### ***Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope***

***A Read Aloud Story for People of All Ages About Loving and Losing, Friendship and Hope***

By Donna O'Toole

Compassion Press

Burnsville, North Carolina 28714

# Stories of Hope

## Anna Eleanor Roosevelt

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was born October 11, 1884 in New York City, New York. She was named Anna after her mother and Eleanor for her father who was nicknamed “Ellie.” From the beginning she preferred to be called by her middle name, Eleanor. She had two brothers who were born later.

When Eleanor was eight, her mother died from a deadly disease. She and her two brothers were sent to live with their grandmother. Just before she turned ten, her father died and she became an orphan. After these losses, Eleanor became very shy and would not talk in class. She was very unhappy.

When she was fifteen, her aunt thought it would be good to send Eleanor to a private school in England. She had a very good teacher who wanted to help young women become smart and independent. Eleanor learned to speak French and started feeling better about herself. She became such a leader at her school that when her younger cousin, Corinne, came there she said, “Eleanor was everything.”

Eleanor married a young man who later became the President of the United States. Even though her husband was the leader of our country, Eleanor became a leader in lots of ways too. Eleanor became a part of the United Nations General Assembly, a group of people who worked for peace in the world. She encouraged human rights and felt that everyone should be treated equally or fairly. Eleanor received 35 honorary degrees and was awarded one of the United Nations Human Rights awards.

Eleanor Roosevelt worked hard to improve the lives of others and that made her one of the most loved women of her time.

## Clara Barton

Clara Barton was born in Oxford, Massachusetts. She was the youngest of five children and was very smart. It was said that her siblings were kept busy answering her many questions, and each taught her many skills. Her older sisters were teachers and her brothers taught her how to ride horses and many other things.

When Clara was eleven, her brother David fell from the top of a barn. Clara stayed by his side for two years and learned to give him all of his medicine. As she continued to develop an interest in nursing, Clara may have drawn inspiration from stories of her great-aunt who was also a nurse.

Later on, during the civil war, Clara started an agency to give out medicine and supplies to hurt soldiers. She was given permission to ride in the ambulances to provide comfort to the soldiers and nurse them back to health.

All of the work that she did during the Civil War made her very tired and sick. Her doctors recommended she rest and take a trip to Europe. While she was there, she became involved with the International Committee of the Red Cross. This committee had began so that they could help victims of war, even if they were on the other side. When Clara returned to United States, she tried to get the United States government to start an American Red Cross. The government thought the U.S. would never face another war but Clara argued with

### **Clara Barton Cont.**

President James Garfield that the new American Red Cross would help in other crises, besides war. Clara's new idea to use the American Red Cross to help in any great national disaster brought the United States the "Good Samaritan of Nations" label. Clara became the president of the American Red Cross which has been helping people for over 100 years.

### **Stevie Wonder**

Stevie Wonder (born Stevland Hardaway Morris) was born prematurely in Saginaw, Michigan. It is thought he received too much oxygen in his incubator, which led to him becoming blind. His mother told Stevie's brothers and sister to treat Stevie the same as any other child, and not to tease or over-assist him because of his blindness.

The family moved to Detroit and Stevie began singing and playing instruments in church at an early age. He went to the Michigan School for the Blind in Lansing, Michigan where he practiced classical piano.

When Stevie was 12, he was introduced to Ronnie White (a very popular singer). Mr. White brought Stevie and his mother to his recording manager. The recording manager was so impressed by him that he got Stevie to sign to Motown Records with the name "Little Stevie Wonder".

When Stevie was 13, he had his first major hit playing with Marvin Gaye. Stevie went on to record more than thirty top ten hits, and win twenty-two Grammy Awards and a lifetime achievement award.

Stevie continues to write and produce songs for many of his label mates and is considered a musical mentor to aspiring musicians everywhere.

### **Dan Jansen**

Inspired by his sister Jane, Dan took up speed skating while growing up in Wisconsin. He set a junior world record in the 500-meter race at the age of sixteen and finished fourth in the 1,000 meters in the 1984 Olympics.

At the 1988 Winter Olympics, everyone thought Jansen would win the gold medal even though he had been very sick with mono. The day before his race, however, Jansen received a call saying that his sister Jane was dying of leukemia (a form of cancer). He spoke to his sister but she was unable to respond. Later that morning, he was informed that she had died. He bravely went on to compete that night in the 500-meter race, but fell early. A few days later in the 1,000-meter race, he began with record-breaking speed but fell again. He left the 1988 Olympics with no medals but received the U.S. Olympic Spirit Award for his efforts through tragedy.

Jansen continued to train and arrived at the 1994 Winter Olympics. He had already won his second World Sprint Championship title and the 1994 Winter Olympics was his last chance to win an Olympic medal. Coached by a friend, Jansen won his first Olympic gold medal, setting a new world record in the process, and dedicated his gold medal to his sister.

Because he worked so hard, he also received the 1994 James E. Sullivan Award, which is given to the most outstanding athlete in the United States.

Jansen was put into the United States Olympic Hall of Fame in 2004. Today, he is a skating coach for the Chicago Blackhawks of the National Hockey League. He has also set up the Dan Jansen Foundation, in memory of his sister, with the purpose of fighting leukemia.



# Activity Sheet: Memory Skittles

## Supplies

- Bag of Skittles candy

## Directions

Pass around the bag of Skittles, having each student choose three-to-five pieces, based on the amount of time you will have to process.

Introduce the meaning assigned to each color. Based on the colors chosen, students share about themselves. As always, students can pass if they wish.

## Growing Skittles:

- Red= a change or challenge that has made you stronger
- Yellow= how you felt when this change first occurred
- Purple= how you feel about this change now
- Green= a hope or wish that you have for yourself in the future

# Celebrate YOU!

You are worth celebrating.  
 You are worth everything.  
 You are unique.  
 In the whole world, there is only one you.  
 There is only one person with  
 Your talents  
 Your experience  
 Your gifts.  
 God created only one you, precious in his sight.  
 You have immense potential  
 To love  
 To care  
 To grow  
 To sacrifice  
 If you believe in yourself.  
 It doesn't matter your age, or color, or whether you have friends or not.  
 Let that go.  
 It belongs to the past.  
 You belong to the now.  
 It doesn't matter what you have been  
 The wrong you've done  
 The mistakes you've made  
 The people you've hurt.  
 You are forgiven, accepted, loved – in spite of everything.  
 So love yourself, and nourish the seeds within you.  
**CELEBRATE YOU!**  
 Begin now. Start over. Give yourself a new birth.  
 Today.  
 You are you, and that is all you need to be.  
 You are temporary, here today and gone tomorrow.  
 But today,  
 Today can be a new beginning, a new thing, a new life.

## Session Two

### Text for *After Charlotte's Mom Died*

Charlotte was six years old and lived with her dad and her favorite stuffed animal, Godfrey. Charlotte lived just with her dad and not with her mom because her mom was dead. She had died in a car accident when Charlotte was five and a half.

Since mom died, Charlotte's dad had been very sad. Sometimes he cried. He seemed busy a lot, and he often didn't seem to hear or see Charlotte.

Sometimes Charlotte cried too. Other times she felt angry. Why did her mom die? Why didn't she come back so Charlotte could see her, and so her dad wouldn't have to be sad?

At night, Charlotte was afraid to fall asleep. Aunt Gloria had told her that being dead was like being asleep. Too, Charlotte thought about what would happen to her if her dad died. Then Charlotte would be an orphan and have to go live in an orphanage.

Charlotte had a lot of thoughts like this, and she only told them to Godfrey.

On the outside, Charlotte looked like she used to when her mom was alive. She went to school and took her bath, just like before. On the inside, though, Charlotte felt different. She felt sad and mad and scared. She felt like she had lost something very precious, and would never find it again.

One day when the girls at school were playing house, Charlotte said she'd play the mom. A Girl named Joanie said, "You can't! You don't have a mom, so you can't play it!"

Charlotte's mixed-up feelings whirled around inside her like a storm.

"I do too have a mom!" she yelled, and before she knew it, she had pushed Joanie so hard that Joanie fell and hurt her arm.

Charlotte's dad had to come to school to talk to the teacher. Charlotte felt sad and mad and scared as Dad and the teacher talked.

When Dad was finished talking, instead of being mad like Charlotte thought he'd be, he used his softest voice, the one Charlotte had hardly heard since Mom died. Dad put his arms around Charlotte and said, "I guess I didn't realize how upset you've been because I've been too busy being sad about Mom's death.

"I decided you and I will go see someone who can help us with our feelings so we can be happier. This someone is called a 'therapist,' and her name is Anna."

Charlotte liked Anna's office. It was full of things to play with, and Anna didn't say, "Don't touch that! Like Aunt Gloria did. Also, Anna had a cat named Tiger who was orange and white with big, soft paws. There were stuffed clowns in Anna's office, and Charlotte liked to play the "family game" with them.

Once she had the mother clown have a car accident, just like what had really happened to her mom.

Another time Charlotte pulled the hat on the father clown down over its face and ears. “He can’t hear or see the little clown,” Charlotte explained to Anna. “The little clown had a bad dream, and her daddy didn’t listen.”

One day, Charlotte showed how the little clown was afraid to go to sleep because Aunt Gloria had said being dead was like being asleep.

Charlotte’s dad was with her in the office. When he heard this, he cried. “I didn’t know that Charlotte,” he said. Anna always held Dad’s hand when he cried, and never said, “Now cheer up and give me a big smile!”

Anna told Charlotte that people sometimes said being dead was like being asleep, but that wasn’t really correct. It was safe for Charlotte to go to sleep, and it would not make her dead.

Anna told Charlotte that she needed to tell her worries to her dad and not just to Godfrey. So Charlotte told Dad about being afraid she’d be an orphan.

Dad said, “I don’t think anything’s going to happen to me. But there will always be someone in our family to love you and to take care of you, and you will never have to go to an orphanage.”

Uncle Joe, Aunt Carmen, and Charlotte’s favorite cousin, Georgie, told her, too, when she and her dad went there for dinner, “We’d take care of you,” Georgie said.

Charlotte needed to cry, and Georgie held her hand until she was done. “Let’s eat cake!” said Georgie when Charlotte was finished crying.

Anna had a beautiful pink stone that Charlotte could pick up and hold. Anna told her it was a special kind of wishing stone. “If you say the wish out loud, we can see if we can make it come true, or if it’s the kind of wish that can’t come true,” said Anna.

Charlotte held the smooth pink stone in her hands. “I wish,” she said, closing her eyes, “I wish that my mom wouldn’t be dead anymore.”

“Oh,” said Anna, “I know you and Dad both wish that, and so do I. But that’s the kind of wish that can’t come true, and so you both feel very, very sad.”

Anna said, “Let’s think of a wish that can come true.” She held the stone in her own hands. “I wish,” she said, closing her eyes, “that Charlotte and her dad can be happy again even though Mom is dead.”

Charlotte and her dad looked at each other. Dad reached out his arms to Charlotte, and they cried and cried. Charlotte let out all those feelings that were like a storm inside her. As Dad held her, she felt like she was finding something precious, even if it wasn’t the something she had lost. Maybe everything could be right again.

Anna said, “As time goes on, those happy feelings will get bigger and bigger, and those sad feelings will get smaller and smaller.”

Suddenly Charlotte’s dad laughed and pointed to Tiger. Charlotte saw that Tiger had curled up with Godfrey and was licking his face. Charlotte laughed, too. It felt good.

# Activity Sheet: The Heads or Tails Feeling Game

## Supplies

- A quarter
- Small prizes or candy

## Directions

Let's play a game about feelings. It is called The Heads or Tails Feeling Game. To play, take turns flipping a coin. Whichever side it lands on, ask questions or complete tasks from that column.

### **Heads:**

1. Name three feelings children can have when someone special dies.
2. What does grief mean?
3. True or False: Many children find it hard to feel sad all the time because it is difficult.
4. True or False: After someone special dies, people may have a hard time believing that person is really dead.
5. True or False: When a family member dies, children may worry that they will die soon too.
6. What are some reasons why people blame themselves for someone's death?
7. True or False: Children shouldn't cry when someone dies because it might make their parents sad too.
8. Name 3 good ways to express anger.
9. Why do children sometimes act bad after someone in their family dies?
10. What can you do to feel better when you are upset?

### **Tails:**

1. Hop to the other end of the room and back on one foot.
2. Show what happy looks like with your face and body.
3. Spin your body around five times then try to touch your nose with your thumb.
4. Show what sad looks like with your face and body.
5. Jump up and down 10 times.
6. Show what angry looks like with your face and body.
7. Do 10 jumping jacks.
8. Show what scared looks like with your face and body.
9. Stomp your feet 10 times.
10. Show what proud looks like with your face and body.

# Activity Sheet: Grief Twister

## Supplies:

- “Twister” game
- Questions for Grief Twister

## Directions:

Play the game “Twister” as you normally would. The exception to this game is that every dot has a corresponding question to go with it. Once a player has spun, he/she must answer the question, or use the “I Pass” rule, before he/she can make their next move.

The last to fall wins.

Here is the grid of questions for the “Twister” mat:

What is a memory?	Tell about a happy memory with your special person	What do you miss most about the person who died?	Tell about a holiday spent with your special person
Tell about a meal shared with your special person	What advice would you give a friend who had someone special die?	Tell about a gift you gave your special person	Tell how you feel when you look at photos of your special person
Tell about a funny moment with your special person	What fear have you had since the death?	Tell about a sad memory with your special person	What do you remember most about the funeral?
What is something about yourself that you're proud of	Why is it important to talk about memories of someone who died?	Tell about a gift your special person gave you	Tell about the last time you saw your special person
What happens when someone dies?	How did you feel about coming to group your first night?	What have you learned about grief since the death of your loved one?	How is death discussed in your home?
How do you feel when your mom or dad cries?	When do you, if ever, feel jealous?	How do you avoid answering questions about your loved one?	What is something you're thankful for since the death of your loved one?

# Activity Sheet: The Heads or Tails Feeling Game

## Supplies

- Paper
- Pencils or pens

## Directions

Have each participant use their five senses as stems for describing grief. (The use of the senses as stems for their poem is great for making the connection that grief is holistic.)

The sensory stems include:

It looks like \_\_\_\_\_.

It sounds like \_\_\_\_\_.

It smells like \_\_\_\_\_.

It tastes like \_\_\_\_\_.

If I could hold it in my hands, it would feel \_\_\_\_\_.

Grief makes me feel like \_\_\_\_\_.

Share and process.

Additional option if you are working in groups or families: You can compile all the poems into one large group poem and bring copies to the next session.

Read the group poem, with each member reading the part they contributed.

Example of a completed sensory poem for anger:

### **Anger**

*My anger smells like the air.*

*It feels like rough kinky hair.*

*It looks like clouds of smoke*

*It smells like something that makes you choke*

*It tastes like something disgusting and foul*

*Something that I don't want to feel again for a while*

*Anger makes me feel like garbage.*

17-year-old grief support group member

## Session Three

### Background Information for Facilitators

Following A Death, A Child May Feel Anger Toward:

#### 1. Parents

- a. For not telling them Grandma was so sick
- b. For not protecting them or the person who died
- c. For spending so much time with the sick person or, now with other family members, friends and professionals, such as funeral directors, lawyers and others.

#### 2. Those others who

- a. Didn't make their loved one well (doctors, nurses)
- b. Killed their person (drunk drivers, murderers)

#### 3. The person who died

- a. For leaving them and the family
- b. For not taking care of himself or herself, or getting into danger
- c. For not saying goodbye
- d. For causing all this upset, sorrow and changes in the family

#### 4. Sisters and brothers

- a. For getting more attention
- b. For grieving at a different pace or with different feelings
- c. Just because they're handy and available

“Children can be angry at themselves as well. They may wish they had done something different, wish they had said something they didn't say, or had been kinder and loved better. Anger will go someplace. It has to get out!”

Adapted from information by Joy Johnson

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## Text for *When I Feel Angry*

When somebody makes fun of me, I feel angry. I feel angry when I have to stop a game at the best part and clean up my room, or when we finally can go swimming and it rains.

It makes me mad when I try my hardest but I can't make my drawing look right. I just crumple it up and throw it away.

If the teacher says I was talking and I wasn't, I get angry. It isn't fair!

Anger is a strong, hot feeling. When I feel angry, I want to say something mean, or yell or hit. But feeling like I want to is not the same as doing it. Feeling can't hurt anyone or get me in trouble, but doing can.

When I want to say something mean, or yell, or hit, there are other things I can do. I can go way from the person I'm angry with. I can take deep breaths and blow the air out, hard, to send the anger out of me. I can make my anger cooler by running or riding my bike, or doing something I really like to do. After a while I feel better. I can have a good time again.

Some things that make me angry can't be changed, like when our team loses, or my favorite thing gets spoiled.

But sometimes when I feel angry, it means something needs to be different. Maybe it's me. Maybe I need to rest or cry. Maybe I need time by myself. Maybe someone else needs to be different. Maybe someone needs to be nicer to me, or to stop being unfair.

I might need help figuring it all out. Then I can change what I'm doing. Or I can tell someone else what I need. I can listen to the other person tell, too. Talking and listening usually makes things better.

When I feel angry, I don't have to stay angry. I can cool down so I don't hurt someone or get into trouble. I can go away. I can take deep breaths and blow them out. I can run, ride my bike or play with my toys. I can rest or cry. I can figure out what made me angry, or ask someone to help me. I can talk, and I can listen.

When I feel angry, I know what to do!

### ***When I Feel Angry***

By Cornelia Maude Spelman  
Albert Whitman & Company  
Morton Grove, Illinois 60503

## Anger Cloud

### Supplies

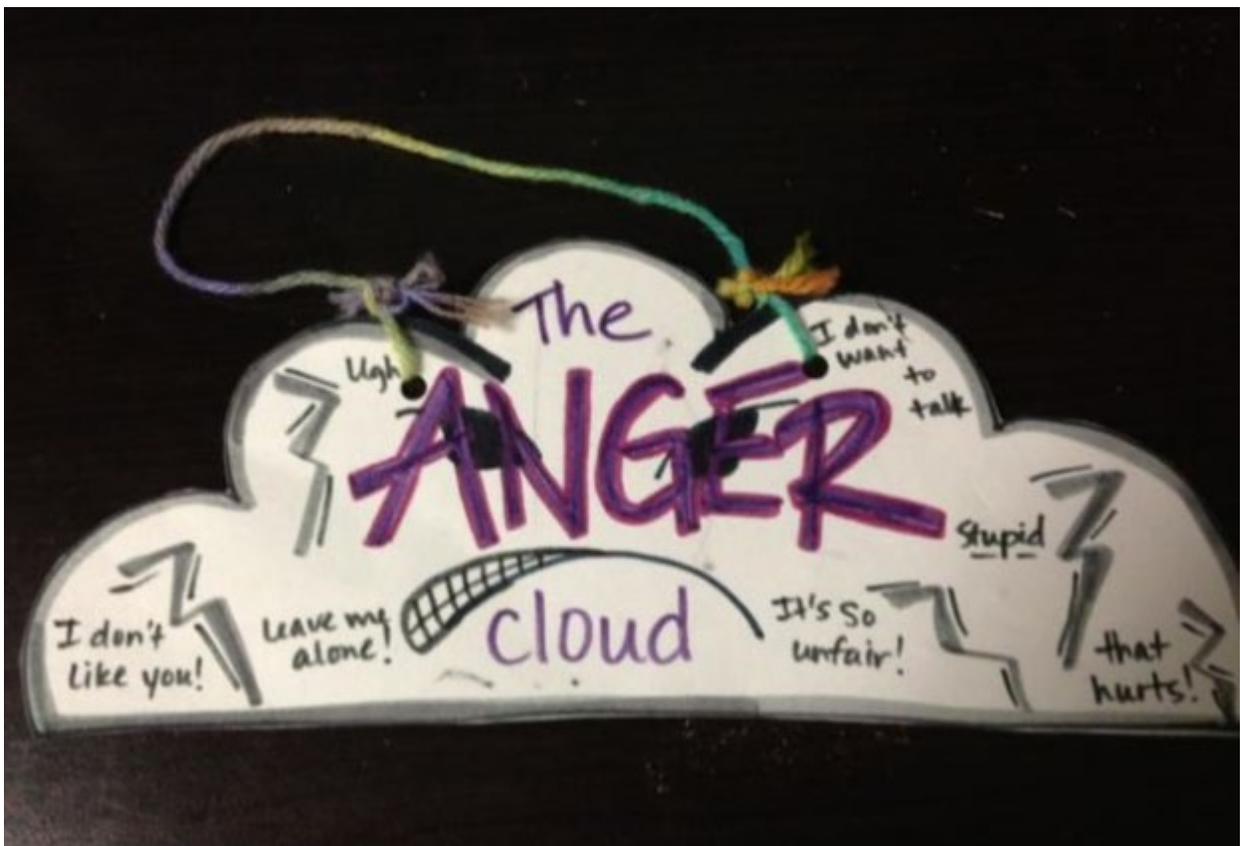
- Poster board or light-colored construction paper
- Markers
- Crayons
- Yarn

### Directions

Provide each group member with a cloud-shaped form of sturdy white or light colored paper (poster board works well) large enough on which to write or draw. Punch two holes on the top of the cloud form, loop colorful yarn or string and tie the yarn ends together to create a door hanger. The child can hang this door hanger on his or her bedroom door to indicate what type of day they are having.

Suggested decorations can include cotton balls, stickers, glitter and whatever else is available.

Ask them to depict what their anger looks like.



## Grief Works Wheel

Create a “Positive Ways to Handle Grief Wheel” with a spinning pointer to land on one of the following ways to respond to grief and its harsh emotions.

### The spinner can land on:

- Say: “I’m sorry”
- Take a time out
- Have a family meeting
- Talk about how you feel
- Say: “Stop, please!”
- Count from 10 to 0 backwards
- Suggest something you both enjoy
- Listen to music and chill out



## Text for *Mean Soup*

It had been a bad day for Horace. He forgot the answer to question three. Zelda gave him a love note. And Lulu, the show-and-tell cow, stepped on his foot.

As if this wasn't enough, his mother sent Miss Pearl to pick him up from school. She swerved and screeched and nearly killed three poodles before they made it home.

Horace felt so mean he stepped on a flower.

His mother said, "Hello." And Horace hissed.

His mother said, "How was your day?" And Horace growled.

His mother said, "Did you thank Miss Pearl?" And Horace fell on the floor.

"Let's make soup," his mother said. Horace lay still. He felt mean. And he wasn't going to make soup.

His mother filled a pot with water and set it on the stove. When the water got hot, she threw in some salt. Then, taking a breath, she screamed into the pot. "Your turn," she said. So Horace got on a stool and screamed, too.

His mother screamed louder. Horace growled and bared his teeth. The water started to boil.

His mother stuck out her tongue. Horace stuck out his tongue twenty times. He banged on the pot with a spoon. He breathed his best dragon breath.

Then he smiled. His mother smiled, too.

"What's the name of this recipe?" asked Horace.

"Mean Soup," she said.

And they stood together, stirring away a bad day.

### *Mean Soup*

By Betsy Everitt

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

1250 Sixth Avenue

San Diego, CA 92101

## Things that Make Me Angry

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The things that have made me most angry about my loved one's death is...

What I have done with that anger is...

## Sentence Completion Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Some people are very angry after their \_\_\_\_\_ dies. I was/was not angry when you died because \_\_\_\_\_.

A reason I was/was not angry is

\_\_\_\_\_.

Even so, I am sorry that

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_. As I think about life then and now, I realize what I want/

wanted is \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Something I REALLY appreciate is

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

With my love,

*Concept based on Helping Kids Manage Grief, Fear and Anger*  
 by Terri Akin, David Cowan, Susanna Palomares,  
 Dianne Schilling  
 Innerchoice Publishing  
 P.O. Box 1185  
 Torrance, CA 90505

**Session Four**  
**Text for *The Lovables in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem***

**I AM LOVABLE.** Hi, lovable friend! I'm Mona Monkey. I live in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem. Along with my friends, we're the Lovable Team. Come right along, bring your huggable you. We'd all like to meet you and talk to you, too. The gates of the kingdom are opening wide. As you say these words three times with pride: "I'm lovable! I'm lovable! I'm lovable!" So come with me, and you will see, all of the lovable ways to be.

**I AM COURAGEOUS.** A roaring welcome to the kingdom. I'm Lawrence Lion. In our great kingdom, it is clear that love and friends are always near. So if you're feeling any fear, remember this and leave it here.

**I AM CAPABLE.** Hellooo-hooo. I'm Owen Owl. All the Lovables have gifts to share, because they're capable and they care. You and your friends are talented, too. What is something you love to do?

**I LOVE TO LEARN.** I'm waving hello to you. I'm Elena Elephant. Learning something new each day brings me joy along my way. I'll bet that someone bright as you will love to learn your whole life through.

**I LOVE TO PLAY AND HAVE FUN.** Ha-ha hi, friend! We're Bobbi and Billy Bear. We wrestle and play in a gentle way. We giggle and laugh all through the day. Playing and laughing is good for you, too. So play every day like the Lovables do.

**I TAKE CARE OF MY BODY.** Howdy. I'm Bernie Buffalo. I love my body and eat only the best. I make sure I get plenty of rest. Treat your body with love every day. And you'll go galloping on your way.

**I TAKE CARE OF THE WORLD AROUND ME.** Hel-lo, buddy-o! I'm Buddy Beaver. I care for river, sky, and land, for all of nature is so grand. To our world you, too, can give loving care so the earth may live.

**I LOVE OTHERS AS THEY ARE.** Oceans of hellos! I'm Daniel Dolphin. All of the Lovables near and far are oh so lovable just as they are. Love is the greatest gift you can give to yourself, and to others, as long as you live.

**I AM GENTLE AND STRONG.** Ahoy mates! I'm Wong Whale. I'm the biggest and strongest Lovable of all. I am gentle to others, both large and small. You, too, can be strong, instead of tough. You, too, can be gentle, instead of rough.

I LIKE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS. Peace to you. I'm Diana Dove. I like to spread peace both far and wide. Sharing brings happiness from deep inside. When you open your heart to give and to share, you show your friends how much you care.

I AM KIND. A gentle welcome. I'm Dana Deer. I'm kind to my friends, and kind to me, too, because I'm important and so are you. Treat yourself with love each day, and you'll treat others in a kinder way.

I AM FULL OF JOY! Oh boy, oh joy. I'm Hilda Hippo. Hippoty hoo ha, hippoty hey, My, oh my, it's a hippo-full day! Joy is a special note that you sing, when you open your heart and let your song ring.

I AM SPECIAL AND UNIQUE. Hi, special friend! I'm Oscar Ostrich. With such skinny legs, some say I'm absurd! Still I know I'm a really neat bird. You are special by just being you. Love yourself and others will, too.

I AM PROUD TO BE ME. Stripes ahoy! I'm Zena Zebra. I feel proud to be who I am. All of my stripes are really quite grand. You are important with your own part to play, so show who you are in your own special way.

***The Lovables in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem***

by Diane Loomans

Illustrated by Kim Howard

H. J. Kramer, Inc.

Novato CA 94949

# Activity Sheet: Hop-Scotch Favorites

## Supplies

- For outdoor play, use sidewalk chalk
- For indoor play, use full 8x12 sheets of construction paper to make a hopscotch grid
- Crayons or markers for labeling each square

## Directions

The following is a hopscotch grid filled with memory questions about their loved one. It should engage the child in the sharing of memories and encourage the child to see differences and similarities between their loved one and their own interests.

1. Create a hopscotch grid by writing the following topics on north and south side of each square:

Favorite color – Best friend  
 Favorite food – Best vacation  
 Favorite hobby – Best gift  
 Favorite place – Favorite movie  
 Favorite restaurant – Favorite story  
 Favorite book – Favorite TV show

2. Each child takes a turn hopping along the hopscotch grid. They can choose to throw a pebble or beanbag and answer the question on that square. Or they can answer each question for every square.

3. Once everyone has had a turn, the group can discuss similarities and differences among their peers.

## Session Five

### Text for *The Kissing Hand*

Chester Raccoon stood at the edge of the forest and cried. “I don’t want to go to school,” he told his mother. “I want to stay home with you. I want to play with my friends. And play with my toys. And read my books. And swing on my swing. Please may I stay home with you?”

Mrs. Raccoon took Chester by the hand and nuzzled him on the ear. “Sometimes we all have to do things we don’t want to do,” she told him gently. “Even if they seem strange and scary at first. But you will love school once you start.”

“You’ll make new friends. And play with new toys.” “Read new books. And swing on new swings. Besides,” she added. “I know a wonderful secret that will make your nights at school seem as warm and cozy as your days at home.”

Chester wiped away his tears and looked interested. “A secret? What kind of secret?” “A very old secret,” said Mrs. Raccoon. “I learned it from my mother, and she learned it from hers. It’s called the Kissing Hand.”

“The Kissing Hand?” asked Chester. “What’s that?”

“I’ll show you.” Mrs. Raccoon took Chester’s left hand and spread open his tiny fingers into a fan. Leaning forward, she kissed Chester right in the middle of his palm. Chester felt his mother’s kiss rush from his hand, up his arm, and into his heart. Even his silky, black mask tingled with a special warmth. Mrs. Raccoon smiled.

“Now,” she told Chester, “whenever you feel lonely and need a little loving from home, just press your hand to your cheek and think, ‘Mommy loves you. Mommy loves you.’ And that very kiss will jump to your face and fill you with toasty warm thoughts.”

She took Chester’s hand and carefully wrapped his fingers around the kiss. “Now, do be careful not to lose it,” she teased him. “But, don’t worry. When you open your hand and wash your food, I promise the kiss will stick.”

Chester loved his Kissing Hand. Now he knew his mother’s love would go with him wherever he went. Even to school.

That night, Chester stood in front of his school and looked thoughtful. Suddenly, he turned to his mother and grinned. “Give me your hand,” he told her.

Chester took his mother’s hand in his own and unfolded her large, familiar fingers into a fan. Next, he leaned forward and kissed the center of her hand.

“Now you have a Kissing Hand, too,” he told her. And with a gentle “Good-bye” and “I love you,” Chester turned and danced away.

Mrs. Raccoon watched Chester scamper across a tree limb and enter school. And as the hoot owl rang in the new school year, she pressed her left hand to her cheek and smiled. The warmth of Chester’s kiss filled her heart with special words. “Chester loves you,” it sang. “Chester loves you.”

#### ***The Kissing Hand***

Audrey Penn  
Child Welfare League of America, Inc.  
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## Positive Adjective Sheet

Able	Expressive	Popular	Understanding
Accomplished	Fair	Positive	Unique
Achiever	Faithful	Productive	Upbeat
Active	Fascinating	Protector	Uplifting
Admirable	Friendly	Proud	Valuable
Adorable	Funny	Purposeful	Warm
Adventurous	Gentle	Qualified	Wise
Affectionate	Genuine	Real	Zealous
Agreeable	Good	Reasonable	
Ambitious	Impressive	Receptive	
Animated	Intriguing	Reflective	
Articulate	Joyful	Refreshing	
Aspiring	Jubilant	Relaxed	
Assertive	Kind	Reliable	
Attentive	Light hearted	Reserved	
Authentic	Likable	Resourceful	
Beloved	Lively	Respectable	
Benevolent	Loveable	Respectful	
Blessed	Magnetic	Responsible	
Blissful	Mannerly	Righteous	
Bubbly	Mature	Sensitive	
Calm	Merciful	Serious	
Caring	Meticulous	Sincere	
Cautious	Mindful	Smart	
Charming	Modest	Sociable	
Cheery	Moral	Special	
Clever	Musing	Spirited	
Compassionate	Neighborhoodly	Stable	
Confident	Nice	Spontaneous	
Creative	Nifty	Stimulating	
Daring	Noble	Strong	
Decisive	Novel	Successful	
Dedicated	Obedient	Sweet	
Delicate	Observant	Sympathetic	
Delightful	On-time	Talented	
Dependable	Optimistic	Team player	
Determined	Organized	Thankful	
Devoted	Original	Thoughtful	
Different	Particular	Tidy	
Diligent	Patient	Tolerant	
Disciplined	Patriotic	Tranquil	
Dreamer	Peaceful	Trustworthy	
Dynamic	Perceptive	Truthful	
Energetic	Pleasant		
Enjoyable	Polite		

## Session Six

### Text for *Rachel and Her Grandma*

Rachel and her grandma were good friends. They liked to do many things together. They picked strawberries from Grandma's garden. The shortcake they made with the strawberries was their favorite dessert.

They planted flowers together and enjoyed planning how the colors would look when the flowers bloomed. Rachel even liked to pull the weeds with her grandma. The plants always looked so much prettier when they were finished.

They baked cookies together. Rachel knew just where Grandma's mixing bowl was. Grandma got out the butter and sugar. Rachel got out the big spoon. Grandma always let her lick the bowl when the last batch of cookies was in the oven.

The cookies tasted so-o-o yummy when they came right out of the oven. They tasted especially good with a cold glass of milk. They went window shopping together. They would walk slowly through the stores, feeling the fine fabrics and looking at the beautiful clothes. Sometimes Grandma would buy something for Rachel.

One of Rachel's very favorite times was when Grandma would read to her just before bedtime. They would read all sorts of books, sometimes long ones, sometimes short ones. Sometimes they would make up their own stories. They liked to take walks together.

When they walked, they always held hands. Rachel liked the feeling of her small hand inside Grandma's warm, larger one. Rachel's grandma took a walk every day, even if Rachel wasn't there. Grandma said it was good for her to get out of the house.

Rachel's grandma listened carefully to what Rachel said. Rachel knew she listened, because Grandma asked Rachel questions. She didn't just say, "Uh-huh," or "That's nice." Rachel's grandma answered questions, too.

But she usually helped Rachel think in a new way so Rachel could answer her own questions. Rachel and her grandma hugged each other to say, "Hello," and they hugged again to say, "Good-bye."

Grandma's hugs always felt so good. Rachel and her grandma loved each other very much. One day while Rachel's grandma was taking a walk, she felt a very bad pain in her chest. The sky seemed like it was swirling in front of her eyes. Suddenly, Grandma fell to the sidewalk. The neighbors found Rachel's grandma lying on the ground and called for help.

The ambulance came and took Rachel's grandma to the hospital. Rachel's mother tried to explain to Rachel what had happened. The doctors said Grandma's heart was getting old. They thought she would be fine with a little rest. What was really happening to her grandma? Rachel was trembling. Rachel's mother held her tightly. Rachel snuggled closer to her mother until her body relaxed and stopped shaking.

She felt a little better after her mother talked with her, but she was still very worried about Grandma. The doctors had said that they thought Grandma would be fine. Yet, in the middle of the night, Rachel was awakened by the ringing of the telephone. Something felt terribly wrong.

Rachel went into her parents' room. Her dad was hugging her mother. Rachel's mother had her head on his shoulder, and she was crying. Rachel's mother pulled Rachel into an embrace. Then she said in a very soft and gentle voice, "Rachel, your grandmother just died." A huge lump that felt like a baseball rose up in Rachel's throat. As tears spilled down her cheeks, Rachel wondered what her grandma had been doing when she died.

She wondered if her grandma had been scared. She wondered if it hurt to die. She wondered if her grandma had known she was dying. Rachel's daddy lifted her up and carried her back to her room. He lay her gently on her bed and stroked her hair for a few moments.

Daddy said, "I know how much you loved your grandma. You will miss her very much. Mommy and I will be with you, and we really love you." Then he kissed Rachel and told her to try to go back to sleep." As her daddy walked down the hall, Rachel could feel a heavy weight on her chest. "It hurts so much when someone you love dies," she thought. "It feels like a big hole has been torn in my heart, and it will never be filled up again." Rachel couldn't stop thinking about Grandma.

She hurt so much that she cried and cried and eventually cried herself to sleep. For the next few days, Rachel tried to be brave. But she cried when she saw Grandma in the fancy casket. Grandma looked like she was sleeping, but her skin didn't look like it used to. Rachel wished she could kiss Grandma's cheek and give her a great big bear hug like she used to do. She said a silent good-bye to her grandma. Then some men came and closed the casket and began to carry her grandmother away.

Rachel knew then that she would never see her grandmother again. She could not stop sobbing as her daddy picked her up and held her close to him. Rachel and her parents talked with a lot of people that day. They came to say how sorry they were about the death of her grandma. Everybody went with Rachel and her parents to the cemetery where Rachel's grandma would be buried. There was a big hole in the ground where the casket would go. After everyone went home, some men would carefully lower the casket into the hole and cover it with dirt. If she wanted to, Rachel would be able to come and visit the place where Grandma was buried.

When Rachel and her parents got home, Daddy explained to Rachel that Grandma's spirit wasn't in her body any more. Rachel believed that her grandma's spirit would now follow her every place she went. As the days passed, Rachel would think of her grandma at unexpected moments. Sometimes she would be playing with a friend and be reminded of Grandma and what they had done together. The first few times Rachel thought about Grandma, she cried again.

Mommy and Daddy did some crying, too. They said it was important to feel the hurt so later on they could remember the happy times with Grandma. Rachel didn't like feeling sad all of the time, but she couldn't help it. She felt lonely, and she missed Grandma so much. Gradually, as the days turned into months, Rachel could still feel the imaginary hole in her heart when she remembered her grandma, but it didn't hurt so much any more. She would be sad, but she didn't feel like crying any more. Sometimes she even caught herself smiling as she remembered some of the fun things she and Grandma used to do.

Rachel remembered how she and Grandma had picked the ripe strawberries and made the shortcake. She remembered her grandma's smile as they sat together and ate their special treat. Rachel remembered picking flowers and going shopping and going for walks. Rachel also remembered baking cookies and reading books and telling stories. She felt warm and happy again as she thought of her hand in her grandma's. She could even remember exactly how Grandma's hugs had felt.

Rachel realized the imaginary hole in her heart would always be there. No one could ever take Grandma's place. But the hurt surrounding the hole had disappeared. Mommy and Daddy had been right. She had cried and felt the awful hurt for awhile, but now she remembered the happy times, too.

Rachel would often think about Grandma. She would think of the walks and Grandma's hand holding hers. She would close her eyes and feel her Grandma's spirit beside her. From now on, she decided, whenever she had that feeling, she would think of it as another one of Grandma's hugs.

### ***Rachel and Her Grandma***

By Denise Beverlin Kern, Ph.D

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San Diego, New York, London

## Badge of Honor Worksheet

The Badge of Honor is to reward the child for facing and handling their personal situations with courage and faith. We want to show them how proud we are of them and their efforts. Use your imagination and creativity to make your own *Breakway* Badge of Courage. The idea can be embellished upon and personalized to fit the specific needs of the *Breakway* Program and the group involved in the activities.



# Activity Sheet: “I Remember” Poem

## Supplies

- One sheet of paper
- Pens or pencils for everyone

## Directions

Fold the piece of paper like an accordion. On the top or first fold of paper write “I Remember...”

Pass the paper around and on each paper fold, have each participant write one memory they have of their person who died. The paper can keep passing around the circle until every member has had a chance to write as many memories as they would like.

When completed, read as a poem. An Example:

I Remember...

She made it cool for me to be with my loved ones.  
 They way he used to hug me and she used to love me and the  
 way they used to tell me to keep my head up.  
 How she used to tuck me into bed.  
 The way she would smile at me.  
 I remember my grandpa taking me to the lake so we could fish  
 for a long time.  
 It would be hours before we came back.  
 I remember wishing you would get better so you could stay here  
 longer, I will remember you forever.

-written by 6 middle school students

# Activity Sheet: Dealing With Memories

## Supplies

- Deck of cards

## Directions

1. Sit in a circle on the floor. Put the cards in the center of the group.
2. Let each person draw a card. The person who draws the highest numbered card is the starter.
3. Gather all the cards and shuffle them. Deal five cards to each person.
4. The starter is to turn to the person on their right. That person will draw a card from the starter's five cards.
5. The person who drew the card will answer the question on the card or is allowed to ask another group member to answer the question.
6. When the question has been answered, the game continues with the next person on the right drawing a card from that hand, etc.

## Questions for Cards

2's - What is different around home since my special person died?

3's - What do I miss most about the person who died?

4's - My favorite memory about the person who died is...

5's - What I didn't like about the person who died is...

6's - What would I say to the person who died if s/he walked through the door right now?

7's - How have I changed since the person died?

8's - What was my first reaction to the news that someone had died?

9's - What was it like trying to sleep the first night after the news that someone had died?

10's - How do I think the people around me have changed?

Jacks - What was I thinking or feeling during the funeral and burial process?

Queens - Do I think the person who told me about the death did it right? Why or why not?

Kings - How did I feel when the funeral was over and I was expected to get back to doing regular things?

Aces - Tell the story about the death and whatever details I'm comfortable with.

**Interview Questions**

What has been the most difficult thing you have had to deal with since the death so far?  
What has been the most helpful thing that someone has said or done for you since the death?  
Everyone expects you to feel sad. What is the one feeling that you have experienced that you didn't expect to feel?  
What is one thing that you have observed in yourself that you hadn't noticed before, or something that you have done that you didn't think you could do?

**Interview Questions**

What has been the most difficult thing you have had to deal with since the death so far?  
What has been the most helpful thing that someone has said or done for you since the death?  
Everyone expects you to feel sad. What is the one feeling that you have experienced that you didn't expect to feel?  
What is one thing that you have observed in yourself that you hadn't noticed before, or something that you have done that you didn't think you could do?

**Interview Questions**

What has been the most difficult thing you have had to deal with since the death so far?  
What has been the most helpful thing that someone has said or done for you since the death?  
Everyone expects you to feel sad. What is the one feeling that you have experienced that you didn't expect to feel?  
What is one thing that you have observed in yourself that you hadn't noticed before, or something that you have done that you didn't think you could do?

**Text for *Double Dip Feelings: Stories to Help Children Understand Emotions***

Sometimes we feel happy. Sometimes we feel sad and sometimes we feel both happy and sad. Sometimes we feel playful. Sometimes we feel mad. Sometimes we feel both playful and mad.

Did you ever have two different feelings at the very same time?

When Amy's new brother came home to live, she felt somersault joy and left out sad.

When he painted her face with an oatmeal fist, Amy said, "He's a funny little boy but a very big pest."

Did you ever feel both silly and mad at the very same time?

When Katie's family moved to a different town, she said, "I like my new house with a room of my own."

"The old one was smaller but the old one was home."

Did you ever feel both happy and sad at the very same time?

When Daniel stood on the diving board for the very first time, he thought, "I promised my dad I would do it, but I wish I could change my mind."

Did you ever feel both brave and afraid at the very same time?

When classmates teased Sam for wetting his pants, Kevin thought, "I want to tease him too, but he's only doing what I used to do."

Did you ever feel both mean and friendly at the very same time?

When Daniel beat Amy in a spelling bee at school, he was thrilled to be a winner, but worried that he would lose a friend.

When Katie had chickenpox in bright shades of red, she hated all the itchy spots, but loved being cozy with Gigi in bed.

When Katie dumped her dinner in Gigi's plate, she was glad to be rid of her spinach, but sorry she gave him a snack he would hate!

When Kevin was leaving for an overnight sleep, he said, "I know I'll look silly when I bring my bear, but he can't sleep when I'm not there."

Did you ever feel both embarrassed and excited at the very same time?  
When darkness fell and it was time for bed, Amy envied the kids playing hide and seek, but she was glad to go to sleep.

So, sometimes you feel both happy and sad, and sometimes you feel both friendly and mad  
remember, everyone has feelings.

There are many different kinds, and sometimes we have two at the very same time.

*Double-Dip Feelings: Stories to Help Children Understand Emotions*

By Barbara S. Cain

Illustrated by Anne Patterson

Magination Press®

750 First Street NE

Washington, DC 20002-4242



# Activity Sheet: Feelings Song

## Activity Sheet: Feelings Song

(Sing to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

I have feelings, you do too.

Let’s all sing about a few.

I am happy, I am sad,

I get scared, I get mad.

I am proud of being me.

That’s a feeling too, you see.

\*I have feelings, you do too.

We just sang about a few.

\*There’s an extra line at the end of the song so you can sing it by repeating the last line of the tune

# Activity Sheet: Puzzle Shuffle

## Supplies

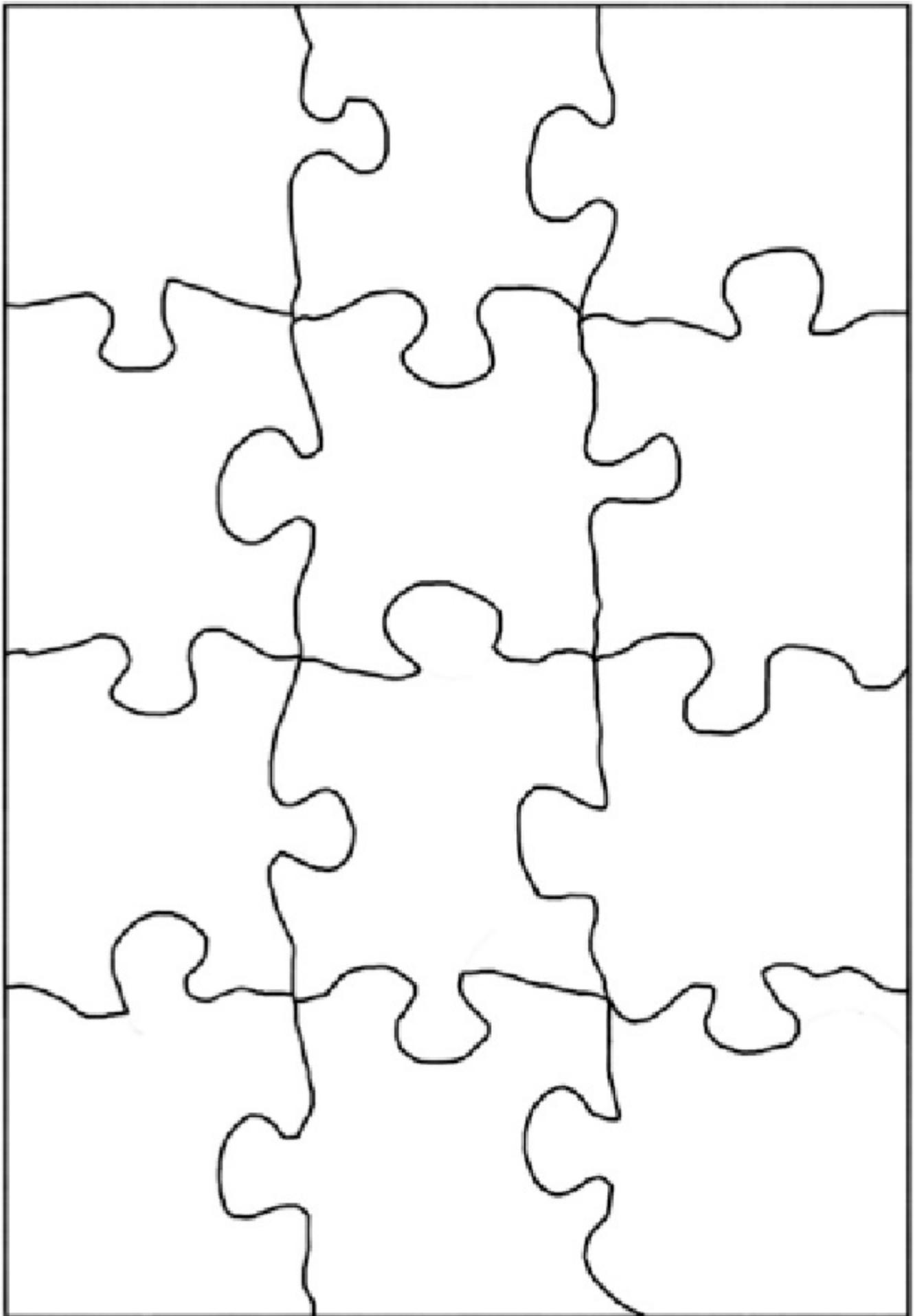
- Copies of puzzle sheets
- Pencils
- Markers

## Directions

1. Pass out the sheets of paper with puzzle pieces on them.
2. On the outside pieces, have the members write a word in each puzzle piece that they think other people would use to describe them (feelings or characteristics they choose to let others see).
3. On the inside puzzle pieces, have the member write feelings or actions that they hide from others.
4. After everyone is finished, give each member a different colored marker.
5. Next, the member will pass around their sheets. If another person has a similar interest or has also experienced the same things shown on the puzzle page, the member makes a mark on the puzzle piece with his or her colored marker.
6. After everyone has looked at the sheets, the members all get their own sheets back and find that others in the group have similar interests and experiences.

## Discussion Questions

- Are there some things they saw on others' sheets that they wish they had included on their own sheets?
- Were there some things that they have not experienced but a lot of others have experienced?



# Activity Sheet: Insider Tug-of-War

## Supplies

- Large space
- 6-8 ft. length of rope (preferable a rope that is easy on the hands)
- Chalk or tape to mark the centerline

## Directions

*The following is a game in which members have an opportunity to work through the emotional experience of being torn between two feelings beliefs, or thoughts during their grief journey. Other group members also experience being supported by others as they struggle with the insider experience of being torn. This activity should give insight to their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs as they verbalize their self-talk.*

1. The group facilitator introduces this activity by pointing out how often s/he may be hearing group members use the phrase “torn between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. Ask the group for examples of when they may have said this.
  - a. Examples:
    - i. “I’m torn between feeling I should take care of my mom and wanting to go out with my friends.”
    - ii. “I’m torn between feeling really angry at him for dying and really sad that he is gone.”
    - iii. “I’m torn between wanting to hang on to the way things used to be and wanting to just move on with life again.”
    - iv. “I’m torn between never wanting to love anyone again and really wanting to love someone again.”
3. Invite one of the group members to participate in a new exercise to help him or her really look and listen to the “insider tug-of-war” that is going on over their issues.
4. Divide the remaining members of the group into two equal teams with each team holding one end of the rope.
5. Tell each team to huddle and consider the self-talk for one of the sides of the “insider tug-of-war” that is going on for the group member.
  - a. Examples:
    - i. Team 1 huddles and comes up with all of the self-talk statements that support the feeling of being angry at dad for dying.
    - ii. Team 2 huddles and comes up with all of the self-talk statements that support the sad feelings that dad is gone. Give each team about 3-4 minutes to do this.
6. The group member with the particular issue stands as an observer midway and a few feet back from the rope so that s/he can really hear the statements, the volume and the chaos.
7. Teams then get in place holding the rope on either end and are instructed on the signal, “go,” to all begin pulling and shouting their self-talk at the other team, at the same time. This creates a storm of messages. The games proceeds, as in tug-of-war until one team pulls the other over the center tapeline and is declared the winner.

## Follow-up discussion

- For follow-up, talk about the metaphor of the tug-of-war: insider self-talk, various voices that speak inside, the strength of each side of the argument and the chalk line.
- What was it like for the group member to hear his or her self-talk?
- What was it like to see the inside tug-of-war depicted so concretely?
- What insights were gained by the exercise?

# Activity Sheet: The Emotions Game

## Supplies

- Dice
- Question cards
- Game board pieces

## Directions

1. Decide which order the members will begin the game in. They will be the game board pieces. The game board will be set up much like a cakewalk. Each member will begin at the starting point.
2. The first person to go will drop the dice. Whichever color lands facing up will represent the color block he is to go to. It also represents the category of question he is to answer (unless the dice lands on “Skip”)
  - a. Examples:
    - i. Red = Strong
    - ii. Yellow = Positive
    - iii. Blue = Negative
    - iv. Black = Weak
    - v. Green = Fill in the Blank.
3. When the member gets to his color block, ask him a question from the colored stack that corresponds to his color block.
4. The second member will go after the first has answered (or passed) on his question. After the second member has answered his question, then the third member will go. This pattern will continue until all members are on the game board and it is the first member’s turn again. The first person to finish wins.

*There are six questions for each category but more color blocks than that so you will most likely repeat questions. This is okay as long as someone doesn’t get the same question twice. If this does happen, ask the next question in the stack.*

*The questions are listed below for you to review on your own before the game.*

## **Positive**

1. Tell us something you’re proud of.
2. Share a silly memory you have of your loved one.
3. When you think about what happened, what is something you’re thankful for?
4. What is something you do that is a comfort to you?
5. How often do you take a break from your grief and have fun?
6. How has your experience changed your priorities?

# Activity Sheet: The Emotions Game

## Negative

1. Do you worry about someone else dying?
2. What do you fear most since your loved one's death?
3. When do you feel alone most?
4. What or who do you have a hard time forgiving?
5. Have you ever felt embarrassed of your feelings toward the loss of your loved one?  
How did you cope with that?
6. When do you feel jealous?

## Strong

1. Tell of something has made you angry since the death.
2. What is something you wish you had not done?
3. What has been the greatest surprise since the death of your loved one?
4. Has anyone said anything that made you angry since the death?
5. What is something you wish your loved one had done?
6. Have you ever felt responsible for your loved one's death?

## Weak

1. Tell of a time you felt numb.
2. When, if ever, did you experience denial?
3. How have you or a family member pulled out of denial?
4. Has there been a time you felt helpless? What brought you back a sense of empowerment?
5. How many times have you felt like your loved one's death was a dream?
6. Tell of a time when you were tired of caring or feeling.

## Fill in the Blank

1. I feel guilty when \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When I let my feelings out, I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I wish my parents could understand that \_\_\_\_\_.
4. One of the ways I make it difficult for people to talk to me about the death or my feelings is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. My first night at group I felt \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When I think about my own death, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

## Session Eight

### Worksheet: Helping the Children Who Know They Made It Happen

It seems that as parents we spend a lot of time trying to get children to accept responsibility for the little things they do. Simple questions like “Who left the cereal bowl on the table?” or “Who knocked over the flower pot?” or “Who got out the building blocks?” are often greeted by a chorus of “Not Me!”

Since children are so adept at denying responsibility, it often comes as a surprise to learn what responsibility they do take on and keep to themselves.

When is my child likely to believe she made it happen?

“Made-it-happen” thoughts occur when important life events happen. Death, divorce, injury and illness raise questions for children about security. They become aware that something could happen to other people they need and love. They also become concerned about their own safety, about something happening to them.

Why does my child believe he made it happen?

“Made-it-happen” thoughts are often the attempt to find a cause for important events. Through believing his thoughts or actions were the cause, the child gains a sense of control over the event. If he is careful, he can make sure that the bad thing never happens again. However, such power is a tremendous responsibility and a tremendous burden. It leaves no room for mistakes or for being human.

“Made-it-happen” thoughts also occur when the child has done or thought something he feels was wrong. The thought or action may have happened minutes, hours or days before the event. Taking responsibility for something springs from guilt with the event seen as punishment. Rather than relieving guilt, the child’s guilt grows. Now she not only feels badly about what she did, but she also feels badly about what happened as a result.

How can I let them know they didn’t make it happen?

When important events occur, talk to your child about their real causes. Children love facts presented in simple terms. Complex situations can be simplified:

“Germs cause illness.”

“Tiny cells that get mixed up cause cancer.”

“Accidents happen when something is out-of-control (a falling rock) or when someone makes a mistake (turning down a one-way street and going the wrong way).”

Help your child understand the limits of her power. Point out other wishes that did not come true; other times when nothing happened after angry words were spoken. Turn guilt and regret into actions. Find things for the child to do now to deal with his feelings now.

Talk about your own feelings. As adults, our “I know I made it happen” thinking takes the form of, “I should have...” or “If only....” As we find a way to let go of this guilt, we also gain the insight to help our children.

Remember that “I-made-it-happen” thoughts can be hidden for years. Keep listening to what your child says now, as it may provide secrets to old burdens as well as new ones.

From *I Know I Made It Happen*

by Lynn Bennett Blackburn

Centering Corporation

Omaha, NE 68104

[www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)

### Text for *Liplap's Wish*

One winter morning, Liplap woke up and looked out his window. The first snowfall and covered his yard with a blanket of sparkling white!

He quickly tugged on his winter clothes and hopped outside – lip-lap, lip-lap – and got right down to work, rolling and shaping the snow. Soon he had made a snowbunny. But it didn't have a face.

"I wish," thought Liplap, "Grandma could see my snowbunny. She'd know how to make it look really great. She'd know how to give it a face."

But Grandma hadn't lived to see the snow this year. Liplap still couldn't believe it. He kept expecting to see her step from his house.

Liplap hopped back inside – lip-lap, lip-lap – and rummaged in the old satin-lined box where Grandma kept ribbons and bobbins and knickknacks and things. Then he hopped back outside and poked in five different kinds of buttons for the snowbunny's coat. He still half hoped Grandma would come out to see his snowbunny.

The front door opened. His father waved and said, "Liplap! Your snowbunny has no face!"

Suddenly, Liplap felt like crying. He hopped right by his father and back into bed.

Liplap's mother brought his carrot cake and hot cocoa, still steaming, but Liplap didn't feel like eating.

She patted his back, and sang him a lullaby until he drifted off to sleep.

Later that day, Liplap once again looked out his window. The setting sun was pulling rose and yellow scarves across the sky. His snowbunny looked cold. Liplap quickly bundled up again and hopped outside – lip-lap, lip-lap.

He threw his own scarf around the snowbunny's shoulders, his rumpled cap on the snowbunny's head. Liplap pulled off his mittens and slid them over the snowbunny's snow paws. He cupped his own cold little paws and blew on them the way Grandma used to do.

Liplap shivered. He peered hard at the snowbunny's face, and then he dug down into the moist earth and found three shiny pebbles. With the black stones he made two shiny eyes and a little black nose. Then with some pine needles, he made the snowbunny's whiskers.

The snowbunny's eyes gleamed tiny lights from the last of the sun...then went dark. Something went dark inside of Liplap too. He found a stick and carved a frown in the snowbunny's face.

Then he hopped back into his house feeling very sad.

That night, Liplap's mother knelt with him at the bedroom window.

“There’s an old Rabbit’s tale,” she said, “that you grandma used to tell. It’s about how, long ago, when the First Rabbits died, they became stars in the sky. And to this day, they come out at night and watch over us. And they remind us that our loved ones shine forever in our hearts. That’s why we wish upon a star.”

“Do you think Grandma is a star?” asked Liplap. “Well, look there,” said his mother, pointing to the sky. “See that low star shining white – as white as Grandma’s fur? Do you think that’s her?” asked Liplap eagerly.

“I think you could wish it were,” answered his mother.

Liplap closed his eyes and wished. And when he opened his eyes, that white star seemed to wink and sparkle. It made him tingle.

“Now she’s with us forever,” he said, as he curled up in bed.

Soon Liplap was dreaming.

The next morning, when Liplap hopped outside – lip-lap, lip-lap – he saw that the frown on the snowbunny’s face had melted. In its place, Liplap stuck a carrot.

“Are you hungry, Snowbunny?” he asked. “I am.”

Then Liplap ate five carrots – one for each point of a star.

*Liplap’s Wish* by Jonathan London  
Illustrated by Sylvia Long  
Chronicle Books  
85 Second Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

### Breakway Feelings Chart



Excited



Friendly



Satisfied



Tired



Worried



Mean



Festive



Cool



Guilty



Sick



Quiet



Afraid



Curious



Happy



Hurt



Loved



Shocked



Confident



Sad



Angry



Embarrassed



Confused



Bored



Lonely



Silly

### Text for *Geranium Morning*

I have the same name as my dad — Timothy Brandon Blair. But ever since Dad died, nothing's been the same. Dad used to leave work early to take care of me after school. Mom works in an office and can't come home early. Now I take care of myself.

Dad used to take me on outings. I loved the reptile house at the zoo. Dad liked going to the arboretum. Now when I go out, I see other kids with their dads. I hate not having my dad anymore.

I'm glad about one thing, though. I have a new friend. Her name is Frannie, and she understands. Frannie knows my secrets, like how I couldn't sleep in on Saturdays because I had nightmares of my last morning with Dad. I can still see him poking his head in my room. "Want to come to the nursery?" he asked. "It's time to get my geraniums."

Once each spring, Dad added to his collection. Our porch was full of planters. The planters were full of geraniums. I thought he should get a new hobby, but Dad said, "Geranium morning's a family tradition!"

I hoped he'd go on without me this year, so I scrunched down in bed. I said I was tired, even though I wasn't.

Really, I didn't want to wait around while he picked out the plants. And I especially didn't want to ride home balancing those pots on my lap. Geraniums smell funny, sort of like sour old pennies. Dad liked the smell because it reminded him of his grandfather.

My friend Frannie knows my other secret too — why I can't stand cocoa. That morning I told Dad, "I'll be up for cocoa when you get home." Mom always made cocoa on geranium mornings. "All right," he said. "I'll miss you. See you when I get home." But he never did.

Maybe "I'll miss you" was the last thing he said. I can't quite remember. I do remember Mom screaming when I came down for cocoa. I thought Dad would be home any minute. I didn't know the police had just left. That was the worst morning of my life! Right away my relatives came. Before I could ask any questions, my aunt hurried all the kids outside to play. I didn't want to play! I wanted somebody to tell me what was going on.

I wanted to see my dad. Finally Mom called me into the kitchen and told me what happened. "A man was driving his truck the wrong way. Your dad didn't see it in time. He was killed."

Mom started crying and reached out to hug me. I didn't mean to pull away. I thought I was going to throw up. I wish I'd known Frannie then. Even with people all around, I felt so alone.

For weeks my relatives tried to cheer me up. I didn't want to go to the zoo or any other place I had been to with Dad. But I didn't want to be left alone either, especially on Saturday mornings.

Mom quit cooking, so we ran out for burgers almost every night. I never thought I could get sick of hamburgers! I tried to cook, but my macaroni tasted even worse. Mom yelled at me a lot whenever I made even little mistakes. Didn't she know it was hard on me too? After all, I am just a kid. Maybe she wished it'd been me instead of Dad. Maybe if I'd been there to hold the geraniums...

Nobody understood how I felt. But then, I didn't understand myself either. I'd be sad one minute, mad the next, then I'd be laughing out of control. It seemed like my old friends didn't like me anymore.

And my teachers made me nervous. They said I needed discipline, like the school bully, Jeremiah Turkle. But I wasn't like Jeremiah! Things just bothered me more than they used to, and sometimes that got me in trouble.

One day after school, Jeremiah made me really mad. But it turned out all right because that's how I met Frannie. Jeremiah was shooting spitballs at some girls. Frannie, who'd just transferred to our school, didn't see him and came walking by. Jeremiah leaped out in front of her and wouldn't let her pass. I hadn't met Frannie yet, so I didn't know if she could defend herself. But I knew Jeremiah hurt people, and I didn't like people getting hurt. "Stop it!" I hollered.

Jeremiah wouldn't stop. Instead, he tugged on her sweater. Without even thinking about how big he was, I grabbed Jeremiah's shirt and spun him around. He fell into the dirt. That surprised everybody!

But then a teacher came around the side of the building, and we all took off. Frannie said thanks as we ran across the playground. "Sure," I said, following her through the gate. I liked being a hero.

Then she surprised me: "Your dad died last year, didn't he?" I couldn't believe she said that after I'd just helped her. "None of your business!" "I know it's none of my business," she apologized. "A teacher told me about your dad. My mom is dying." I wasn't expecting that either.

"I'm sorry." What was I supposed to say to a girl whose mother was dying? "I'm really sorry," I said again. I meant it.

My stomach felt awful, and I couldn't swallow. I wanted to leave her there, but I heard myself saying, "I'll walk you home." I didn't talk to her though. I was glad when we got to her house.

"Well, see you later." I didn't know what else to say. "Want to come in for some juice?" "No thanks." I hung my head. "It's my mom, isn't it?" She looked hurt. I couldn't answer. "I thought you'd understand!" she cried. The door slammed behind her.

I felt about as small as the ants I stepped over on my way down the walk. The next day whenever I saw Frannie, she wouldn't look at me. I wanted to forget about her, but I couldn't. Finally after school, I went to talk to her. "I'm sorry," I said. "It's all right." She didn't look all right though. She looked sad.

"I guess was scared," I said. "I've never known anyone who's dying. It made me think of my dad." "Do you still miss him?" "Yeah." I was beginning to like Frannie. "Want to come over now?" she asked. "Sure. I just need to call my mom from your house."

We talked while we walked. She asked me if I was still scared to meet her mom. "Well," I said, "Maybe a little. I know this sounds dumb, but does your mom have a disease that other people can catch?" "No," Frannie answered. "I used to wonder that too until I asked my dad. It's something hardly anybody gets. And it's something the doctors can't fix. Mom says we just have to be brave."

I had another lump in my throat, but I didn't feel scared anymore. We raced to Frannie's house. When we went into the living room, Frannie's mom was lying on the couch. She looked tired and a little bit boney. I liked her voice though. It sounded scratchy but soft. I felt fine with Frannie's mom. My mom liked having Frannie around too. She even started cooking again. Sometimes Frannie came over for dinner. When Mom had a meeting, I'd stay late at Frannie's. Her mom and dad would play games with us.

Then, just when things seemed to be going so well, Frannie’s mom got worse. For days, Frannie and I didn’t play together. Frannie would go right home after school. One morning, she didn’t come to school at all. My teacher told us that Frannie’s mother had died. I couldn’t pay attention in class. As soon as the last bell rang, I ran right to Frannie’s house. Lots of people were standing around. Frannie was curled up on the couch. “I’m sorry I couldn’t call you,” she said, “but I’m glad you’re here.” I knew exactly how Frannie felt. I sat next to her on the couch all afternoon.

The days after that are kind of a blur. Frannie and I were always together, except on Thursday nights. She had joined a counseling group. “They’re all kids like us,” she said. “We talk to each other about how we feel. Why don’t you come with me?” “No,” I said. “Mom wouldn’t let me. She says we’ve got to get on with our lives.” Frannie disagreed. “My dad says it takes a long time to settle things inside yourself.”

Frannie seemed smarter than me. Then all of a sudden, she was crying. I didn’t mind. When she stopped, I tried to make her feel better. “At least you got to say good-bye.” “Yeah, but I had to watch her go.”

I thought hard about that. I didn’t know which was worse. Frannie was sniffing again. I wondered if I should be quiet, but I couldn’t stop myself. “You know what bothers me the most?” I asked. “The ‘if onlys’—‘if only I’d gone with Dad. I know I would’ve seen the truck in time’ or ‘if only he hadn’t wanted more of those stinking geraniums!’”

Frannie looked at me. “‘If onlys’ won’t bring him back.” She was right.

I don’t know how Frannie and I would have made it alone. The sadness didn’t go away, but knowing that we had helped each other. The weeks faded into months. Frannie’s dad took us out a lot—more hamburgers! And on Saturday mornings, Mom let Frannie come over.

Last Saturday, though, I slept in — for the first time since Dad died. When I woke up, I called Frannie. “Want to come to the nursery with me?”

“Geranium morning?” she asked. “Yes. I have something to settle.” It was time to get Dad’s geraniums.

*Geranium Morning*

By E. Sandy Powell

Carol Rhoda Books, Inc.

c/o The Lerner Group

241 First Avenue North

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

## Worksheet: Things Over Which I Have and Don't Have Control

Sometimes I think about some things I wish I had done differently before \_\_\_\_\_ died, and those things are...

1.

2.

3.

Sometimes people feel bad (or guilty) because they cannot make those around them feel better since their special person died. (Check one)

I feel that way \_\_\_\_\_.

I do not feel that way \_\_\_\_\_.

The people I would like to HELP feel better now are...

1.

2.

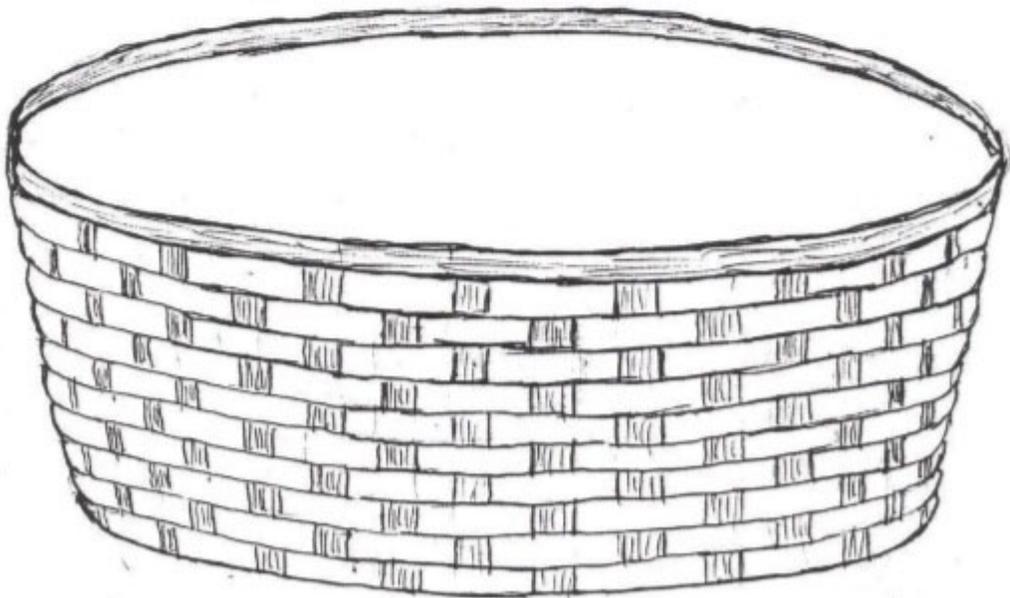
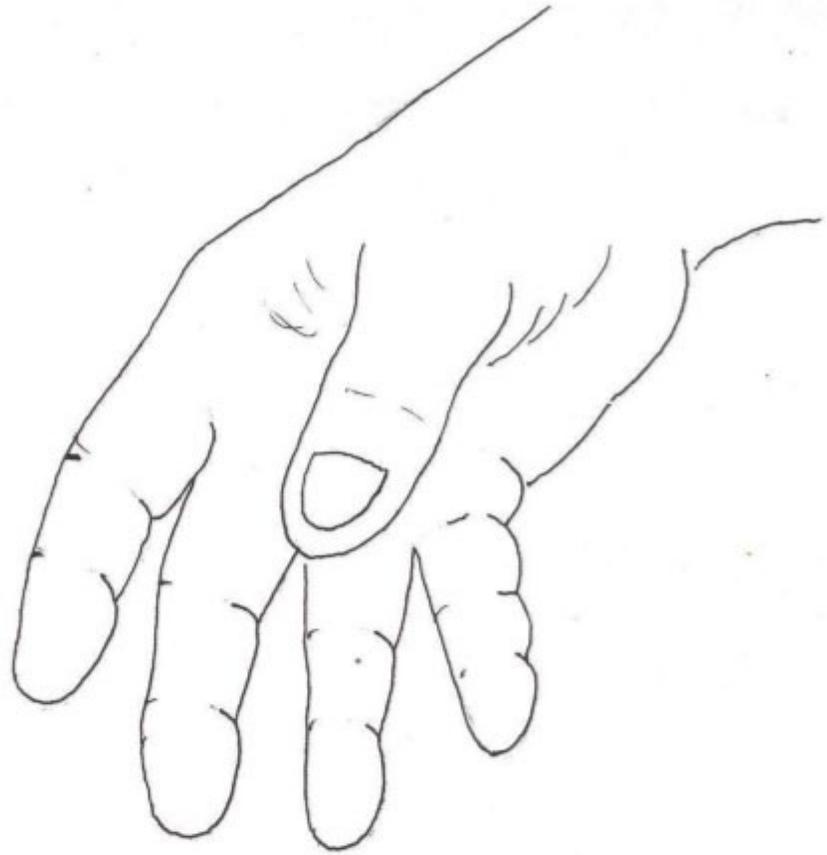
3.

I cannot make their hurt go away, but what I can do for them is...

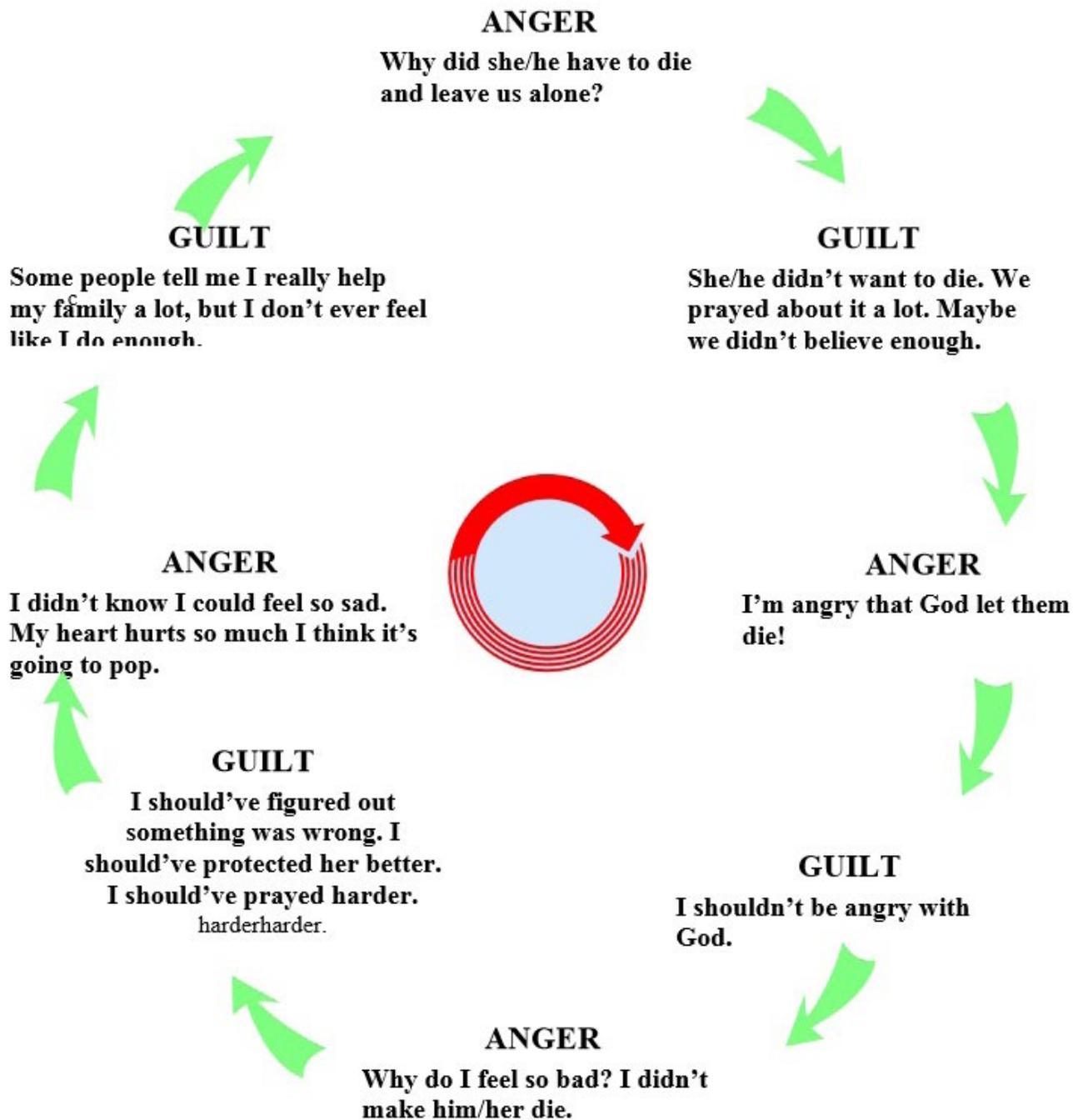
1.

2.

3.



# ILLUSTRATION OF A POSSIBLE CYCLE OF ANGER AND GUILT



## Session Nine

**Text for *Life Doesn't Frighten Me***

by Maya Angelou

Shadows on the wall  
 Noises down the hall  
 Life doesn't frighten me at all

Bad dogs barking loud  
 Big ghosts in a cloud  
 Life doesn't frighten me at all

Mean old Mother Goose  
 Lions on the loose  
 They don't frighten me at all

Dragons breathing flame  
 On my counterpane  
 That doesn't frighten me at all.

I go boo  
 Make them shoo  
 I make fun  
 Way they run  
 I won't cry  
 So they fly  
 I just smile  
 They go wild

Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Tough guys fight  
 All alone at night  
 Life doesn't frighten me at all.

Panthers in the park  
 Strangers in the dark  
 No, they don't frighten me at all.

That new classroom where  
 Boys all pull my hair  
 (Kissy little girls  
 With their hair in curls)  
 They don't frighten me at all.

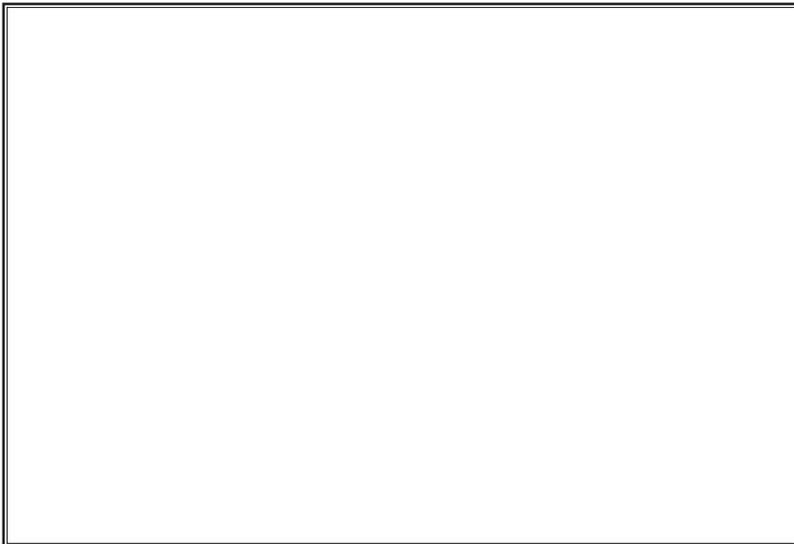
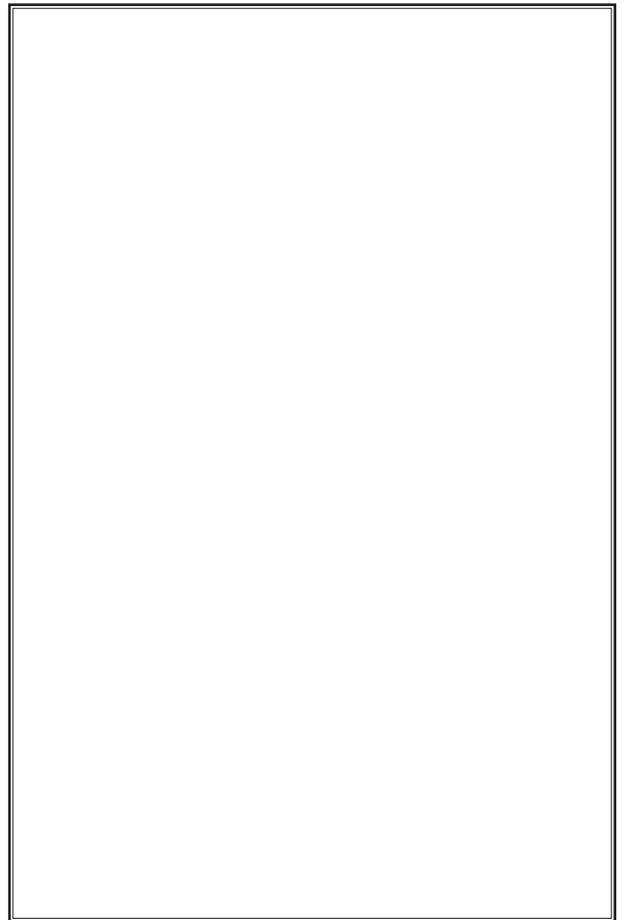
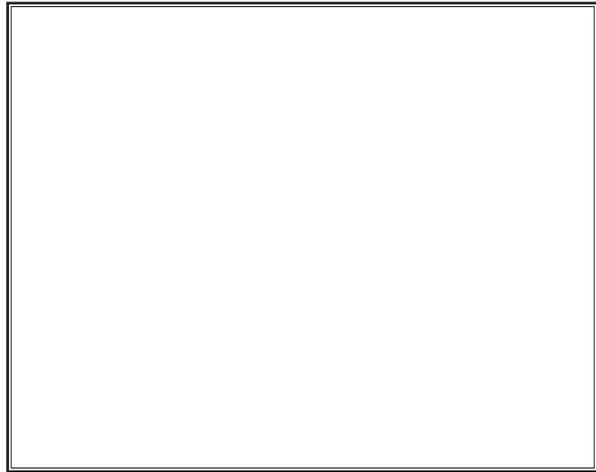
Don't show me frogs and snakes  
 And listen for my scream,  
 If I'm afraid at all  
 It's only in my dreams.

I've got a magic charm  
 That I keep up my sleeve  
 I can walk the ocean floor  
 And never have to breathe.

Life doesn't frighten me at all  
 Not at all  
 Not at all.

Life doesn't frighten me at all.

These are fears or worries that I have had since my special person died...



# Activity Sheet: Guatemalan “Worry Dolls”

## Supplies

Clothespins  
Felt or material scraps  
Toothpicks  
Tacky glue  
Embroidery floss or yarn  
Scissors

## Directions

1. Wrap the upper part of a clothespin in material or floss (do not separate the strings if you are using floss) stopping at the waist area if you are making a floss blouse or shirt, continuing on for a dress.
2. To make arms, cut a toothpick to suitable length and wrap with the same color or pattern as shirt. Glue arms to shirt and secure with a couple of additional rounds of embroidery thread.
3. For the lower body, if you choose to use floss, begin at the waist and wrap the lower portion of the body with floss.
  - a. To make pants, wrap body, then one leg, and then the next.
  - b. For a skirt, simply wrap the floss to the length you want. A tiny dot of glue will help secure any loose edges of floss. Material scraps can be used to create different types of skirts or dresses for the doll.
4. Long hair can be made for the doll by looping floss around two or three fingers, tying in the middle and cutting the opposite end. Glue to the doll’s head. Short hair is made in a similar fashion. Make the hair longer than you think necessary – it’s easy to give your doll a haircut!

Text for *Who Am I?*

Don't be fooled by me...

Don't be fooled by the face I wear.

For I wear a thousand masks; masks that I'm afraid to take off...and none of them are me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature with me, but don't be fooled. Please don't be fooled...

I give the impression that I'm secure...that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without.

That confidence is my name and coolness is my game; that the water's calm, and I'm in command, and that I need no one. But don't believe me. Please...

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask.

Beneath this lies no complacency.

Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, and aloneness.

But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.

I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear...of being exposed.

That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,

A nonchalant, sophisticated façade,

To help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows.

But such a glance is precisely my salvation.

My only salvation, and I know it!

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to.

I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance and love.

I'm afraid you'll think less of me...that you'll laugh at me, and your laugh would kill me.

I'm afraid that deep down I'm nothing; that I'm no good – and that you will see this and reject me.

So I play my game, my desperate game – with a façade of assurance without, and a trembling child within.

And so begins the parade of masks. And my life becomes a front.

I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk.

I tell you everything that is really nothing, and nothing of what's everything...of what's crying within me.

So when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm saying.

Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying...what I'd like to be able to say...what for survival I need to say, but what I can't say.

I dislike hiding. Honestly! I dislike the superficial game I'm playing; the phony game.

I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous...and me.

But you've got to help me. You've got to hold out your hand, even when that's the last thing I seem to want.

Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of breathing death.

Only you can call me into aliveness.

Each time you're kind, and gentle and encouraging,

Each time you try to understand because you really care,

My heart begins to grow wings, very small wings, very feeble wings, but wings.

With your sensitivity and sympathy, and your power of understanding,

You can breathe life into me. I want you to know that.

It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself...that I am worth something.

That is, if it's followed by acceptance...if it's followed by love.

Who am I, you may wonder...I am someone you know very well...

For I am you, and I am every man you meet, and I am every woman you meet.

Author Unknown

## Session Ten

### “If You’re Happy and You Know It”

“If you’re happy and you know it” is a well-known folk song that you can sing using any feeling.

If you’re happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands (Clap, Clap)  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands (Clap, Clap)  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
Then your face will surely show it.  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands (Clap, Clap).

### The following are ideas for other feelings...

If you’re lonely and you know it, give yourself a hug. (Hug self)  
If you’re angry and you know it, stomp your feet. (Stomp feet)  
If you’re sad and you know it, shed a tear. (Boo-hoo)  
If your friends are feeling sad, tell them you care (Say, “I care!”)  
If you have memories and you know it, shake your head. (Say, “I remember!”)

## Activity Sheet: Fearless Fish Lantern

### Supplies

Cut outs of fish (one for each child)  
 Markers and pens  
 Six 12-inch by 18-inch construction paper strips per child  
 Hole punch  
 String

### Directions

- Give each child a fish to color and design (since the fish will be hanging, encourage them to color both sides).
- Once they have finished with their fish, pass out six strips of 12-inch by 18-inch construction paper to create the lantern-shaped ocean. Lay the strips horizontally.
- Each strip should have a worry they have or something they are scared of written on it. They can decorate these with words or pictures of their worries.
- Cut two, two-inch border strips – one from the bottom and one from the top. Make cuts about one inch apart.
- Attach each strip to the bottom and top borders with glue (see picture below).



- To hang the lantern, punch three holes in the top border and attach string or yarn to each hole.
- Tie the ends of the strings together and punch a hole in the fish.
- Tie a string to the fish and knot the end in with the lantern strings so that the fish hangs inside the lantern.

## Text for *A Book of Hugs*

There are all kinds of hugs in the world...

PUPPY HUGS. Puppy hugs are very soft and wet.

BEAR HUGS. Bear hugs are very strong. Be careful not to hurt.

OCTOPUS HUGS. An octopus hugs with its whole body.

FISH HUGS. Fish hugs are very cold and seldom returned. (P.S. Never hug a shark.)

PORCUPINE HUGS. Porcupine hugs are done very carefully.

FRAIDYCAT HUGS. Fraidycat hugs make you feel safe.

PIGGYBACK HUGS. A good way to travel or see a parade.

MOMMY HUGS. You can never hug a Mommy too much.

DADDY HUGS. Daddy hugs are best when he first walks in the door.

BROTHER HUGS. Usually called a buddy hug. (Note: A circle of buddy huggers is called a huddle.)

GRANDPA HUGS. Grandpa hugs are sometimes given while sitting.

GRANDMA HUGS. Grandma hugs can be found anywhere, but are especially nice in the kitchen.

SISTER HUGS. Also known as a single-arm hug. Single-arm hugs are good for when you walk together (even if you aren't sisters).

BABY HUGS. Baby hugs are given with a little tickle.

GREAT-AUNT MARY HUGS. A Great-Aunt Mary hug can be given only once a year. (You will usually end up with lipstick on your cheek.)

ARM HUGS. Arm hugs are good if you are too little to get your arms around someone.

HAND HUGS. Usually called shaking hands. Never hand-hug with dirty hands unless you both have dirty hands.

KNEE HUGS. Knee hugs are good if you are tall. (Warning: Never try to knee-hug someone who is moving.)

BLANKET HUGS. Everyone needs some kind of blanket.

TREE HUGS. Some trees are easier to hug than others. (Note: If you hug a pine tree too long, you get stuck on it.)

ROCK HUGS. Rock hugs are very hard on your face.

ICE-CUBE HUGS. Ice-cube hugs are quite common in February.

LAMPPOST HUGS. A lamppost hug can save you from a painful experience.

SANDWICH HUGS. The whole family can get into a sandwich hug.

BIRTHDAY HUGS. A birthday hug is a present anyone can afford.

REPORT CARD HUGS. A Hug; Bee Hug; Sea Hug.

HURT HUGS. Hurt hugs make the pain go away.

GOODNIGHT HUGS. Also sleep-tight and don't -let-the-bedbugs-bite hugs.

*All hugs are wonderful, but the best hugs of all are...I-love-you hugs.*

*Facts and Hints About Hugging: There is no such thing as a bad hug; there are only good hugs and great hugs. Hug someone at least once a day and twice on a rainy day. Hug with a smile; closed eyes are optional. A snuggle is a longish hug. Bedtime hugs help chase away bad dreams. Never hug tomorrow when you could hug today.*

## Feelings Wheel

Create a Feelings Wheel with a spinning pointer to land on one of the following feelings around the rim of the wheel:

SCARED

SNEAKY

BOSSY

HAPPY

ANGRY

SAD

TOUGH

SHY

PUZZLED

PROUD

LOVE

CONFIDENT



# Activity Sheet: Grief Twister

## Supplies:

- “Twister” game
- Questions for Grief Twister

## Directions:

Play the game “Twister” as you normally would. The exception to this game is that every dot has a corresponding question to go with it. Once a player has spun, he/she must answer the question, or use the “I Pass” rule, before he/she can make their next move.

The last to fall wins.

Here is the grid of questions for the “Twister” mat:

What is a memory?	Tell about a happy memory with your special person	What do you miss most about the person who died?	Tell about a holiday spent with your special person
Tell about a meal shared with your special person	What advice would you give a friend who had someone special die?	Tell about a gift you gave your special person	Tell how you feel when you look at photos of your special person
Tell about a funny moment with your special person	What fear have you had since the death?	Tell about a sad memory with your special person	What do you remember most about the funeral?
What is something about yourself that you're proud of	Why is it important to talk about memories of someone who died?	Tell about a gift your special person gave you	Tell about the last time you saw your special person
What happens when someone dies?	How did you feel about coming to group your first night?	What have you learned about grief since the death of your loved one?	How is death discussed in your home?
How do you feel when your mom or dad cries?	When do you, if ever, feel jealous?	How do you avoid answering questions about your loved one?	What is something you're thankful for since the death of your loved one?

# Activity Sheet: You're on the Ball

## Directions

*This activity is similar to musical chairs, but instead of chairs you will be using a ball.*

1. Play music as participants throw the ball to each other. When the music stops, the individual holding the ball selects and answers a change question.
2. After the participant answers the question, ask anyone else if they would like to answer the question.
3. Continue with additional rounds and process.

## Questions

- Name one way that things have changed at home since your loved one died.
- Name one way that things have changed at school since your loved one died.
- Is change good or bad?
- What are a few things that help you deal with change?
- Name a change that is easy to cope with.
- Why do things change?
- Does change last forever?
- Name one change you got to choose and one change you didn't get to choose.
- Name one person who understands the changes you have been through.
- If you had a magic wand and could change anything in the present, what would it be?
- If you had a magic wand and could change anything in the past, what would it be?
- Do you feel like the same person since your loved one died or do you feel different?  
How?



# Activity Sheet: Memory Skittles

## Supplies

- Bag of Skittles candy

## Directions

Pass around the bag of Skittles, having each student choose three-to-five pieces, based on the amount of time you will have to process.

Introduce the meaning assigned to each color. Based on the colors chosen, students share about themselves. As always, students can pass if they wish.

## Growing Skittles:

- Red= a change or challenge that has made you stronger
- Yellow= how you felt when this change first occurred
- Purple= how you feel about this change now
- Green= a hope or wish that you have for yourself in the future

# Activity Sheet: The Good Mourning Game

## Purpose

Grief in children is often less obvious than grief in adults. Children are more likely to act out, to joke about, deny or cover up their feelings. Therefore, it is especially important that children have an opportunity to express and understand feelings related to loss.

The Good Mourning Game provides such an opportunity. The game board shows nature's basic cycle that moves from stormy intensity to relative calm, like the grief cycle. The game cards address various dimensions of grief and offer children several avenues to explore in working through the grieving process. The game allows them to resolve their grief in an open, supportive and caring environment.

## Directions

1. Give each player two PASS CARDS.
2. Ask each player to choose a game piece and place it on any of the five SMILING SUNS located on the game board.
3. The youngest player is to begin the game by rolling the die and moving his or her pawn up the closest star point in a clockwise direction.
4. When a player lands on a blank space, s/he draws a card, reads it, and responds to it. If the player is on the green star point, COPING, s/he draws a green card, and so on. Any attempt to respond earns the player a reward token of the same color.
5. When a player lands on a shooting star, s/he may jump to another shooting star or stay on the shooting star.
6. PASS CARDS can be used to skip a turn or to jump to a Smiling Sun on a different star point if the player has already earned three reward tokens on his or her current star point.
7. When a player has earned three tokens on a star point, s/he moves to the beginning of the Star Path in the center of the game board. With each roll of the die, the player moves his or her pawn, then draws a purple AFFIRMATION CARD, which is read aloud by the adult. When a player completes the Star Path, s/he receives a Shining Star – which serves as a reminder of new coping skills learned.

*The object of the game is to earn three tokens from each star point. Then, complete the Star Path in the center of the board to get a SHINING STAR.*

# Activity Sheet: The Good Mourning Game

## Game Cards Key

### *Remembering* – Blue Cards

These cards allow players to share their memories, hold onto those memories that are special, and talk about those memories that may involve guilt, regrets, or other unresolved feelings.

### *Imagining* – Yellow Cards

These cards offer the players ideas about basic relaxation skills. These ideas about relaxation may help them realize that the way they think affects how their body feels.

### *Coping* – Green Cards

These cards help players explore their feelings and identify their own coping strategies.

### *Playing* – Red Cards

These cards give players a chance to disengage from the intense and sometimes painful work of grieving and to enjoy the therapeutic effects of laughter.

### *Feeling* – Orange Cards

These cards allow players to express whatever feelings they may have about their loss. When emotions are validated, grief becomes more manageable.

### *Affirmation* – Purple Cards

These cards acknowledge players' efforts to share their grief. Players are to practice supporting each other through verbal praise.

### *Pass Cards* – White Cards

These cards allow children to skip questions they don't want to answer. The use of Pass Cards can help the facilitators to know the areas with which the group member is having the hardest time.

# Activity Sheet: The Goodbye Game

## Purpose

*This game was designed to help grieving children complete the mourning process as well as to teach non-bereaved children to communicate about subjects related to death and dying. Experienced counselors may also use the game as a diagnostic tool to learn about the child's underlying psychological processes associated with grief, fear of death or fear of someone dying.*

## Directions

1. The game begins by players placing their pawns on the start space. The first player rolls the die and moves his or her pawn along the leaf path the number of spaces on the die.
2. When the player lands on a colored leaf, s/he chooses the corresponding color card and reads it aloud (or the adult reads it depending on the age of the child).
3. The player is rewarded with a token if s/he answers the question or performs the designated task.
4. Sometimes the child may not want to respond. This is okay, however, s/he does not get a token if s/he chooses not to respond.
5. If a player lands on the log, he or she must move in the direction indicated by the arrow, i.e., forward or backward (it's natural to regress during the grief process).
6. A player can also accelerate the process towards the end by landing on a space that leads up the stream.
7. The object of the game is to accumulate as many chips as possible by the time the player reaches the finish space (sunset). Alternatively, one could be declared the winner if s/he accumulates the most chips within the therapeutic hour.
8. Finally at the end of the game, each player is encouraged to make a statement pertaining to a special memory associated with the loss of whom they are grieving.

## Text for *Today I Feel Silly*

Today I feel silly.

Mom says it's the heat. I put rouge on the cat and gloves on my feet. I ate noodles for breakfast and pancakes at night. I dressed like a star and was quite a sight.

Today my mood's bad. I feel grumpy and mean. I picked up my room. It still isn't clean. I forgot to feed Franny and water the fern. And the cocoa I'm making is starting to burn.

Today I am angry. You'd better stay clear. My face is all pinched and red ear to ear. My friends had a play date. They left me out. My feelings are hurt. I want to shout!

Today I am joyful. My mood is first-rate. My friend's sleeping over. She said she can't wait. My freckles are popping, the sun is so bright. I ran in the relay with all of my might.

Today I'm confused. My life's getting hairy. Sam says he's my boyfriend, but he also likes Mary. My mom told my father he might be a dad. I might get a brother. I'm not sure I'm glad.

Today I am quiet, my mom understands. She gave me two ice creams and then we held hands. We went to the movies and then had a bite. I cried just a little and then felt all right.

Today I'm excited there's so much to do. I'm going to sell cookies and lemonade, too. I'm starting a club to go clean up the park. And I've got a big crush on my teacher named Mark.

Today I am cranky so nothing seems right. I have diarrhea and broke my new kite. Mom dyed her hair orange. My dad shaved his beard. My tooth came in crooked. This family is weird.

Today I am lonely. I feel so small. My Auntie's away. I wish that she'd call. My mom's working late and my dad has the flu. And although I've got stuff I've got nothing to do.

Today I am happy. I'm walking on air. I learned how to knit and to French-braid my hair. I did my first solo in hip-hop and jazz. This day's been so great, I am full of pizzazz.

Today I'm discouraged and frustrated – see? I tried Roller-blading and fell on my knee. I really want straight hair, but mine's curly-q. Should I cut it or grow it, oh what should I do?

Today I am sad, my mood's heavy and gray. There's a frown on my face and it's been there all day. My best friend and I had a really big fight. She said that I tattled and I know that she's right.

Today my mood's great, it's the absolute best. I rode a two-wheeler and passed my math test. I played soccer at recess and we won the game. I sang in the show and my parents both came.

I'd rather feel silly, excited or glad, than cranky or grumpy, discouraged or sad. But moods are just something that happen each day. Whatever I'm feeling inside is okay.

How do you feel today?

## Session Twelve

### A Lot Of Things You Can Think Or Feel When Someone Has Died

Below is a whole list of things you might think or feel (or have thought or felt) when someone has died. Read through the list as quickly as you can and check the thoughts and feelings that come close to describing the same thoughts and feelings you have experienced (even if you just felt them for a moment). Don't think too much about each one; just go through the checklist as quickly as you can!

- \_\_\_ 1. Sometimes I feel left out; people forget to ask about how I am doing.
- \_\_\_ 2. Sometimes I get angry with the person for dying.
- \_\_\_ 3. Sometimes I feel sad and hurt when I think about it.
- \_\_\_ 4. Sometimes I feel guilty.
- \_\_\_ 5. It really feels weird to be around other people who knew the person that died.
- \_\_\_ 6. I wonder about death and dying.
- \_\_\_ 7. Sometimes I feel guilty cause I don't want to want to be sad all the time.
- \_\_\_ 8. Sometimes I get jealous because other people don't have these feelings.
- \_\_\_ 9. Sometimes this all feels like a dream that will go away when I wake up.
- \_\_\_ 10. Sometimes I feel real confused and out-of-sorts.
- \_\_\_ 11. I feel helpless, like there isn't anything I could do to stop it or to help.
- \_\_\_ 12. I wonder if the same thing could happen to someone else in my family.
- \_\_\_ 13. Anything can hit you the wrong way and bring up all kinds of feelings.
- \_\_\_ 14. Not crying means that I am strong and I can hold it together.
- \_\_\_ 15. I wonder if I should have acted differently toward the person who died.
- \_\_\_ 16. Sometimes I find myself getting angry at the person who died.
- \_\_\_ 17. Sometimes I find myself mad at God for letting this happen.
- \_\_\_ 18. I wonder about what would have happened if they did not die.
- \_\_\_ 19. I need a break from thinking about all this because I still need to have fun.
- \_\_\_ 20. I know I'm just a normal person in an abnormal situation.
- \_\_\_ 21. Sometimes I start thinking that the person really isn't dead.

## Session Twelve

### A Lot Of Things You Can Think Or Feel When Someone Has Died

- \_\_\_ 22. People are always trying to get me to be happy when I need to feel sad.
- \_\_\_ 23. Sometimes my family isn't very helpful and I have to talk to friends.
- \_\_\_ 24. Sometimes my friends aren't helpful and I rely on my family for support.
- \_\_\_ 25. I find myself being more cautious or careful these days.
- \_\_\_ 26. I feel like the sadness will never go away.
- \_\_\_ 27. Sometimes I feel like I'm the only person who feels the way I do about all of this.
- \_\_\_ 28. I get mad because this is so unfair.
- \_\_\_ 29. I get confused sometimes, and it's hard to concentrate and remember things.
- \_\_\_ 30. Sometimes I get scared for no reason.
- \_\_\_ 31. I feel like I am a different person now that this has happened to me.
- \_\_\_ 32. Sometimes I pretend it hasn't happened.
- \_\_\_ 33. Life goes on and I get mad because it's not the same
- \_\_\_ 34. I can still be happy even though this is happening to me.
- \_\_\_ 35. Sometimes when I think about it, I don't feel anything at all.
- \_\_\_ 36. I'd like to erase this all from my brain.
- \_\_\_ 37. Sometimes I don't want to think or talk about it because it's too much.
- \_\_\_ 38. I just can't help worrying about other people in my family.
- \_\_\_ 39. Sometimes I have dreams and even nightmares about the person who died.
- \_\_\_ 40. Sometimes I cry for no reason.
- \_\_\_ 41. Sometimes I get afraid to be alone.
- \_\_\_ 42. I get worried or feel anxious more than I used to
- \_\_\_ 43. Nighttime can be the hardest time—that's when I can't stop thinking about it.
- \_\_\_ 44. Sometimes I think I'll never get used to this.
- \_\_\_ 45. Sometimes I feel guilty because I wasn't always nice to that person.
- \_\_\_ 46. Sometimes I can't remember what it was like before the person died.

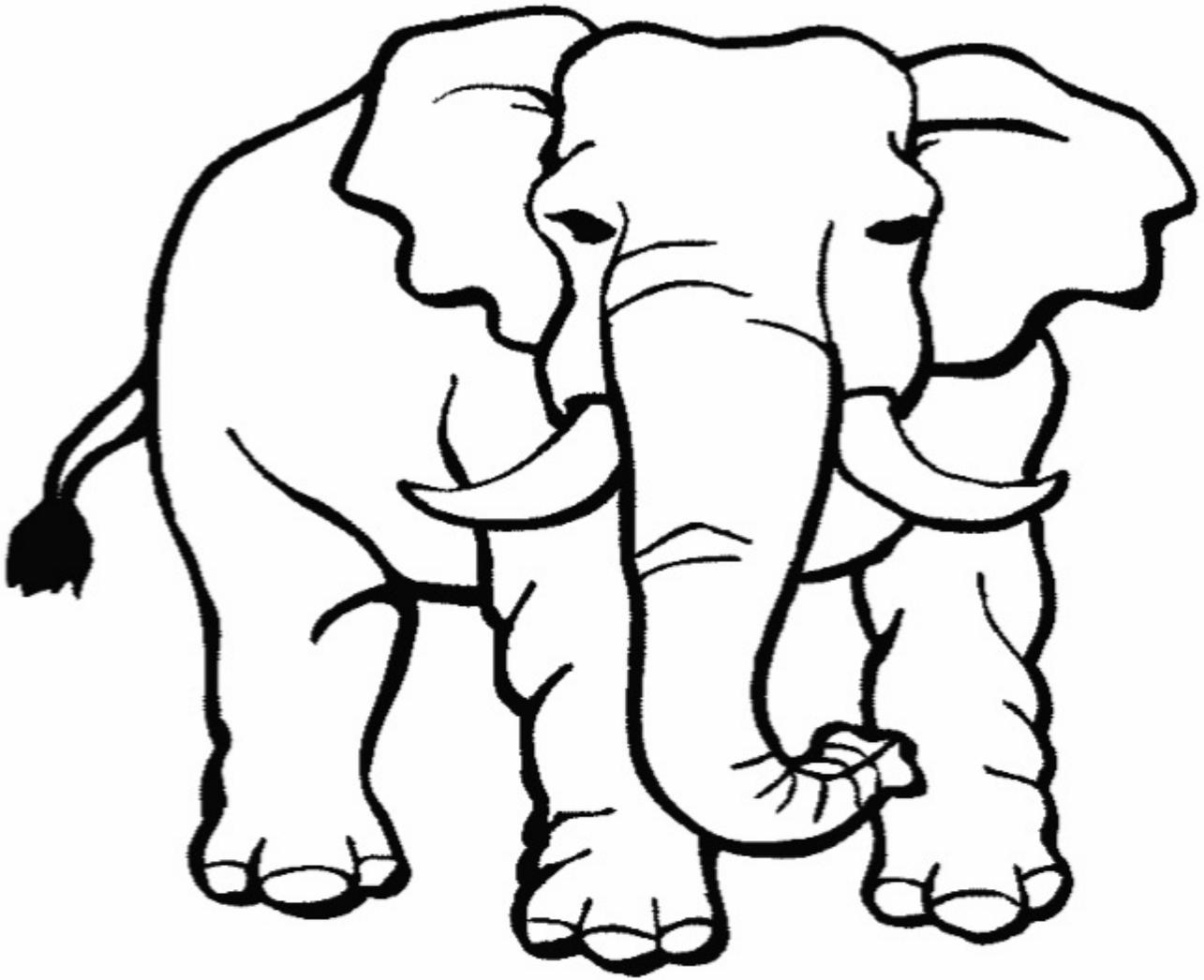
## Session Twelve

### A Lot Of Things You Can Think Or Feel When Someone Has Died

- \_\_\_ 47. I know what has happened but don't understand why.
- \_\_\_ 48. I wonder if the person who died knows that I love him or her.
- \_\_\_ 49. Nobody asked me what I think or how I feel.
- \_\_\_ 50. I know no matter what happens, I am going to be okay.

How many thoughts and feelings did you check? Maybe you recognized ten or twenty, or maybe even all fifty. Some of these things are hard to feel and some are hard to admit that you feel.

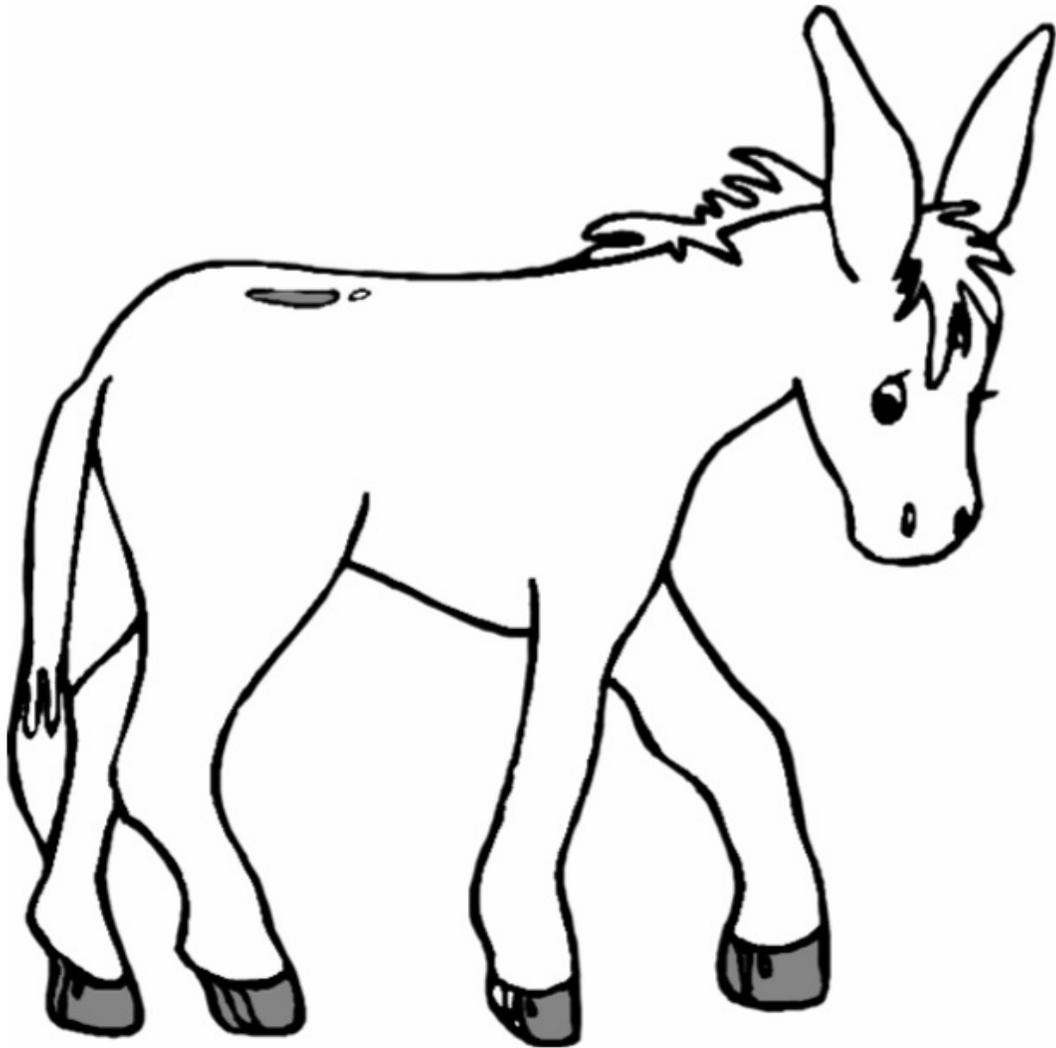
Remember, the thing about thoughts and feelings is that they are not right or wrong, and they are not good or bad. They just are, and you can't help thinking or feeling the way you do about anything. It is what you do to take care of your thoughts and feelings that matter. Some of these feelings feel good, and some feel not so good. All these thoughts and feelings are normal! Everyone who experiences grief can think and feel these ways. And, many persons, big and little, find it helpful to share these with others. Find someone with whom you feel safe to share your special thoughts and feelings with.



*Elephants are said to have a good memory. Grieving people need to **remember** to keep their loved one fresh in their hearts and minds.*



*Lions are known as the “king of the jungle” because they are **courageous**. Grieving people have to be courageous to feel the feelings of grief.*



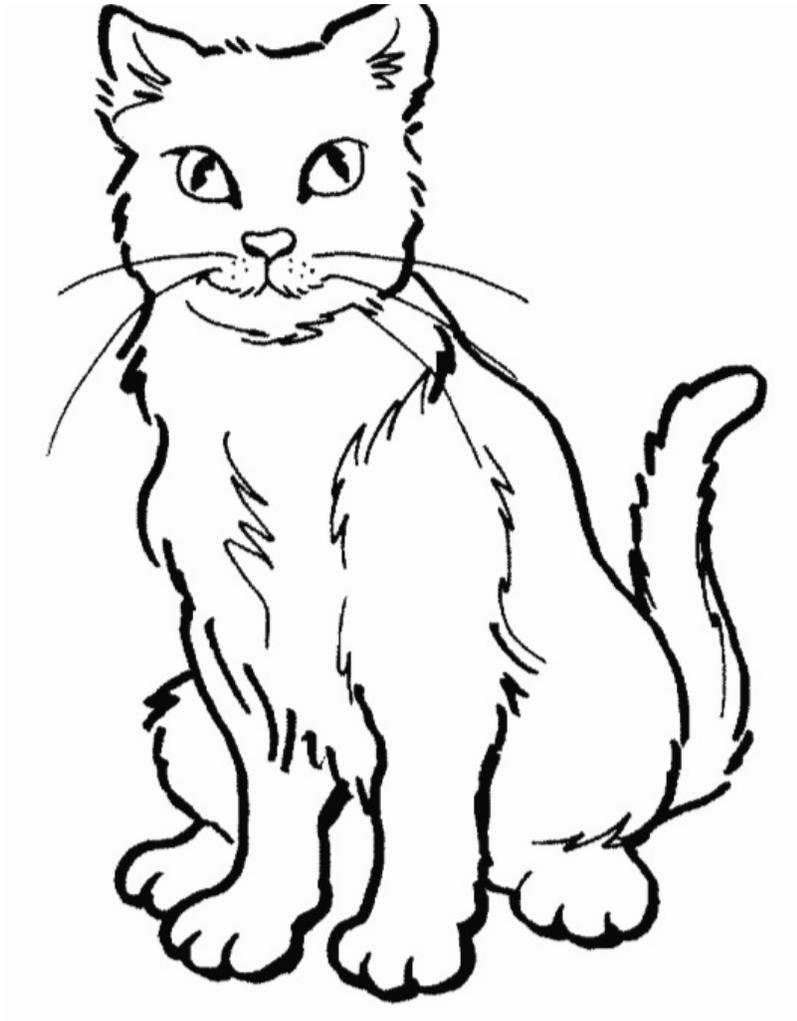
*Donkeys can carry large burdens on their backs. Grieving people sometimes are **burdened** with their feelings of grief and need to be able to carry their burden until they can share it with someone.*



*Owls are said to be wise.  
Grieving people have to be **wise** about expressing their feelings and staying hopeful that  
life will be good again even if it hurts right now.*

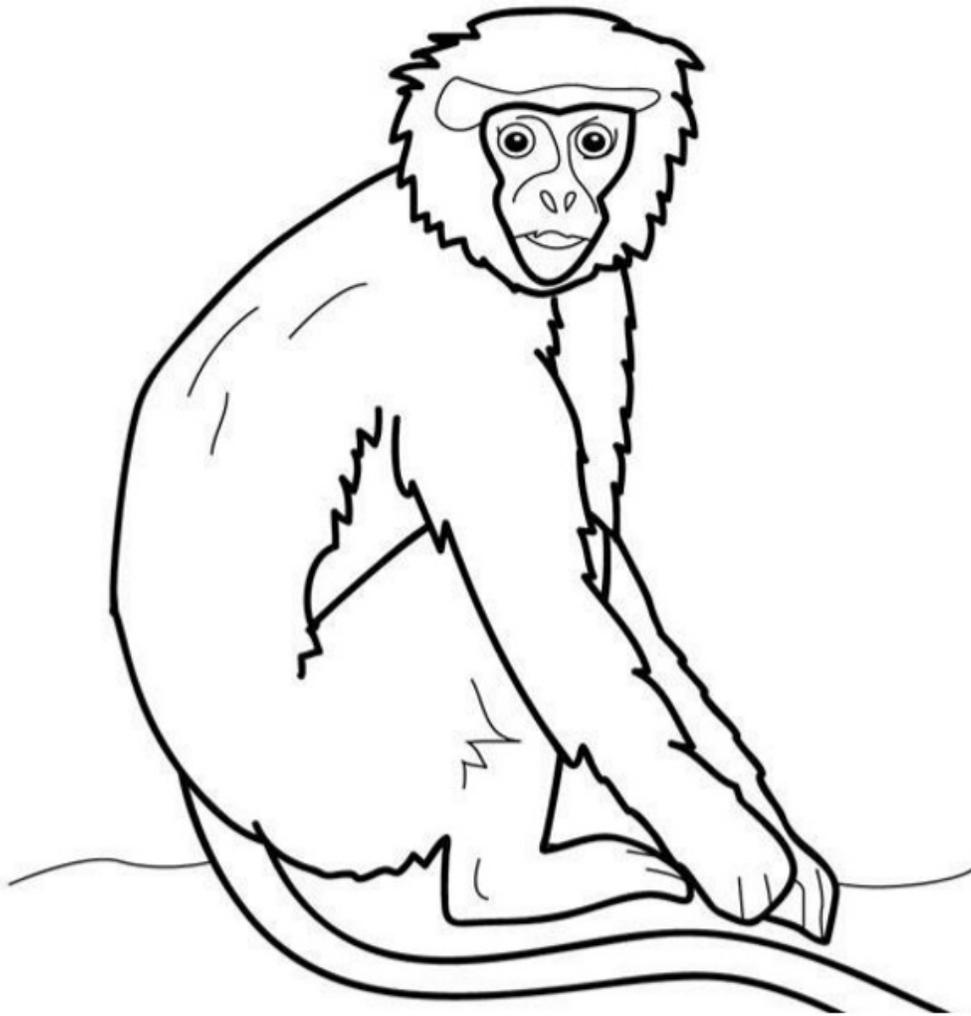


*Dogs love unconditionally and are loyal to their owners. Grieving people still **love** the person who died even though they can't be with the person anymore except in memory.*



*Cats are known to take pretty good care of themselves. They sleep and stretch and eat and groom.*

*Grieving people need to be like cats and take good care of themselves.*



*Monkeys are **playful** and fun. Grieving people sometimes have to be like monkeys and still find ways to play and have fun.*

# My Grief Animal

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw your grief animal. Take the parts of animals that you need to be like as a person who is grieving and make your own unique animal. What is its name? What are its characteristics?

### Text for My Grief Animal

Elephants are said to have a good memory. Grieving people need to remember to keep their loved one fresh in their hearts and minds.

Lions are known as the “king of the jungle” because they are courageous. Grieving people have to be courageous to feel the feelings of grief.

Donkeys can carry large burdens on their backs. Grieving people sometimes are burdened with their feelings of grief and need to be able to carry their burden until they can share it with someone.

Owls are said to be wise. Grieving people have to be wise about expressing their feelings and staying hopeful that life will be good again even if it hurts right now.

Dogs love unconditionally and are loyal to their owners. Grieving people still love the person who died even though they can't be with the person anymore except in memory.

Cats are known to take pretty good care of themselves. They sleep and stretch and eat and groom. Grieving people need to be like cats and take good care of themselves.

Monkeys are playful and fun. Grieving people sometimes have to be like monkeys and still find ways to play and have fun.

## Worksheet: Skills for the Hard Times

*Knowing how to take care of yourself is the art of growing through loss. When you begin to face the reality of your loss, self-care becomes really important. Self-care can make the difference between a grief wound that refuses to heal and one that heals cleanly. Because we all grieve differently, we will all heal differently. From the following list of suggestions, pick the actions that feel right for you. In the spaces provided, write ways that you could implement the action into your life.*

Don't "do" anything. The most important self-care ability for this stage is actually a non-action. To grow through these hard times, to have your hurts heal cleanly and to not create new problems, don't do anything to feel better. Another way to say that is: don't run from the hurt. As unpleasant as it feels, the discomfort is a normal, natural and necessary part of your healing process. Sometimes, as a way to get relief from our discomfort, we are tempted to want to get away from it all. While actions like moving, changing jobs or schools, drinking, giving your stuff to others, changing relationships, taking drugs, or spontaneous spending seem like temporary relief, all they really do is create a distraction. They also create more change in the present and can result in bigger problems down the road. As uncomfortable as you are, the best way to cope with these hard times is by going through, not around, your feelings of grief.

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Remember, grief is normal and healthy. Grieving, even feeling miserable, is a normal and necessary part of the healing process. Just as nature provides for seasons of the year, there is a natural order to the seasons in the grief process. Your springtime will come.

*Sadness is related to the opening of your heart. If you allow yourself to feel sad, especially if you can cry, you will find that your heart opens more and you feel more love.*

Shakti Gawain

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Don't try to keep it all together. To a degree, it is necessary to come apart when you've had a big loss. Your life is being rearranged as a result of your loss, and you are also being reorganized. The skill is not so much to fix this condition but to accept it as a natural response to a big loss. The challenge is to be patient with yourself while the natural healing process runs its course.

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If you need help, get it. With a big loss, something important has been taken away and deep sadness is natural. If you are drowning in your feelings of grief, ask for a life preserver. Psychologically healthy people, even those who are up to their ears in grief, are able to say “I can’t...” or “I don’t want to handle this alone.” And then they reach out for help.

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Be yourself no matter what, because everyone is different. There is no normal way to grieve. Whatever you feel or think is okay, acceptable, forgivable. You don’t have to explain yourself. Your feelings and thoughts don’t have to be logical. In fact, they can even be downright irrational. Whatever happens, just be you. Don’t feel guilty or self-conscious about any feeling. Whatever you feel after a big loss is just you being you and trying to cope. Self-love and self-acceptance are gifts you can give yourself when you are experiencing an enormous emotional injury.

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Cry if you can. If you can cry, you are really lucky. Some people think that crying is a sign of weakness, but actually the opposite is true. Stuffing your feelings inside is what makes you depressed and serious. That is when you become weak and vulnerable. Crying releases built up emotional pressure. It’s a very healthy way to express your feelings and often helps when you can’t find the words you need, or words can’t fully convey what you’re feeling. Cry when it comes and cry until your done crying. It is the self-respecting thing to do and it honors your loss. Crying is a gift.

*Tears are like rain. They loosen up our soil so that we can grow in different directions.*  
Virginia Casey

Take care of your body. The bigger the loss, the bigger the emotional and physical drain. You can be so busy trying to cope, so preoccupied with your grieving, that you don't realize you are running out of energy. It's very much like running a marathon. If you don't take care of yourself along the way, taking water at the aid stations, you can suddenly run out of fuel. It's called hitting the wall. Take naps and go to bed early instead of spending long hours staring at the TV. Take long walks or work out regularly, eat healthy food, go easy on caffeine and drink lots of water. These simple actions are all ways to help you.

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Keep it simple. With all the confusion inside, you'll want to keep a simple and restful schedule for dealing with your outside life. Try not to take on any new responsibilities or activities. A regular and easy schedule of activities means you won't have to make a lot of decisions. If your life is relatively calm and orderly, you'll have more energy for coping with your grief and the confusion inside.

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Let time pass. After a big loss it can take months or longer for things to settle down. The time you spend depends on the importance of your loss. After some losses your life is changed forever and will never get completely back to how it used to be. Often people will be tired of feeling so badly and be ready for the grief to end long before it does. Your grieving will ease up and your ability to function will improve. Taking care of yourself, being very patient and letting time pass are all that is required.

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Be with caring people. When you are grieving, you are nursing deep emotional wounds. It is like being seriously injured; you have to get medical attention. After a big loss you may be handling daily life, even looking okay on the outside, but inside you're hurt pretty bad. Allowing others to support you can ease the pain and help you to get through it all. It is why we have friends and caring family members. They will be there for you and honestly let you know when you've gone too far with your feelings, thinking or behavior. Most importantly, they will let you know they care about you, even when you're moody, grouchy or off the wall.

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Talk, talk, talk. When you're dealing with grief, there is a lot going on inside you. You will have feelings about it, big questions, troublesome thoughts and memories to process. You need to talk and talk and talk. Find a group of listeners who can hear about your pain and not go away, who will listen to your questions over and over. These aren't always easy people to find. Not everyone is wired for patience and emotional intensity. This doesn't mean they don't care; it's just that everyone has limits to what they can tolerate. A good strategy for taking care of your need to keep talking about your loss is to rely on a lot of different people. Spend a little time talking with each of your friends. The important thing to remember is to share your story. You need to talk and are worth listening to.

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Get a guide. In any confusing territory, it's important to find people who are familiar with the terrain. As you will learn, you can get a special kind of support from people who have had a similar loss. Seek these people out. Get them to share their experience. Ask them for regular contact. They know a lot about what you are going through. They will make excellent guides through the dark time and difficult places.

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Take some time alone. Solitude means taking time away for rest and peace of mind – time to think, cry, do nothing, be quiet, pray, meditate, draw, journal or work out. Time alone can help you cope with and heal from your loss. But, there is a difference between solitude and isolation. Solitude is taking a time out; isolation is going away. When we isolate ourselves, we cut ourselves off from others. In doing so, we lose the caring and objectivity that being connected to others provides.

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Lean on your spirituality. Change and endings are the natural order of things. We just forget all that because loss hurts. Your understanding of how the universe works may be helpful in times of major losses. Any faith in a spiritual force like God, or whatever you experience as a power greater than yourself operating in the universe, can be a nurturing and supportive resource when you are grieving. Sometimes it's very hard to comprehend why things happen the way they do. In those moments, we can lean on our spirituality to help us believe there is an answer to the why that is too big for our understanding, and then to yield to the pain of it all.

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*At fifteen, life had taught me undeniably that surrender, in its place, was as honorable as resistance, especially if one had no choice.*

Maya Angelou



# Activity Sheet: Survivor Games

## **Jewel Find**

### Supplies

- Poster board
- Affirmation Cards
- Tub of rice
- Glue

### Directions

Each team will have a tub of rice in which Affirmation Cards are hidden. Have one or two members dig to find the cards. When they find a card, the other members are to glue it to the poster board and hang it in their room. Encourage members to decorate the poster board, as it will be put on the wall as a reminder.

## **Hula Hoop Circle**

### Supplies

- Hula Hoop

### Directions

(You may need to go into the main room to have enough space for this game).

1. Have each team circle up with their members holding hands.
2. Place the Hula Hoop on a team member's arm and tell them they must pass the Hula Hoop all the way around the circle, without breaking the circle. If the circle breaks they must start over.



# Activity Sheet: Survivor Games

## Rope of Reaction

### Supplies

- Rope, yarn or string
- Fight or Flight cards

### Directions

1. Each team will have a long rope with different cards knotted onto it.
2. The teams should designate two people to work on different ends of the rope, unknitting the cards. These cards will have different responses to grief and will need to be categorized by the remaining members under “fight” (fighting against the hurt) or “flight” (running away from the hurt).

## Affirmations

- Even though my special person died, I know that not all of my life will be painful.
- My opinions are important.
- I don't have to do everything myself.
- It's okay to make mistakes.
- People can have differences and still be friends.
- It's okay to be angry or feel hurt, but it helps to talk to someone about it.
- I will be good to myself.
- Problems are situations I can learn from.
- I can find healthy ways to express my feelings.
- I am not alone.
- I am a survivor.
- I will allow myself to change.
- It's okay to be sad.
- I can be fearful and courageous at the same time.
- Going at my own pace is the way for me to make progress.
- I don't have to compare myself to anyone else.
- I will give myself a break because I am doing the best I can.
- I don't have to listen to someone who is putting me down.
- Asking questions, even ones I think are dumb, is okay.
- I am stronger than I think.
- I will be happy again.
- I know that there are some things in my life I cannot change, I can only change the way I handle them.
- I know that I did not cause the death.
- I can handle the stress of my grief better when I take care of my body.
- I am open to receiving help from others.
- I know it's okay to have fun once in a while even though my loved one has died.
- In order to get help for myself, I must ask for it.
- I can share my story with others I can trust so that they can understand me better.
- I can recall memories of my special person and share them with others.
- I can pay attention to my behavior. It will tell me when I need to get my feelings out.

## Affirmations (cont)

- Other people might tell me how I should feel, but I will feel what I need to feel.
- I don't always have to talk about how I feel; I can also draw my feelings or write about them.
- I know that everyone in my family may be in a different place with their grief. I will respect
- a rainbow appears at the end of a storm. I will trust that there will be rainbows
- at the end of my grief.
- I will grieve my loved one on and off as I grow up.
- I will remember my special person always.
- No one can replace my special person, but I can let other people into my life that care about me.
- Where each person is, and not compare myself to them.
- I need to let other people love me.

## Session Thirteen

### Text for *Veggie Memories*

“Time to go!” Mom yells down the hall.

We are heading out to visit Nana and Papaw today. We don’t get to see them all the time, so I am excited. I grab my backpack, put on my shoes and head toward the car when my mom stops me.

“What’s in the bag?” she asks me.

I answer, “My tools.”

The ride always seems long so sometimes I take a nap on the way.

When we get to Nana and Papaw’s they are outside waiting for us. I run to meet them and give them big hugs. Then I take their hands and we head straight to the garden. You see, when I go see Nana and Papaw we don’t just sit around and watch the television. We always go out to the backyard where there is an enormous garden. This is where we find what Nana calls, “nature’s surprises.”

“What’s in the backpack?” Papaw asks me.

“Look,” I reply as I unzip my bag and set out a pair of mom’s gardening gloves and an old garden spade.

Nana smiles and says, “I guess you are ready to see nature’s surprises. Follow me.”

We first walk through and look at all the flowers and vegetables we planted on my last visit.

Nana taught me to plant flowers near the vegetables to attract the bugs needed to pollinate them. She also taught me that some bugs, like aphids, are bad because they will destroy the plants.

Papaw taught me to put ladybugs on the plants with the aphids. Ladybugs are good because they eat the aphids that want to hurt the plants.

Walking through the garden I noticed that some of the plants died. I asked Papaw, “What happened to them?”

He said, “Nothing lives forever. It is okay. Death is a natural part of life. Some of these plants will live a long time and come back every year. Others will only last one year. And still others, because of disease or bad bugs or some other reason, will die more quickly.”

I learn so much from Nana and Papaw. After we walk through the garden, we pick all the vegetables that are ready to eat and we go into the house for dinner. All this gardening makes me hungry!

With all the vegetables we harvested, Nana is able to make a huge salad for all of us. I love eating fresh food. I think the surprise of nature is that it tastes so good.

After spending some time at Nana and Papaw’s home learning more about gardening, food and bugs, it is time to go home. I gather my tools and hug Nana and Papaw good-bye.

“I’ll see you next time.”

At home it is raining and I look out the window remembering how Papaw says the water is good for the garden and makes it grow.

Later that night, mom and dad come into my room and sit beside me on my bed. Both of them look like they have been crying and tell me they have some very sad news.

“Nana and Papaw were in a bad accident during the storm and are dead.”

“No,” I cried. “We just saw them. They are alive. I am going to help them with the next harvest.”

My dad put his hand on my back and said, “I know this hurts. It is very sad and it is okay to be angry.”

I cried a lot that night. I did not want Nana and Papaw to be dead. I want to see them again and learn more from them. I want to eat Nana’s salads and help Papaw put out ladybugs.

Months have passed and I am still sad that Nana and Papaw are gone. I miss them a lot. Mom and Dad are going to sell their house and the garden. We are going one last time to their house so I can say good-bye and have a final harvest.

When we get to Nana and Papaw's house I am sad because they are not there to greet me and give me hugs. I quickly run out back to the garden. As I look around I feel both very happy and also very sad. It is weird how I can feel both at the same time.

Being in the garden reminds me of them and all the fun we had and makes me feel happy. But being there without Nana and Papaw makes me feel sad and angry.

Mom puts her hand on my back. "I know," she says. "It's okay. Let's go look for nature's surprises."

As we walk through the garden I notice a lot of new vegetables and flowers. I also notice that some of the plants have died. It's just like Papaw said. Nothing lives forever and some plants will die sooner than others.

I can hear his voice reminding me that 'its okay' and I smile.

I say good-bye to the garden and the old house and leave with all the vegetables that are ready to eat. Mom promises to make a big salad when we get home in honor of Nana and Papaw.

In the spring, when it is planting season, mom and dad help me to make my own garden in the backyard. I tell them about planting flowers near the vegetables and all about aphids and ladybugs.

It makes me feel better to remember the things Nana and Papaw taught me. Even though I cannot see them or be around them anymore, I can feel close to them when I remember the time I spent with them and all they taught me.

## Worksheet: Have You Ever Wondered What To Say?

We all want our words to be comforting when we are with someone who has experienced the death of an important person in their life. After spending time with a bereaved person, haven't we all wondered if our words hurt or helped? Below are some "do's and don'ts" that may be helpful to you.

- Please don't ask me if I'm over it yet. The fact is that I will never be over it.
- Please don't tell me he is in a better place. I know that, but he still isn't here with me.
- Please don't say, "...at least he isn't suffering anymore." You see, I haven't come to terms with why he suffered at all.
- Please don't tell me you know how I feel. No, you don't. We are all so different. Even if your loss is the same as mine, we still don't feel the same way.
- Please don't tell me, "...at least you had him for so many years." How many years is enough to have a person around whom you love so much?
- Please don't tell me, "God never gives us more than we can bear." I believe that intellectually, but when this pain is so great, I ask myself, "How can I bear this today?"
- Please just say you are sorry. Please just say you recall my loved one, if you do, and tell me some things about him that you remember. Please just let me talk about him. Please mention his name. Please just offer me a shoulder to cry on.

From The Kids' Place website  
[www.kidsplace.org](http://www.kidsplace.org)

### Text for “The Need to Remember“

(An excerpt from Dr. Alan Wolfelt’s *Healing the Bereaved Child*)

Bereaved children have fundamental needs that must be met if they are to heal and grow. This need to remember involves allowing and encouraging the child to move from the here and now of his relationship with the person who died to the what was. Though the bereaved child should not be expected to give up all ties to the person who died (actually it is unwise and often damaging to communicate to the child that any and all relationships with the person who died are over), there must be an alteration of the relationship from one of present to one of memory.

The process of beginning to embrace memories often begins with the funeral. Unfortunately, there are some adults who prevent children from this vital part of the work of mourning by excluding them from the funeral. Remembering the person who has died through the funeral helps affirm the value of the life that was lived. In fact, the memories that families share during this time often set the tone for the changed nature of the relationship. The ritual encourages the expression of cherished memories and allows for both tears and laughter. Memories that were made in love can be gently embraced in the companionship of loving adults.

Remembering can be a very slow, painful and incremental process. When children are particularly hurting from the sting of grief, non-judgmental support and understanding may be what is most needed. However, sometimes we must encourage the gentle encountering of memories. Stimulating the child to keep memories alive rather than blocking them out helps affirm the value and function of memories, most bereaved children will need help meeting this important mourning need.

There are many ways you can help bereaved children with memory work. A few examples are noted below:

- Modeling the expression of your own feelings and memories
- Encouraging the child to teach you about some of her own memories
- Providing the child with keepsakes that belonged to the person who died
- Allowing the child to be involved in the funeral ritual
- Talking about experiences the child had with the person who died
- Displaying photos of the person who died
- Visiting places of special significance that stimulate memories
- Naturally bringing up the person who died in conversations with the child
- Reviewing photo albums together at special times like holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries
- Keeping in mind any major milestones that might create occasions for reminiscing, like graduating from grade school to middle school, the child’s birthday, etc.

Special mention should be made of children with ambivalent memories, particularly those children who memories are marked by emotional, physical or sexual abuse. These kinds of experiences make it naturally difficult to openly embrace memories. These children need non-judgmental adults they trust enough to explore these painful memories with. Obviously, these kinds of memories complicate the task of mourning and require professional attention. Children who are not helped to place these memories in perspective (and to understand that they were victims) may carry an underlying sadness or anger into their adult lives.

My experience in learning from thousands of bereaved children is that remembering makes hoping possible. Bereaved children’s futures become open to new experiences and relationships to the extent that past memories have been embraced.

# Activity Sheet: Meet the Press

## Supplies

- Play microphone
- Hat and trench coat
- Question cards

## Directions

Explain to the members that they are each going to have a chance to tell their story. Everyone will have a chance to be the reporter and interviewee. If facilitators go first as an example, the kids may get more of a kick out of it.

1. Have the reporter put on the trench coat and hat.
2. The reporter will choose three questions to ask the interviewee, who will tell their story.
3. Switch roles and continue around until everyone has had a chance to be each role.

## Sample Questions

- How did your loved one die?
- Where were you when you found out?
- What is one thing you really miss about the person who died?
- What is one thing you don't miss?
- If you had one day to spend with the person who died, what would you do?
- If you could call the person who died on the phone, what would you tell them?
- Tell one memory, good or bad, of the person who died.

# Activity Sheet: Tibetan Prayer Flags

## Supplies

- Colored swatches of fabric
- Fabric markers, paints, stamps
- Cord or string

## History

*In the Tibetan language, prayer flags are called “lung ta,” meaning “wind horse.” Prayer flags are meant to be placed outdoors by stringing or attaching them to the edge of a roof, between poles, on temples, between trees and other places. By doing so, it gives the wind the opportunity to move them. The wind is considered an expression of our minds, and the mental energy that activates them. When you see them, your intention to pray and work for the welfare of others is rekindled. Thus, the wind, like the mind, carries the blessings throughout the countryside and across the world.*

In the Tibetan tradition, the five colors of flags represent five elements:

- Blue = space
- Green = air
- White = water
- Yellow = earth.
- Red = fire

Also in the Tibetan culture, certain symbols represent different concepts:

- Flying horse = accomplishment of positive acts
- Tiger = confidence
- Snake = drives away bad thoughts or intentions
- Lion = success and achievement.
- Dragon = power

*Flags are hung outside with the intention that the writings, wishes and prayers upon them are carried by the wind to bless all beings. They are an expression of the individual’s intention to pray for and offer good thoughts for all beings.*

## Directions

1. Explain to group members the tradition and significance behind Tibetan prayer flags.
2. Instruct group members to select as many panels as they would like for their flag and decorate it however they choose. Suggest that they draw, paint or stamp a symbol of a gift that their loved one has left behind (the gift could be something tangible like a letter or piece of clothing, or a characteristic, like has daddy’s eyes or a sense of humor). Around the symbol, suggest that group members write a wish or message for the person who has died.
3. Allow time for members to share their flag with the group and describe the symbol and the gift it represents.

## Session Fourteen

### Text for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

In the light of the moon a little egg lay on a leaf.  
~~~

One Sunday morning the warm sun came up and – pop! – out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar.  
~~~

He started to look for some food.  
~~~

On Monday he ate through the apple. But he was still hungry.  
~~~

On Tuesday he ate through two pears, but he was still hungry.  
~~~

On Wednesday he ate through three plums, but he was still hungry.  
~~~

On Thursday he ate through four strawberries, but he was still hungry.  
~~~

On Friday he ate through five oranges, but he was still hungry.  
~~~

On Saturday he ate through one piece of chocolate cake, one ice-cream cone, one pickle, one slice of Swiss cheese, one slice of salami, one lollipop, one piece of cherry pie, one sausage, one cupcake, and one slice of watermelon. That night he had a stomachache.  
~~~

The next day was Sunday again. The caterpillar ate through one nice green leaf, and after that he felt much better.  
~~~

Now he wasn't hungry any more – and he wasn't a little caterpillar any more. He was a big, fat caterpillar.  
~~~

He built a house, called a cocoon, around himself. He stayed inside for more than two weeks. Then he nibbled a hole in the cocoon, pushed his way out and...  
~~~

He was a beautiful butterfly...

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

Eric Carle

Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers

345 Hudson Street

New York, New York 10014

## Worksheet: My Thoughts about Changes

Changes that have occurred in my family since my loved one died:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Changes that have occurred in myself since my loved one died:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some changes that I don't like are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Changes which my family has made since the death that I do like are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I am doing or can do in MY life to make something positive out of some of the changes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Worksheet: I Did Not Choose to Become Bereaved

I did not choose to become bereaved.

Painful as it is, I choose to allow grief to work progressively in me.

I grieve because I loved much. My \_\_\_\_\_ died, but my ability to love didn't die.

Since I loved, and still love very much, I expect my grief to be painful.

I realize that each person grieves differently.

I accept that other family members have grieved and will grieve differently than I do.

I do have a responsibility to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

I can best fulfill that responsibility if I grieve and allow them to grieve.

I am a part of my family and of humanity.

Grief need not build a wall between my family and me, but can build a bridge.

I choose to allow grief to strengthen our family ties.

Grief, while very real, is not rational.

I am learning to accept in others what appears irrational to me.

I am learning to accept the irrational in my thoughts and actions.

At times, unresolved grief continues to produce mental and physical symptoms.

I must allow the grief process to proceed in me.

Crying is a part of grief and is therapeutic; it is not \_\_\_\_\_ to cry.

I must allow myself to cry, even openly.

Grieving does not answer the question "Why?"

Since there is no acceptable answer, I must accept the unanswered question.

My \_\_\_\_\_ was a person – an important person to me.

I will not forget \_\_\_\_\_ and the life we had before the death.

I cannot return to the 'normal' that existed before \_\_\_\_\_'s death.

I must go on to what is now to be 'normal' for me.

Getting on to a new normal does not mean forgetting \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ remains in my thinking and my talking now, and will in the future.

I cannot be grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ died.

I am grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ lived and I choose to express that gratitude.

I cannot forget the events surrounding the death of my loved one.

I realize that healing does not mean forgetting \_\_\_\_\_.

If I allow it to, by my grieving, time will produce some healing.

I could not control the past, which included the death of \_\_\_\_\_.

I do have some control over the future as I build the future with my family.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's death did not happen so that I might become a better person.

I choose to allow \_\_\_\_\_ 's death and my grief to make me a better person.

There was much I did not understand before I joined the fellowship of the bereaved.

Because of my loss I choose to become more understanding, tolerant, and compassionate.

My grief has created and brought out many emotional needs for me. I can help meet those needs by meeting the similar needs of others.

My spiritual beliefs did not die with the death of \_\_\_\_\_.

I choose to use them to help me through these difficult years. Questioning those beliefs and values is not wrong. I will, as a result of my questionings, strengthen my belief system. I did not choose to become bereaved, but I choose to allow good to come out of what has been so painful for me.

## Session Fifteen

### Common Myths about Teenage Suicide

Myth #1: Youth who talk about suicide rarely attempt it.

Fact: Most who attempt or commit suicide have given verbal clues.

Myth #2: Talking about suicide will make it happen.

Fact: Talking about suicide does not place ideas into young people's heads that were not already there. There is evidence that once a suicide occurs others may follow.

Myth #3: The tendency towards suicide is inherited.

Fact: There is no evidence of a genetic link. However, a previous suicide in the family may establish a destructive model for dealing with stress and depression.

Myth #4: Teenage suicides happen in the night.

Fact: Most teenage suicides occur between 3:00 and 6:00 in the evening – presumably when the suicidal person can be seen and stopped.

Myth #5: Suicidal people leave notes.

Fact: Only a small percentage – about 15 percent - leave notes.

Myth #6: If a person wants to commit suicide, nothing can stop him or her.

Fact: Suicidal people have mixed feelings about death. They send out messages and clues that ask others to save or help them. No one is suicidal all the time. Many suicides can be prevented.

Myth #7: Youth who want to commit suicide are mentally ill.

Fact: Mental illness increases the risk of suicide, but most young people who attempt or commit suicide would not be diagnosed as mentally ill. Youth suicide is often a sudden and urgent reaction to cumulative events and stresses.

Myth #8: Once a teenager has been suicidal they are never out of danger.

Fact: Many youths who have been depressed recover and lead normal healthy lives. They learn constructive rather than destructive ways to cope and handle feelings and disappointments.

Compiled from:

*When Living Hurts* by Sol Gordon;

*Too Young to Die*

by Francine Klagsbrun; and

*Suicide in the Young*

by Earl Grollman

# Activity Sheet: Tear Jars

## Supplies

- Various colors of clay
- Confetti
- Beads
- Stickers

## Directions

1. Give a little history on the tear jars and how they were used by reading the excerpt below: In the dry climate of ancient Greece, water was prized above all. Giving up water from one's own body, when crying tears for the dead, was considered a sacrifice. They caught their precious tears in tiny pitchers or "tear jars" like the one shown here. The tears became holy water and could be used to sprinkle on doorways to keep out evil or to cool the brow of a sick child. The tear jars were kept unpainted until the owner had experienced the death of a parent, sibling, child or spouse. After that, the grieving person decorated the tear jar with intricate designs, and examples of these can still be seen throughout modern Greece. This ancient custom symbolizes the transformation that takes place in people who have grieved deeply. They are not threatened by the grief of people in pain. They have been in the depths of pain themselves, and returned. Like the tear jar, they can now be with others who grieve and catch their tears.
2. Instruct each member to mold his or her clay into a jar-like shape. They can even make lids for their jars if they would like. Allow the children to share colors if they would like to add variety to their vase.
3. Each member will decorate his or her tear vase with the assorted items.
4. As the members are constructing their tear jars, you may want to begin a discussion about how our tears are important, just like in ancient times. You may say something like, "It's okay to place a high value on your tears. Tears are the expression that you loved somebody very much and are a healthy way of expressing sadness."

# Activity Sheet: Your'e on the Ball

## Supplies

- Large rubber ball (similar to a dodge ball)

## Directions

*This activity is similar to musical chairs, but instead of chairs you will be using a ball.*

1. Play music as participants throw the ball to each other.
2. When the music stops, the individual holding the ball selects and answers a change question. After the participant answers the question, ask anyone else if they would like to answer the question.
3. Continue with additional rounds and process.

## Questions

- Have you ever felt depressed? If so, when?
- How do you feel when you see your parent cry?
- How do others know when you are sad?
- Is it okay for boys to cry?
- When you are feeling down, what makes you feel better?
- Name one person who understands the changes you have been through.
- Is it okay for adults to cry?
- Name one way that you mask your grief.
- What do you think is the most important thing you could do for someone who is depressed?

## *For Middles Only*

- If you knew a friend was suicidal, what would you do?
- Name a self-destructive behavior that is common among your friends or people at school.
- Name a warning signal that a person is considering suicide.

## Text for *Tear Soup*

There once was an old and somewhat wise woman whom everyone called Grandy. She just suffered a big loss in her life. Pops, her husband, suffered the same loss, but in his own way. This is the story of how Grandy faced her loss by setting out to make tear soup.

For many years the custom of making tear soup had been forgotten. As peoples' lives became more rushed they found it much easier to pull soup in a can from the shelf and heat it on the stove. But several years ago Grandy got a taste of a well-seasoned tear soup. One of her friends made it from scratch after her child died. As soon as Grandy tasted the rich flavor of that carefully made soup, she promised herself never again to assume that quicker was better.

Because of her great loss Grandy knew this time her recipe for tear soup would call for a big pot. With a big pot she would have plenty of room for all the memories, all the misgivings, all the feelings and all the tears she needed to stew in the pot over time.

She put on her apron because she knew it would get messy. It seems that grief is never clean. People feel misunderstood, feelings get hurt and wrong assumptions are made all over the place. To make matters worse, grief always takes longer to cook than anyone wants it to.

And then...Grandy started to cry. At first she sobbed. Sometimes she wept quietly. And sometimes when she was in a safe place where no one could hear her, she even wailed.

Grandy knew she had to make much of this part of the soup alone. She learned from past experiences that most people don't like being around tears. Her friends would worry if they knew just how many tears Grandy's recipe called for this time. So the old and somewhat wise woman reflected on her own special recipe as she looked down into the large overflowing pot of memories. It was a task she would repeat many times during the next few months.

Grandy winced when she took a sip of the broth. All she could taste was salt from her teardrops. It tasted bitter, but she knew this was where she had to start. And for now, it was the only thing on her menu. There were things that Grandy never wanted to forget. These included the good times and the bad times, the silly and the sad times.

With her arms full of memories Grandy made many trips to the kitchen. One at a time, she slowly stirred all her precious and not so precious memories into the pot. But eventually she ran out of things to add. Grandy's arms ached and felt stone cold and empty. There were no words that could describe the pain she was feeling. What's more, when she looked out the window it surprised her to see how the rest of the world was going on as usual while her world had stopped.

Her grandson, Chester, who just wanted his Grandy to be happy again, hoped his chocolate drops would make her feel better. Mrs. Bloomklotz, Ms. Chadwick and Mr. Long, all brave yet fearful neighbors, dropped by to see how Grandy was doing. They filled the air with words, but none of the words took the smell of tear soup away. Grandy was gracious because she knew how helpless her friends felt. They wanted to fix her, but they couldn't. All Grandy really needed from them at the moment was a knowing look and a warm hug.

There were also days when Grandy hungered for a thoughtful ear. Sometimes she would ask total strangers, "Care to join me in a bowl of tear soup?"

"No thanks," most would reply. "I don't have time for tear soup today."

Even some of Grandy's friends hurried past her house and pretended not to notice the aroma of tear soup coming through her open door. Grandy found that most people can tolerate only a cup of someone else's tear soup. The giant bowl, where Grandy could repeatedly share her sadness in great detail, was left for a few willing friends.

“I’m here,” Midge cried. “I got here as fast as I could and I’ll be here whenever you need me. What a tragedy. I’m so sorry you’re having to make such a big pot of soup.”

Oh what a relief. Grandy knew she didn’t have to be careful what she said around Midge. Midge wouldn’t try to talk her out of anything she was feeling. And Grandy could even laugh and not worry that Midge would assume Grandy was over her grief.

“Sorry I couldn’t get here sooner,” said Midge.

“No problem,” replied Grandy. “I’ve had plenty of help. But most of these friends will be history pretty soon. They’ll be over my tragedy long before I am. But I know you’ll still be around.”

“I don’t know what to say, but I’ll be glad to listen,” Midge said tenderly. “C’mon, tell me all about it while we make some bread to go along with your soup.”

These two friends, who had shared a thousand laughs and just as many tears, pounded at the bread dough together.

“I feel like I’m unraveling.” Grandy cried. “I’m mad. I’m confused. I can’t make any decisions. Nobody can make me feel good. I’m a mess. I just didn’t realize it would be this hard.”

“Why don’t we go for a walk while we wait for the bread to rise,” Midge suggested.

“I know exercise is supposed to help me but I feel like I have concrete blocks strapped to my legs. We’d better not go too far or you’ll have to carry me home,” moaned Grandy.

Mrs. Cries-a-lot called and reminded Grandy that she had been making tear soup for years and would be more than glad to come right over and show her how to make it the correct way.

“Thanks but no,” said Grandy. “This pot has my name on it.”

Grandy knew better than to let Mrs. Cries-a-lot or anyone else tell her what she should do to get through this terrible loss.

Next, her recipe called for some comfort food. For Grandy this meant mashed potatoes or ice cream. Comfort food always makes you feel better – at least for a little while. It gets past that big lump in your throat when other foods can’t.

“I think it needs some chocolate too.” After all, it was her soup.

Grandy kept attending worship even though she was mad at God. Sometimes she yelled at God and asked why this happened. And sometimes she demanded to know where God was when she was feeling so alone. Still, Grandy trusted God, but she didn’t understand God. She sensed that people believed that if she really had faith she would be spared deep sorrow, anger and loneliness. Grandy kept reminding herself to be grateful for ALL the emotions that God had given her.

On some afternoons people would ask questions like, “Is it soup yet?” Or, “How long is it going to take? You have been at this for over a month now. It’s time to get out of the kitchen.”

Grandy fumed at the caller’s advice. Grandy looked forward to getting the mail each day. She dreaded the day when no more sympathy cards would come.

When she was alone and needed to think, she found it helpful to keep notes on her soup making.

Thank goodness Grandy and Pops have been married a long time. They already knew each other’s tear soup would be different. Secretly Grandy wished Pops would put more flavoring in his soup, but he doesn’t want to. And he’s perfectly content to dine alone and sip his own soup.

Making tear soup is hard work. Sometimes it was all she could think about. Even the things Grandy used to love to do, she didn't have the energy for, nor did she care about anymore.

Some of Grandy's friends over the years had not tended to their tear soup. Their soup boiled over and the pot scorched. What a mess. It took them a long time to clean up their pots and to start over. The smell of burnt soup still lingers in some of their homes.

Grandy knew there were times when she needed to take a break from her soup making. Even though it was hard to do, she forced herself to get away.

Grandy heard that a neighbor was having to take her turn in the kitchen. Some people thought that the neighbor was eating too much tear soup. So Grandy, being an old and somewhat wise woman, called and invited her to a special soup gathering where it's not bad manners to cry in your soup or have second helpings. Soon the thoughtful cooks sat at Grandy's table and discussed the process of making tear soup. There are some parts that require help from friends and some parts you just have to alone. They shared stories about soup making they wouldn't dare tell anyone else for fear of being judged a bad cook. They all laughed knowingly when Grandy remarked, how on days when she was daydreaming while driving, she was glad that the car seemed to know where she wanted to go. These people had become Grandy's "new best friends."

One day as Grandy and Chester were going for a drive, Chester asked, "Mom says you've been making tear soup. What does she mean?"

"Well, tear soup is a way for you to sort through all the different types of feelings and memories you have when you lose someone or something special. Remember when your baby brother died right before he was born and your mom sat for days holding his blanket and weeping? She was making tear soup.

"You made tear soup yourself by acting out your own disappointment when you shouted at Jason, wishing his brother would die, too.

"Remember when Billy's dog died and he didn't want to play with you? Not feeling like having fun is one of the ingredients of tear soup, also. And remember when Aunt Meg got divorced and they had to move? There was a lot of tear soup simmering in that house.

"Some days when you're making tear soup it's even hard to breathe. Some days you feel like running away. You just hope a better day comes along soon. And then comes one of the hardest parts of making tear soup. It's when you decide it may be okay to eat something instead of soup all the time."

The next morning as Grandy was cleaning up, Chester asked her if she was done making tear soup.

"Well, I don't think you actually ever finish. The hard work of making this batch of soup is almost done though. I'll put the rest in the freezer and will pull it out from time to time to have a little taste."

"So what else have you learned by making tear soup, Grandy?"

"I've learned that grief, like a pot of soup, changes the longer it simmers and the more things you put into it. I've learned that sometimes people say unkind things, but they really don't mean to hurt you. And most importantly, I've learned that there is something down deep within all of us ready to help us survive the things we think we can't survive."

"Grandy, you know so much. What will I do after you die?"

"Don't worry, I will leave you my recipe for tear soup."

### *Tear Soup*

By Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen  
Grief Watch  
Portland, OR

## Teenage Suicide FACT Quiz

(Circle True or False)

True or False: Teens who talk about suicide rarely attempt it.

True or False: Talking about suicide will make it happen.

True or False: If someone commits suicide, it is likely another family member will also commit suicide also.

Teenage suicides happen during what time of day?

---

True or False: Suicidal people always leave notes.

What can you say to someone that is thinking about suicide?

Suicide is considered when

---

True or False: Once a teenager has been suicidal they are never out of danger and always depressed.

Compiled from:  
*When Living Hurts*  
by Sol Gordon;  
*Too Young to Die*  
by Francine Klagsbrun; and  
*Suicide in the Young*  
by Earl Grollman

## Suicide Warning Signs

If you suspect someone is thinking about suicide, watch the person, listen for messages and look for these signs:

- A previous suicide attempt, or the person has hurt him- or herself on purpose.
- Increased sadness, tearfulness, moodiness or irritability.
- Loss of appetite or excessive eating.
- Changes in sleeping patterns. Sleeping way too much or too little lasting at least several days.
- Withdrawal from favorite activities and relationships.
- Expressing feelings of helplessness or hopelessness.
- Evidence of alcohol or drug binges or other self-destructive behavior.
- Verbal comments that tell of plans to “end it all” or “I can’t take it anymore.”
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance.
- Expressing suicidal thoughts or a preoccupation with death.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Changes in school performances, suddenly getting poor grades.
- A profound depression in response to a recent loss or rejection.
- Giving away or disposing of prized possessions such as pictures, records, tapes, toys or clothing.
- Personality changes of nervousness, agitation, or outbursts of anger, or changes in lethargy and apathy.

What To Do if You Suspect a Person is Suicidal:

- Take your feelings and warning signs seriously.
- Tell someone; a responsible adult.
- Discuss it openly and frankly.
- Show interest. Be a good listener.
- If high risk, don’t leave the person alone.
- Get professional help.

How to Help in a Suicidal Crisis:

- Recognize the clues to Suicide.
- Look for symptoms of deep depression and signs of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Listen for suicide threats and words of warning, such as “I wish I were dead,” or “I have nothing to live for.”
- Watch for despairing actions and signals of loneliness; notice the person becomes withdrawn and isolated from others.
- Be alert to suicidal thoughts as depression lifts.
- Trust your own judgment. If you believe someone is in danger of suicide, act on your beliefs. Don’t let others mislead you into ignoring suicidal signals.
- Tell others. As quickly as possible, share your knowledge with parents, friends, teachers, or other people who might help in a suicidal crisis. Don’t worry about breaking a confidence if someone reveals suicidal plans to you. You may have to betray a secret to save a life.
- Stay with a suicidal person. Don’t leave a suicidal person alone if you think there is immediate danger. Stay with the person until help arrives or a crisis passes.
- Listen intelligently. Encourage a suicidal person to talk to you. Don’t give false assurances that everything will be okay.

- Listen and sympathize with what the person says. Try to stay calm and be as understanding as possible.
- Urge professional help. Put pressure on a suicidal person to seek help from a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or other professional during a suicidal crisis or after a suicide attempt.
- Encourage the person to continue with therapy even when it seems difficult.
- Talk directly about the suicide. Discussing suicide or asking the person if they have a specific plan will allow you to assess the urgency of the situation, and may diffuse romantic notions or the emotions involved with keeping a plan in secrecy.
- Know the resources in advance. Becoming educated on the people and agencies in your community you can turn to in a suicide crisis can save a lot of time and stress should the need for these services arise. Your ability to calmly provide these resources to a friend may provide hope.
- Be supportive. Show the person that you care.

*Adapted from Too Young to Die*, Francine Klagsbrun  
Copyright by author, 1981, Simon & Schuster,  
Inc. Used with permission.

## List for Feeling Charades

*Angry*

*Happy*

*Sad*

*Lonely*

*Excited*

*Tired*

*Bored*

*Ashamed*

*Nervous*

*Attentive*

*Surprised*

*Loving*

## How would you feel?

*(Not what would you do)*

- A teacher asks you to stop talking
- A parent is keeping a secret
- Your sibling yells at you
- Your neighbor yells at your dog
- You can't find your other shoe
- Nobody sits next to you at lunch
- You see someone stealing
- Your friend has an accident
- Someone tells you, you look nice
- You find a missing library book under your bed
- The dentist calls you by the wrong name
- You get invited but your best friend doesn't

# Activity Sheet: The Healing Hearts Game

*This game may be played by two or more players*

## Supplies

Heart game pieces -game cards

Game board dice Comforting fuzzies (pom-poms)

## Directions

- Each player chooses a different colored heart (or other game piece) and places it at START (where the heart is broken and aching due to a loss).
- To decide who goes first, have each player roll the die. The one rolling the lowest number will go first, followed by the player on his or her left.
- Place each stack of cards, questions down, near its corresponding color-coded land on the game board.
- The player going first will roll the die and move his or her game piece the appropriate number of spaces.
- S/he will then draw a blue card, read the question, and answer it. Each of the blue cards (corresponding to the LAND OF LOSS) asks questions that encourage the player to talk about the loss, what happened, who died, how s/he heard the news, etc. Consider mentioning the normal shock and numbness that often accompanies the news that someone has died. It is okay to pass if a player is not quite ready to participate.
- After each player has drawn a card and attempted to answer it, s/he is allowed to reach into the bag of comforting fuzzies (pom-poms) and select one. These comforting fuzzies can be taken home if the Teen wants to do that.
- As the players move into the LAND OF FEELINGS, they will draw red cards.
- Red cards help initiate discussions about feelings. Additional comments that might be provided during this part of the game could include discussions about tears, whether it is okay to feel relief or even happiness, or how it is possible to experience two feelings at once
  - *Note: masks denote the feelings on the game board. This is a good opportunity to discuss how we sometimes feel one way on the inside, but put on a different face for others (mask our feelings).*
  - *Note: a shortcut exits in the LAND OF FEELINGS. Some of the players may be tempted to try a shortcut to get away from their feelings and some of the challenges and/or changes occurring in their lives. Point out to the group members that often when we do attempt shortcuts, we end up bogged down more than ever. Some of the long-term effects people might experience when they try to escape from their feelings of grief might be depression, use of drugs or alcohol, fighting, negative self-esteem, strained family relationships, poor grades, or physical illness.*

- As players move into the LAND OF CHANGES AND CHALLENGES, they are asked to discuss how their lives have changed since their loss occurred. They may have had to move to the home of an extended family member, necessitating a change in schools, neighborhoods, friends, etc.
- The purple LAND OF DISCOVERIES focuses discussions on what students have discovered about themselves during their grief journeys. Do they feel stronger and more able to handle challenges? Have they discovered particular things that have helped them on their journey (talking to friends, journaling, talking about feelings, crying, or spending time with pets?)
- The next land players enter is the green LAND OF MEMORIES. Here, players should experience the comfort of remembering their loved ones. They may enjoy sharing stories with each other during this section of the game. However, the concept of anniversary dates and the difficulties that can occur on special days (loved one's birthday, Mother's or Father's Day, holidays) are important issues to discuss. Some of the questions in the LAND OF MEMORIES having to do with holidays will prepare players for the possibility of landing on the SPECIAL DAYS space in the LAND OF NEW BEGINNINGS. Players landing on the space marked SPECIAL DAYS move back to the LAND OF CHANGES AND CHALLENGES. This often happens in the grief journey. Special days can be difficult to get through. Depending on available time, players landing on this space may spend just one turn in the LAND OF CHANGES AND CHALLENGES and then go back up to the LAND OF NEW BEGINNINGS, or they may continue back through the LAND OF DISCOVERIES and the LAND OF MEMORIES.
- Discussions during this part of the game should revolve around the fact that there will be times during the grief journey that we feel we are not making much progress toward a healed heart. Sometimes, days will be dark and gloomy again.
- The special CLOUDY DAY and SUNNY DAY spaces throughout the game also point out this same idea to the players. No matter where we are in our grief journey, we will have some sunny days when we feel like laughing and playing. During those times, it is okay to give ourselves permission to feel good. Players landing on SUNNY DAY spaces should skip ahead two extra spaces. Players landing on CLOUDY DAY spaces need to be reminded that these days also occur all throughout our grief journey. On cloudy days, we need to be extra good to ourselves and recognize that we really are making progress in our journey even though it feels like we are sliding backwards. These players also move ahead one space and are allowed to reach in the bag and pull out an extra COMFORTING FUZZY. One discussion might revolve around what the fuzzy might represent, such as hugs, a special treat, a compliment or time spent with a special friend.
- In the pink LAND OF NEW BEGINNINGS, players will draw questions that encourage them to look to the future rather than to the past and their memories. For example: Name someone you would like to get to know better and how would you do this, or think of something new you would like to learn and tell us about it.
- Discussions revolve around the fact that grief changes us. Once we have told our stories, paid attention to and learned from our feelings, accepted challenges and changes in our lives, learned more about ourselves, and realized that we will always hold special memories of our loved ones in our hearts, we are ready to reach out to the future and embrace new relationships and new adventures.

- Finally, all players reach the HEALED HEART, which is sunny and full of light. The faint scar on the healed heart represents the fact that a part of us will always miss the person that died or left. That is to be expected. There may always be rough days now and then. That is okay. We will never forget the person who is gone – the good memories and the not-so-good memories. But for the most part, we are ready to become full participants in life once more, reaching out to new experiences and new relationships with joy – a sunny heart full of light and love.
- The players will naturally want to declare themselves the winner if they are the first to arrive at the HEALED HEART or if they end the game with the greatest number of COMFORTING FUZZIES.
- It is important to help children understand that we are all winners in the grief journey when we have arrived at the HEALED HEART. Each journey is unique. Some will arrive quickly, while others will take more time. We are all on the same journey, but sometimes we take different paths. We do best when we not only offer help and support to each other, but are also willing to receive help.

*Healing Hearts – A Game for Children About The Journey Through Grief*  
Rising Sun Center For Loss and Renewal  
2848 Windsor Oaks Trace  
Marietta, GA 20066-2243

# Activity Sheet: The Goodbye Game

## Purpose

This game was designed to help grieving children complete the mourning process as well as to teach non-bereaved children to communicate about subjects related to death and dying. Experienced counselors may also use the game as a diagnostic tool to learn about the child's underlying psychological processes associated with grief, fear of death, or fear of someone dying.

## Directions

- The game begins by players placing their pawns on the start space. The first player rolls the die and moves his or her pawn along the leaf path the number of spaces on the die.
- When the player lands on a colored leaf, s/he chooses the corresponding color card and reads it aloud (or the adult reads it depending on the age of the child).
- The player is rewarded with a token if s/he answers the question or performs the designated task. Sometimes the child may not want to respond. This is okay, however, s/he does not get a token.
- If a player lands on the log, s/he must move in the direction indicated by the arrow, i.e., forward or backward (it's natural to regress during the grief process).
- A player can also accelerate the process towards the end by landing on a space that leads up the stream.
- The object of the games is to accumulate as many chips as possible by the time the player reaches the finish space (sunset). Alternatively, one could be declared the winner if s/he accumulates the most chips within the therapeutic hour.
- Finally at the end of the game, each player is encouraged to make a statement pertaining to a special memory associated with the loss of whom they are grieving.

## Session Seventeen

### Items for the Feelings Box

- Pillow: Hit it when you are angry; cry into it when you are sad.
- Pencil: Write a letter about your feelings and give it to someone you trust.
- Crayons: Drawing or scribbling helps get your feelings out.
- Bubble Wrap: Stomp on the bubbles when you get angry.
- Box of tissues: Sometimes it just feels good to cry!!
- Ball (Nerf ball, tennis ball, racquet ball or lacrosse ball): Doing something physical helps get your feelings out.
- Red Heart: Talk to someone you love about your feelings. Ask for a hug or give a hug.
- Bubbles: If you still have negative feelings after trying to work them out, take a deep breath and blow them away.

## Text for Someone Special Died

Someone I love very much just died. I wonder what it will be like without him.

We used to go for walks and swing and skip stones on the pond but now he isn't here.

We used to play catch, put together puzzles and read books. But now he isn't here.

I miss him I can't believe I won't ever see him again. Sometimes I pretend he is still alive.

Mom says everything dies. Flowers die. Dogs die. People die.

"What happened when he died?"

"His body stopped working."

"Where did his body go?"

"His body is buried in the cemetery"

He shouldn't have left me. I loved him. It's not fair. Sometimes I feel so mad, I want to yell, or hit my pillow, or slam the door.

Sometimes I feel so sad, that nothing makes me happy. I just want to cry and cry.

Sometimes I don't want to play with anyone. Not DeAnna. Not Chris. Not even my dog Corky. I just want to be alone.

But when I think about the fun we had together, I feel better. I want to make a scrapbook, so I'll always remember our good times. In my scrapbook, I'll draw a picture of us playing catch and going for a walk together. I'll cut out a picture of a swing from a magazine. I'll draw me swinging and him pushing. I'll glue a piece from our favorite puzzle. And I'll write the names of the books we read together.

He died and I know he won't be coming back. But with my scrapbook, I'll never forget him.

*Someone Special Died* by Joan Singletary  
Carson-Dellosa Publishing, LLC  
PO Box 35665  
Greensboro, NC 27425-5665

## Worksheet: I MISS THEM...

When someone in your family dies, there may be many times you miss them and the things you used to do together.

Things I miss about the person...

- 
- 
- 

The times I most wish they could still be here are...

- 
- 
- 

Things that might happen to me in the future when I might most miss the person who died are...

- 
- 
- 

When I'm really feeling lonely for my special person, these are the things I do to help myself...

- 
- 
- 

This is the way I feel right now...

- 
- 
- 

It is normal to be lonely for and to miss the special person who died.

## Worksheet: Facing Feelings

Things that make me feel lonely and/or sad when I think about my special person who died:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Activities that help me when I am feeling lonely and/or sad (ways I help myself):

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Things people have said and/or can say to me that help me get through the lonely and/or sad times (how I allow others to help me):

- 
- 
- 
- 
-

# Activity Sheet: Soccer Ball Warm-Up

## Supplies

- Soccer ball
- Questions to deal with topic

## Directions

1. Take a soccer ball and make it into an activity by taping open-ended questions or drawing question marks on the open spaces of the ball.
2. Throw a ball to a member and where his or her thumb lands is the question s/he is to answer. If both thumbs land on a question space, s/he can choose which question to answer. There are some spaces with “Wilson” etc. on the ball, so just tell the members to use the space closest to their thumb.
3. After the member has answered his question, he throws it to another member.

## Sample Questions

- What is your favorite part of the holiday season?
- What do you like the least about holidays?
- What do you fear the most about the holidays?
- What will be the most difficult thing you will have to do during the holidays without your loved one?
- What can you do to feel close to your loved one this holiday season?
- Discuss a holiday tradition that you want your family to continue.
- Share a special holiday memory.
- How are you feeling tonight as you look toward the holidays?
- How can your friends help you this holiday season?
- Share a silly holiday memory.
- If you could change something about a past holiday, what would it be?
- What could be a way that you and your family can remember your loved one during the holidays?
- Are there any traditions that you want to change this holiday season?

## H-E-L-P-A-C-H-I-L-D

**HONESTY.** Many times children aren't given accurate explanations concerning the death. Age appropriate information regarding a death is vital for the child's future sense of well-being.

**EMPATHY.** A child who is grieving may need to tell their story over and over. Letting them know you are sad with them following the loss will help the child work through the loss. Creating an emotional environment in which the child feels comfortable asking the same questions over and over about their death-related thoughts will increase their sense of security in their world that has so dramatically changed.

**LITERATURE.** There are many excellent children's books that may aid in the release of thoughts and emotions – of caregiver and the child. Inviting older children in the family to read a book for appropriateness for their younger sibling before you read it to the child may prove to be quite effective in provoking some thoughts or feelings the older child has not allowed themselves to express.

**PLAY.** Children do not have the emotional ability to stay in their grief as adults do. They are in and out of their grief, seemingly overwhelmed by sadness at one moment and filled with giggling childhood energy the next. Seeing the child return to a sense of normalcy, adults may have the mistaken belief that the child is no longer grieving.

**ACCEPTANCE.** Children need to know in the words and actions of their caregivers that they will not be betraying their special person who died by feeling happy again.

**COMFORT.** Children who are experiencing a significant loss often feel out of control. Routine and structure are important for children to feel safe. When kids are asking the tough questions about death and grief, hold hands while you talk. A big hug may be more important than any words.

**HONOR.** They may need permission to not feel for a while. Depending on the personality of the child, as well as life experiences, for a period of time the loss they have experienced may overwhelm their ability to cope.

**INVOLVEMENT.** Be willing to share yourself. The coping skills you have developed to deal with losses may be helpful to the child. Sharing your vulnerability as well as your strengths could give a child hope that they will be able to get through the loss.

**LOVE.** Touch helps. When helpful, appropriate words seem to elude you, a gentle hand on the shoulder can say a lot. Doing something together says, "I love you!"

**DIALOGUE.** Children often need permission to remember out loud, to think about how things once were or could've been. Those who believe in heaven may find comfort in "talking to" the person who died, expressing the joys and pains of living and the pain of their death.

## Worksheet: Grief and The Holidays

Suggestions offered by *Breakway*

*Following a death, grieving children and adults alike may have difficulty facing special occasions. The memories associated with birthdays, anniversaries and holidays can turn memorable events of the past into moments of dread in the present. It is important to take each holiday or special event one step at a time, one day at a time.*

- Plan ahead. Surprises may evoke deeper feelings. Thinking through some of the possibilities and making plans ahead of time often defuses some of the impact that a holiday or other special milestone may have on you. Try to avoid being blind-sided.
- Be prepared to be flexible. You can't control everything and everybody. Allow for schedules to be adjusted. Compromise may become the key during the holidays.
- Change can be good and difficult at the same time. Things will never be just the way they were. The very fact that we are mourning a loss suggests change. Realizing that changes are unavoidable doesn't take away the challenges of actually making the changes.
- Be easy on yourself. You can't please everyone, so don't stress yourself. From time to time, ask yourself, "Am I making a bigger deal about this than others are?" Don't push yourself too hard.
- Evaluate your ability to cope in various situations. Know your limitations and your ability to function in the circumstances and with the people associated with the upcoming holiday. Stay away from situations you feel you can't handle, or put in a brief appearance in the company of a trusted friend who will help you through it.
- Give yourself what you need. Some of us are better at helping others than allowing ourselves to be helped.
- Ask for help during the potentially draining holiday times. Be willing to give up previous sacred territory or jobs to those who are ready to help.
- Enjoy what you can, when you can. Be picky this holiday season. Don't start out with the expectation that you will do everything that well-intentioned family and friends suggest for you.
- Be gentle on others, too. Their emotional reserves may be just as depleted as yours. Be as patient and kind with others as you would want them to be with you. Give yourself a break from people if you feel too stressed to be pleasant around them.
- Do something for others. Small acts of kindness for others may bring us out of our own cloudy existence for a while. Don't go overboard in the service department, though. Know your limits.
- Don't deprive children of their holidays. As tough as it may be for us, remember that children's grief may be expressed periodically and episodically over a number of years. Give them as much of their holiday as you can. Enlist the aid of others to help you with the children if necessary.
- Include whatever spiritual activities are helpful for you. Don't neglect the value of prayer, attending religious or social gatherings with people of your faith, and/or reading spiritual materials for inspiration.
- Remember the value of memories, rituals and traditions. Decide how you want to keep the memory of your loved one alive. Honor their life by keeping some of the old traditions. Being rigid about all customs and traditions, however, may add to the frustration of everyone involved.
- Be prepared to begin some new traditions. Acknowledge your hope for the future by starting some forward-looking traditions.
- Realize that there are many holidays and anniversaries during the year. Be aware of how you are feeling as special events approach. Give yourself the emotional care you need no matter what time of year.
- Remember, whatever we do after the death is for the living. Participate in activities that are meaningful to you. Life goes on, and the impact of a loved one's life lives on in us.

Days During The Year That May Be Hard  
For Me Since My Loved One Died

<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>
<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>October</u>

## Session Eighteen

### Text for *I'm Thankful Each Day!*

I'm thankful each day for the blessings I see and for all of the gifts that are given to me.  
 And counting the stars at the edge of the sea, I can't help but feel they were put there for me.  
 I'm thankful for summers and warm golden days...  
 I'm thankful for autumns or orange pumpkin haze.  
 I'm thankful for meadows and bright colored flowers...  
 I'm thankful for raindrops and soft summer showers.  
 Each sunset is special...  
 Each sunrise is new...  
 Each breeze in the trees is a promise come true.  
 Each evening's a wonder where beauty abounds...  
 Each morning's a harvest of new sights and sounds.  
 And it's nice just to know that beneath winter snow the blossoms of spring are beginning to grow.  
 I'm thankful for friends for laughing and sharing...  
 I'm thankful for family for loving and caring.  
 I'm thankful for all the kindness I see...  
 I'm thankful for peace and for pure harmony.  
 My body's a present of perfect design...  
 My mind is a power as endless as time.  
 And if ever I worry that trouble is near, I always remember there is nothing to fear...  
 For each hour is laden with infinite love...  
 Each second brings comfort and joy from above.  
 And I guess in the end the best thing to say is I'm thankful for living...  
 I'm thankful each day!  
 I'm Thankful Each Day!

*I'm Thankful Each Day!*

By P.K. Hallinan

Ideals Children's Books

535 Metroplex Dr. Ste 250

Nashville, TN 37211

## Activity Sheet: "I Am" Poem

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

---

“I Am” by \_\_\_\_\_

# Activity Sheet: “I Am” Poem

## Supplies:

- pencils
- copies of “I Am” format sheet

## Directions:

Read the poem “I Am” by Keli Klecher. Using the same words as in the poem, have the preteens complete their own “I Am” poem. Allow them to share their poems with the group if they would like.

“I Am” by Keli Klecher

I Am a daughter who misses her father.  
 I Wonder if I will ever see him again.  
 I Hear his voice wherever I am.  
 I See him in all my dreams.  
 I Want to meet him again someday.  
 I Am a daughter who misses her father.  
 I Pretend I am with him every day.  
 I Feel happy when I see him in my dreams.  
 I Touch his grave on the holidays.  
 I Cry when somebody says something about him.  
 I Am a daughter who misses her father.

I Understand I will not see him for a while.  
 I Say I would give my life to see him again.  
 I Dream of him every day.  
 I Try to touch him in my dreams.  
 I Hope to see him again one day.  
 I Am a daughter who misses her father



# Facilitators Forms

*Breakway* Facilitator Application

*Breakway* Philosophy

General Guidelines

Job Description

Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules

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Statement of Faith

## *Breakway* Facilitator Application

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name (including maiden name or any other names used)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Drivers License # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

What is your Occupation? (Be Specific) \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer (if employed) \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ How Long? \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ How Long? \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_ How Long? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your expectations of participation in this program? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything likely to prevent you from keeping your one-year commitment? If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your experiences with youth (volunteer, professional, personal)

Which participants would you feel most comfortable spending time with?

Children \_\_\_\_\_ Teens \_\_\_\_\_ Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Any \_\_\_\_\_

List your first, second, and third choices of groups you'd like to be in:

\_\_Littles (ages five to eight)

\_\_Middles (ages nine to 12)

\_\_Teens (ages 13 to 19)

\_\_Adults

Reason for preference \_\_\_\_\_

When are you available? Please circle the times you are available in the boxes below:

Monday morning      Tuesday morning      Wednesday morning      Thursday morning

Monday afternoon      Tuesday afternoon      Wednesday afternoon      Thursday afternoon

Monday evening      Tuesday evening      Wednesday evening      Thursday evenings

What kind of talents or skills do you have that would be of interest to children and which you would be willing to share with your group?

Are you on public record as a sex offender or physical abuser? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been convicted of a felony? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you abusing drugs or alcohol? \_\_\_\_\_

Please identify any physical or medical conditions that may affect your ability to participate in this program.

Have you ever sought treatment for a mental illness? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently taking any medications? \_\_\_\_\_ If so what? \_\_\_\_\_

And for what condition? \_\_\_\_\_

What deaths have occurred in your family? Please give person(s) who died and dates:

Who should we contact in an emergency? Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (AM) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (PM) \_\_\_\_\_

Due to the nature of *Breakway* program, we reserve the right to reject or accept potential volunteers.

I hereby state that all information given on this application is true. I also give *Breakway* the right to check any references given. I, the undersigned, do, for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify *Breakway* and hold each of their officers, directors, employees, and agents harmless from and against any and all causes of action, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever, and any and all related attorneys' fees, court costs, and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become a volunteer staff member.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Signature/Date

Adapted for *Breakway* from material originally compiled by The Dougy Center, The National Center for Grieving Children and Families ([www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)).

## Breakway Philosophy

We believe that children old enough to love are old enough to mourn.

C.S. Lewis said:

*To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully around hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.*

Most people have allowed themselves the luxury of being vulnerable to love and attachments and possess hearts that are breakable. When loss occurs, grief follows. We acknowledge our society's expectations of three days or so to mourn, and we created a safe place for children so they can take the time they need to express themselves freely, to know they are not alone, to have special listeners who care about them and aren't afraid to let them talk about their loved one who has died.

We believe children will want to love again after loss and experience healthy relationships in life, so we created *Breakway* to assist them on their grief journeys.

We believe that bereaved children are not necessarily doomed to go through life addicted, depressed or suicidal, but acknowledge that they are at risk for these problems.

We believe that children could use some support as they grieve because it is likely they have adults in their lives who are grieving as well and who may be unable to be present for them emotionally. Children need to learn healthy coping skills so that they handle their losses, rather than allowing losses to handle them.

We do not believe in dragging a child to some conclusion of his or her grief.

We do not believe that we recover, get over or resolve our grief. We believe that grief changes us forever, and that we can be reconciled to our loss and heal in time. We also believe that no matter how long ago the loss, grief comes in waves. Part of the grief journey is learning how to manage the waves.

We believe that each person grieves uniquely and try not to put time limits or other expectations on anyone experiencing grief.

We don't want to be a secret in this community.

We are passionate about what we do. We want to promote healthy mourning in every way that we can. We are aware that mourning rituals are scarce, and we try to provide ways to remember the people who have died in the lives of the children we serve.

We play, draw, color, cut, paste, read, dress-up, play puppets and games, write, compose poetry, paint, listen to music and let our imaginations live. We want children to want to choose to dance, rather than sit out life. We know there is a time to sing and dance, and a time to cry and mourn. What we do is know the difference, and allow a heart to do as it needs to make that choice.

Helen Keller said:

*The world is full of sorrow, but it is full also of the overcoming of it.*

So, our message is one of hope.

## ***Breakway* General Guidelines**

1. All materials brought by a facilitator to share with the group must be reviewed by the group coordinator ahead of time, including tapes and handouts.
2. What takes place in the children's room is confidential. It is important for the children's facilitators to interact regularly with parents for the purpose of building trust. Generalized statements about the children's progress are appropriate between a facilitator and a parent. For example: "Jacob is doing well. He has made some important strides. He is expressing himself more and more." Or: "Jacob seems stuck. Is there anything you could share with me to assist him in any way?"
3. If parents have any concerns with regard to the progress of their children or the activities in the children's group, facilitators should encourage them to check in with the group coordinator.
4. Confidentiality must be observed with regard to any and all information disclosed by participants and facilitators in meetings, pre-meetings and post-meetings. Discretion must be used so that meetings can remain safe for the telling of personal truths.
5. The group coordinator is available to address the parents' meeting about what takes place in the children's group (using general terms).
6. Facilitators should log the time spent at Breakway on the sign-in sheet at the front door.
7. Facilitators may not contact a participating family by phone.
8. Children and children's facilitators must straighten the rooms prior to closing.
9. A facilitator or parent needs to be with any children who leave the group rooms.

---

Volunteer Signature/Date

Adapted for Breakway from material originally compiled by The Dougy Center,  
The National Center for Grieving Children and Families ([www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)).

## **Breakway Job Description - Volunteer Group Facilitator**

1. Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a working knowledge of Breakway Volunteer Facilitator Manual.
2. A group facilitator participates as a sharer and one who cares in a child or parents' group.
3. There is no formal counseling or therapy as part of these groups. Staff and facilitators support each other, and facilitators and participants share as well as teach and learn about life.
4. A one-hour pre-meeting is held immediately before each group session and a debriefing post meeting immediately after. The time requirement for evening groups for volunteers starts promptly at (insert times of meetings here).
5. Facilitators of both the child and parents' groups will be responsible to their respective group coordinator.
6. Volunteers are to respect that information shared in a support group is held in confidence by volunteers and staff except in cases of suicidal ideation, child abuse, chemical abuse or dependency on the part of a child or adolescent, or when a parent or legal guardian has signed an information release.
7. Volunteer facilitators must report any suspicion of suicidal or homicidal ideation or child abuse directly to their group coordinator before the post-meeting. This allows the coordinator to ensure the safety of the child.
8. If a facilitator is going to miss a meeting, he or she is to call the group coordinator at Breakway. This gives the coordinator time to prepare for the change in the group.
9. Volunteers and staff are expected to respect that their relationship with participants is a helping relationship. The establishment of personal relationships or interactions with family participants may interfere with the healing process, which is the mission of Breakway. Volunteers and staff are not to establish personal or intimate relationships with participants during or after program services.

### Duties

1. Identify safe behaviors and restrict unsafe ones.
2. Enforce rule breaks.
3. Note and discuss individual children's needs.
4. Hold to time limits.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Breakway* Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules**

- Volunteers will not abuse children, including:
  - Physical abuse, such as striking, spanking, shaking or slapping;
  - Verbal abuse, such as humiliating, degrading or threatening;
  - Sexual abuse, including but not limited to inappropriate touching and exposure; or
  - Mental abuse, such as habitual ridicule, scapegoating, deprivation and exposure to violence.
- Smoking or use of tobacco products in the presence of children is prohibited.
- Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of program participants will not be tolerated.
- Volunteers must treat children of all races, religions and cultures with respect and consideration.
- Volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and/or criticism.
- Volunteers will abstain from frightening discipline techniques.
- Volunteers will not use profanity in the presence of children or parents.
- Volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward others in the presence of children, parents and staff.
- Monetary and expensive gifts to volunteers are prohibited.
- Volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that may adversely affect children's health, including fever or contagious conditions.
- Volunteers will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, tact and maturity.
- Volunteers will do everything in their power to avoid being put in a situation where they are alone with a program participant (child) other than their own.
- Volunteers will not fraternize with program participants away from *Breakway*.
- Texas State Law requires that all citizens report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and law enforcement agency.
- Volunteers will be subject to a background check, including criminal history.
- *Breakway* staff will conduct periodic evaluations and interviews with children and parents to encourage reports of any behavior out of the ordinary.

I understand that allegations or suspicions of child abuse are taken seriously by *Breakway* and will be reported to TDPRS for investigation and that *Breakway* will fully cooperate with any related investigations and will pursue the prosecution of child abusers to its full extent under the laws of this state.

I understand that any violation of this Code may be grounds for removal as a volunteer. Being fully aware of the matters contained in the Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules, I still desire consideration to become a Volunteer for *Breakway*.

---

Volunteer's Signature & Date

## Consent for the Criminal Background History Check

### Authorization/Waiver/Indemnity

I hereby give my permission to *Breakway* to obtain information relating to my criminal history record through the (appropriate agency of state residency). The criminal history record, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct as committed as a juvenile.

I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history records check may be repeated at any time.

I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history as received by *Breakway* and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I, the undersigned, do, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, hereby remise, release and forever discharge and agree to indemnify the (appropriate agency of state residency) and each of their officers, directors, employees and agents and hold them harmless from and against any and all causes of actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever (including claims for negligence, gross negligence and/or strict liability of the (appropriate agency of state residency) and any and all related attorneys' fees, court costs and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become a volunteer/staff member.

---

Today's Date

---

Date of Birth

---

Applicant's Signature

---

Social Security Number

---

Applicant's Printed Name

---

Driver's License State and Number

---

Please list maiden name or any other names used.

---

Phone Number

## *Breakway Confidentiality Agreement*

*Breakway* touches human life intimately in many ways. We as volunteer facilitators will frequently be observers and recipients of confidential information concerning participants and their families. It may be a fact, series of facts or a situation in the participant's life that is heard or observed, with the implicit understanding that this information be preserved as a sacred trust.

Confidentiality is the preservation of information concerning participants and other facilitators that is disclosed to the facilitator. Confidentiality is based upon the basic right of privacy of participants. It is the ethical obligation of the facilitator and is necessary to create effective trust. The participant's right, however, is not absolute. As the participant's information is shared during debriefing with other group facilitators, the obligation would then bind all equally.

When participants come to *Breakway* for help, they will realize in some way the necessity of revealing pertinent facts about themselves and their situation. This may include innermost feelings that they want no one outside the group to know. It may include facts about things that are upsetting in their home that they specifically are not ready to share with other members in their household.

This is to be preserved in confidence with only the following two exceptions:

1. The above-mentioned post meetings; and,
2. When, in the opinion of the facilitator, statements regarding harm being done to self and/or by or to others, a facilitator will disclose such threat to the group coordinator who shall create and implement a plan of action to protect the parties involved.

- I have read the confidentiality agreement and agree to follow the guidelines.
- I agree to perform the duties as outlined in the job description.
- I agree not to make copies of the Facilitator's Manual or any part thereof.
- I agree to provide the *Breakway* with a minimum of one year of volunteer work (if working as a facilitator). I understand the value of proper closure and agree to tell my group at least two weeks in advance of my departure.
- I understand that the final responsibility of the welfare of the children belongs to their parent, parents or guardian. Parents can limit any activities that their children are involved. They have the ultimate decision regarding their children's participation in any and all activities at *Breakway*.

---

Volunteer's Signature

---

Date

## Statement of Faith

Accordingly we believe:

The Bible is the inspired word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and conduct, which reveals the nature of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:19-21). God interacts with this world as Creator and Savior through Jesus Christ (Gen. 1; Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-5; 12-13).

God is honored when we imitate the nature of God and his son through the guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 3:13-17; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Pet. 2:21).

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born in the flesh to a virgin. He was crucified with the foreknowledge of God as atonement for man's sin, was raised from the dead, and has ascended to the right hand of God. Through Him only we have access to God (John 3:13-17; John 14:6; Acts 2:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Salvation of man is only through God's gift of grace for those who put their faith only in Jesus Christ for their justification. Faith is demonstrated by obeying His command to be baptized in water reflecting the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Eph. 2:8-9, Gal. 2:16, Gal. 3:26-27, Rom. 6:3-4, 23, Acts 2:37-39, Matt. 28:18-20).

Those who have accepted God's gift of grace and demonstrated their faith have fellowship with Him if we walk in the light as He in the light, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:5-10).

Jesus Christ established His church and placed himself as head (Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23; Matt. 16:18). God interacts with believers through the Holy Spirit as Helper, Teacher and Guide, and convicts all mankind of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13; Acts 9:31).

God is to be worshipped in spirit and truth. God calls us to participate regularly in worship and service, to praise him and mutually encourage and build each other up in Jesus Christ (John 4:24; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25).

Like Jesus, children should grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God as they age, increasing in favor with God and man (Luke 2:40, 52; Matt. 19:13-14).

## Statement of Faith (cont)

Accordingly we believe:

Jesus Christ is glorified by our conduct and effort to do our best in everything we do, knowing it is Him we serve (Col. 3:12-14, 17, 23-24).

Marriage is a divinely instituted relationship between one man and one woman, intended by God to last a lifetime (Matt. 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; Gen. 2:18-25).

---

Signature Printed Name

---

Date

# Intake Packet

It is best to complete an Intake Packet for all willing participants for *Breakway* during the evaluation and orientation appointment with a *Breakway* staff member. The necessary forms to be completed in the Intake Packet are:

## Initial Intake Form

Family Orientation Questionnaire

Adults Form (one for each parent or guardian accompanying the child to *Breakway*)

Child's Form (one for each child ages five to 12)

Teen's Form (one for each teen ages 13-18)

Family Agreement Form

Permission Form

Seven Expectations to Privacy

(The sample provided in this handbook is based on requirements in the State of Texas. Your form should be based on federal, state and local requirements in your state of residency. This copy goes home with the family after orientation.)

Rules for Safety (This copy goes home with the family after orientation.)

Autorization for Release of Information

My Grievs Rights (This copy goes home with the family after orientation)

**Breakway Initial Intake Form**

Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Child/ren (Include age): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

Who in the family died? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the person die? \_\_\_\_\_

When did the person die? \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolling in: \_\_\_\_\_ (Meeting Date) Group      \_\_\_\_\_ (Meeting Date) Group

Reminder needed? \_\_\_\_\_

Orientation date: \_\_\_\_\_ with: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Breakway* Orientation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

## Family Orientation Questionnaire

(Please fill in)

Parent or Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address, City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

May we contact you at work?  yes  no

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

May we contact you at work?  yes  no

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Contact Method:  email  home phone  work phone  cell phone

Preferred Contact Method:  email  home phone  work phone  cell phone

Emergency Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all participating family members, including self (adults, teens, children)

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Allergy/Med. Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Circle the Relevant Answers:**

How was the deceased related to the child/teen?

Father Step-Father Brother Step-Brother Grandparent

Mother Stepmother Sister Stepsister Teen Friend

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How was the deceased related to you?

Wife Ex-Wife Son Father Brother

Husband Ex-Husband Daughter Mother Sister

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions about the person who died:**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: Birthdate: Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

The person died at: Home Hospital Hospice Work Other \_\_\_\_\_

Causes, Circumstances and Location of Death

What other deaths has you child/teen experienced and approximate date? (Friends, relatives, pets, etc.)

What other changes have you and your child/teen experienced? (Moved, changed schools, jobs, etc.)

How did you hear about *Breakway*?

**OPTIONAL:**

Family Nationality(ies): (Please circle appropriate answers)

African American Caucasian/European American Native American Indian Asian American

Latin American/Hispanic Middle Eastern American Other

Adapted for *Breakway* from material originally compiled by The Dougy Center,  
The National Center for Grieving Children and Families ([www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)).

## Adult's Form

Adult's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

How are you related to the deceased? \_\_\_\_\_

How have the areas of your life been affected since the death?

Relations with child/teen:

Work and career:

Friendships and social life:

Sleep and eating habits:

Other family relationships:

Other:

What emotions have you been experiencing since the death?

shock  guilt  fear  anger  shame  relief  hopelessness  anxiety

loneliness  embarrassment  confusion  happiness  sadness  frustration

irritability  others (please elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

Since the death, have you experienced any physical symptoms?

no  yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Taking any medications?  no  yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you seeing a counselor?  no  yes, what brought you to the counselor?

Who are the supportive people with whom you can share your grief?

### Breakway Child's Form (Ages five to 12)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

How are you related to your special person who died? \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one:

Since the death, I want to be by myself:

*More Same Less*

Since the death, school has been:

*Harder Same Easier*

Since the death, I get along with my friends:

*Better Same Worse*

Since the death, I get along with members of my family:

*Better Same Worse*

Since the death, my sleep is:

*Better Same Worse*

Since the death, I eat:

*More Same Less*

Since the death, I sometimes have physical hurts (headaches, stomachaches, rashes)

\_\_\_ no \_\_\_ yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

What emotions have you been experiencing since the death?

\_\_\_shock \_\_\_guilt \_\_\_fear \_\_\_anger \_\_\_shame \_\_\_relief

\_\_\_hopelessness \_\_\_sadness \_\_\_anxiety \_\_\_loneliness \_\_\_embarrassment

\_\_\_confusion \_\_\_happiness/laughter \_\_\_others \_\_\_\_\_

Do you see a counselor or private therapist: at school? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

outside of school \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

## **Breakway Child's Form (Age 13-18)**

Teen's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

How are you related to the deceased? \_\_\_\_\_

How have the areas of your life been affected since the death?

Relations with child/teen:

Work or career:

Friendships and social life:

Sleep and eating habits:

Other family relationships:

Other:

What emotions have you been experiencing since the death?

shock  guilt  fear  anger  shame  relief

hopelessness  sadness  anxiety  loneliness  embarrassment

confusion  happiness  sadness  frustration  irritability  others (please elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

Since the death, have you experienced any physical symptoms?

no  yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Taking any medications?  no  yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you seeing a counselor?  no  yes, what brought you to the counselor?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who are the supportive people with whom you can share your grief?

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Breakway* Family Agreement Form**

Before completing and signing this form, please read and discuss with the adults, children and teens who want to participate at *Breakway*.

- We understand that *Breakway* provides support groups, not therapy or counseling.
- We agree to attend our group regularly. If we miss more than two consecutive sessions except for illnesses or crisis, we may be dropped.
- We agree to call when we are unable to attend our group.
- We agree that a child or teen must always be accompanied and supervised by a parent or another adult.
- We agree to always have a parent or another adult remain at *Breakway* while the child or teen is in a group.
- We understand the adult has the option of participating in the adult support group.
- We have read and understand the Family Agreement Form. We have discussed this information and agree to abide by the guidelines of *Breakway*.

---

Print Names of Adults, Children, Teens Signature of Each

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

## *Breakway* Permission Form

To communicate the mission and message of *Breakway* we often want to use quotations, stories, artwork and other artistic expressions of the children and teens for display boards, brochures, newsletters, lectures or training. The last name and detailed information about the child or teen are not spoken or printed.

\_\_\_ We give our permission to the above uses of pictures, artwork, quotations, stories.

\_\_\_ We give our permission with these exceptions:

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\_\_\_ We do NOT give our permission to any of the above.

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Print Names of Adults, Children, Teens Signature of Each

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Breakway: Your Rights to Privacy and Exceptions to privacy***

Our work with you and your family at *Breakway* is confidential. Information shared with the staff, volunteers and other participants is private. Your rights to privacy will be strictly maintained. There are, however, some important exceptions to privacy that are explained on the back.

Please read the seven exceptions to privacy on the back before signing below.

In signing this document, I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about *Breakway's* Confidentiality Policy. I have read and understand the "Rights to Privacy and Exceptions to Privacy" information. I fully understand and accept my rights to privacy and the exceptions to rights to privacy.

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Print Names of Minor Children and Teens

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Print Names of Parents or Legal Guardian

---

Signatures of Parents or Legal Guardian

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Print Name of Emancipated Teen (18 + years)

---

Signature of Emancipated Teen

## Seven Exceptions to Privacy

Exception #1. (Texas) law requires our staff to report to the appropriate government agency any suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

Exception #2. If we learn that someone with whom we are working has a specific intent to bring harm to him- or herself, we reserve the right to inform other family members and/or make appropriate referrals if necessary.

Exception #3. If we have reason to be concerned about the drug and/or alcohol use or abuse by a child or teen, we reserve the right to inform the parent.

Exception #4. If information is ordered by the court, including a subpoena, we will attempt to contact you about the order. If you oppose the release, the court may nevertheless require compliance with the order.

Exception #5. If we learn that someone participating in the program might commit a violent act, we may take steps to protect the intended victim against such danger or inform police, or both.

Exception #6. The rights and exceptions to privacy apply to information disclosed in support groups. All group members are encouraged to keep such information confidential, but *Breakway* cannot guarantee they will do so.

Exception #7. At times, *Breakway* uses case examples of children or teens and their families in publishing articles, conducting professional training, community education, and in fundraising efforts. We may anonymously refer to your situation in those circumstances. Your child, teen or family's complete name will never be used without your specific written approval.

(A copy of this goes home with the family after orientation.)

## ***Breakway Rules for Safety***

*Breakway* has nine rules developed to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the children and families.

### **Stop Rule: “Stop and I mean it.”**

When someone is doing something that feels unsafe to anyone, that child/teen needs to stop the activity immediately.

### **Throwing Rule**

Only soft objects may be thrown. Hard objects may not be thrown at any time in the group. When objects are thrown, they must hit below the shoulders.

### **Put-Down Rule**

No hurting other people’s feelings by making fun of them, name calling or put-downs. Respect each other and one’s self.

### **Hitting Rule**

Children/teens may hit the pillows or stuffed animals, but they may not hit another person.

### **Adult Rule**

Children/teens must be with an adult at all times while at the site. They may not leave the building unless accompanied by an adult.

### **Blood Rule**

Children/teens are instructed not to touch blood. In the event that bleeding occurs, children/teens are to tell an adult who will clean up the spill.

### **Privacy Rule**

What is said in the group is private and confidential and stays here (exceptions are state-required reporting laws).

### **I Pass Rule**

Children/teens can always pass if they do not want to talk.

### **Listening Rule**

We respectfully listen to each other, being considerate enough to allow everyone to have an opportunity to talk, if they so choose.

(A copy of this goes home with the family after orientation.)

## ***Breakway* Authorization for Release of Information**

If you want a staff member of *Breakway* to speak to another professional or anyone else about any of your family members, please complete this form, sign it with a witness, and have the witness sign and date. Complete a separate form for each child/teen or organization to whom you authorize a release of information.

I authorize the staff of *Breakway* to release information to:

Person or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Child/Teen's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

I understand this transfer of information is for the purpose of benefiting my family in our grief support at *Breakway*.

This release will be in effect for the duration of my participation in the *Breakway* program or will expire on \_\_\_\_\_, whichever comes first. I may revoke this release, in writing at any time.

Signature of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

## My Grief Rights: Ten Healing Rights for Grieving Children

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Director,  
Center for Loss & Life Transition, Fort Collins, Colorado  
[www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com)

Author's note: This "bill of rights" for grieving children is intended to empower them to help themselves heal—and to help direct the adults in their lives to be supportive as well.

Someone you love has died. You are probably having many hurtful and scary thoughts and feelings right now. Together those thoughts and feelings are called grief, which is a normal though very difficult thing everyone goes through after someone they love has died.

The following ten rights will help you understand your grief and eventually feel better about life again. Use the ideas that make sense to you. Post this list on your refrigerator or on your bedroom door or wall. Re-reading it often will help you stay on track as you move toward healing from your loss. You might also ask the grown-ups in your life to read this list so they will remember to help you in the best way they can.

1. I have the right to have my own unique feelings about the death. I may feel mad, sad or lonely. I may feel scared or relieved. I may feel numb or sometimes not anything at all. No one will feel exactly like I do.
2. I have the right to talk about my grief whenever I feel like talking. When I need to talk, I will find someone who will listen to me and love me. When I don't want to talk about it, that's okay too.
3. I have the right to show my feelings of grief in my own way. When they are hurting, some kids like to play so they'll feel better for a while. I can play or laugh, too. I might also get mad and scream. This does not mean I am bad, it just means I have scary feelings that I need help with.
4. I have the right to need other people to help me with my grief, especially grown-ups who care about me. Mostly I need them to pay attention to what I am feeling and saying and to love me no matter what.
5. I have the right to get upset about normal, everyday problems. I might feel grumpy and have trouble getting along with others sometimes.
6. I have the right to have "grief bursts". Grief bursts are sudden, unexpected feelings of sadness that just hit me sometimes—even long after the death. These feelings can be very strong and even scary. When this happens, I might feel afraid to be alone.

7. I have the right to use my beliefs about my god to help me deal with my feelings of grief.
8. Praying might make me feel better and somehow closer to the person who died.
9. I have the right to try to figure out why the person I loved died. But it's okay if I don't find an answer. Why questions about life and death are the hardest questions in the world.
10. I have the right to think and talk about my memories of the person who died. Sometimes those memories will be happy and sometimes they might be sad. Either way, these memories help me keep alive my love for the person who died.
11. I have the right to move toward and feel my grief and, over time, to heal. I'll go on to live a happy life, but the life and death of the person who died will always be a part of me. I'll always miss this special person.

(A copy of this goes home with the family after orientation.)