

# GRIEF AT HOME

## FAMILY ACTIVITY SHEET #7

### MEMORY TREE



## Let's share some memories!



Grief is a lifelong process that changes over time. Grieving children and adults don't just "get over it," but instead, can learn how to integrate the loss into their lives. After someone dies, memories help us keep that person in our hearts even though they are no longer physically with us. Talking about the person openly help us remember that we still have a relationship with them. To honor our departed family and friends, this activity is focused on making a memory tree, where we can place our treasured thoughts and memories (or hopes or desires or wished we had) we've had in our grief.



## Materials and Things You'll Need

- Cardstock or construction paper leaves
- Scissors
- Markers, colored pencils, crayons

Estimated time: 30-45 minutes

## Set up:

- Find a time to work together as a family

## Suggested Guidelines

- Talking about the activity:
  - Our activity is the "Memory Tree"
    - We'll be talking about the person that died. We'll be remembering them by talking, sharing stories, and memories that we have. Some of us don't have many or any memories of our person, and that's OK. We have things that we treasure about them and things we wished we could have done with them or told them.
    - It's important to feel connected to our person. We can do that by speaking to them, writing them letters, or sharing memories like today.
- Things to keep in mind
  - If you or someone can't think of a memory, or if children don't have memories, that's OK. Encourage children to ask others or share memories as you complete the activity.
  - If it's too hard to remember or it's difficult, focus instead on positive memories you've had in life. Write out memories of feelings supported by someone else, or fun memories with your friends or family.



## Activity Steps

Gather your supplies and find a place to work together and share supplies

- Cut out leaves (you can use a stencil or freeform). Start with 3-5 per person, but feel free to use more as you go through the activity.
- First Leaf: ask everyone to write down a favorite everyday memory. You can write down the prompt or draw it on the leaf.
  - Examples: favorite breakfast, favorite song, favorite movie
- Second Leaf: ask everyone to write down a favorite special occasion memory (one that you treasure)
  - Example: a favorite birthday, the best day you've ever had
- Third Leaf: ask everyone to write down something you remember about them
  - Example: their smile, their favorite thing to do
  - If memories are too difficult to think of, you can write down messages you'd like to send to them
- Fourth Leaf: ask everyone to write down a wish of something you had for that person
  - Example: I wished they were here for my birthday
  - Again, if memories are too difficult, you can write down messages of things you wish they were here for
- Fifth Leaf: ask everyone to write down something you shared together
  - Example: we both liked chocolate milk
  - Have a conversation with family about similarities everyone had with the person (Example: you had the same color eyes).
- Continue adding leaves as you and your family think of things to add
- You can find a place for your tree in your home

## Processing

- It's okay to decline and skip
- Validate sharing and braveness
- What's it like to think about the person that died?
- What are easier things to remember about the person that died?
- What are harder things to remember about the person that died?
- What are other ways to remember the person that died?



## Ideas for Sharing Memories

- Ask family to start a journal that everyone can share and write memories and messages in
- Create a new family ritual or tradition to honor and remember that person
- Create a family scrapbook or memory box together
- Draw a picture of your family moments or memories
- Talk to the person, write letters, notes or memories

