Family Grieving Activities

**For the Whole Family:**

**Family Collage**

This idea will help your family create a project that helps your family talk about whatever is on your mind.  Anyone can suggest a topic.  Some ideas are things you appreciate about each other, things that make you happy, what you are worried about, things that help you feel better, things you remember about the person who died.

You will need paper, glue, scissors, old magazines, photos etc.  Allow everyone some time to look through the magazines and choose pictures or words that mean something to them.  Use glue sticks and your paper to make a collage of the magazine cutouts.

Give each person a chance to talk about what they choose and why.  If you want to, hang your collage in a special place.

• Memory Box. For some children, creating a memory box may be appropriate, especially if worries and fears have been addressed. Any small box can be used as a symbolic container for “memories”—objects made of clay that represent people or events, small drawings of good times with the deceased person, photos of family, or small mementos that remind the child of positive experiences with the dead person.

**"Talk" with the person you lost**. During moments of solitude, perhaps late at night or early in the morning, talk to the person you lost as if s/he were right there with you. Say whatever is on your mind, everything you wished you had said while s/he was still alive. After speaking, take a few moments to allow yourself the time to feel a sense of peace.

**Write letters**. Similar to the exercise above, write several letters to the person you lost. In the first letter or two, openly express whatever feelings you might be experiencing. Don’t censor yourself. If you feel angry, lonely, depressed, fearful, happy, or relieved, say so. The key is to allow yourself to say what’s on your mind and in your heart. Once you’ve done so, write a final letter of gratitude to them. Let him/her know what you appreciate and what you’ve been grateful for throughout the years.

**Treasure fond memories**. There are several ways in which you may want to treasure fond memories of your special person. You may choose to collect mementos and put them in a scrapbook, or put together a video collage of photos collected over the years, or host a potluck dinner for family and friends and record stories they share about the person. Do whatever helps you create lasting memories that you can go back to in the days ahead.

**How can adults gain the trust of teens?**

To gain the trust of teens, adults must become good, nonjudgmental listeners. Let teenagers know that you are interested in them, in their views, in their ideas and thoughts. Let them know that you like and care for them. Support their ideas or gently introduce new ways to approach their ideas. Acknowledge their grief and offer your thoughts of how to ease their pain.

**What activities work with teens?**

Teens will tell you that they just want to talk and not have any activities. For some grief groups this is true, but you need some ideas to fall back on if a particular group is silent and non-responsive. The following activity gets group members comfortable with each other because it immediately addresses the reason why they are there.

**My Story**

The person who died in my life is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The cause of death was\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I found out about the death when\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

After death, I believe my loved one is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

My first feeling was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Now I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What makes me most angry is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I worry about\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The hardest thing about school is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

My friends are\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The adults in my life tell me\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What helps me most is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What helps me the least is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **Other ideas for activities are:**

Writing or drawing spontaneously on mural paper taped to the wall

Creating a collage using pictures and words cut from old magazines

Constructing a book that can be used as a journal or a memory book

Writing a poem, eulogy or song

Launching a balloon after writing messages to the person who died (Use biodegradable balloons and clip the string for environmental reasons.)

Going on a field trip to a funeral home, cemetery, etc.