

Resources for Separation, Grief, and Healing During the Pandemic



This resource is for families and friends who are moving through grief related to separation, illness, and death during the unique circumstances of a pandemic. These are materials to help nurture connection, understanding, and healing, especially when we cannot be together in person. The curators welcome your suggestions for additional resources to include.

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Books, Stories, and Activity Books

Children

- [Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss](#) by Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen, Illustrated by Taylor Bills ([video reading](#)).
- [The Memory Tree](#) by Britta Teckentrup ([video reading](#)).
- [The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages](#) by Leo Buscaglia ([video reading](#)).
- [The Tenth Good Thing About Barney](#) by Judith Viorst, Illustrated by Erik Blegvad ([video Reading](#)).
- [The Invisible String](#) by Patrice Karst, Illustrated by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff ([video reading](#)).
- [Where Are You? A Child's Book About Loss](#) by Laura Olivieri.
- [Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies](#) by Janis Silverman.

Youth

- [The Science of Happiness](#) - Soul Pancake
- [Mental Health Tips via Soul Pancake](#) - Hey There Human
- [When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens](#) by Marilyn E. Gootman.
- [The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teens and Friends](#) by Helen Fitzgerald.
- [Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love](#) by Earl A. Grollman.
- [Juniper Lemon's Happiness Index](#) by Julie Israel.
- [Speak of Me As I Am](#) by Sonia Belasco.
- [I'll Give You The Sun](#) by Jandy Nelson.
- [The Fault in Our Stars](#) by John Green.
- [The Invisible String](#) by Patrice Karst, Illustrated by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff ([video reading](#)).

Activity Books

- [Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies](#) by Janis Silverman.
- Parents can use the [Emotional Resilience Toolkit](#) to help their children name emotional responses and develop skills for managing them.
- Children can use the [Explore my Emotions booklet](#) and [My Feelings Workbook](#).
- Teens can use the [Social Emotional Learning Workbook](#) to identify and work with emotions.

Parents and Caregivers

- [When Children Grieve: For Adults to Help Children Deal with Death, Divorce, Pet Loss, Moving, and Other Losses](#) by John W. James and Russell Friedman.
- [Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child](#) by Earl A. Grollman.
- [Bearing The Unbearable](#) by Joanne Cacciatore ([Missfoundation.org](#)).

- [Using Books to Support Children and Youth Through Grief, Loss, and Healing](#), New York Life Foundation (includes notes about supporting various developmental stages).
- [When Things Fall Apart](#) by Pema Chodron.
- [It's OK That You Are Not OK: Meeting Grief And Loss In A Culture That Doesn't Understand](#) by Megan Devine.
- [The Year Of Magical Thinking](#) by Joan Didion.
- [Being Mortal](#) by Atul Gawande.
- [Counseling Strategies For Loss And Grief](#) by Keren Humphrey.
- [When Bad Things Happen To Good People](#) by Rabbi Harold Kushner.
- [A Grief Observed](#) by C. S. Lewis.
- [Wild Comfort: The Silence OF Nature](#) by Kathleen Dean Moore.
- [Option B](#) by Sheryl Sandberg (foundation [OptionB.org](#), also has a Facebook page).
- [Understanding Your Grief](#) by Alan D. Wolfelt.

Self Expression

Arts and Crafts

- [Paper Heart Garland](#), use with story, *The Invisible String*.
- Coloring Sheets: [UU Chalices & More](#) (32 pages), [Inspirational Sayings](#) (60 pages).
- [Make Mittens from Recycled Sweaters](#) of a loved one.
- Presence Craft with Leaves (see image right). This darling craft is a great way to introduce little ones to a sense of presence and the spirit in all things! **You can copy and resize the image for your needs.**



Music and Playlists

- [Spotify Playlist for Healing](#)

Meditation and Prayer

- **Gandhi Peace Body Prayer (video)**

I offer you peace (extend arms, hands palm up).

I offer you friendship (clasp hands together).

I offer you love (arms crossed on chest).

I see your beauty (point to eyes).

I hear your needs (point to ears).

I feel your feelings (place hands on chest).

My wisdom comes from a higher source (arms extended: one pointing up and the other pointing down).

I honor that source in you (clasp hands together).

Let us work together (arms extended, open palms up).

- **Hand Breathing:** Try this breathing meditation using your hand! (see image right). **You can copy and resize the image for your needs.**



- **Tree Meditation:** Adapted from Alexandra Big Life Journal

What is your favorite tree? Think about the tree and envision the tree in your mind.

Imagine that you are like the tree in your mind. What does it look like?

Imagine the branches reaching out into the sky.

Imagine the roots extending deep into the ground.

Imagine the leaves and flowers. Is there anything living in your tree?

Now imagine a big wind comes up and the tree starts moving and bending in the wind.

Remember, the challenges we're facing are like the **wind** which bends the tree.

Trees stand strong despite the wind because of their **strong root system** (support system): family, friends, pets, their MINDSET, positive thoughts, beliefs, values, etc.

Trees need wind to blow against them because it helps their root systems to grow deeper, which supports the tree as it grows taller. In other words, the tree welcomes the strong wind because it helps it grow STRONGER!

So similar in life, challenges make us stronger! Such experiences as we're facing these days develop our character and our mindset and deepen our roots. When we grow deep, we too, stand tall!

- **Labyrinth** (see image right). Walking a labyrinth either by your feet or finger is a physical form of meditation and a symbol of the journey towards wholeness. **You can copy and resize the image for your needs.**



Relaxation and Mindfulness

- Yoga Ed. Mind-Body Resources, [Trauma Sensitive Tools for Children and Youth](#) - yoga-based tools designed for young people who have been exposed to traumatic events or circumstances. These resources develop the mind-body connection to enhance health, well-being, learning, and behavior.
- Free Audio: Pema Chödrön, [Making a Relationship with Pain and Joy: Tonglen Instructions](#).
- Left Brain Buddha, [Mindfulness Practices, Especially for Kids](#): Five simple mindfulness concepts you can introduce to children as young as four or five: 1) I can find my anchor; 2) I can notice my puppy mind, 3) I can send kind thoughts and be grateful, 4) I can notice my feelings, 5) I can be still as I look, listen, and learn. ["Teaching Mindfulness to Children"](#) blog. Click here for [a handy poster to print](#).

- RAIN technique for managing stress: Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture. Recognize what is happening. Allow the experience to be there, just as it is. Investigate with interest and care. Nurture with self-compassion. Tara Brach offers [several related resources](#).
- Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom, [Exploring Values with Mindfulness](#).
- Psychology Today, [A Therapist's Self-Care Tips to Cope with Stress and Anxiety](#)
- Today, [2-Minute Grounding Exercise](#)

Rituals and Activities

- **Bubbles:** Have children blow bubbles into the sky and as they do, whisper prayers and good wishes and love into the bubbles for them to take to their loved one who has died. Do this each year on their birthday or other special day.
- **Memory Boats:** Create little boats out of bark and other natural ingredients such as leaves, moss, feathers, and flowers. Set the boats adrift with a visualization in the mind of letting go or use the boats to send a message (like the bubbles above).
- **Heirloom Quilt:** Make a quilt from the clothes your loved one wore. Hire a local quilter or do it yourself. Keep the quilt or pass it on to a new baby. Or, instead of a quilt, make a memory pillow to hug.
- **Altar:** Create an altar in a corner of the room using a small table, shelf or other surface. Place on it anything you like that connects you to the person or animal that has died. Photos, personal objects, mementos from a trip, notes, anything. Put objects that soothe you as well- rocks, flowers, candles. Pay special attention on birthdays, holidays, etc.
- **Dedications:** Make a practice of donating to a special organization or charity your loved one cared about. Buy a bench in the park. Plant a tree on their birthday. Dedicate flowers in their memory. Practice giving something away in honor of the loved one.
- **Journal:** Dedicate a special notebook to write about your loved one. Write about them or your process of grieving. Write stories of your loved one for family members. Create a video journal while your family member is alive to share with each other now and once the person has died. Write letters to your loved one and mail them off.
- **Body Art:** Some people get tattoos to honor the one that has died. Others ritualistically paint on their hands on the occasion of the death of their loved one. There are organizations that take the ashes after cremation and use them in the ink of the tattoo. There are also companies that will turn your ashes into a diamond.
- **Give Things Away:** When you have decided to give your loved ones things away don't just give them to a local charity. Turn the process of giving things away into a sacred rite of passage with candles, prayers, and special music. Tell stories and share the memories as you pass remembrance items to friends and families. Maybe include a note for them about the object and why it was given to them. Create a beautiful table with jewelry or other items and invite family and friends to take an item to wear to the memorial and then have as a keepsake. If the person who is dying is able to do so, they can give the items away themselves.
- **Memory book:** Make a scrapbook or memory book out of photos, letters, and other images from magazines, receipts and other souvenirs from travels to aid in the process

of remembering and honoring but also grieving and healing. Or, make a memory box and keep special items from your loved one in it.

- **Create:** Take time to create art or fix a meal or tap into some other creative aspect of yourself to represent the person or animal you have lost and to remember/honor that person or animal. Create a memory token out of an object that was theirs or make your own by painting on a stone or carving a piece of wood, etc.

Giving and Caring

- Make and send a card.
- Drop off a basket of baked goods or drawings.
- Bake and share a favorite meal.
- Offer specific tasks you can do: buy groceries, walk the dog, weed the garden, clear snow, watch the children.
- [Refuge in Grief: Grief Support](#), incl. "Care and Feeding of Your Grieving Person" (image shown right). **You can copy and resize the image for your needs.**



Additional Online Resources

- [Sesame Street: Helping Kids Grieve](#)
- [MISSFoundation: A Community of Compassion and Hope for Grieving Families](#)
- [Good Grief Resources](#)
- [Imagine. Grief Support Community](#)
- [Parenting in Place](#)
- [Child Mind Institute | Transforming Children's Lives](#)
- Gratefulness: [Gratitude and Grateful Living](#)
- [Compassion and Wisdom: Exploring Values with Mindfulness](#)
- [64 Children's Books about Illness and Death](#)
- [Children Grieve](#)
- [Speaking Grief](#)
- [Grief Recovery Method Workshop](#)
- [Stephen Colbert and Anderson Cooper discuss their experiences of grief](#), having lost parents and siblings at a young age
- TED Talk, [We Don't 'Move On' From Grief. We Move Forward With It.](#) Nora McInery.