remembering together

AN ACTIVITY BOOK FOR KIDS WHO ARE GRIEVING A COVID-19 DEATH
The mission of Dougy Center is to provide grief support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and their families can share their experiences before and after a death. We provide support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children who are grieving.

This resource was funded by the Brave of Heart Fund, founded by the Foundations of New York Life and Cigna and administered by E4E Relief. The Brave of Heart Fund was established in 2020 to provide charitable grants and emotional support services to families of the frontline healthcare workers, volunteers, and support staff whose lives were lost in the fight against COVID-19. It continues to offer support to these bereaved families via partnerships with non-profit organizations aligned with the fund’s core purposes.

employeerelieffund.org/brave-of-heart-fund
remembering together

AN ACTIVITY BOOK FOR KIDS WHO ARE GRIEVING A COVID-19 DEATH
Introduction

This is Aldo and his friend Lola. Aldo loves swimming, eating snacks, and music. Lola loves video games, playing soccer, and visiting her cousins. Just like Aldo, she also loves music, but she likes to dance way more than he does.

Another thing that Lola and Aldo have in common? Grief. They both had people in their family die of COVID-19.

What's Grief?

When someone in our life dies, we can experience grief. We can experience grief in our bodies, in our thoughts, in our feelings, and in so many other ways.

Aldo's dad and grandmother both died. His dad worked at a hospital and even though he wore his mask and gloves, he still got sick with COVID. Aldo and the rest of his family got COVID at the same time, but his dad and grandmother were the only ones who got really sick. Aldo’s dad was in the hospital for a long time, and eventually his body stopped working and he died. Aldo’s grandmother got sick at home and had to go to the same hospital, but not the same room where his dad died.

Lola’s mom was a firefighter and she got COVID a few months after Aldo’s dad did. She also died at the hospital. Lola went to visit her mom, but she couldn’t go inside the building. Instead, she stood outside her mom’s window with her aunts and held up a sign she had decorated with green hearts. Green was her mom’s favorite color.

Where was the last place you saw or talked to your person or people who died?

Aldo and Lola met when they started second grade and quickly became best friends. Lola says it helps her to know someone else who also had someone die of COVID. Sometimes Aldo and Lola cry together. Sometimes they share memories of their dad and grandmother and mom. Other times they laugh and play and act silly together.

As you go through this workbook, Aldo and Lola will be there for you with help and ideas. Ready?

Instructions:

• Grab a pen, pencil, markers, or crayons.
• Do the activities in any order.
• Skip the ones you don’t want to do.
• Have a question? Ask an adult.
• If you have big feelings come up, take a break and check in with an adult.
ALDO’S ADVENTURE TO UNDERSTAND GRIEF

Maybe you’re on one too? Aldo was 7 when his parent died of Covid. If you want, write in who died in your life and how old you were.

Grief is everything we think, feel, and wonder about when someone dies. There’s nothing wrong with you because someone in your family died of Covid.

Even though grief can be lonely, it’s not a solo hike.

My mom is always crying. Does that mean I should too?

Grandpa is angry because Dad had to go to work. That’s how he got Covid.

What have you learned about grief from other people?

Grief can change everything, including what we think, feel, like, and what we want to do in the future.

What have you changed?

It’s better when people do and say things that feel helpful.

I like when my mom makes my favorite snack and my friends invite me to play. I don’t like it when my uncle tries to cheer me up with bad jokes.

What’s helpful for you?

Grief is as unique as you are. How you feel and what you do might be different than other people.

What’s messy about your grief?

I love my mom, but sometimes she was mean.

Dad was working at the hospital all the time. I never got to see him.

I want to...

When someone dies of Covid, life can feel out of control. It helps to have choices.

Mom let me decide if I wanted to go to the funeral.

I pick out what I wear to school.

I decided I wanted to switch from baseball to soccer.

There’s no right or wrong way to move on the grief trail. How do you like to move?

There’s no specific end to grief. It changes over time, just like you.

Get extra help.

Grief can be really hard. It can make other things that were already hard seem impossible. It’s okay to ask for help. Talk with a trusted family member, neighbor, teacher, friend, or other adult.
There’s a billboard in my town that used to be about COVID. I kind of hated seeing it after she died, but now that it’s gone, I also kind of miss it. What if no one remembers why she died?

A FAVORITE DAY

Is it hard to remember the good times with your person before they died of COVID? Sometimes writing or drawing a memory can help. Think of a favorite day you spent with your person and write or draw all the details you remember: Where were you? What was the weather like? What did you do? What did you wear? What did your person do or say?

If you don’t have a favorite day or can’t remember, try asking someone else who knew your person to tell you about a favorite day they had together.
She ALWAYS wore this red coat and big boots.

Lots of kids worry they will forget things about their person who died. In these circles, write or draw what you remember about your person. Don’t know something? Ask someone in your family who might know!

WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE

THEIR FAVORITE THINGS
[Color, animal, food, item of clothing, place, thing to do with me...]

WHERE THEY GREW UP

WHERE THEY WENT TO SCHOOL

WHAT THEY DID FOR WORK/FUN
Sometimes grief makes me feel like I’m different than everyone else, and that’s kind of lonely.

Who is on your grief team? Who are the people and pets and places that help you?

When I need a hug:

When I want to be silly:

When I have a question:

If I need help with homework:

When I want to hear a story about my person who died:

When I feel scared:

When I feel mad:

On the extra hard days:
A few things we used to do...

What do you miss doing with your person who died? Did you play at the park? Ride on the bus together? Read books before bedtime? Sing silly songs together?

In the squares below, write or draw a few things you used to do together.

★ Star the one that was their favorite
○ Circle the one that was your favorite

My mom loved to walk with me to school. I loved playing soccer with her the most.

and one thing I wish we could

In the rectangle write or draw something you wish you could do with them.
On the tree trunk, write the person or people who have died. On the leaves, write something special about them or a memory you have.

Everyone in my house got COVID at the same time, I still wonder if it was me who brought it home?

“...”
GRIEF CREATURE

Imagine that the grief creature lives inside this cave...write or draw about your grief creature below.

What does it look like?
How does it sound?
What does it do?
Is it friendly, angry, sad, happy...
All of these? None of these?
Does your grief creature have a name?
When my grandparents tell me stories about what my mom was like as a kid, it makes me smile and laugh. She got into a LOT of trouble!
My family of feelings

Draw the different people who are part of your family and then write or draw the feeling or feelings that you see them having — some feelings might be about the person in your life who died, some feelings might be about other things. Animals count too and don’t forget to include yourself!

If you need help, you can pick a feeling from the list at the bottom.

sad  irritated  scared  worried  calm  happy  excited  confused  brave  strong  down  hopeless  grouchy  mad
I couldn’t go see my mom at the hospital, so my other mom would call me every night on FaceTime so I could tell her I loved her.

FINISH THE SENTENCES

When you’re grieving, sometimes it helps to write it out. Finish these sentences with whatever comes to mind. There are no right or wrong answers — and no one is going to judge your spelling!

When ___________________ (my person) died, I felt...

Today my grief feels...

Since my person died, my family...

If I could talk to my person one more time, I would say...

I wish my person could tell me...

After my person died, school...

When other people talk about COVID...

Something I liked to do with my person was...

I’d like to forget...

If I could ask them anything...
Worries & Wishes

Some kids say that after their person died of COVID they started to worry about things they didn’t really think about before. Things like: Who will take care of me? Will someone I care about get sick or die? Did I give it to them? Will my family be okay? Who will pick me up from school? What will we do for my birthday now?

What worries do you have? You can write or draw them on the rocks below. You can also talk with your family and write them together.

When Lola’s mom died, she had a lot of worries. Those worries made it hard to sleep and made her stomach hurt a lot. She talked about it with her family and they helped her think of things she could do to feel better. Now, she takes some deep breaths, plays soccer, yells into her pillow, or scribbles in her coloring book. What helps you when you have worries?

Sometimes it helps to take each worry and turn it into a wish. Which of the worries that you wrote on the rocks can you turn into wishes?

Write these new wishes on the rocks in the river.

Ask your family if you need help with ideas.
GRIEF IN MY BODY

Do you ever feel grief in your body? Draw a picture of yourself and then put stars on the places where you feel your feelings and then write or draw those feelings.

I like to wear my dad’s T-shirt to bed. Sometimes it still smells a little like him.
Drivers & Passengers

When you ride in the car, the driver makes the car go, stop, and turn. Sometimes people riding in the car open and close windows, play music, and change the temperature in the car. As a kid, there are some things that you get to decide and some things the adults in your life get to decide.

In and around the car on the left, write or draw the things in your life that you get to decide. In and around the car on the right, write or draw the things that other people get to decide. What would you change if you could?

My dad gets to decide where we live. I get to decide what to wear to school. Sometimes I wish I could decide what we eat for dinner!

What I would change if I could:
What to do with a feeling

When someone you care about dies of COVID, you can have a lot of different feelings. It can help to pick something you can do when you have those feelings. What feeling do you think the sloth is having? Write the feeling under each face and then write something you can do when you feel that feeling.

My mom worked at the hospital and she was gone so much that sometimes I still think she’s just at work.
Pictures

Pictures help us remember the people who have died. Below, draw a picture of the person or people in your life who have died. On the next page, there are spaces to glue in photos that are important to you. Ask an adult for help with finding photos, making copies, and sticking them to the paper!

My mom was really, really tall, so I drew her next to a big tree.

My favorite photos are of me and my mom together.
Sometimes kids at school say mean things like ‘COVID’s not even real.’
Even though it makes me mad,
I just walk away.
What grief feels like

Grief feels different for everyone. What does grief feel like to you?
Write or draw in the squares below. If you want, ask people in your family
to fill in how grief feels for them.

A whole wave coming out of my eyes
BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH
A ROTTEN APPLE
A WHOLE WAVE COMING OUT OF MY EYES
Funerals & Memorials

Did your family have a funeral, memorial service, celebration of life, or Homegoing after your person died of COVID? Some families do. Some don’t. Some of them couldn’t have one in-person because of the pandemic. Some families had a virtual one where people logged on through their phone or computer.

What did your family do?

In this box, write or draw what your family did.

My family did a funeral on Zoom for my dad. It was kind of weird, but I liked that my dog could be next to me the whole time.

If I could design my mom’s celebration of life, I would have made everyone wear green – her favorite color! Oh, and better snacks like good cookies and cupcakes.

In this box, write or draw anything you would change about it.
It’s ok to cry, laugh, be happy, mad, or scared. There’s no right way to feel.

"That last word was a tough one to find. I love remembering how my dad and I would make breakfast together on the weekend."
My grief feelings show up randomly. Usually when I don’t want them to!

Grief can be hard work. It helps to have people, places, and things that help you feel strong and comfortable.

What would you like to put in your comfort backpack? Write or draw what you would include.

In my backpack I have a water bottle, my stuffed animal, a picture of my mom, and my favorite sweatshirt — I take that thing everywhere!
Holidays are different now

What holidays does your family celebrate? How are they different without your person or people who died?

On these pages write the holidays your family celebrates. Want to add a drawing for each one?

- Circle the one that was your person’s favorite
- ★ Put a star next to your favorite

In the space below each holiday, write or draw how it’s different without your person.

Día de los Muertos was my grandmother’s favorite holiday. I like Valentine’s because of all the chocolate.

My mom made the best Halloween costumes. Since she died I don’t like dressing up as much.
Hopes & Dreams

It's still okay to have hopes and dreams for your future, even if someone in your life has died of COVID.

What do you hope and wish for?

When I grow up, I want to be a firefighter like my mom. I need to lift a LOT of weights like she did.
You can contact Dougy Center at 503-775-5683, visit them online at dougy.org, or email them at help@dougy.org!
“Dad kept getting better and then worse and then better, so I thought he would come home. But then he got really, really sick and died. It was a rollercoaster.”

“Grief is different for everyone.”

“When Grandma told me she died, I yelled ‘NO!’ really loud.”