



FOR KIDS WHO ARE GRIEVING

My Grief Book

A place for my feelings, my questions and my memories.

This book belongs to:



Activities adapted from the Dougy Center, the National Grief Center for Children & Families, with gratitude. Find more free resources at dougy.org.

How to use this book with your child

This book is for children who are grieving someone who died, or who are carrying big feelings after something frightening. There are no right answers and no need to finish it.

Go at their pace

Let your child choose the pages. Skip any that don't fit. Come back to it over days or weeks.

Use honest, simple words

Say "died" instead of softer phrases, which can confuse kids. It's okay to say "I don't know."

Listen more than you fix

Reflect back what you hear. You don't need to make the feelings go away.

Expect the same questions

Kids often ask again and again. Calm, consistent answers help them make sense of it.

Keep routines, with room to bend

Familiar meals and bedtimes feel safe. Loosen expectations for school and chores when needed.

Take care of yourself, too

Kids do better when the adults around them have support. Lean on your people.

What grief can look like

Young children: clinginess, tantrums, sleep changes, going back to earlier behaviors, telling the story over and over.

School-age kids: stomachaches, nightmares, trouble focusing, worry that someone else will die, sometimes blaming themselves.

Teens: pulling away, strong mood swings, not wanting to talk, risk-taking, or taking care of everyone else.

Call COPA at 541-389-6313 if grief is getting in the way of daily life or you're worried. **Get help right away** if your child talks about hurting themselves or not wanting to live: call or text **988**, or call **911** in an emergency.

What is grief?

Grief is all the feelings and thoughts we have when someone or something we care about is gone, or when something very sad or scary happens.

- Grief feels different for everyone. There is no wrong way to feel.
- Grief can show up in your body, your thoughts and your feelings.
- Feelings can pop up when you don't expect them, even at school or while playing.
- You can feel sad and happy on the same day. That's okay too.
- When feelings get really big, take a break and find a grown-up you trust.

Circle the feelings you've had. Add your own!

Sad	Mad	Scared	Confused	Lonely	Worried	Tired
Numb	Okay	Happy	Calm	Guilty	Surprised	Brave

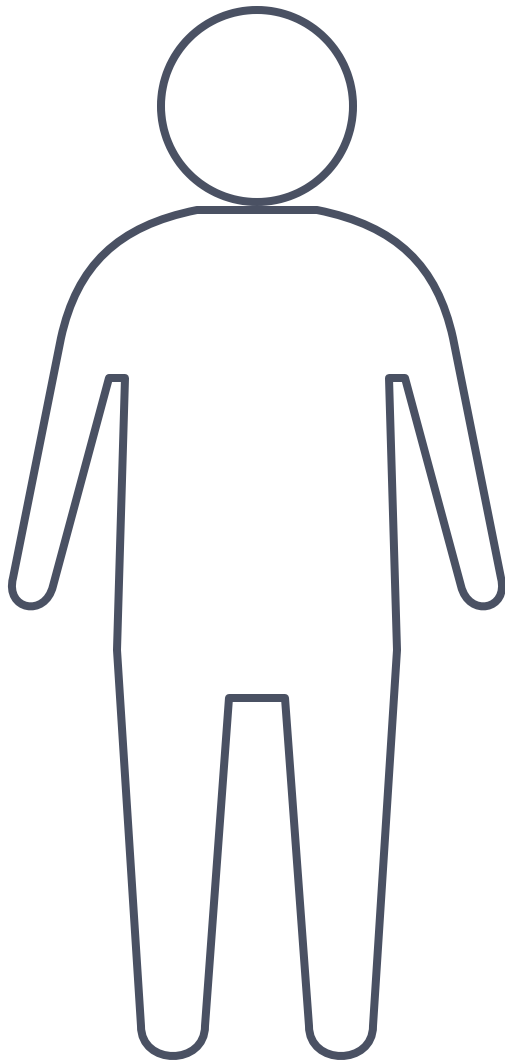
My own word:

My own word:

Right now I feel...

Grief in my body

Feelings live in our bodies too. Maybe your tummy hurts when you're worried, or your hands feel tight when you're mad. Pick a color for each feeling, then color where you feel it.



My color key

☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____
☐	_____

Try this: Put your hand where you feel the biggest feeling. Take three slow breaths into that spot. Does it change?

All about my person

It's okay to keep talking about the person who died. Their name and your memories still matter.

Their name

How I knew them

Something they loved

Something that made them laugh

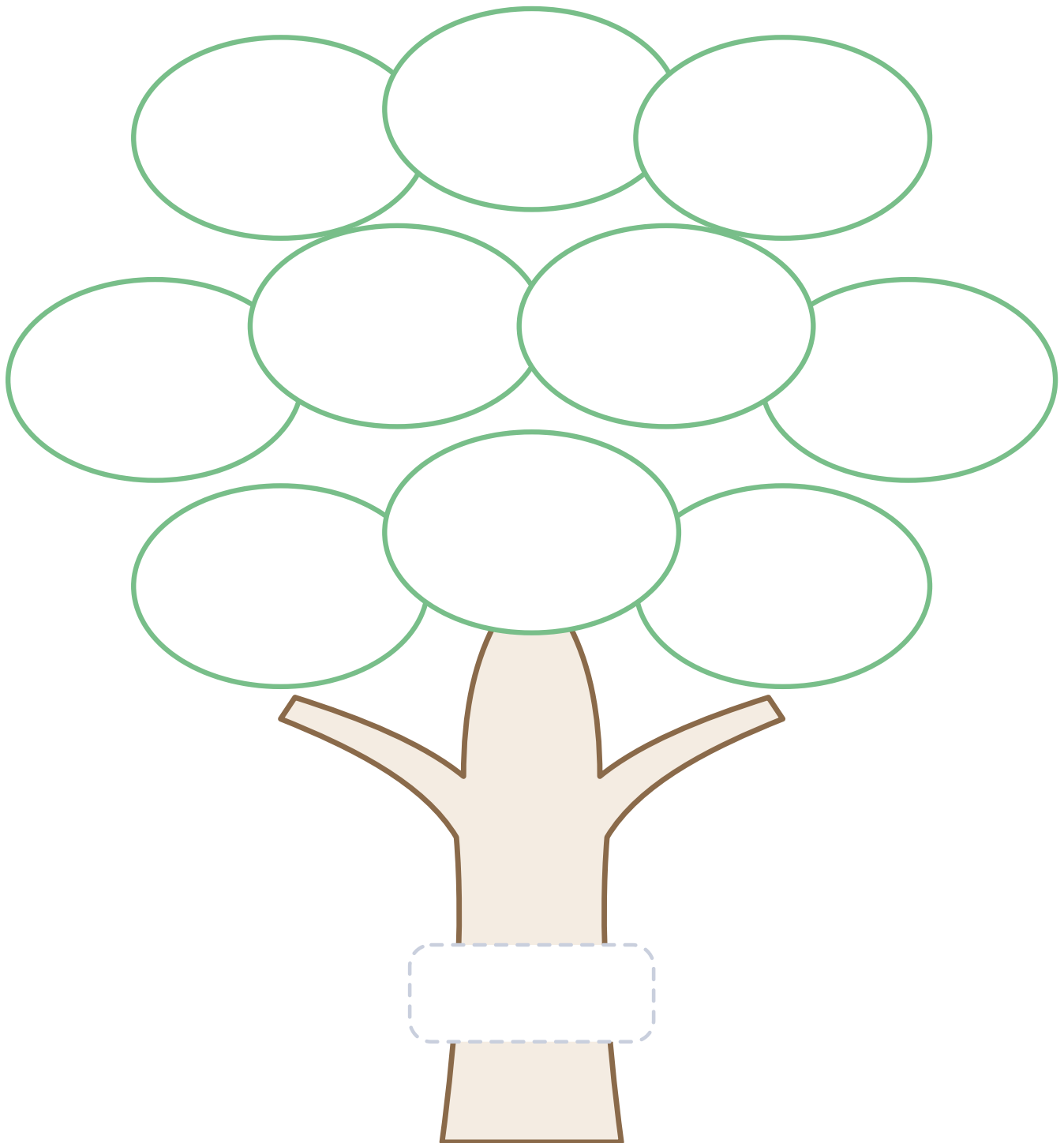
A favorite day with them

Draw or write about it. Where were you? What did you do?

A large dashed rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for a drawing or written response. It occupies the majority of the lower half of the page.

My memory tree

Write your person's name on the trunk. On each leaf, write or draw a memory. You can add more leaves any time.



What I know, what I wonder

After something scary, kids hear lots of things from friends, TV and phones. Some are true, and some aren't. Share this page with a grown-up you trust so they can help sort it out.

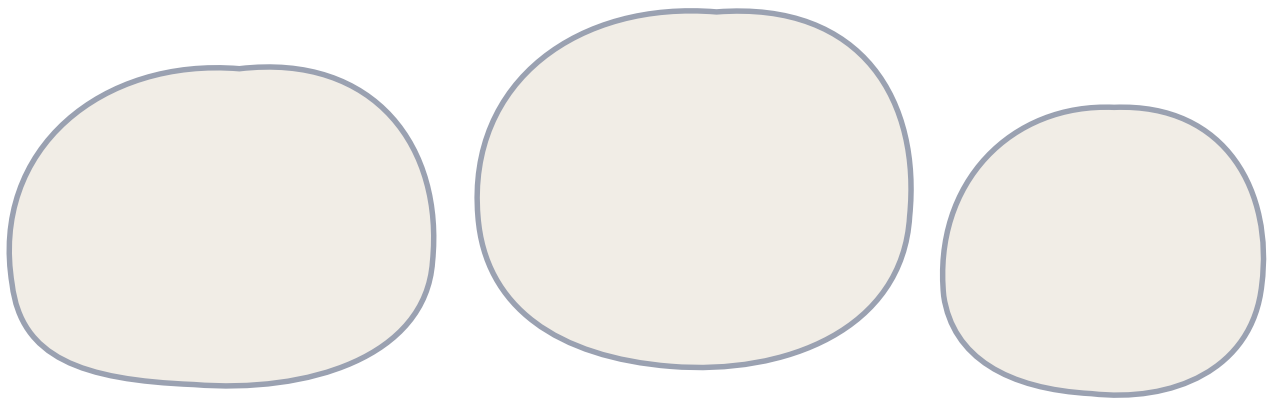
What I know

What I wonder about

Things I heard that I'm not sure are true

Worries and wishes

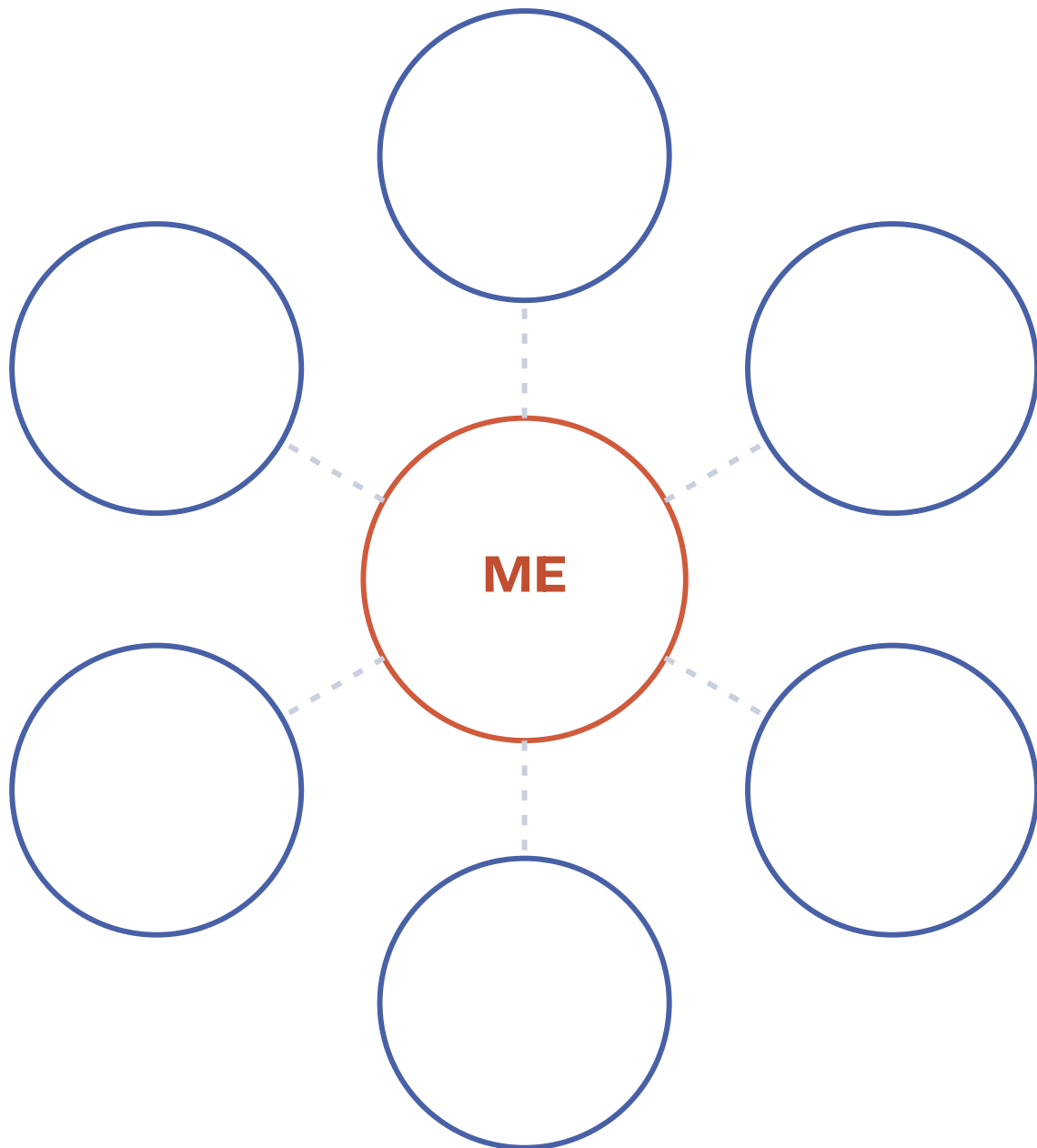
Write a worry on each rock. Then, if you want, turn some worries into wishes on the stars. Talking about worries with a grown-up can make them feel lighter.



A grown-up I can tell my worries to:

My grief team

Who helps you on hard days? Who makes you laugh on easy days? Your team can include people, pets and places. Put yourself in the middle.



A place that feels safe:

A grown-up at school I can go to:

What to do with a big feeling

Different things help different feelings. Check the ones you want to try, and star the ones that work for you.

Move my body

- ☐ Run, jump or dance
- ☐ Shoot hoops or kick a ball
- ☐ Squeeze a pillow or play dough
- ☐ Go for a walk outside

Make something

- ☐ Draw or paint my feelings
- ☐ Write in a journal
- ☐ Build with blocks or Legos
- ☐ Make up a song

Calm down

- ☐ Hug a stuffed animal or pet
- ☐ Find a quiet, cozy spot
- ☐ Listen to music
- ☐ Take slow breaths (below)

Connect

- ☐ Get a hug
- ☐ Tell a grown-up how I feel
- ☐ Play with a friend
- ☐ Look at photos of my person



Flower and candle breathing

Pretend to smell a flower: breathe in slowly through your nose. Then pretend to blow out a birthday candle: breathe out slowly through your mouth. Do it five times.

My comfort backpack: draw or list the things and people that help you feel strong.

A letter to my person

What do you want to tell them? What do you miss? What do you wish you could ask? You can keep this letter, share it, or put it somewhere special.

Dear _____,

Love, _____

If you're a teen and grieving

This book is mostly for younger kids, but grief hits at every age. Here's what we want you to know.

There's no right way to do this

Grief doesn't follow rules or a timeline. It can show up weeks or months later, and that's normal.

Figure out what helps you

Music, sports, art, writing, time outside, time with friends. Notice what makes things a little lighter, and what makes them heavier.

Watch for the stuff that hurts more

Drinking, drugs, reckless driving or shutting everyone out can feel like relief, but they usually make grief harder. Talk to someone if you're going there.

You don't have to hold everyone else up

Lots of teens take care of siblings or parents after a loss. It's okay to need care too.

Find your people

A friend, coach, teacher, relative or counselor. You don't have to talk about it all, just don't go it alone.

Need to talk now? Oregon YouthLine: call **877-968-8491** or text **teen2teen** to **839863** (teens answer 4 to 10 PM). Anytime: call or text **988**.



FOR GROWN-UPS

Where to find more support

COPA • 541-389-6313

Our pediatricians, behavioral health clinicians and 24-hour nurse line are here for your family.

The Dougy Center • 503-775-5683

Free tip sheets, activities and Spanish resources for grieving kids, teens and families.
dougy.org

Deschutes County Crisis Line • 541-322-7500, ext. 9

24/7. Walk-in Stabilization Center for kids and adults: 63311 NE Jamison St., Bend.

211

Free help finding local services. Dial 211, or text your zip code to 898211.

In a crisis: call or text **988** (press 2 for Spanish). In an emergency, call **911**.

Activities and guidance in this book are adapted, with gratitude, from the Dougy Center's free resources for grieving children, including "Remembering Together," "Tips for Supporting Grieving Children" and "Developmental Responses to Grief." Visit dougy.org for the originals and many more.