



MAKING A MEMORY BOX

A Guide for Parents

Introduction

Losing a loved one at any age is tough. For children, it may be the first time they experience death or encounter grief. Helping them understand what they are feeling and work through those emotions can be tough. Children may be reluctant to talk about how they are feeling, or could be unable to express their grief verbally. By creating a memory box together, it can help children to open up about their feelings, talk about and share memories of their loved one.

The act of creating the box can provide an emotional outlet for kids, allowing them to communicate in their own way. The finished memory box can then be kept and viewed at a later time, keeping memories and mementos safe, and giving them a tangible object they can share and use to talk about their lost loved one.


What is a memory box

A memory box is a place where you can keep special things that belonged to a person who has died like small gifts, photos, or drawings. It's a way to remember the person who has died, keeping those memories safe, and moving forward. Including short notes of happy memories, items that remind you of that person, or other personal touches can be great items to include and look back on together with others.

How can it help?

Children may find it tough to express their emotions, particularly if they feel pressured to talk. By trying a shared, creative activity like creating a memory box together, this can encourage communication and allow natural openings for children to bring up their feelings and memories themselves. Children who are worried about forgetting their loved one can also find it reassuring to have their special memories safely collected in one place.

Once your child has completed their memory box, it can be a good tool for them to use when they want or need to talk to someone.



What you'll need

- A box or container
- Clear-drying glue
- Coloured pens or paints
- Colourful paper or craft paper
- Pen or pencil
- Photographs

You can buy ready to use memory boxes, however the act of creating and decorating their own box can help children to express their grief and make the memory box their own. It can be as simple or elaborate as they like; there is no right or wrong way to make it - the focus is on providing a comfortable way for children to share their grief and memories.

Conversation starters, ideas & tips

Before you start making a memory box together, it can help to think of a few different kinds of memories your child may have about their dead loved one. Having a few questions or ideas you use to get things started can help.

Can you think of...

- Any special times your child may have shared with them?
- Any hobbies or activities they may have shared together?
- Any big milestones they may have shared (like teaching them to ride a bicycle; going with them on the first day of school; being there for their first sports day)
- Any important dates when they may really miss the person, or need extra support?
- When they might miss them the most? (holidays; anniversaries; new experiences)

Further information and resources

Happiful Kids - full range of free Happiful Kids bereavement resources:

www.counselling-directory.org.uk/childhood-bereavement.html/

Counselling Directory - support, information, and professional children's counsellors:

www.counselling-directory.org.uk/

Child Bereavement UK - support for families, young people, professionals, and schools:

<http://childbereavementuk.org/>

NHS - information to help children who have lost a loved one:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/bereavement/Pages/children-bereavement.aspx/>

Winston's Wish: the charity for bereaved children - support and information for children and parents:

<https://www.winstonswish.org.uk/>



For more free resources, visit:
<http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/childhood-bereavement.html/>