**Parent Resources/Options for Supporting Children and Families after Loss**

In addition to the resources below, please also see the ‘[Recover’ tab on the STARS Toolkit site](http://www.starstoolkit.org/helpful-documents).

Remember that we are all experiencing stress at this time, even prior to the loss that has recently occured. This article offers good insights into helping to manage these feelings: [How ‘Anticipatory Grief’ May Show Up During the COVID-19 Outbreak](https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/how-anticipatory-grief-may-show-up-during-the-covid-19-outbreak)

**4 ways to honor your grief (from NPR)**

Once you identify the losses you're feeling, look for ways to honor the grief surrounding you, grief experts urge.

* **Bear witness and communicate**
	+ Virtually to share these losses together. Using apps, such as Zoom, Skype, Facetime or Facebook Live, virtual meetups are easy to set up on a daily or weekly basis.
* **Write, create, express**
	+ Keeping a written or recorded journal of these days offers another way to express, to identify and to acknowledge loss and grief.
	+ Art therapy, which can be especially helpful for children unable to express well with words, for teens and even for many adults.
	+ Use breath to blow their sadness, fear and anger into a rock that they then throw away.
* **Meditate**
	+ Taking time to slow down and take several deep, calming breaths throughout the day also works to lower stress and is available to everyone. For beginners who want guidance, download a meditation app onto your smart phone or computer.
* **Be open to joy**
	+ Make sure to let joy and gratitude into your life during these challenging times. Whether it's a virtual happy hour, tea time or dance party, reach out to others.
	+ "If we can find gratitude in the creative ways that we connect with each other and help somebody, then we can hold our grief better and move through it with less difficulty and more grace."

Memorializing the lost individual can be helpful, though be thoughtful as to location and permanence as moving or dismantling a memorial (even at a later time) can be retraumatizing. Memorial ideas:

* Rock gardens or rock cairns
* Write and/or mail notes/cards of memories and wishes to the family who experienced the loss
* Make a “life-book” - memories and stories related to the lost individual that are in a positive framework (e.g., things the loved one loved/participated in or stories of fun/happy times). This book can be shared later with other family members or kept as a personal memory book or given to the family who experienced the loss

Mindfulness can be an extremely helpful skill in, over time, helping people learn to regulate their emotions, be present in the moment, and manage difficult situations.

* Mindfulness
	+ <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>
	+ <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/calming-and-relaxing-coping-skills>
	+ <https://www.gonoodle.com/good-energy-at-home-kids-games-and-videos/>
* Meditation
	+ <https://www.calm.com/> (contains child-specific meditations)
	+ <https://www.headspace.com/> (contains child-specific meditations)

Additional articles/webinars helpful in understanding and working to manage strong emotions during these times:

[Grief support systems during isolation](https://www.theverge.com/2020/4/1/21202122/coronavirus-grief-mourning-isolation-funeral-die-alone) (The Verge)

[The “Big 7”- Evidence Based Strategies for Regulating Emotions in Uncertain Times (RULER - The Yale Institute for Emotional Intelligence)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=ctSWJ2BLDC8&feature=youtu.be)

[When Grief/Loss Hits Close to Home: Tips for Caregivers](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/addressing-grief/when-grief/loss-hits-close-to-home-tips-for-caregivers) (NASP)

**If you are concerned about how your child is managing his or her grief and sadness about the loss, reach out to your child’s school counselor or principal. They will be able to assist you and help you find supports that can be helpful to your child and to you.**