

65 Interactive Healing Activities

To Guide children
Through The Grieving Process



By Rebecca Schmidt M.Ed., LSW

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my two amazing daughters, Hannah and Lauren, who have experienced the loss of all four grandparents in a three-year period. I am hoping these activities can help other children heal as much as they have helped my daughters.



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65 Interactive Healing Activities To Guide Children Through The Grieving Process

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65 Interactive Healing Activities

INSTRUCTIONS

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Introduction & Research

According to research, the expression of thoughts and feelings help children through the grief process. Loss, one of life's most difficult experiences, is especially hard for children and young adolescents. They may feel scared, confused, and frustrated, and these emotions are not easy for them to recognize and process.

"Thoughts, feelings, fears, and concerns can run high for children who are seriously ill, dying or dealing with the death of a loved one," Judy Rollins and Lawrence Riccio have observed. "The arts offer a powerful tool for expression, for often the things children experience in these situations are 'too scary for words'."

Counselors need brief, easy-to-implement activities that help children reminisce about special moments with the person who has died, recognize and express their many feelings, and get through birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions they cannot share with him/her.

Designed for use in individual and small-group counseling, the activities in this book can help children from kindergarten through a middle school deal with the death of someone who matters to them. Each activity is presented as if the counselor is working with a single child, but all activities can be adapted for use with small groups of children. Some activities are worksheets. Others require varying amounts of pre-session preparation on the part of the counselor.

It is my hope that this book will aid counselors in helping children cope with and work through these extremely trying experiences. Children never forget compassion demonstrated during these most difficult times.



Research Reference:

Rollins, Judy A and Riccio, L Lawrence. ART is the heART: A palette of possibilities for hospice care. *Pediatric Nursing*. 2002; 28(4): 355–363.

14 Comfort Bear

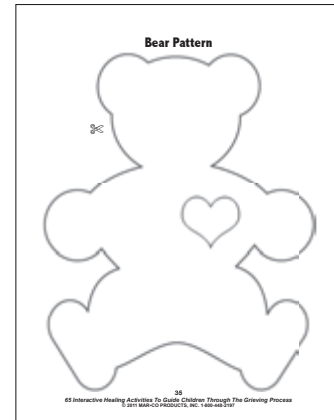
(Note: If not practical for the counselor and child to do this together, the counselor may share this idea with the parent. The child may share the bear with the counselor or use it to comfort someone who is terminally ill. After the person's death, the bear can comfort the child.)

Objective: The child reminisces and expresses feelings about the loved one.

Activity: The child uses the loved one's clothing to design a bear and names the bear after him/her. The child glues the patterns together around the edges, leaving a small opening to add stuffing. Using fabric markers, the bear is then decorated with words and symbols relating to the child's loved one. Stuff the bear and glue the opening shut. (The bear may also be reproduced on paper, then decorated.)

Materials:

- 2 copies of *Bear Pattern*, cut from loved one's clothing (page 35/CD)
- Scissors
- Fabric glue
- Fabric markers
- Stuffing



PAGE 35
ACTIVITY 14 ON CD

15 Precious Places

Objective: The child learns and practices stress-relieving techniques, reminiscing about the loved one and special, quiet times they shared.

Activity: In a dimly lit room with soft music playing, the counselor encourages the child to close his/her eyes and talk about a calming activity he/she and the loved one liked to share.

Materials:

- CD player
- CD of calming instrumental music

16 Place Mat Party

Objective: The child shares thoughts and memories of the person who has died.

Activity: Using favorite colors, the child decorates the paper or place mats with drawings of the loved one and things he/she liked. Working for 5–10 minutes for several sessions, the child may make as many as 8 place mats to be used on special occasions. Optional: Laminate the completed place mats.

Materials:

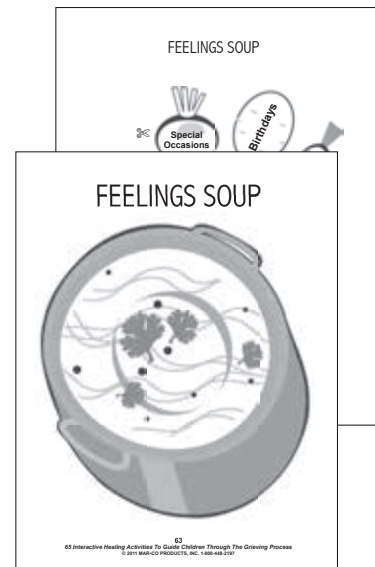
- White paper or place mats (with waterproof backing) from a party supply store.
- Colored pencils/markers or crayons
- Pencil

57 Feelings Soup

Objective: The child expresses his/her feelings and reminisces about special times with the loved one.

Activity: The child cuts out the worksheet vegetables and pot. While gluing the vegetables to the pot, he/she discusses special things he/she did with the loved one. The child colors the Feelings Soup.

Materials: Copy of *Feelings Soup* (pages 63-64/CD)
 Pencil
 Colored pencils/markers or crayons
 Scissors
 Glue



**PAGES 63-64
ACTIVITY 57 ON CD**

58 Lots of Lava

Objective: The child talks about body changes that occur when he/she gets angry and appropriate ways to express that anger.

Activity: In each drop of lava on the worksheet, the child writes *red face*, *clenched fists*, or another way that anger affects his/her body. Explain that breathing deeply and hitting a pillow are good ways to keep anger from erupting. The child colors the volcano.

Materials: Copy of *Lots Of Lava* (page 65/CD)
 Pencil
 Colored pencils/markers or crayons



**PAGE 65
ACTIVITY 58 ON CD**

59 Whom Do You Want To Call?

Objective: The child identifies people who can help if he/she feels upset.

Activity: On each speaking bubble, the child writes one person's name and phone number. He/she explains why it's wise to call or text each person if he/she needs to talk.

Materials: Copy of *Whom Do You Want To Call?* (page 66/CD)
 Pencil
 Phone numbers (One week before this session, ask the child's parents for names and phone numbers.)



**PAGE 66
ACTIVITY 59 ON CD**

THE FOLLOWING SAMPLES
ARE REPRODUCIBLE/PRINTABLE PAGES
INCLUDED ON THE CD-ROM

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Tell Me A Story

When was your loved one born?

What did he/she enjoy most as a child?

Did he/she have pets as a child?

Did he/she collect anything?

What would you tell him/her right now?

What was the best time you had with him/her?

What did you love most about him/her?

What would you ask him/her right now?

What did he/she do to make you laugh?

What will you miss most?

ACTIVITY 12

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Missing Tree



**On each leaf, write something you
will miss about your loved one.**

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Time To Tell



Circle the hour, then draw on the clock face how you feel at that time of the day.



AM

PM



AM

PM



AM

PM



AM

PM



AM

PM



AM

PM



AM

PM



AM

PM



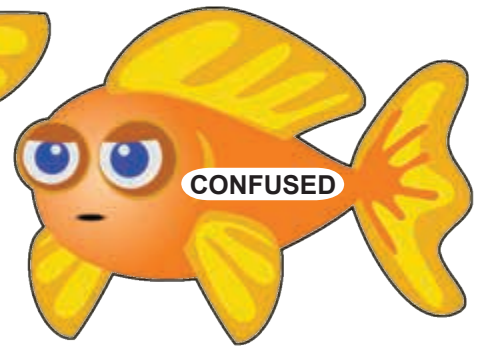
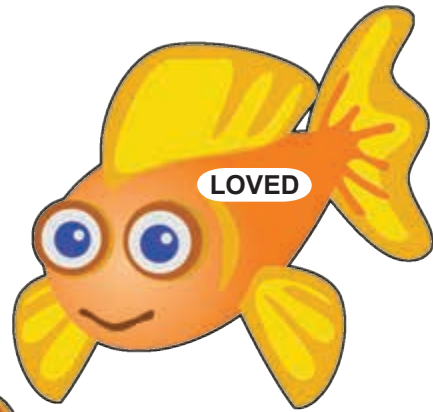
AM

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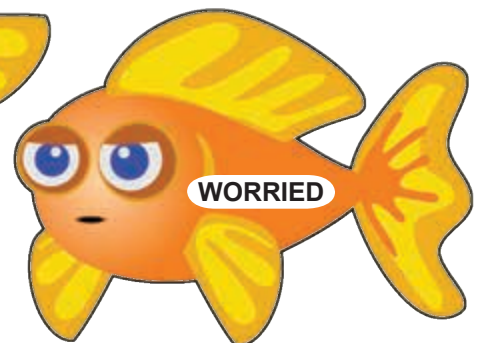
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Fishing For Feelings



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I Heart you!



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