NAVIGATING GRIEF

A GUIDED JOURNAL FOR TEENS







THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO:



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INTRODUCTION

This guided journal is a special place for you to share your thoughts and feelings. We hope that this journal becomes your tool to explore and understand those thoughts and feelings. As you move through the journal, your words and reflections will guide you on your personal, unique journey through the healing experience of grief.

You are a unique person. No one is the same as you. You have your own gifts, thoughts, and beliefs. The changes you are going through at this stage of your life can be exciting but also overwhelming. You aren't a kid anymore, but you aren't an adult yet either. You are experiencing life between those stages. Others may expect you to act, think, and feel like an adult, but much of your childhood is still inside you.

When someone you love dies, it can be very difficult for you. This is even more true at your age, because you are growing, developing and making sense of the world. Losing someone you love can be very scary. When someone we love dies, we begin a new journey. This journey is not of our own choosing and does not have an exact course. It's hard to understand and cope with all the feelings that accompany this journey of grief, along with the changes your body and mind are going through.

We are very sorry that you have lost something or someone that meant a lot to you. While we can't feel exactly what you feel, we want you to know that you are not alone.

JOURNALING & GRIEF

What is grief? Grief is what you think and feel on the inside when someone you love dies. Grief is different from mourning. Mourning is how we express these thoughts and feelings—how we let them out of our bodies. You mourn when you talk to other people about your feelings, when you cry, or when you look at photos of the person who died. You might be grieving on the inside, but unless you let those strong thoughts and feelings out—unless you mourn—it will be hard to truly heal.

Journaling has been proven a helpful way for teens to do the work of mourning because it is private and self-directed, yet you are still expressing your grief outside of yourself.

First, remember there is no right way to use this journal. Give yourself permission to write what your heart and head are telling you. Use your imagination. Use markers and crayons if you want to. How you do this is up to you; it's yours! Do expect some ups and downs as you take time to reflect on certain questions. They might bring up feelings of sadness and discomfort. Keep writing, even through the sadness if you feel comfortable doing so, and take a break if it feels overwhelming.

Throughout the journal, there will be activities and question prompts. It will become a record of thoughts, feelings, and memories over a period of time. When you feel ready to start exploring this journal, find a comfortable place. Quiet yourself and try to relax. Be patient with yourself. This journal is an invitation to pour out your heart, to cry, and allow the hurt that's there to come forward. This journal is here to listen as you write.



ABOUT ME

My name is:
I am from:
I am years old.
Name of the person or people I've lost:

I think this journal will be special to me because...

The reality is, you will grieve forever,
you will not "get over" the loss of a loved one;
you will learn to live with it;
You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the
loss you have suffered you will be whole but
you will never be the same again.
Nor should you be the same,

- Elizabeth Kubler Ross

nor should you want to.

AUJAQ SUMMER



-SECTION 1-

Understanding My Grief

Grief is a strong, sometimes overwhelming, emotion that people experience when they lose someone important to them, such as a family member or a friend. Grief is a normal reaction to loss and can make you feel extreme sadness, especially when the loss involves the death of someone you love. Some teens have lost more than one important person, and multiple losses can feel even more overwhelming. Your grief is very unique to you and will be shaped by many things in your life. No two losses are ever mourned the exact same way.

There are no right or wrong ways to grieve, but there are healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with loss. You have your right to feel your feelings and to express your grief in a way that feels right to you.

You will do the work of mourning in your own way. Don't compare your experience with other teens as they are as unique as you in how they experience their own life. Consider taking it one day at a time - this will allow you to mourn at your own pace.

This section is to help you explore your grief with more depth and understanding.

"So you mustn't be frightened...if a sadness arises in front of you larger than anything you have ever seen...You must realize that something is happening to you, that life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hand and will not let you fall"

- Rainer Maria Rilke

THE 7 STAGES OF GRIEF

These stages are steps that you may go through when someone you love has passed on. You could feel like you are experiencing many stages at once, or that you are going through them in a different order.

This is completely normal!

Which stage do you think you are going through right now?

-Shock-

A state of disbelief after an upsetting or surprising event or experience.

-Anger-

In this stage, you might direct your anger towards the person who has passed, doctors, friends or family members, and even yourself.

-Denial-

You may try to ignore or avoid the reality of your loss, and the emotions that the loss creates.



-Bargaining-

This stage can involve negotiating with a higher power to take away the pain you feel after a loss.

-Acceptance-

In this final stage of the grieving process, you have learned how to continue living with your loss. You have accepted that your loss is their new reality.

-Depression-

In this stage, you may feel intense sadness and/or emptiness.

-Testing-

In this stage, you will begin trying and testing new solutions to deal with your loss.

COPING MECHANISMS

For when you are experiencing grief

During difficult times, there are always different ways to cope. It may be tempting to use unhealthy coping mechanisms, however, they can have a lasting negative impact on your life. Here are some unhealthy and healthy coping mechanisms to help guide your decisions.

HEALTHY COPING

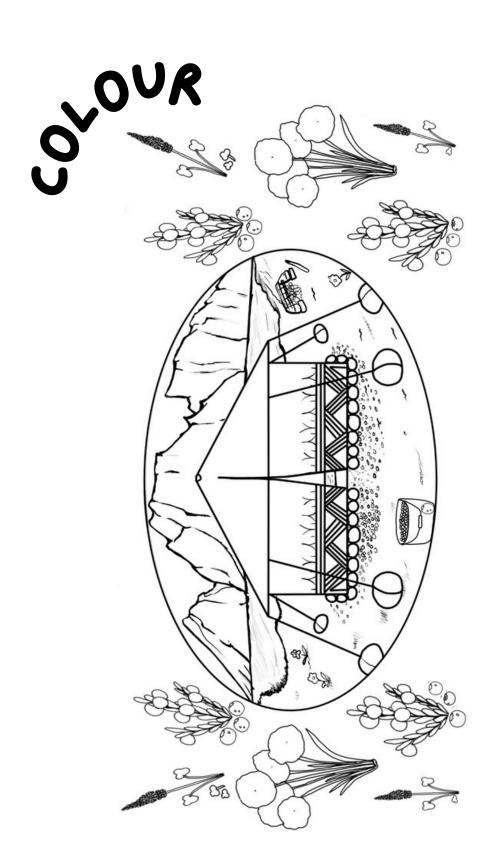
UNHEALTHY COPING

- Physical activity and sports
- Creating: art, poetry, music, sewing, beading and journaling
- · Going on the land
- Spending time with friends
- Listening to music
- Talking it out with someone you trust
- Taking deep breaths

- Numbing the pain with drugs or alcohol
- Dangerous activities and risky behaviour.
- Isolating yourself
- Over eating, or not eating enough
- Scrolling aimlessly on social media
- Blaming yourself
- · Punishing yourself
- Taking it out on others

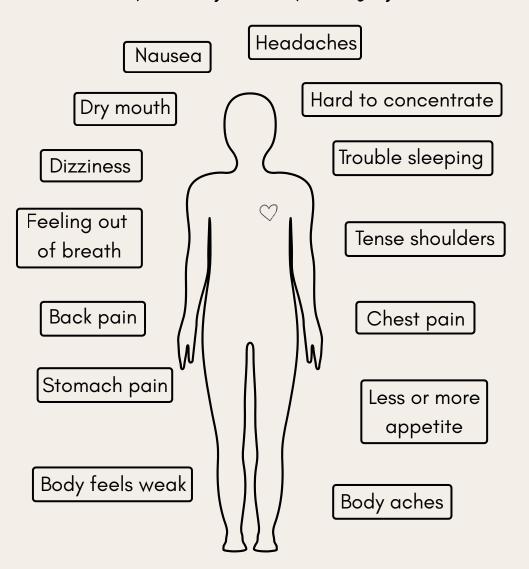
What are some other coping mechanisms you have tried or seen others try?





GRIEF AND MY BODY

Losing someone can be very hard on your mental health, but it can also have many negative effects on your physical health. Here are some examples - have you been experiencing any of these?



WHAT DOES MY GRIEF FEEL LIKE? PAIN SADNESS FEAR LONELINESS CONFUSION **ANGER** IRRITATION DEPRESSION RELIEF ADD MORE FEELINGS BELOW

MY GRIEF

What is the strongest emotion I have felt so far?

What fears do I have?

What do I wish people understood?

What has been the most challenging part of this experience?

WHAT NOW?

Loss is painful

Sometimes it feels like fully healing will never happen

Every person's experience is unique

Take time to heal so you can return to a new normal

Some tips for you:

Talk through it with others

Take time for yourself

Be kind to yourself

Spend time with people that make you feel good

Do things that bring you joy

Listen to your feelings

Trust yourself



Elders and grief:

"I have gone through a lot of hard times, and I have learned many reasons why I went through those hardships by going through them. I asked myself "why did I go through this hardship?" These are some things to think about and you can talk to an elder about what you are going through. This brings some hope for living a happier life even when you are going through hard times, reach out to the elders. It brings you a prosperous life by talking to elders around you."

-Lizzie Ittinuar Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

-Grief Reminder-

Remember to breathe. When we get tense we tend to hold our breath or have short, shallow breaths.

First, notice that you are breathing and then try slowing it down, breathing more into your belly, and exhaling a little longer than you inhale.

UKIAQ



-SECTION 2-Self Reflection

Grief can be a really confusing and overwhelming experience, bringing up all sorts of emotions you might not expect. Self-reflection becomes super important during this time because it gives you a chance to sort through all those feelings. By taking some time to think about how you're reacting and what you're doing, you can start to understand the specific emotions you're dealing with, whether it's sadness, anger, confusion, or just feeling numb. This helps you process everything in a healthy way, acknowledging the pain without judging yourself for feeling it.

Self-reflection also helps you figure out what helps you cope, whether it's talking to friends, listening to music, or spending time alone. You can then focus on the things that actually help you feel better and avoid things that might make things worse.



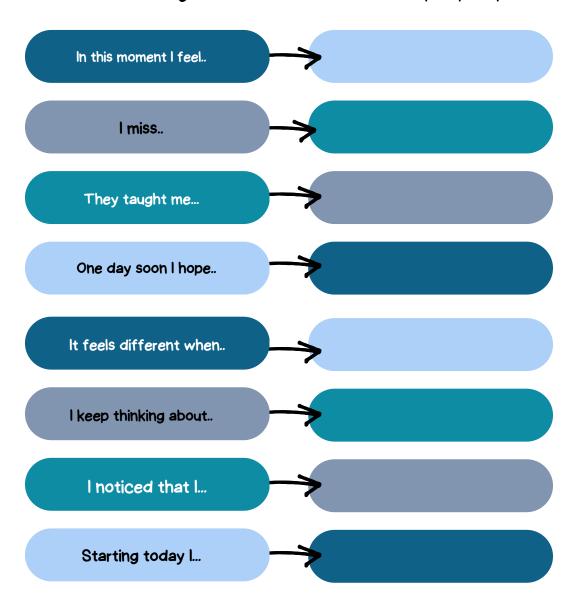
"Let it sit in your body, let's feel it. It's real, we just lost something. We need to let our bodies process that feeling... we're going to get angry, it's going to hurt. Feel the anger, feel the hurt. Let your mind find a process, writing one word at a time."

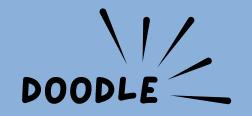
-Susan Aglukark



MY THOUGHTS

Your mind might feel cluttered right now, so let's try to sort out our random thoughts and emotions with some helpful prompts.





LETTER TO MY FUTURE SELF

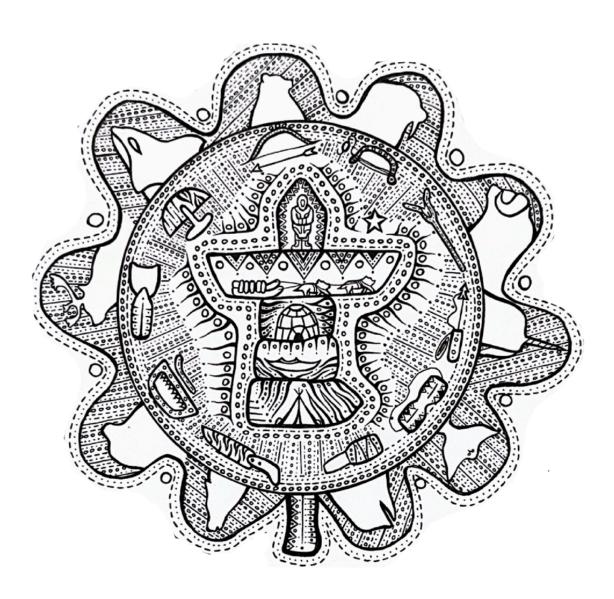
Are you ready to write a letter to your future self? Cut these pages out and put them somewhere safe, where you can read it when you are older. Set a reminder on your phone for the date when you want to open it, as well as where you hid the letter! It can be 6 months from now, 1 year, 5 years - even 10 years!

Here are some prompts to help you get started:

- This is what I did today...
- This is my favourite music/movie/show right now...
- I've been thinking about this alot lately...
- I hope that this will happen soon...
- What is it like in the future?
- This is something funny that happened today...
- This is something that scares me right now...
- This is something that I'm stressed about these days...
- This is what's been going on here lately...

LETTER TO MY FUTURE SELF

COLOUR





RESPECTING OTHERS, RELATIONSHIPS AND CARING FOR PEOPLE.

Writing Reflection

RESPECTING OTHERS, RELATIONSHIPS AND CARING FOR PEOPLE.

Respecting others, relationships in life and caring for others will mean something different to everyone. How we foster respect and care in our relationships to others and ourselves can often tell us what matters most in our lives. Defining what it means to respect and care for others in a comfortable way that fits into our individual lives is important. Learning how we want to be respected and cared for can give us hints on how we'd like to share and live according to our understanding of this principle within our relationships and communities.

What does respect mean to you? How do you foster respect and caring for others or yourself in day to day life?



WORRY JAR

Write your worries into this jar. You can write anything that makes you sad, anxious, nervous or scared. Once you are done filling the jar, imagine closing the lid. Take a deep breath and check in with yourself-does it feel better now that you wrote down your worries?



JOY JAR

Now, write or draw all of the things that bring you happiness into this jar. This might be your favourite food, your happy place, a family member, a sport, being out on the land, cooking, hunting, sleeping, sewing - anything!



WHAT I NEED

Take some time to identify what kind of support you need from the people around you.

What I need from my family:

What I need from my friends:

What I need from my community:







You are capable of AMAZING things

NOTE TO SELF

Your boundaries are important

Your FEELINGS are valid







Elders and grief:

"When I was going through those hardships, it felt like my upper body came out of me. It felt as though I was only left sided, my right body wasn't operating. I couldn't use my brain, or go hunting, and all the things that I was capable of doing disappeared. The only way out for me was to talk about my struggles. As long as I let it out of me whether it's bad or it's going to disappoint people. It needed to come out of my mouth. That is the only way to take back the strength to keep going."

-Caleb Sangouya
Pond Inlet, Nunavut









-SECTION 3-My Healing

Grief is a tough experience, especially as a teenager. It can feel like your world has been turned upside down, and there's no right or wrong way to feel. It's important to remember that healing takes time, and that everyone grieves differently.

Talking to someone you trust – a friend, family member, or school counselor – can really help. It's like sharing the weight of what you're going through. Find healthy ways to deal with your feelings, like listening to music, getting outside, or doing something creative. Remembering the person you lost is important too. Share stories about them, look at pictures, or find other ways to keep their memory alive. If things feel too heavy or overwhelming, it's okay to ask for help from a therapist or other professional. They can offer extra support and guidance.



Take a few moments to focus on all the things that are going well in your life right now.

Write down some examples, both big and small, that you are grateful for

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AFFIRMATIONS

You can use positive affirmations to motivate yourself, encourage positive change, and boost your self esteem. Try writing these affirmations down, or reading them to yourself.

- I will get through this
- I can heal
- I am loved
- It's OK to cry
- I will welcome brighter days
- It's ok to laugh even though I am grieving
- I can accept help that is offered to me
- I am allowed to miss them
- There is no time limit to grieve
- I have permission to feel my feelings
- Death will not break the bond of love

WHAT IS SELF CARE?

Self-care is the practice of taking time to do things that improve your physical and mental health, and promote your overall well-being

WHY IS IT HELPFUL WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING?

Self-care is important when grieving because it can help improve your physical, mental, and emotional health. It can also help you understand your needs and address them before helping others.

SELF CARE THAT CAN HELP WITH GRIEF:

- Be kind to yourself
- · Schedule something joyful
- Talk to someone
- Make time to move your body
- Participate in your favorite activities

MY SELF-CARE PLAYLIST 57

Music can be a powerful tool for healing. Create a playlist of songs that bring you comfort or remind you of good memories or loved ones.

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MY SELF-CARE BUCKET LIST

Here is a list of self care activities. Choose your favourite (or add your own) and make your self-care bucket list!

 Walk around the 	
neighbourhood	
 Cook something for 	
yourself	
 Call a friend 	
• Listen to music	
 Play an instrument 	
 Go for a bike ride 	
 Read a book 	
 Meet with a counsellor 	
• Set goals for the future	
• Hug a loved one	
 Watch a funny movie 	
• Spend time with an elder	
 Do a small act of 	
kindness for someone	
• Scream into a pillow	
• Spend time on the land	П

Let out a sigh

SOUR

COPING TOOLKIT

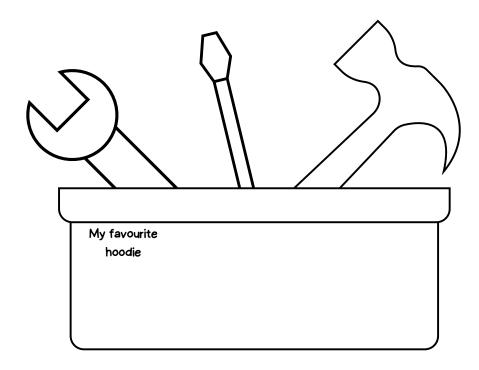
It is helpful to make a plan in case you ever feel overwhelmed with anxiety, worry or sadness. Take some time to design a coping toolkit with tools to help you during one of these times. These tools can be any object or media that could help you in a time of crisis.

Here are some examples!

- · Somewhere I feel safe
- Playing my favourite sport
- My comfort food
- My favourite book
- Hanging out with my best friend (s)
- Objects that remind me of my loved ones
- · My comfort movie

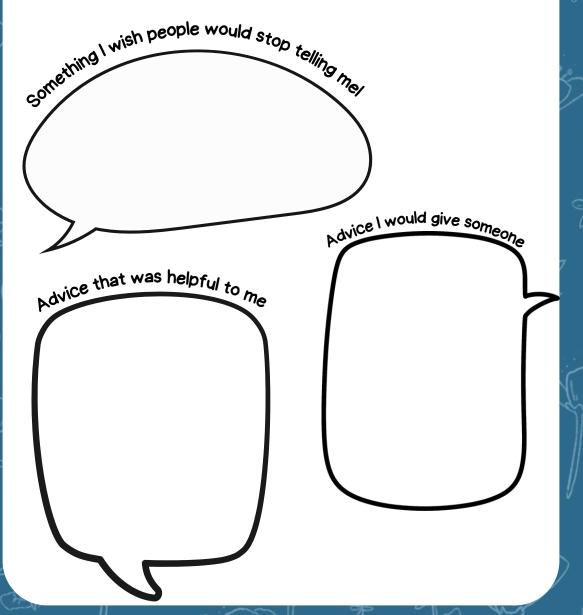
Now it's your turn! What will you put in your coping toolkit? Add them below

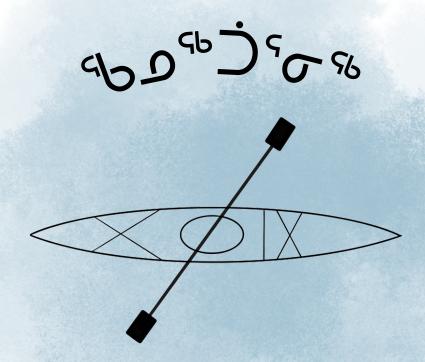
When I am feeling overwhelmed, I will have these tools to help me:



WORDS OF ADVICE

When you are going through tough times, there are often lots of people who want to give you advice. This advice can be helpful, but it can also be unhelpful. Below, think about some of the advice you have received before.





BEING INNOVATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL

Writing Reflection

BEING INNOVATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL

Inuit are very well celebrated for being innovative and resourceful. For example, creating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit as societal values that apply to all aspects of life and guide us to live in harmony with ourselves, our environments and others.

Reflect on a time when you or someone you admire relied on being innovative and resourceful to find a solution. What are you most proud of or amazed by from that situation?

Or consider how you can practice this principle in your everyday life.



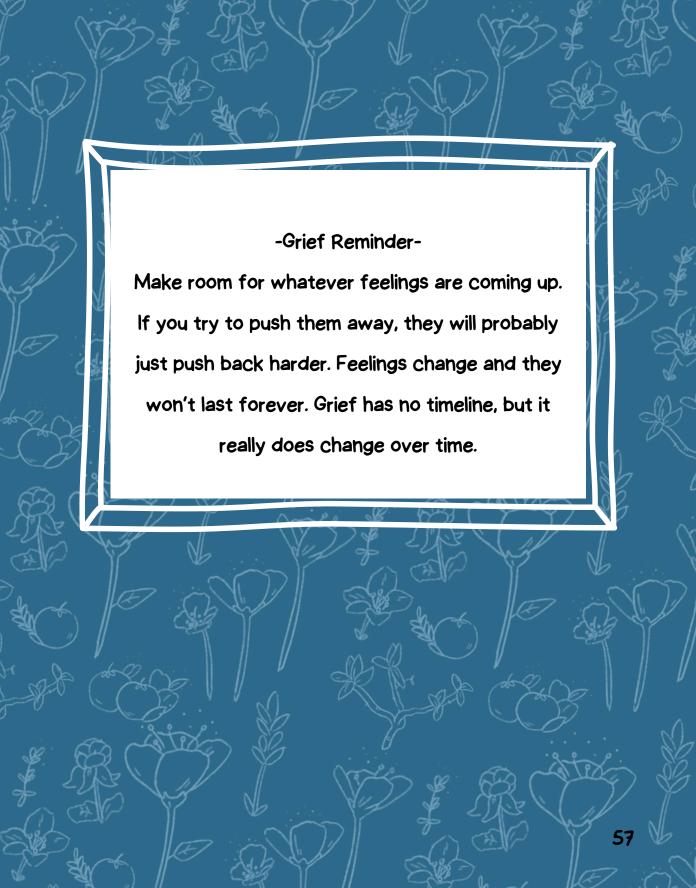


Elders and grief:

"No matter how hard it is, we have to come to term and accept admission, that we have to go through it, and to always keep in mind we all will leave the earth when our time comes.

I'ts inevitable, a fact of life. There's always the beginning and there's always an end."

-Levinia Brown Rankin Inlet, Nunavut



UPIRNGASSAQ EARLY SPRING



-SECTION 4-

Getting Support

Grief can be very overwhelming, and trying to handle it all on your own can make things even harder. Think of it like carrying a heavy backpack – it's much easier if someone helps you with the load. Talking to someone you trust, whether it's a friend, family member, elder, teacher, can lighten that load. They can offer a listening ear, understanding, and support, which can make a huge difference when you're navigating tough emotions. They might also offer different perspectives or suggestions for coping that you hadn't thought of.

Getting support isn't a sign of weakness; it's a sign of strength. It shows you're willing to take care of yourself during a difficult time. Grief can affect your mental and physical health, your relationships, and even your schoolwork. Having someone to lean on can help you navigate these challenges and prevent things from becoming too overwhelming. Remember, you don't have to go through this alone. There are people who care about you and want to help.

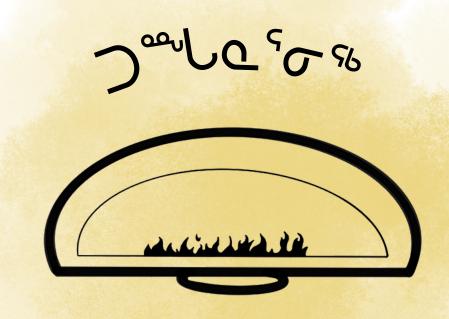




"No matter how prepared you think you are for the death of a loved one, it still comes as a shock, and it still hurts very deeply."

- Billy Graham





FOSTERING GOOD SPIRIT BY BEING OPEN.
WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE

Writing Reflection

FOSTERING GOOD SPIRIT BY BEING OPEN, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE

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Fostering good spirits allows us to be who we are in the spaces we come into, and allows space for others to feel welcomed as they are. By being open and welcoming, lnuit remove the opportunity for shame to take up space when connecting with others.

What does fostering good spirits and being welcoming to the different people in your community mean to you? What does it look or sound like? Are there ways you might have been welcomed in a good and memorable way? What stood out to you?

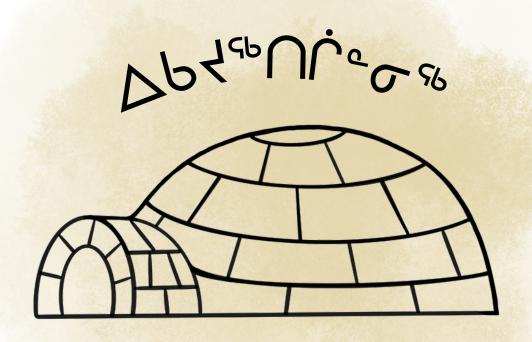
COLOUR



ON THE LAND

Spending time on the land is a very healthy activity, especially during a difficult time in your life. Have you been taking time to go out on the land recently? Fill in the blanks below!

When I am on the land I feel
My favorite thing to do on the land is
My favourite place to go on the land is
When I am on the land, I notice that
When I am on the land, I know that
Being on the land reminds me of



WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE

Writing Reflection

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE

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Working together for a common cause in the community allows many individuals to support the collective in their own ways. Consider how we usually see this play out in community gatherings like feasts, games, cultural workshops, sewing programs, school land trips and community clean ups. Everyone has a part they can play to help achieve a harmonious goal for the community.

What are some common causes you'd like to participate in? What kind of support do you feel called to bring in teamwork and working towards the greater good?

MY SUPPORT SYSTEM

You are loved and supported by so many people. These friends, family and others who love and support you are part of your support system. Think about some people who love and support you in your life- write their names or draw something that reminds you of them. On the second page, reflect on what they do for you!

MY SUPPORT SYSTEM

How do they show me that they How do they help me? love me? How do I feel when I am with them? How can I thank them for being there for me? What do I wish I could tell them? What is my favourite thing to do with them? How can I ask them for the help I need? What do I want them to know?

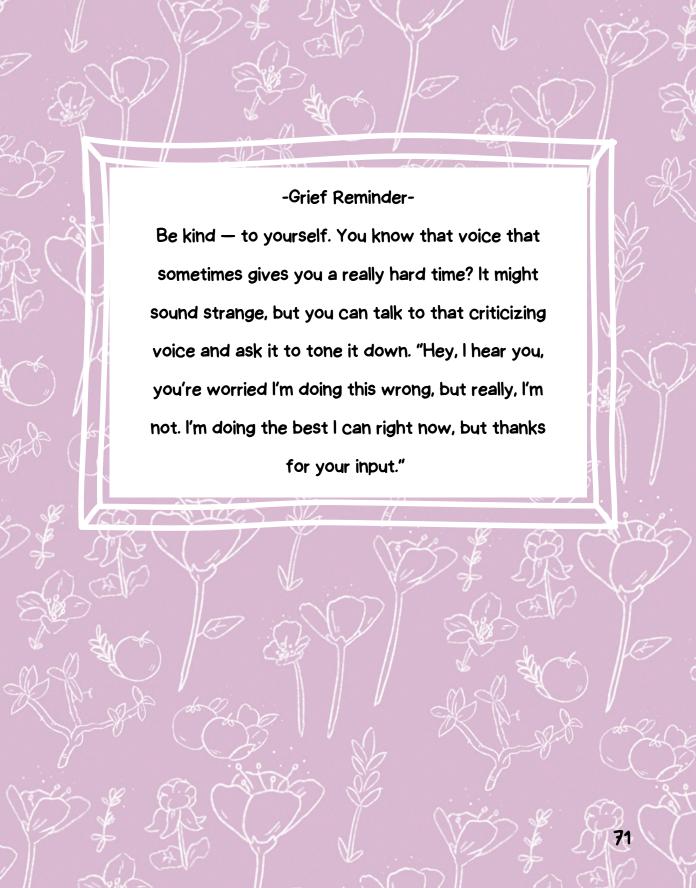


Elders and grief:

"The only way is to get through the difficult situation.

When we ignore our body we get into depression. We need to let the hardship out of our minds by going through it directly. Talk to the people you trust, people that you know and express how you are feeling is what helps to get you better."

-Geela Alookie Qikiqtarjuaq, Nunavut



UPIRNGAQ SPRING T



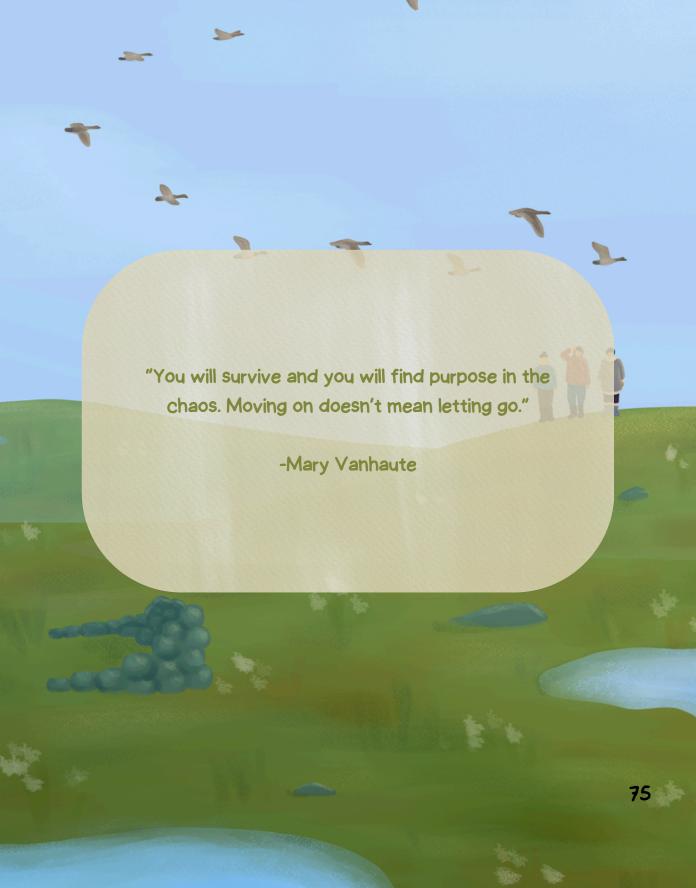
-SECTION 5Moving Forward

Paying tribute to someone who has died is a way of honoring their life and keeping their memory alive. It's like creating a lasting connection, even though they're no longer physically here.

There are tons of ways to do this, and it's really personal. You could create a memory box filled with photos, letters, or other special items that remind you of them. Maybe you have a favorite piece of their clothing you like to wear or a favorite song you have in common that you can listen to.

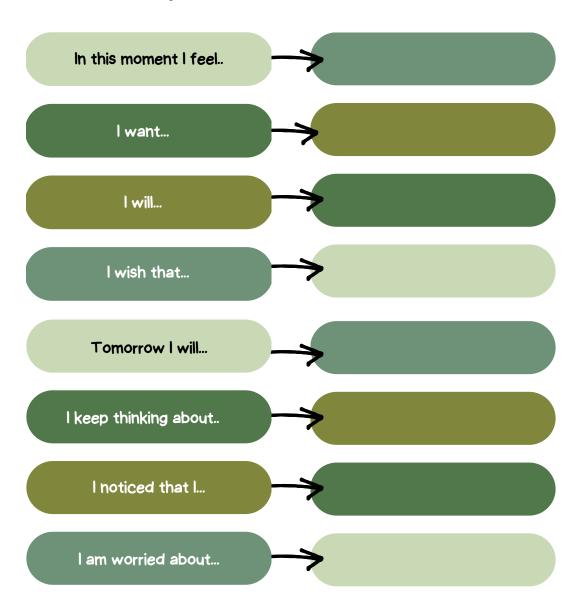
Some people write stories or poems about their loved one, while others might create a scrapbook or online memorial. You could even continue a tradition they loved, like making their favorite recipe for special occasions.

This is completely unique to you.



MY THOUGHTS

Your mind might feel cluttered right now, so let's clear out any random thoughts and emotions with some helpful prompts







DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS, OBSERVATION, MENTORING, PRACTICE AND EFFORT

Writing Reflection

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS, OBSERVATION, MENTORING, PRACTICE AND EFFORT

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Learning from observation and example is a vital cornerstone in Inuit knowledge and how it is shared in our lives. Mastery of learning is a lifelong practice that calls us to be open to different understandings and perspectives to gain the knowledge we need. Everyone has their own unique way of taking in information and their own way of sharing it with the world. When we are still, and notice the differences in our understanding and those of others, we learn for the better.

How would you like to experience this in your life? (In teaching or learning from others.)



MEMORIES

Are you ready to explore some memories of your loved one? Think about these questions, and answer them in your own time.

Something they always said to me:

They were the best at:

My favourite thing to do with them was:

One thing that I really loved about them:

Their favourite food:

Something that reminds me of them:

MEMORIES

Now, choose your own memories to write down!

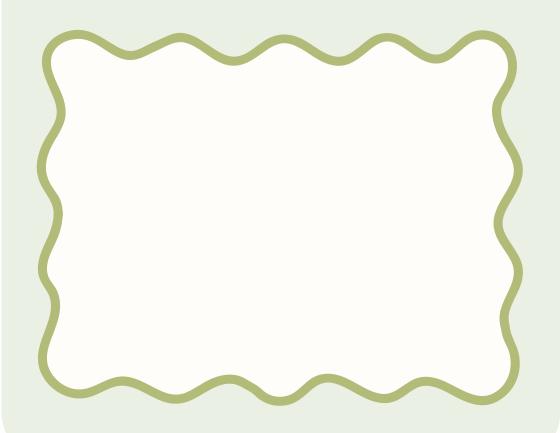
MEMORIES

Funerals, memorials, and other rituals and ceremonies can help you say good-bye to and honour the person who died.

Other ways that you can express your love for them include creating art, music, poetry, going on the land, sewing, and simply remembering.

How would you like to remember them?

Below, use drawings/art, words, images, or songs to brainstorm your own way to honour your loved one.



LETTER TO MY LOVED ONE

Are you ready to write a letter to your loved one? You can write anything to them - you can ask questions, let them know how you have been doing.. Anything that you feel is right.

Here are some prompts to help you get started:

- This is what I did today...
- This is my favourite music/movie/show right now...
- I've been thinking about this alot lately...
- I hope that this will happen soon...
- What is it like in the future?
- This is something funny that happened today...
- This is something that scares me right now...
- This is something that I'm stressed about these days...
- This is what's been going on here lately...
- This is something that I wish I told you before...
- What is it like where you are?
- I wish that...
- I wonder....
- Sometimes I miss...
- I want to...
- I will...

LETTER TO MY LOVED ONE

LETTER TO MY LOVED ONE



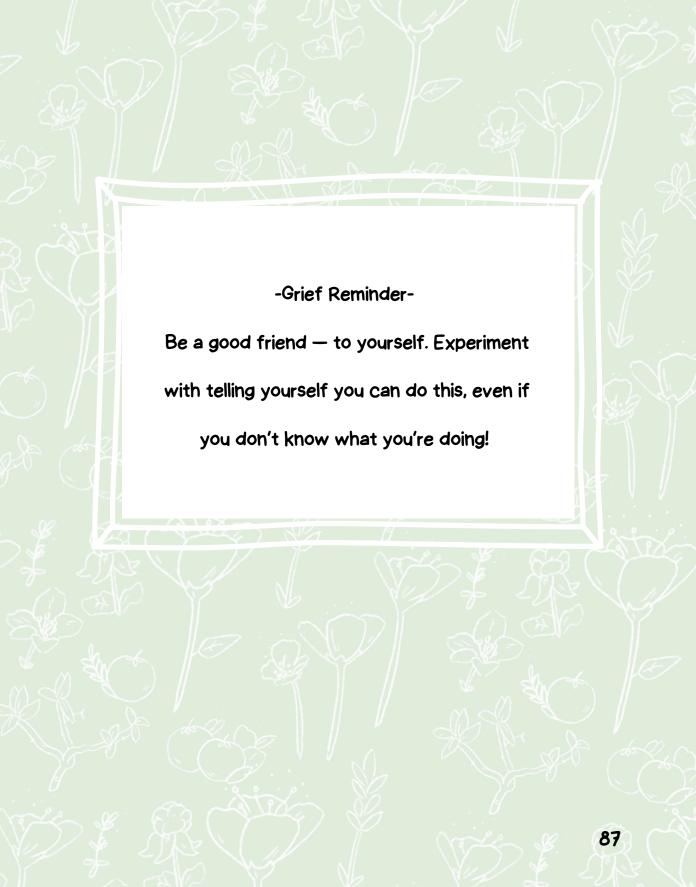
Elders and grief:

"My family and I have lost a lot. Our children went before us. It has now been a few years since you are taken to a better place, sometimes sadness comes. Knowing this, we are healing as we celebrate your lives on earth. We think about all of you every day. Every day you are in our hearts. You are never far away from our thoughts. We have much love, compassion, caring, respect for all of you. I know you know this but I just want to mention it again as we are healing. We as a family will live our lives to the fullest. And that is what you all want us to do. We love you all, always!

My mother once said that sadness will come to pass.

When we die, we will see our loved ones again."

-Piita Irniq Ottawa, Ontario



LET YOUR THOUGHTS FLOW

Now that we are at the end of this journal, here are some journal prompts to help you in the future. Feel free to choose one to write about every day, or just once in a while - whenever you feel like you need to reconnect with yourself.

-Journaling tips-

- Don't stop writing! Try not to reread the line you just wrote.
 Practise letting go and letting your thoughts flow freely on to the page.
- Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar. Try to write as
 if you were talking to someone.
- Just start writing. Sometimes it can be hard to write when there is a blank page in front of you. Start with something easy, like what did you do today? What time did you wake up? What did you eat? Journalling can be as simple as that! There is no need to always write about heavy topics.
- Be gentle with yourself! Journalling can bring up memories or feelings that may be uncomfortable. This is normal, and is an important part of healing.

JOURNALING PROMPTS

- Today, I am. really missing...
- The hardest time of day is...
- · Something good that happened today was...
- I have been feeling a lot of...
- I feel most connected to my loved one when...
- I am grateful for...
- I need more...
- I need less...
- This is what I did today...
- This is what I want to do tomorrow...
- This is what I want my future to look like...
- These are my favourite memories...
- These are my biggest fears...
- This is my dream vacation...
- What are some things that you have wanted to say to someone, but couldn't?
- What are some changes you want to make in your life?
- What are some changes you want to make in you community?
- I hope that one day...
- This is something that really annoyed me today...
- Sometimes I feel like...

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Helpline (E/I) 1-800-265-3333 or (867) 979-3333

Kids Help Phone (E/F)
1-800-668-6868
Text 686868 | Type "TALK" to start talking to a counselor. Online Chat:
kidshelpphone.ca

Suicide Crisis Helpline Call or Text 9-8-8 https://988.ca

Employee/Family Assistance (E/I) Government of Nunavut 1-800-663-1142
Government of Canada (E/F) 1-800-268-7708

Assaulted Women's Helpline (E/F) 1-866-863-0511

Residential School Survivors Help Line (E/I) 1-866-925-4419

> Hope for Wellness Helpline (E/I) 1-855-242-3310

Child First Initiative
1-855-572-4453
canada.ca/supporting-inuit-children
*** Not counseling service, for financial support



ISUMAJUNNATTIARNIQ APP

Support your mental health and well-being with the free app, blending traditional lnuit wisdom with modern tools. Manage stress, find peace, and stay connected to lnuit culture—right from your phone or tablet.



IPHONE



ANDROID









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