

# Memory box activity

## What's the benefit?

### Key Learning

To validate and support an ongoing connection with the person who is dying/has died.

### You will need

Raw Cardboard Boxes (not glossy!)

Paper (blank, tissue, scrapbooking, etc.)

Old Magazines, Catalogues, Comics

Drawing Materials

Craft Supplies

Glue (Mod Podge® for pasting photos & paper; low temp. glue gun for heavier embellishments)

Plastic Plates & Foam Brushes

Scissors

### No. of children

1 or more

### Preparation Activities

1. Inform the child(ren) of the activity one week in advance so they have time to make copies of photographs and gather other special items to put on/in their box (poem, quote, sample of loved one's handwriting, obituary, etc.).
2. Explain that when someone is dying/has died we can still feel their love and stay connected to them. We can do this by sharing special memories; thinking and talking about the person, the things you have in common and the things that you've learned from one another.
3. Ask the child(ren) if they would like to share a little bit about the photographs or mementos that they brought in.

Invite the child(ren) to make a memory box to hold their special memories and things that help them to stay connected with their loved one.

## Instructions

### How to Play

1. Provide each child with a box to decorate.
2. Pour some Mod Podge® onto a plastic plate and demonstrate how to adhere paper materials to the box:
  - Inform the child(ren) that Mod Podge® is a type of glue that dries clear (they might be worried it will stay white)
  - Cut or rip an image from a magazine
  - Apply a thin layer of glue onto the box where you want to paste the image

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- Lay the image down on the freshly glued area
- Now apply a thin layer of glue on top of the image
- 3. Encourage the child(ren) to be creative (paste photographs; cut out single letters from magazines to form names and words; write and draw directly on the box; add embellishments, etc.).
- 4. Invite the child(ren) to share their memory box if they feel comfortable doing so.
- 5. Remind them that when they need to, they can look through their box to help call special memories to mind and to feel connected to their loved one.

### Discussion

#### Reflect

What kinds of things can we keep in our memory boxes? (photographs, jewelry, cards or special gifts, a piece of their clothing, memories written on strips of paper, letter to or from your loved one, tickets to events you attended together, small objects that remind you of your loved one, etc.)

#### Connect

Special things that were given to us or belonged to our loved one can bring comfort and make us feel connected to them. Is there a special gift that this person gave to you that brings you comfort?

#### Apply

You can go through your box when you want to remember and feel connected. What are some other things you can do to honour their memory and feel connected to the person? (Brainstorm ideas and make a list together)

### Variations

1. Rather than a mixed media approach, the child can paint their memory box instead.
2. You can use all of these supplies to make a Memory Frame instead! Provide the children with a blank wooden picture frame (found at your local craft store) to paint. When dry, they can put their favourite picture of their loved one or a special quote/poem/lyric in the frame.

*This activity was taken with permission from **A Handbook for Volunteers: Supporting Children Grieving the Dying and Death of a Loved One** by The Children and Grief Network. Although they are written for clinicians, please feel free to customize for classroom use.*

*This activity has been adapted to the Reflect Connect Apply methodology used by **Right to Play**.*

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***Right To Play** is an international organization that uses the transformative power of sport and play to educate and empower children and youth living in adversity to overcome the effects of poverty, conflict and disease. Partnering with more than 85 First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and urban organizations across four provinces, the PLAY program is led by locally-hired Community Mentors who are trained and supported by Right To Play staff to implement regular weekly play-based programs that build and enhance essential life-skills. We would like to thank **Right To Play** for sharing the organization's experiential learning methodology (Reflect – Connect – Apply) for the activities included in this resource to support youth through their grief. To learn more, visit **Right To Play's** website or email [canada@righttoplay.com](mailto:canada@righttoplay.com).*

