



Grief Comes in Waves ***Support on Father's Day***

When someone close to us dies, we grieve. Grief is all the thoughts, feelings and reactions we have in response to that death. Grief may include many types of feelings - sadness, anger, isolation, shame, guilt, fear, regret, worry, relief and exhaustion. These feelings may be all mixed up and they may hit us in waves. Different grief feelings and reactions may come to us soon after our person dies or they may come to us much later. Grief morphs and changes over time.*

With Father's Day coming, you and your family may be experiencing extra strong waves of grief. The days leading up to Father's Day can be very challenging. It helps to find activities to do that feel comforting and supportive a week or two before the holiday. Here are some ways to begin a conversation about your feelings and to remember Dad.

“Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary.” - Fred Rogers

Warmly,
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*Adapted from *One Wave At A Time* by Holly Thompson

For more resources, visit <https://www.caringmatters.org/resourcesforfamilies>

Make / Do Riding the Waves

Grief comes in waves. Sometimes your feelings feel like huge waves and sometimes they are calm and manageable. It can be comforting to remind yourself that just as the storm always passes and the water becomes calm again, so too will your feelings.

Here is an activity you can do together as a family to remember Dad and to help you begin a conversation about your feelings. Watch this video** for how to make a boat, a sail and waves: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SiH-XYUc-M> **



The materials you need for this project are pictured on the left. Also, some extra steps and pictures are below to help with the project as you explore how your feelings can feel stormy and then calm.

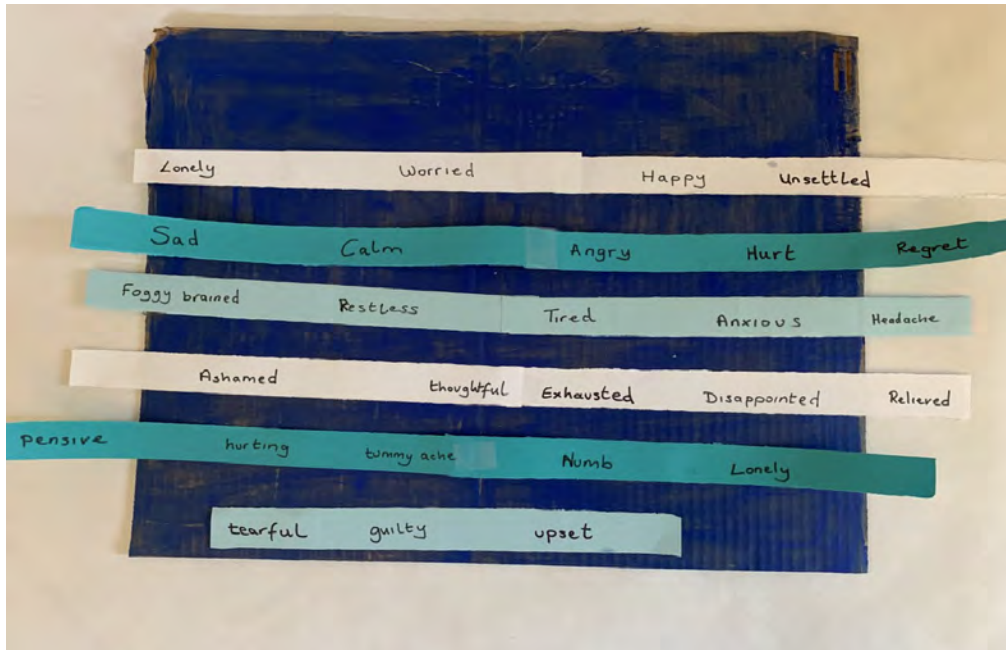
Extra Steps

1. You can also make your boat from a small box or folded paper:
<https://usefulbuzz.com/how-to-make-paper-boat-origami-boat-instruction/>
2. Once you have made your boat and a sail, draw a picture of Dad or write some things you remember about him on the sail.



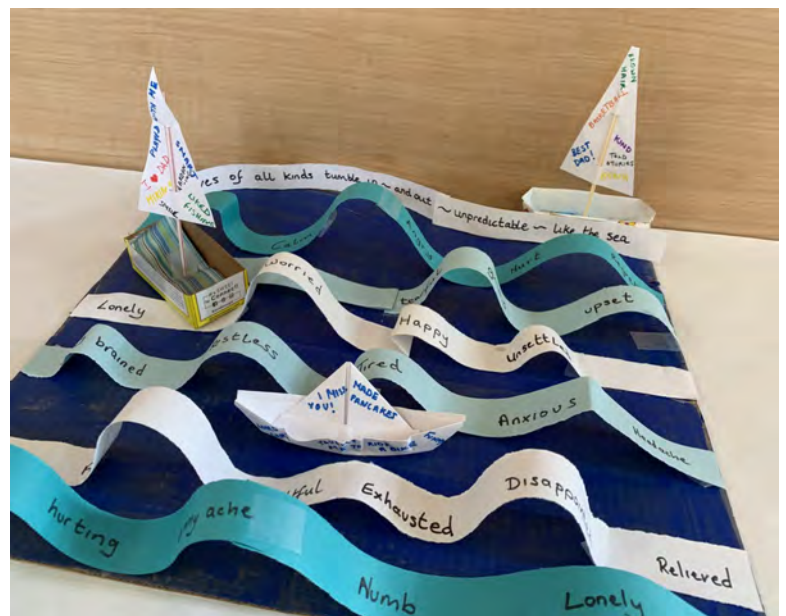
Make / Do Riding the Waves Continued...

3. Make a sea for your boats. Use a piece of blue paper (as shown in the video on page 2**) or for a larger sea take the side of a delivery box, cover with blue paper, or color blue with paint, markers or crayons.



4. Before you stick the waves onto your sea (as shown in the video on page #2**), think about all the feelings that you have had since your dad died. Have each member of the family take a wave strip and write their feelings on it.

5. Put all the pieces together. Stick the sail on your boat. Stick the boats on the sea. Add the waves, making them bumpy. Use your creation as a way to begin a conversation. There are some questions below in the **Think/Talk** section to help you talk with your family about your art.





Read / Listen

One Wave at a Time by Holly Thompson

There are some wonderful ideas for remembering Dad in this book. Which one would you like to do with your family?

Listen to the story here: <https://youtu.be/n-rj17Htry4>





"As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything...and the wave comes crashing. But in between waves, there is life.

Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O'Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out.

The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks."

This post first appeared on Reddit in 2009. You can read it here:

https://www.reddit.com/r/Assistance/comments/hax0t/my_friend_just_died_i_dont_know_what_to_do/c1u0rx2

Think / Talk Together

Look at your project. What do you notice about each boat?

- What's similar?
- What's different? Even in the same family each person's grief is unique.
- Look at the things each of you has written about Dad on your sails.
- Share the memories and stories connected with what you have written.



Now check out all the feelings you and your family have written on your waves.

- What do you notice?
- Did any of you write the same feeling?
- Which feelings seem surprising?
- Can you share when you had each of those feelings?
- Do you have any of them now?
- Share with each other what comforts you when the feelings come rushing in.



Remember that your feelings will come and go like the waves. They may feel very strong at times, but they will always calm down - just like the sea.

More Resources: <https://www.winstonswish.org/fathers-day-lockdown-supporting-grieving-children>