

MY
GRIEF
JOURNAL



STAGES OF GRIEF



1

SHOCK

Shock is an automatic response in order to help you deal with grief. It may feel like disbelief or as if it isn't real.

You may often feel the need to avoid your thoughts or feelings about the loss. You may want to stop thinking about it all together - this is denial.

2

DENIAL

3

ANGER

If you have been bottling up your feelings it can turn into an outpour of anger. You could feel angry with the situation, yourself, or the people around you.

4

BARGAINING

Bargaining often includes thinking that if you were to do something different it could bring your loved one back. It may often include sentences like "If only I had..."

5

DEPRESSION

You may find yourself going through just one, or all of the stages above, but eventually, you will start to feel the loss of your loved one quite deeply - this is a needed and important step on the grief road.

6

TESTING

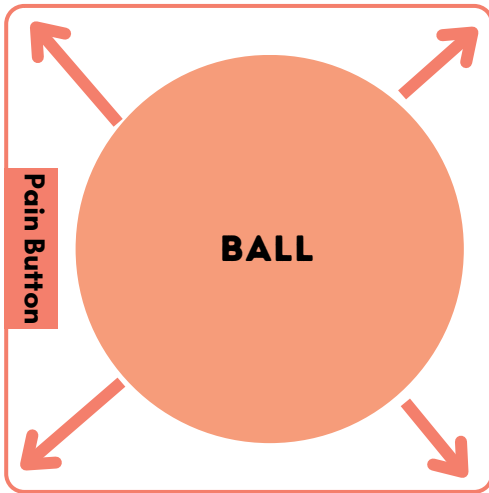
During this stage you may still feel the heaviness of depression and hopelessness but you will start to notice glimpses of joy and happiness as you start to find ways to cope.

7

ACCEPTANCE

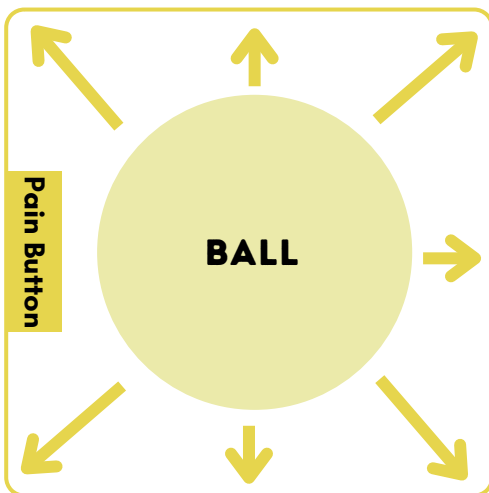
Sometimes acceptance feels a long way away but it most certainly is a step you will feel. Although you still feel the hurt and pain, it is no longer weighing you down completely. You will start to make plans for the future and enjoy life again, sometimes with a deeper sense of gratitude too

BALL IN A BOX



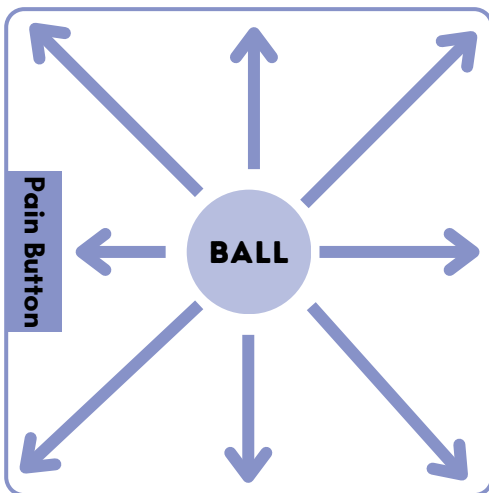
Experiencing grief is like walking around with a ball in a box that has a pain button in it. Imagine that the box is your life, the ball is your grief and the button in the box is the pain you feel.

How big does your ball feel right now?



In the beginning, the ball is huge. You can't move the box without hitting the pain button. It rattles around when you move through life and hits the pain button over and over again. You can't control it. It just keeps hurting. Sometimes it seems like it just won't stop.

How do you know when the ball is smaller?



Over time the ball gets smaller. You can move through life easier and the ball seems to hit the pain button less and less, but when it does the pain can hurt just as much. Because the ball is smaller your day-to-day becomes more manageable however it feels as though you never know when the ball is going to hit the pain button. Although the pain feels just as bad, you seem to have more time to recover in between the hits.

What sorts of things trigger your pain button?

ALL ABOUT ME

Complete the sentence:

My name is

I am **years old**

I live in

I am excited/interested about
.....

My favorite

Foods

Colors

Movies/Games

Hobbies

My Likes:

My Dislikes:

My goals for this year are:

ALL ABOUT MY LOVED ONE

The name of the person who died is:

This person was my...

My favorite thing to do with them was...

My loved one died from:

My favorite memory of my loved one is...

My loved one really liked:

My loved one didn't like:

One thing I miss about my loved one is:

When I want to share stories about my loved one, someone I talk to is...

MISSING THE FIVE SENSES **OF MY LOVED ONE**

In the spaces below, write down words or draw pictures of what you miss most about the person who died and each particular sense.



Sight



Sound



Smell



Touch



Taste/Food



COMMON RESPONSES TO GRIEF

People often think of grief as an emotional experience. It is, but grief is also a physical, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual experience. It not only affects how a person feels but also how a person behaves. Here are some common ways children and teens respond to grief, tick the ones that you are experiencing:

PHYSICAL RESPONSES

- ☐ Deep sighing
- ☐ Weakness and fatigue
- ☐ Rapid heartbeat
- ☐ Muscular tension
- ☐ Sleep disturbances
- ☐ Decreased resistance to illness
- ☐ Change in weight and appetite

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Sadness
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☐ Helplessness
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Bitterness/vengefulness
- ☐ Guilt

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES

- ☐ Withdrawn from friends and activities
- ☐ Unable to concentrate
- ☐ Forgetful
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Seeking and providing forgiveness
- ☐ Decreased resistance to illness
- ☐ Blameful of others
- ☐ Spontaneity

SOCIAL RESPONSES

- ☐ Missing school a lot
- ☐ Not wanting to leave home
- ☐ Inability to talk about the death
- ☐ Stealing things from others
- ☐ Acting older than other kids in your age group
- ☐ Acting or trying to be like the person who died

COMMON RESPONSES TO GRIEF

SPIRITUAL RESPONSES

- ☐ Searching for what was lost
- ☐ Loss of faith
- ☐ Renewal of faith
- ☐ Feeling punished for wrongs
- ☐ Anger at God
- ☐ Comforted by spiritual beliefs
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Hopelessness

WARNING SIGNS

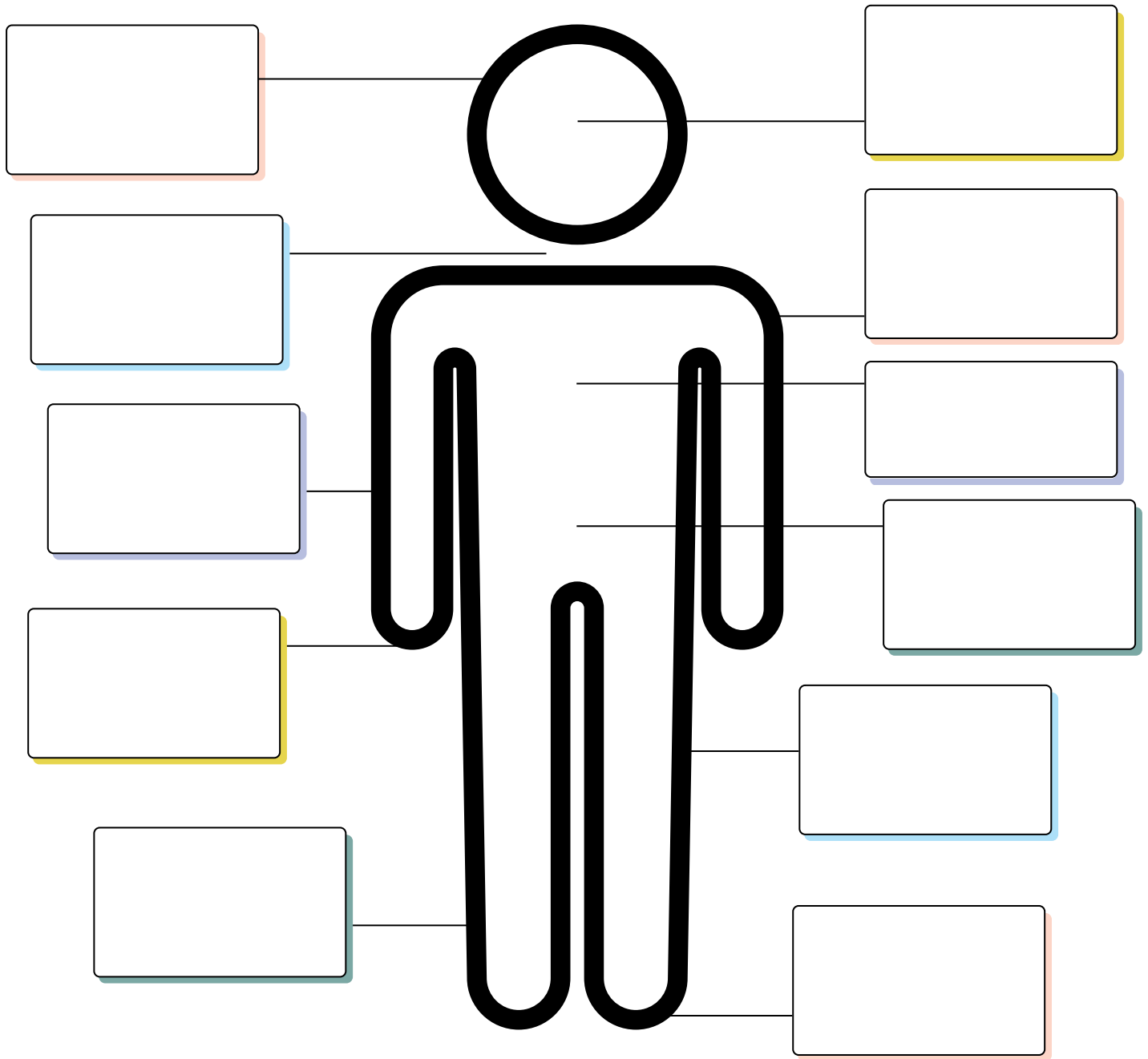
- ☐ Destructive behavior
- ☐ Taking on too much responsibility
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Getting stuck at an early developmental stage
- ☐ Difficulty in relationships
- ☐ School phobia
- ☐ Increased fighting and aggression
- ☐ High risk-taking

OTHER RESPONSES

What other responses to the loss have you noticed within yourself?

COMMON RESPONSES TO GRIEF

Using the lists above, identify where in your body you feel your different grief responses. You can use the empty spaces to write your responses or create new labels.



MY TANGLED BALL OF GRIEF

When you are grieving you can feel a mix of emotions all at once. Sometimes it can be hard to pinpoint exactly what you are feeling. There are no right or wrong emotions but it is important to feel all of them. This illustration below looks at how grief may feel in your body.



Anger



Guilt



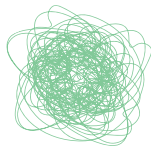
Emptiness



Worry



Shock



Jealous



Sadness



Loneliness

CUP OF **FEELINGS**

Start by choosing a different color for each emotion. Then color the inside of the cup to show how much of each emotion you are feeling right now. Use the blank spaces to pick other colors and feelings not mentioned here.



Happy

Nervous

Sad

Surprised

Angry

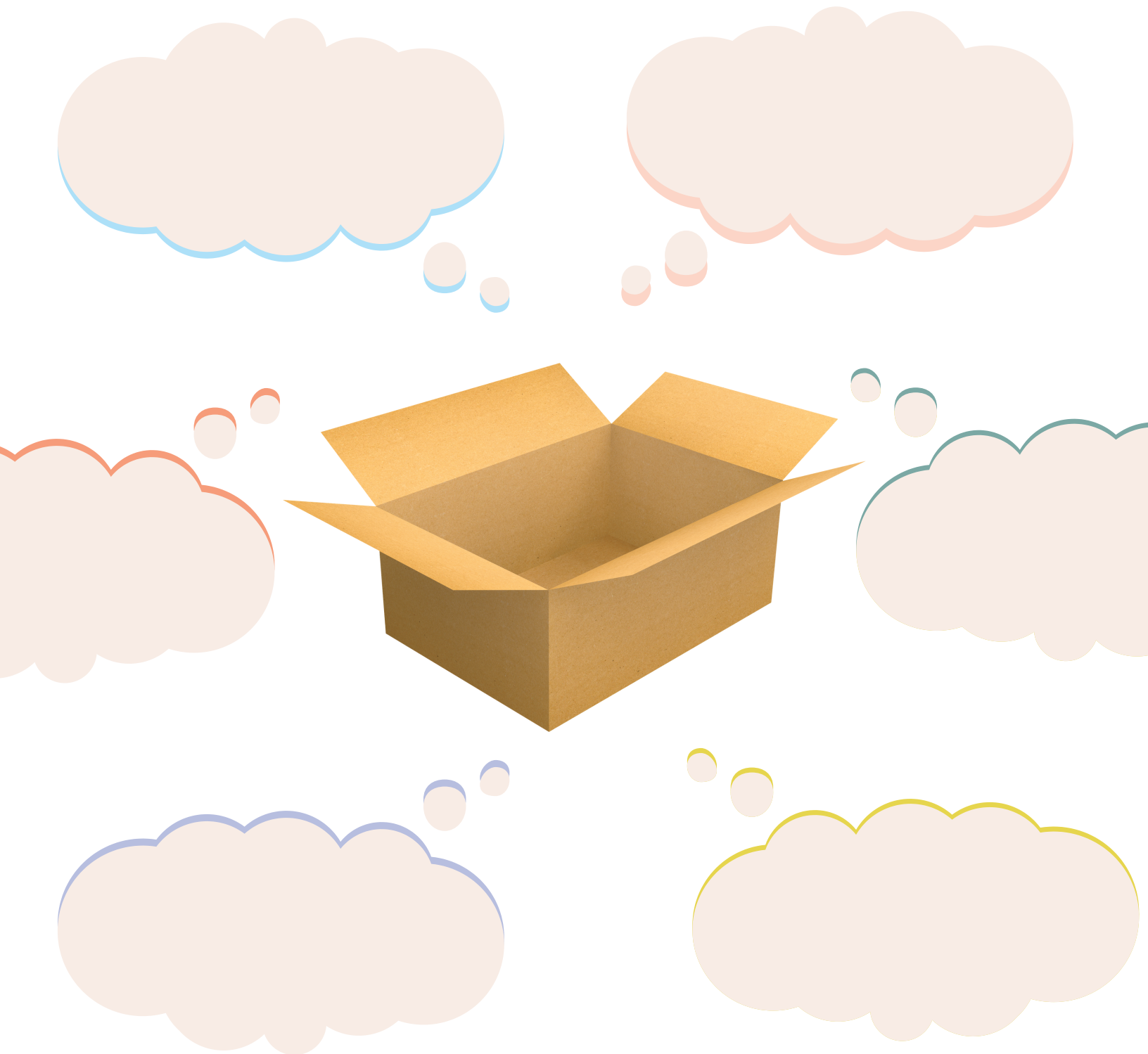
Scared

Jealous

Lonely

MY MEMORY BOX

In the spaces below write down or draw some of your favorite moments spent with your loved one



MY QUESTIONS AND BELIEFS

This may be your first experience with grief and loss. Perhaps you had only heard about it in books, movies, and from other people. Death can be scary to think about sometimes so to make it less scary answer the questions below to explore what you understand about life and death.

What does death look like?

Images:

Coffin

A Rainbow

A Tree

Beliefs and Questions:

There is an afterlife

Where does the body go?

My loved one lives on in me

What does life look like?

Images:

Sun

Being with friends

Music

Beliefs and Questions:

How long will I live?

What does my future hold?

It is important to have fun

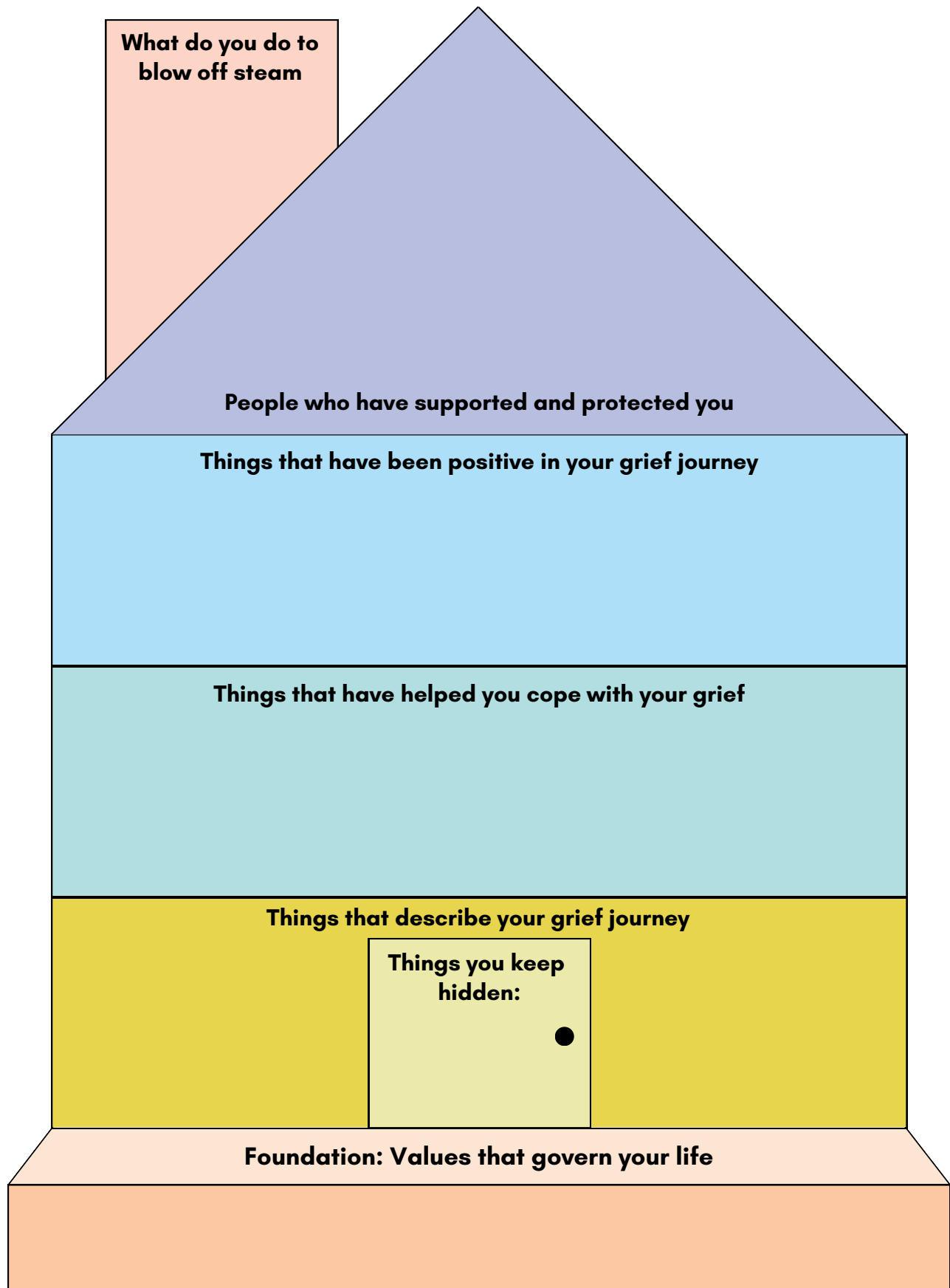
PIECES OF THE "BYE"

There are so many questions one has after experiencing the loss of a loved one. You may have unanswered questions, regrets, memories, and more. Use this activity to answer some of those questions and to dig deep about what you are thinking, feeling, and missing.

A circular worksheet divided into eight equal segments by four lines intersecting at the center. Each segment is labeled with a prompt in a curved font along the outer edge. The segments are colored light orange. The prompts, starting from the top and moving clockwise, are:

- Thankful for...
- Regrets...
- Memories to celebrate...
- I will miss...
- These things remind me of you...
- My support people are...
- Things I've learned since you've been gone...
- Things I've learned about myself...

THE HOUSE OF **GRIEF**



REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS **ABOUT YOUR GRIEF**

What is one thing that has changed at home since the death?

What is one thing that has changed at school since the death?

What is one thing that helps you with the changes in your life?

Do you think change lasts forever?

What is one change that has been easy for you?

Who is the one person who understands the changes you are going through?

If you had a magic wand and could change anything in your life, what would that be?

Do you feel like the same person since the death or do you feel different?

Why do you feel things change?

If you had a magic wand and could cause one thing to happen to you in your future, what would that be?

GOOD BYE LETTER

TO: _____

I AM SAYING GOOD BYE BECAUSE _____

WRITING THIS LETTER MAKES ME FEEL _____

MY FONDEST MEMORY OF YOU IS _____

YOU TAUGHT ME _____

SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO KNOW IS _____

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER _____

FROM: _____

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

DEAR:

SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN GONE I

WHAT I MISS MOST ABOUT YOU IS

MY BEST MEMORY OF YOU IS

I AM SAD WHEN

I WAS SCARED WHEN

SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN GONE

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF YOU IS

I WISH YOU

I WANT YOU TO KNOW

LOVE:

HOW THINGS HAVE **CHANGED**

Since _____ died...

How I am the same	How I am different
How my family is different	How my family is the same
My hopes for myself and my family in the future	

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Important events in my current life

(List the event and age you were when it happened)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Important events I hope will happen in the future

(List the event and the approximate age you think you might be when the event occurs.)

1

2

3

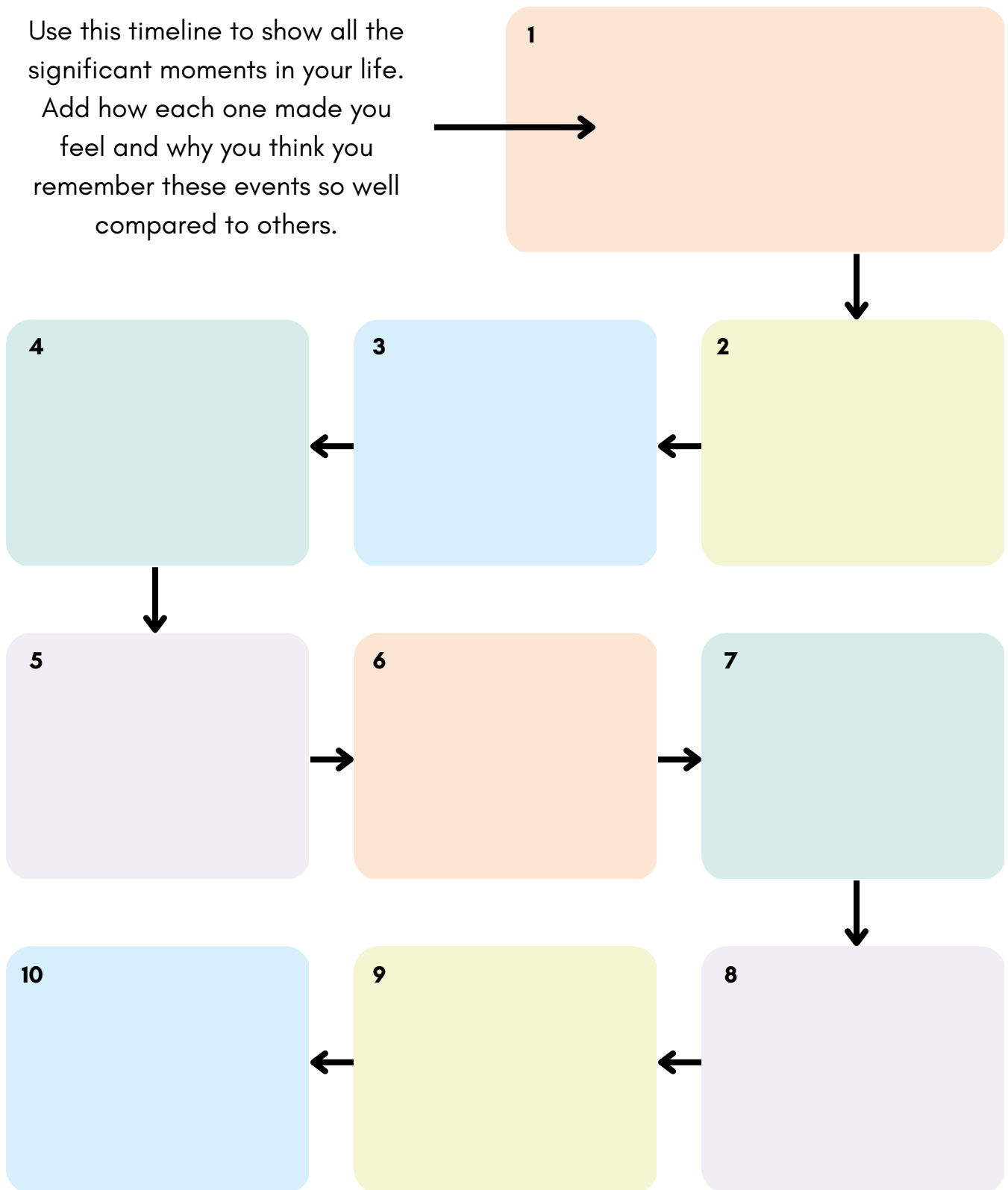
4

5

TIMELINE: **THE PRESENT**

Use this timeline to show all the significant moments in your life.

Add how each one made you feel and why you think you remember these events so well compared to others.



TIMELINE: THE FUTURE

Life feels hard without your loved one here but there are still a lot of moments to look forward to that may bring some more joy. Write down your goals and the events you are excited about in the future.

2

1

3

4

5

THE TASKS OF GRIEF

You may be experiencing what it's like to mourn the loss of your loved one. It can include a mix of feelings from sadness, anger to even a sense of relief. There is also a process to mourning which includes four steps to help you adapt to the loss. It's important to know that adapting doesn't mean forgetting – it simply means that you are able to meaningfully cope through your loss



T

TO ACCEPT THE REALITY OF THE LOSS

When did the reality of your loved one's death sink in?



E

EXPERIENCE THE PAIN OF THE LOSS

What have you been feeling and where in your body do you feel it?



A

ADJUST TO THE NEW ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT THE LOST PERSON

How has life been different since? How do you feel different?



R

REINVEST IN THE NEW REALITY

How do you make time to remember your loved one whilst still making time for the things you love and enjoy?

LET YOUR EMOTIONS **R.A.I.N**

When people are feeling sad or missing their loved ones they can often be quite harsh on themselves. They may say something like "how are you still upset about this", "it's been so long, why are you crying" or "no one even remembers them". This technique can be helpful to deal with some of those thoughts, feelings, and behaviors without judging them but instead treating them with kindness, compassion, and acceptance.



R RECOGNIZE WHAT IS HAPPENING

What's happening in this moment? How am I feeling? Where do I feel it in my body?



A ALLOW LIFE TO BE JUST AS IT IS

I can let the thoughts or feelings just be here. Even if I don't like it?



I INVESTIGATE WITH KINDNESS

Why do I feel this way? Is it really true?

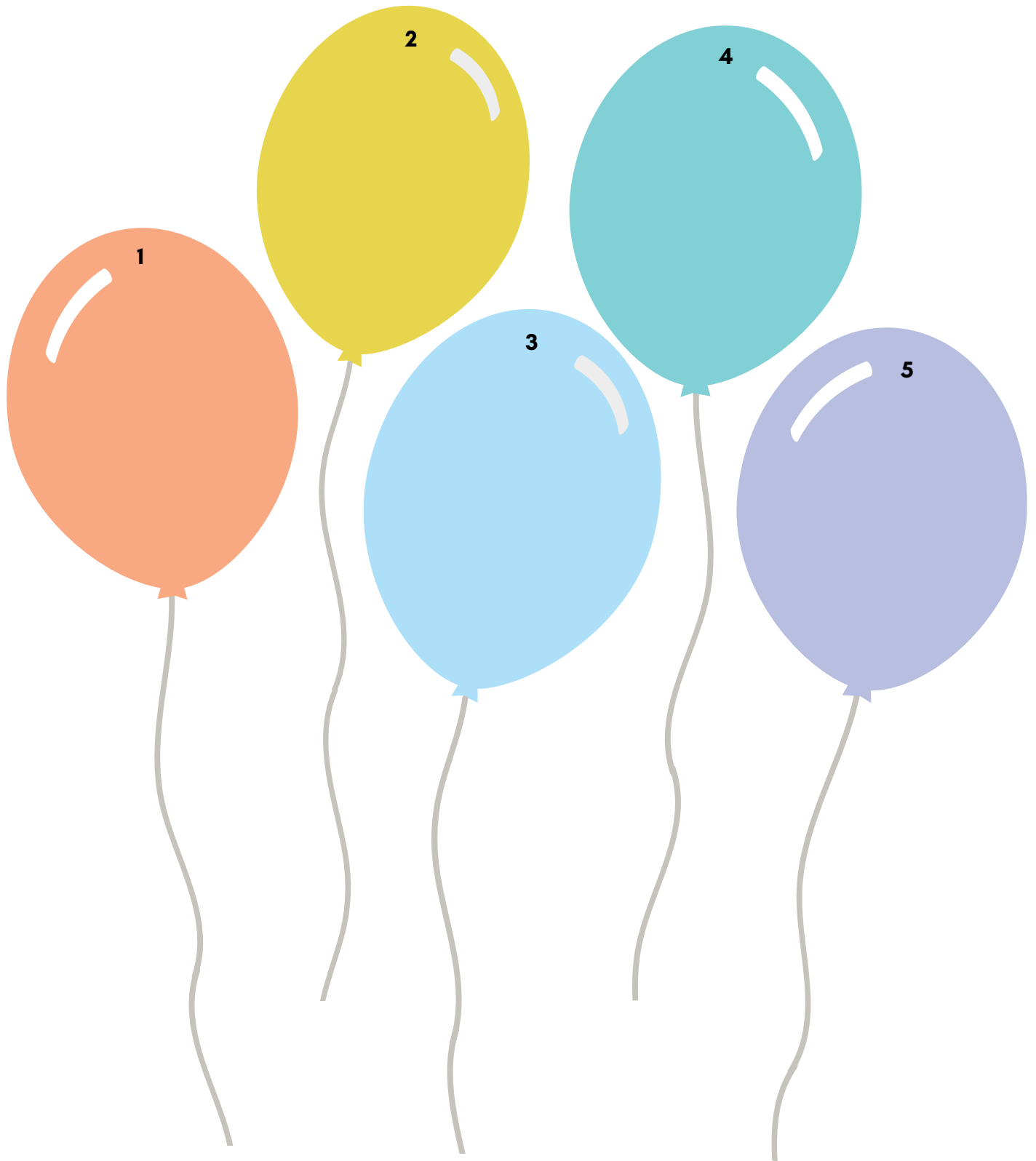


N NON-IDENTIFICATION

I am having a thought or emotion, but I am not that thought or emotion - practice this here.

SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE **IN MY LIFE**

Write down all the names of the people in your life that you could turn to when you need support



COMFORTING ADULTS **IN MY LIFE**

**The main adult in my life
who helps me is:**

I feel most safe when I'm with:

The adults I share my feelings with are:

Other important people in my life are:

**When I am sad an important adult in my
life tells me:**

**The best advice that I have received
from an adults is:**

APPRECIATION OF OTHERS

Appreciation of your mom, dad, or caregiver in your life:

I like it when you

Because

I appreciate it when you

Because

I am happy you

Thank you for

Appreciation of the friends in your life:

I like it when you

Because

I appreciate it when you

Because

I am happy you

Thank you for

APPRECIATION OF OTHERS

Appreciation of other adults in your life:

I like it when they

Because

I appreciate it when they

Because

I am happy they

Thanks for

Appreciation of you!

I like it when I

Because

I appreciate it when I

Because

I am happy for me because

Thanks for

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

I can be good to myself

There are things that I do well

I am wiser and stronger now

My painful feelings are fading away a little each day

I can't change others but I can change myself

I can be grateful for all that I have. I take pride in my accomplishments

I can follow my dreams

There are people who care about me

I am courageous

I can be as happy as I choose to be

I will survive

I may not trust everyone, but I can trust some people

I can find healthy ways to express my feelings

I can adjust to the many changes of loss, a little at a time. I have the power deep within me to get through this.

I can learn from my mistakes

It is all right to take breaks from my grief and do fun things

MY GRIEF PLAN

Use this worksheet to explore helpful ways you can cope when you are feeling sad

When I feel sad I can try these things to cope....

I will talk to these people for comfort...

I can think these thoughts...

Here is how I can take care of myself...
