



## Families and Friends in Bereavement

### SOME THINGS TO TRY

#### Thinking about the Impact of Bereavement on You, Your Family and Friends

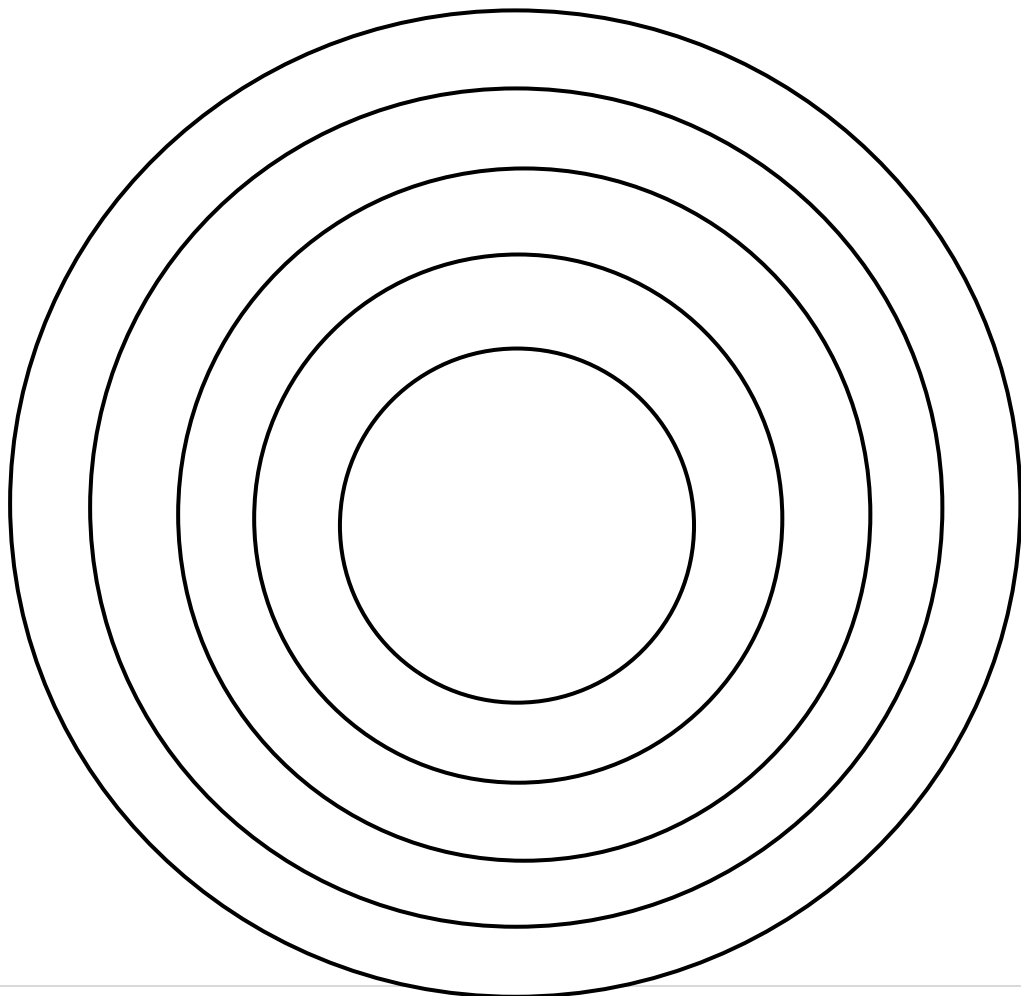
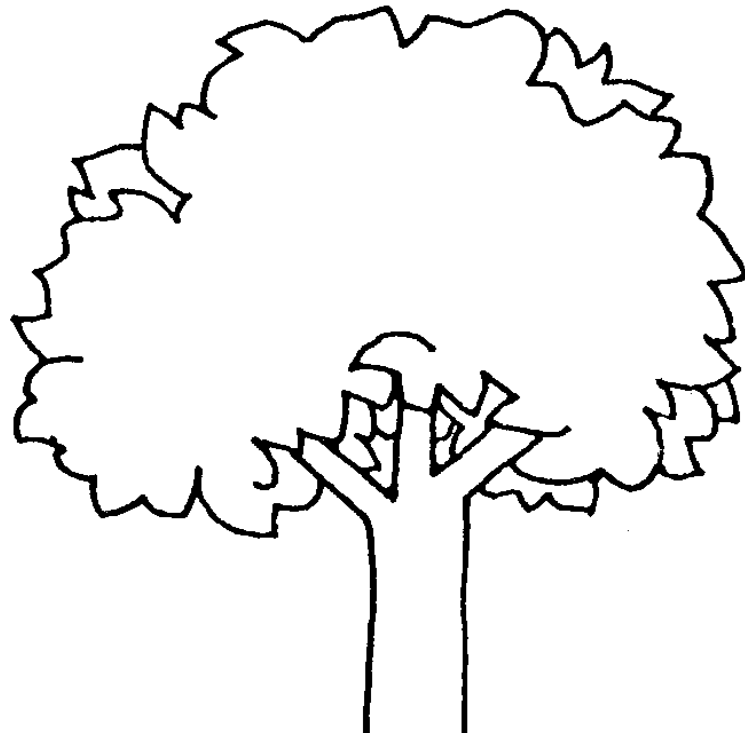
Take a moment to think about who else has experienced this loss.

- How are they coping?
- How could you help them?
- How could they help you?

Some people find it helpful to think about this visually. You could draw a tree and write the names of family members within it or sometimes people like drawing a circle and placing themselves at the centre with their family members around them (see p2). There are some completed examples on the website, on the [Some things to try](#) page, that may be helpful.

The reason for doing this is that you can use it to build on the strengths of your 'family'. Remember family is anyone that is important to you - family, friends, neighbours, and others.

- Identify the strengths and coping strategies of those in your family.
- Consider the things that are important to you e.g. geographical distance, frequency of contact or emotional connection.
- You may wish to keep your drawing to yourself or it may help to share it with others in your family to start a conversation.



## Sharing Memories

Sharing memories, thoughts, feelings, and objects can help families create meaning together. This is also a good way to start conversations, for example “do you remember when...?”

- Is there a photograph, letter, piece of music, poetry, art, or story that you can use to share your recollections together?
  - What are your favourite anecdotes? Ask others for theirs.
  - Is there something you could do together – an adventure you had always planned or a charity event? Do you want to plan a celebratory event?
  - Do you want to create an online memorial? An example can be found at <https://www.muchloved.com/> where digital pages can be created free of charge and shared for as long as you wish.
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## Questions to Help Families Talk Together

The questions below offer a starting point to help families talk together about the death, make sense of what happened, and identify resources and different forms of support that may be available. You may wish to revisit these questions from time to time.

### Understanding what has happened

- Have you talked about the death itself? If you have what was most difficult? Did anything go well? If you haven't, is there a reason for this?
- Have you talked to any health and care workers if they were involved? Has anyone in the family had any feedback that has helped?
- Have you talked with funeral directors or faith leaders? Has anyone in the family had any discussions with them that have helped?

### Meaning

- What did the person who has died mean to you?
- What do you miss most about them? Is there anything you won't miss so much?
- What will you always remember about them?
- What are your emotions at this time e.g. guilt, relief, anger, jealousy, frustration?
- What are you finding hardest about their death? Is there anything that helps with this?
- How has the bereavement led to relationship changes between family members/friends e.g. taking on different roles, changes in emotional connection?
- Has the bereavement led to additional losses e.g. having to move house?
- If they were sitting next to you what would you want to say to them, and why? Is there anything you wished you had or had not said, and why?

### Moving forward

- How can you and your family help each other? What are the different strengths of family members/friends that could be used now?
- Have you or other family members/friends taken on new or changed roles?
- Are there other sources of support could you draw on?
- Are you keeping to usual family routines, or have you created new ones e.g. around anniversaries and holidays?
- How do you want others to talk and be with you?