

Remembering a Loved One on the Anniversary of Their Death

Objective

To plan an activity to remember a loved one on the anniversary of their death.

You Should Know

Remembering a loved one on the anniversary of their death is an important way for you to continue processing your grief. Even though remembering your loss can be painful, it allows you to recognize the loss, remember your loved one, and process your emotions. You can give voice to your grief and sense of loss while integrating your loved one's absence into your day-to-day life.

There is no one right way to remember a loved one's death. It can be as simple as sharing a special photo on social media or as elaborate as having a memorial service with friends and family. Different religions have rituals to remember a loss, however even there are rituals in your religion, you may want to find a personal way to continue with your healing.

Here are some ideas that you might find helpful.

Visit the grave. You might bring some type of decoration, like flowers, a statue, or a wreath.

Sing or listen to a song. You can sing or play songs that help you remember your loved one. You could even make a playlist and share it with friends and family.

Read a children's book on grief. Books like *The Invisible String* and *Tear Soup* help children process grief through stories. Simple stories can be comforting for adults, too.

Share memories. Sharing stories with friends and families about the deceased.

Make your loved one's favorite food. Invite family and friends to contribute food or help you prepare the meal.

Create a special place to commemorate your loved one. You could include a memory candle, photos, flowers, and favorite objects.

Create a family memory scrapbook. Collect favorite photos, write letters or poems, and include other memorabilia. Review the scrapbook each year.

Make a memory bracelet or paint a memory stone. Children as well as adults can make creative items that can help you think about and honor the deceased. The process of making the items can be very healing, particularly if you are in the company of others dealing with the loss.

Donate money or items to your loved one's favorite charity. You could donate to local organization important to you loved one or find a charity online. [CharityNavigator.org](https://www.charitynavigator.org) rates charities on the efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Write other ideas below:

What to Do

Use your creativity to adapt this exercise into an activity that is relevant and personal to you and your family.

Describe an activity you would you like to do

Describe how you feel about doing this activity.

Share your ideas with family members or friends who will be involved in this activity. Write down who you will share this with, when you will do it, and where you will do it.

Plan the remembrance. Write down the details of what you will do. Include the date, time, who will be involved, and the steps necessary to complete the activity.

Once you complete the activity, you might want to do something to nurture and care for yourself. Describe what you could do.

Reflections on This Exercise

After completing the activity think about how it helped in your healing process. Did you find it helpful? Is this something you might repeat each year on the anniversary of your loved one's death? Why or why not?

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
