



# Expressive Arts

## Benefits of Expressive Arts

Creative expression can be helpful for children, teens, and adults. When someone is grieving the loss of a loved one, finding words to describe what you are going through can be difficult. Digital art making, painting, playing an instrument, writing, and coloring sheets are only a few ways that someone can express themselves. Art making allows for reflection and processing of one's grief by putting thought down onto paper or canvas. It also allows you to honor or memorialize your loved one. Sometimes freely scribbling can be enough to release tension in the body! Creative expression gives someone the opportunity to say something without having to speak. The art can stand alone as a form of communication at any age.

## Ideas for Creative Expression of Emotions for Grieving Children

Ask children to draw a picture of what they are feeling - sometimes it is easier for children to express their feelings through art. Asking open ended questions such as “What does that feeling look like?” or “If your feeling were an animal, what would that animal look like?” can help give them a place to start exploring and expressing feelings.

Journaling - writing down feelings can be a great tool for children. Sometimes verbally expressing feelings out loud can be difficult for many reasons.

Create a Feelings Art Journal - While it can be helpful for children to express their feelings by journaling about them, not all children are able or are comfortable expressing their feelings using words. Helping kids start a feelings art journal that they can use over time is a great way to provide them with an alternative way to express themselves. Feelings can be expressed through drawing, through painting, through collages made from pictures out of magazines, through photographs, etc...

Feelings Wheel - creating a visual representation of the many feelings that children have can be a great exploration of those feelings, as well as a tool to help express feelings in the future. The child starts with a circle that has lines drawn on it dividing it like a pie. Then the child fills in each section with a drawing that represents each emotion, such as happy, sad, scared, angry, excited, lonely. The child can keep this feelings wheel and can use it to help identify and express what they are feeling in the future.

I Never... I Wonder... I Wish... - this activity can be done by having a child finish one or all of those sentence starters with journaling or with drawing. These kinds of very open-ended sentence starters can be helpful ways for a child to explore and express difficult thoughts or feelings.

