A decorative border of colorful butterflies (purple, orange, and black) surrounds the central text. The butterflies are arranged in a continuous line along the top, bottom, and sides of the page.

# **YOUR VERY OWN TF-CBT GRIEF WORKBOOK**

**By Alison Hendricks, Judith Cohen, Anthony Mannarino, and  
Esther Deblinger**



## Your Very Own TF-CBT Grief Workbook

### Introduction

This workbook is a companion to Your Very Own TF-CBT Workbook and is intended for school-aged children (ages 5-12) who are experiencing traumatic grief as the result of the death of someone close to them. Children may develop traumatic grief reactions when they lose a loved one in a sudden, violent, or unexpected manner (or any kind of death that is experienced as traumatic by the child). Children who exhibit significant trauma reactions in response to such a loss will benefit from completing the PRACTICE components of TF-CBT to address the trauma of the death. After resolving the traumatic aspect of the loss, many children continue to have grief reactions such as sadness, anxiety, withdrawal, and/or physical complaints. The grief-focused components included in this workbook can be used to help children work through their grief.

As with Your Very Own TF-CBT Workbook, this workbook is a resource that is intended to be used by mental health professionals who have been trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. This workbook can be used as a guide to support implementation of the grief-focused components but should not be the only resource utilized in treatment. Books, videos, games, and other interventions should be used to supplement the workbook. Therapists should use their clinical judgment and work in collaboration with their child clients to decide which workbook activities should be utilized.

Prior to using this workbook, therapists should review Part III: The Grief-Focused Components of *Treating Trauma and Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)* by Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger (2017). The Grief-Focused Components are covered in this workbook as follows:

Grief Psychoeducation	Pages 3-7
Grieving the Loss and Resolving Ambivalent Feelings	Pages 8-10
Preserving Positive Memories	Pages 11-12
Redefining the Relationship	Pages 14-15
Treatment Review and Closure	Pages 16-19

*The authors would like to acknowledge and thank Robin Goodman, Carrie Epstein, and Matt Kliethermes for their contributions to this workbook.*



### Introduction: What is Grief?



Grief is a strong, sometimes overwhelming, emotion that people experience when they lose someone important to them. Grief is a normal reaction to loss and can make us feel very sad, especially when the loss involves the death of someone we love. In this workbook, we are going to learn all about grief and will work together to help you grieve the loss of your special person.

What does your grief look like? What words would you use to describe your grief? Please draw a picture or write down a few words (or a poem or a song) describing your grief in the space below.





### Talking about Death



Death is when someone's body stops working forever. It is a natural part of life. People and animals are born, they live their lives, and then they eventually die. It can be hard to talk about death. But talking about death helps us understand it better and helps us sort out our feelings.



What questions do you have about death? What feelings do you have about death? You can write down your questions and/or your feelings or draw a picture that shows how you feel. You can also act out your feelings and see if your therapist can guess what feelings you are expressing.



**Questions**

**Feelings**





### Why Do People Die?



There are many different reasons why people die. You and your therapist can talk about what you know about what caused your special person to die. You can write about it or draw a picture below.





## Saying Good-Bye



Funerals, memorials, and other ceremonies can help us say good-bye to the person who died. You can write or draw about anything you or your family did to say good-bye to your special person or what you would like to do to say good-bye.





### What Happens After Death?



People have different ideas and beliefs about what happens to a person after they die. What do you think happens? You can write it down here, draw a picture, make a collage, or just tell your therapist.





### “What I Miss Most”

You may be experiencing big feelings because you miss doing things with your special person, you miss things about them, and/or you miss things they used to do for you. You can draw or make a list of the things you miss the most about your special person who died.



You can also talk with your therapist about things you will miss in the future and what you can do to cope.







### “What I Don’t Miss”



Nobody is perfect, and there may be things about your special person that you don’t miss and/or difficult feelings that you may have toward them (or that you had in the past). You can write or draw about anything you don’t miss about your special person here. Or you and your therapist can write down all the feelings you have about your special person on little pieces of paper and roll them up and put them inside a bag. As you shake the bag, you can talk about the feelings bouncing around inside and you and your therapist can work on coping skills for any of the feelings that are difficult for you.





### What I Wish to Say to My Special Person

When someone dies, there can be a lot of things we wish to tell them. It can help a lot to write down all the things you wish to express to your special person. This might include your feelings about them and the things you will miss and won't miss. Another idea is to pretend that your special person is sitting in an empty chair and to tell them all the things you wish to say to them.



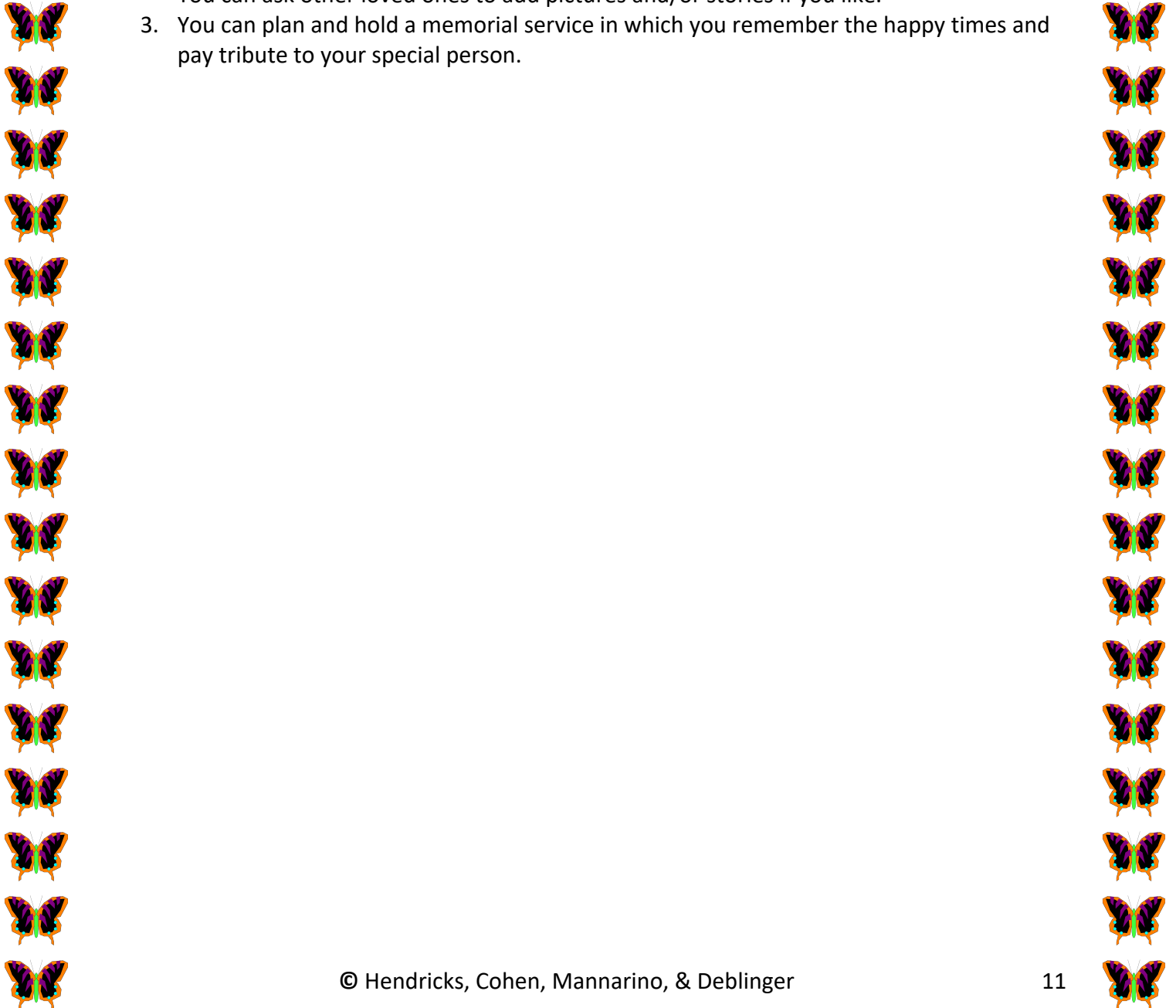
What would you like to hear back from your special person? You can write this in a letter to yourself from them or just tell your therapist what response you would like to hear from them.



## Positive Memories

When someone special dies, thinking about positive memories we shared can help us feel better. What are some of the positive memories you have about your special person or what are some positive stories that others have told you about? There are many different ways to share these memories. Here are some ideas (or you and your therapist might have other ideas about how you would like to share happy memories).

1. You can write down your special person's name and write a happy memory for each letter of their name.
2. You can create a memory book, memory box, or slideshow of happy memories you shared with your special person. You can include drawings, photos, images, and stories. You can ask other loved ones to add pictures and/or stories if you like.
3. You can plan and hold a memorial service in which you remember the happy times and pay tribute to your special person.





### The Best



When you are missing your special person, it can be helpful to think about and imagine your “best.” This could be:



- The best time we had together
- The best thing my special person gave me
- The best thing my special person taught me

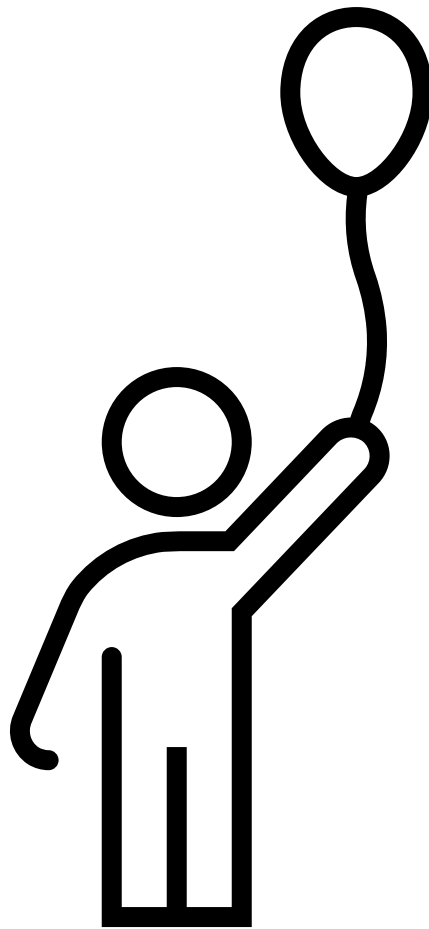


You can choose one of these to write or draw about in the space below.



**Holding On and Letting Go**

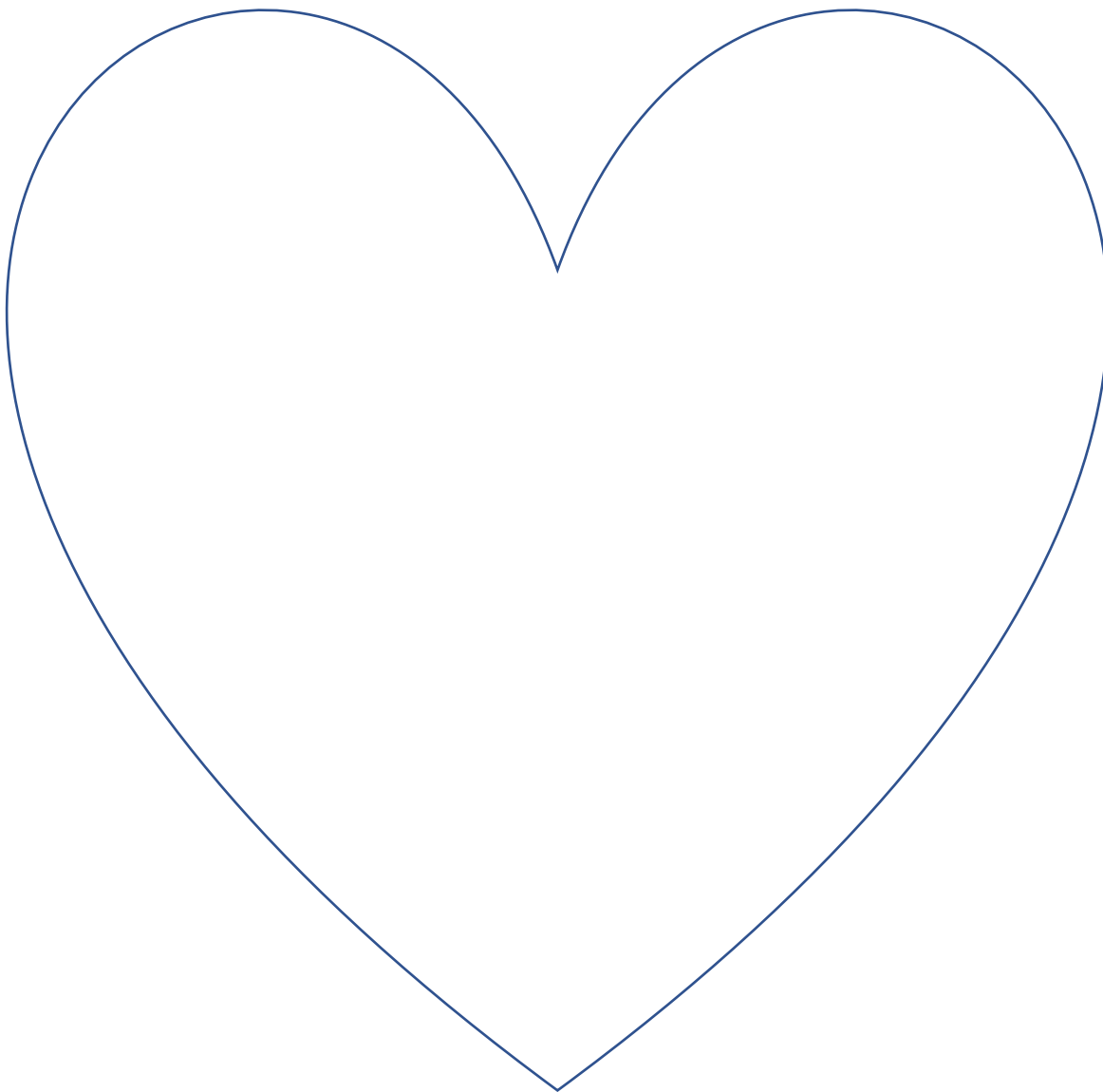
Imagine yourself holding 3-5 balloons attached to strings in your hand. You can add more balloons to the one you are holding to the picture below. Now you can draw or write in these balloons all the things you will hold onto from your special person. These might include positive memories, things they taught you or gave you, and/or how they made you feel. Now you can draw or imagine 3-5 balloons floating away above your head. On these balloons, you can draw or write about what has been lost since your special person died. This might include things your special person did for you on a regular basis or things you used to do together.





## Room in Your Heart

Your special person will always have a special place in your heart. Did you know that your heart is big enough for a lot of other special people, too? You can draw a big heart below and write down all the names of all your special people (including your special person who died) in your heart. You can talk with your therapist about the special people who are in your life now and all the things you can do with them.






### Coping with Difficult Feelings

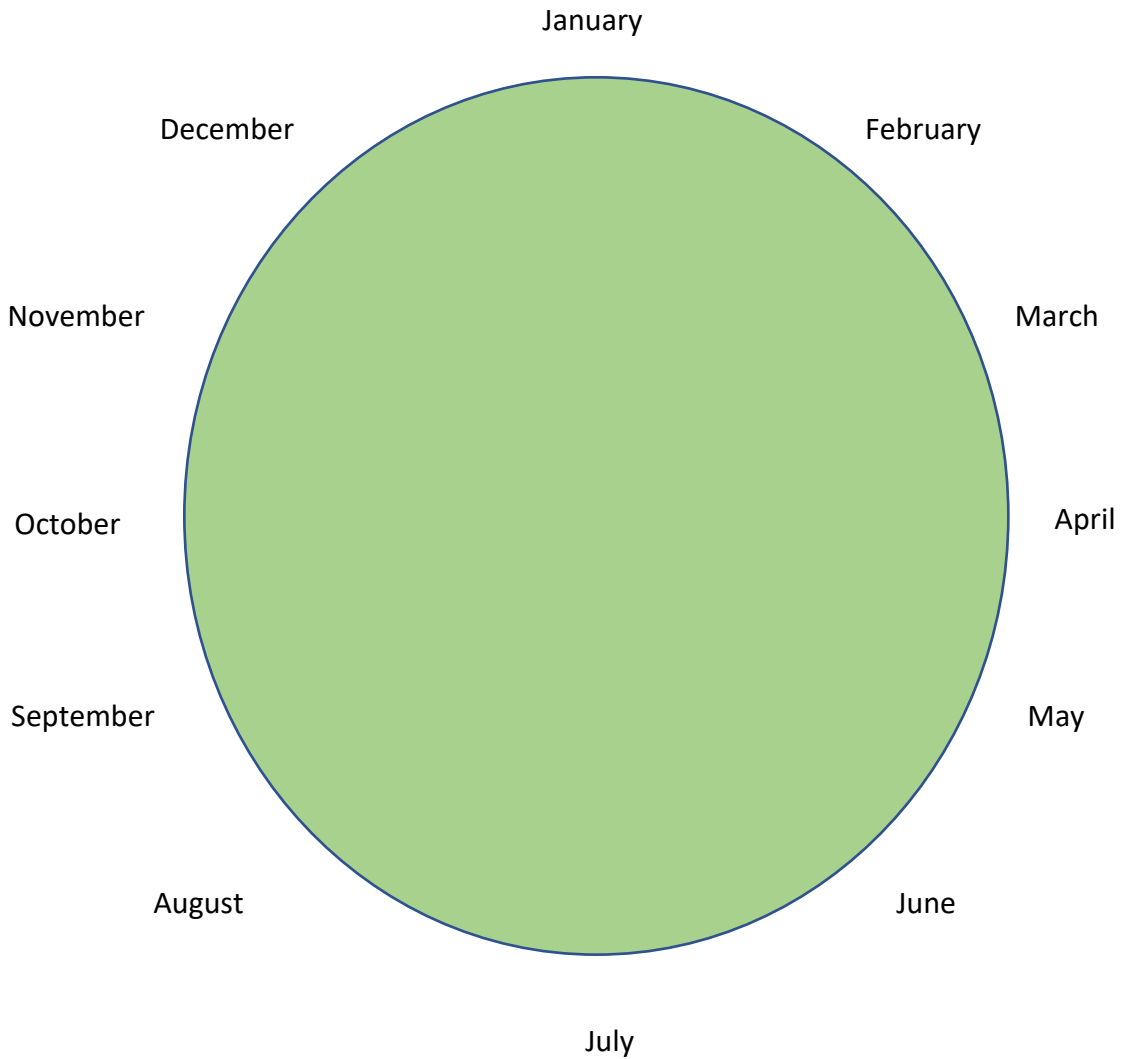
There may be times in your life when something or someone will remind you of your special person. At these times, memories of your special person may give you warm feelings and may help you to cope by remembering what guidance or support they would give you. Other times experiences that remind you of your special person may cause you to feel sad or upset suddenly. What coping skills could you use to manage difficult feelings that you may experience when reminded of the death of your special person? List or draw coping skills you could use below.





## Circle of Life

When someone you love dies, there can be certain days of the year that can be difficult (for example, holidays, the person's birthday, the anniversary of their death). Below is a circle on which you can write any dates that might be hard for you.

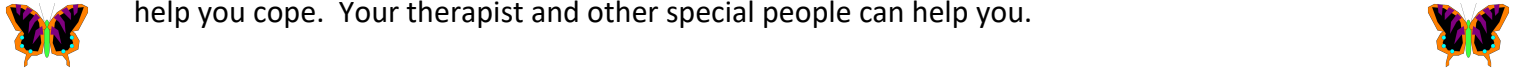






## My Coping Plan

For each of the dates on the calendar that may be hard for you, write down a plan for what will help you cope. Your therapist and other special people can help you.

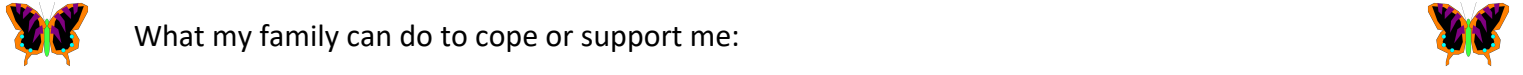


Date:

What I can do to cope:



What my family can do to cope or support me:

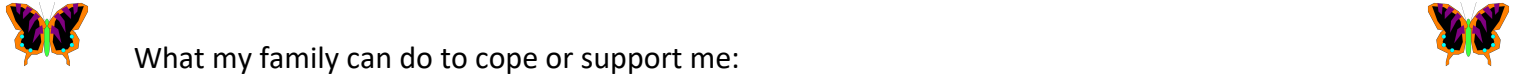


Date:

What I can do to cope:



What my family can do to cope or support me:

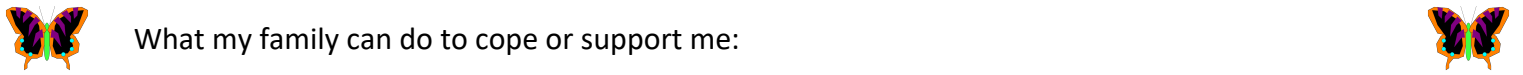


Date:

What I can do to cope:



What my family can do to cope or support me:

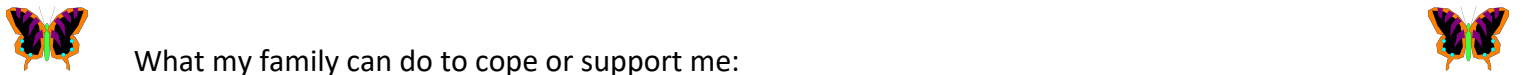


Date:

What I can do to cope:



What my family can do to cope or support me:





### Advice to Kids About Grief



You have learned so much in therapy and have gained new strengths and skills in the process. Congratulations! Based on what you have learned, what advice would you give to other kids who have lost someone they love? You can write your advice below or create a newsletter or video to help other kids who are grieving.



### Saying Good-Bye

It is important to know that grief is a process and feelings about your loss can come back at any time in your life. It's important to allow your feelings, talk to someone you trust, and use all the other great coping skills you have learned in therapy. You may have many feelings about saying good-bye to your therapist. You can talk about these feelings and/or draw or write them here.



**Great job completing this workbook! You are amazing and brave!**

