



*“Each person’s grief is as unique as their fingerprints. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be witnessed. That doesn’t mean needing someone to try and lessen it or reframe it for them, the need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining.”*

- David Kessler

**Dear Camper Family,**

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in Camp Spero At Home 2021. Grief is part of your youth’s story and we appreciate your trusting us to provide fun, innovative ways to support your child on his/her grief journey. We recognize the importance of fostering connections among grieving youth and creating opportunities to memorialize their person in an environment that feels safe and welcoming.

Following the camp experience, there may be opportunities for you to engage with your child(ren) in conversations around camp and their person at home. If you are not sure where to start, here are some helpful reminders.

- Show interest in their Camp Spero experience. Ask your camper which activities were beneficial or enjoyable and which were not.
- Check in with your camper on a consistent basis in ways that feel natural for you, such as at bedtime, at a family dinner or by holding a family meeting. It is okay if they do not want to talk. By asking about their experience and allowing them to “pass,” you are providing opportunities for them to share as well as the permission to decline.
- Campers may want to display Camp Spero projects in the home or their room. This can be an opportunity to talk about your person and support them in ways that honor their person.

Here are some creative ways for you and your child to honoring your person together on an ongoing basis.

<b>Memory Stones</b>	Take a walk together to collect stones to decorate. Paint or decorate your stone to honor your person. You can incorporate their favorite items, songs or saying. Place the stones in a garden or spot in your home.
<b>Balloon Release</b>	Go to the cemetery or an open field. With a sharpie have each family member write a message on the balloon or share a memory out loud. Release the balloon together.
<b>“Favorites” Night</b>	Schedule a time to recognize your person’s favorites: Make their favorite food, play their favorite music or watch their favorite movie.
<b>Overhaul a Space</b>	Whether it is the garden, a wall in the home, or a room, come together as a family and create this space.
<b>Memory Collector</b>	If your child has limited memories or has fears of forgetting their person, create a box or jar where your child can write down and put their questions. Set aside time to answer questions as a family and share memories with your child.



<b>Have a “Day Off”</b>	While routine and consistency support safety, it can be beneficial to have Grief Day around special days. Plan a day together incorporating ways to be connected to each other and the person who died.
<b>Visit Special Places or Cemetery</b>	Visit places that remind you of your person.
<b>Do an Activity Together</b>	Find an activity that is age-appropriate for your child and do the activity together. (Examples: coloring, board games, drawing, arts and crafts, creating a playlist, putting on a talent show, etc.) Take this opportunity to casually check-in with your child around feelings and their grief. This models that it is OK to be a kid and have fun while grieving.
<b>Look at Photos and Memorabilia</b>	Look at photographs of the person who died at different ages in their life. Share favorite photos. Talk about the memories connected to photos and special items.
<b>Light a Candle</b>	Light one candle or have each family member light a candle for the person. This can be done during anniversaries, birthdays, or any day they are thinking about their person.

As each child’s grief is unique, so are their needs. Below are links to information and resources that you may find helpful:

**Free Services from The Elizabeth Hospice**

[The Elizabeth Hospice – Children and Teens Bereavement Program](#)

[The Elizabeth Hospice – Adult Support Groups](#)

[Cuddle Keepsakes](#)

**Children’s Bereavement Program Newsletter** - sign up by emailing: [grievingchildren@ehospice.org](mailto:grievingchildren@ehospice.org)

**Resources**

[NACG – Holiday Toolkit](#)

[NACG – Hero Toolkit](#)

[Supporting Children and Teens after a Suicide](#)

[Sesame Street in Communities](#)

The Elizabeth Hospice is committed to caring for our community’s grieving children and their families. Thank you for allowing us to support your child. If you have any questions, please email us at [campspero@ehospice.org](mailto:campspero@ehospice.org).

With gratitude,

Camp Spero Leadership