



Meaningful Ideas for Funerals, Memorial Services or Celebrations of Life During the Covid-19 Pandemic (Adapted from *What's Your Grief*)

A funeral, memorial service, celebration of life or other end of life rituals are vital to healthy grief. They offer space to: mark a significant event; be comforted by friends/family; share stories, thoughts and feelings; and move towards acknowledging the reality of a death. COVID-19 involves social isolation and limits gatherings to small groups. Below are some ideas for families to consider during periods of isolation or distancing. It will be helpful for you to familiarize yourself with Zoom, Facetime, Skype, or other online platforms. Although virtual visits are not the same as in person visits, they can help you stay connected and feel supported.

HAVE A SMALL VIRTUAL SERVICE NOW AND HAVE AN IN-PERSON EVENT LATER

While you may have a small virtual service now, you can make plans for an in-person event later when people are able to travel again.

STREAM THE SERVICE

Even if people cannot be present at the service, the service can be brought to the people through streaming.

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/how-to-live-stream-a-funeral/>

INCLUDE PEOPLE IN THE SERVICE EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT THERE

Using an online platform, people can do readings, sing songs, or give a eulogy from a distance. People can also send pre-recorded videos to watch and stream as part of the service.

CROWD-SOURCE A VIRTUAL PHOTO SLIDESHOW

Put together a digital slide show that can be shared during the service using an online platform. See if the online platform has features that allow you to do a screen share of the computer playing the slideshow.

CREATE A SLIDESHOW OF MEMORIES OR OTHER WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Invite people in advance either by email or social media to share a memory or any words of remembrance. These can be made into a slideshow and these memories can be very helpful for the grief journey.

SING AND PLAY MUSIC TOGETHER (IN REAL TIME)

Using online platforms, like Zoom, people can sing songs, play piano or other instruments virtually together.

RECORD A SONG AS A FAMILY TO BE PLAYED AT THE SERVICE

For musically talented people it is possible to record different tracks of a song and edit them together.

CREATE A VIRTUAL MEMORIAL BOOK

Using Zoom's chat feature during the virtual service, invite people to type their name and answer questions such as: How did you meet? What did you learn from them? What is a favorite memory? Download and save these messages.

HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ALL DO THEIR OWN SMALL RITUAL AT THE SAME DAY/TIME

Invite family/friends to do a personal ritual at a specified time such as doing a toast, saying a specific prayer or listening to a song they loved.

CREATE A SMALL MEMORIAL IN YOUR HOME OR GARDEN

Plant a tree; make a small display of photos or other remembrance space in your home. Doing this as a family at a specific time is a meaningful and a symbolic way for children and adults to share memories and say good-bye.

Remember, grief, honoring and remembering our loved ones is not a one-time event. It is something you can do many times in many different ways as life moves forward. Although you may not be able to have a traditional funeral or memorial at this time, you can plan for something more formal in the future.

RESOURCES

www.whatsyourgrief.com

<https://zoom.us>

www.hearthousehospice.com

<https://hearthousehospice.com/how-we-help/counselling-support/legacy-activities/>

www.childrenandyouthgriefnetwork.com