



Father's Day can be a difficult and emotional time of year if Dad is no longer with you. Every child is different, and every family is different, so what matters most is that children and young people are supported to remember Dad in whatever way feels right for them at this special time.

Being allowed to be free of other's expectations is empowering and important. Some children will want to remember Dad in a celebratory way, and will want to talk about him lots. Other children will want to be quieter in their reflections, and may be missing Dad and finding it hard to be positive.



Being surrounded by adults who are able to support bereaved children and young people to express their feelings in whatever way feels best for them can be very helpful. Feeling that whatever you say, or however you want to mark

Coping with Father's Day

the day won't be judged or criticised can give confidence and a sense of being in control, which in turn supports children to cope.

Depending on the child and the individual circumstances, it can be helpful to talk to them in advance of the day – to find out what they are most concerned about and if they have any specific ideas for what they want to do to manage the day. What's crucial is to always follow the lead of the child.

Schools can be supportive by talking to pupils, and families as relevant, before the day – so that the child feels safe and in control of things in order to make the day as stress-free as possible.



Balloons Information Sheet 12

Being mindful of the build up to the day is important. Increasingly, we are surrounded by 'triggers' in the form of Father's Day cards for sale, television adverts and posters about Father's Day. These reminders can be painful and can cause a great deal of sadness, but it can also be painful to not have the opportunity to remember Dad.

Some children feel – "I still have a Dad – he's just not alive any more".

Remembering Dad

Father's Day is an opportunity to remember all the special things that Dad did and said, and to treasure memories that make children feel closer to him. This might be done privately and on their own, or with trusted adults.



Here are some ideas that might be helpful:

Visit a special place to remember him

This might be his grave or where his ashes are scattered, but equally it could also be a place which has special significance for

other reasons; somewhere the family walked together, spent time on the beach together, visited a park or a museum together.



Talk about Dad

If the child wants to talk about Dad, then be prepared for this and make sure that you can get support for yourself, especially if you are also grieving for him. It can be helpful to have some prompt questions such as:

- When I think about Dad I feel...
- When I picture Dad I see...
- Dad was special because...
- When I remember Dad it makes me feel...

The child might ask those around them to share their stories of Dad and how they remember him and are feeling.



Make a picture frame

Frame a special photo of Dad, or a drawing that you have done of him or about him.



Music

Play Dad's favourite music and dance.



Food

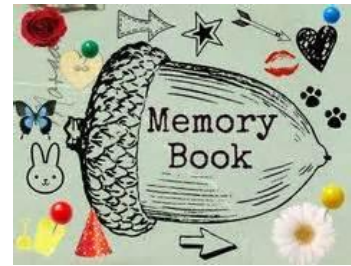
Prepare and eat food that Dad would have loved, or that you remember sharing with Dad.



Scrapbook or memory journal

Make a scrapbook of all your special memories of Dad.

Start a journal of all the things that you remember about him – the jokes and stories he told, the silly things he did, the times he helped you...



Talk to him

Write down all the things you'd like to tell Dad – all the achievements you have accomplished since he died so that you can feel proud of how you are managing.

Stories and poems

Write a story, a poem or a song about your Dad and why he was special to you.



Father's Day is an opportunity to remember all the special things that Dad did, and even though he is not alive any more, his legacy lives on in his children and their memories of him and their ongoing love for him.

Don't forget that grieving is a lifelong process, that changes as time passes. Dad will always be a part of his children's lives.

Ring us for other ideas.

Our telephone number is 01392 826064

Here to help