



Creating and Using a Memory Box

When someone close to us dies or is dying, one of the things families can worry about is how they will remember them. For children and young people, finding ways to hold on to special memories can be an important part of their grief journey.

At Windmills, we use a range of resources to support bereaved children and young people to remember the person who has died. One of these is a **memory box**.

A memory box is a special place where children and young people can keep photographs, letters, belongings and other objects that remind them of the person who has died and the times they shared together.

There is no right or wrong way to make or use a memory box. Every child and young person will have their own memories, feelings and ideas about what they would like to keep.

Step One: Find Your Box

First, find a box that feels right for you.

You could buy a special memory box, or you could use something you already have at home. An old shoebox can work really well because it has a lid and can easily be stored somewhere safe, such as under a bed.

You could decorate your box to make it personal. You might paint it, cover it with photographs, add drawings or write the name of the person you are remembering.

Step Two: Fill Your Memory Box

Think about the things that remind you of the person who has died and the memories you shared.

You could include:

- Photographs and pictures
- Letters or cards
- A favourite piece of clothing
- A watch, jewellery or glasses

- A scarf, tie or purse
- A postcard from a holiday you shared
- A favourite CD or something connected to music they loved
- Something from the funeral or a special occasion
- Birthday cards or anniversary cards
- Small objects that belonged to them or remind you of them

You don't have to fill your box all at once. You might find things to add over time as you remember different people, places or moments.

Try to choose things that have a **story, meaning or memory attached to them**. It doesn't matter how big or small an item is — what matters is what it means to you.

Sometimes an ordinary object can bring back a very special memory.

Step Three: Write Down Why It Is Special

You might want to write a little note to go with some of the things in your memory box.

You could write down:

- Who the item belonged to
- Where you got it from
- A special memory connected to it
- Why it reminds you of the person who died
- How the memory makes you feel

You don't have to write something for every item. You might simply want to write a few words, draw a picture or leave a note for yourself.

As time passes, you may forget some of the little details about a particular memory. Having it written down can help you remember why that item was important to you.

Step Four: Share Your Memories

This step is completely optional.

Your memory box belongs to you, and you can choose whether you want to share it with anyone else.

Some children and young people may want to keep their memory box private. Others might enjoy showing it to family members, friends or another trusted person.

Sharing memories can be a lovely way to talk about the person who has died and hear stories that you may not have known before. You might discover that other people have their own special memories too.

It's also okay if you don't feel ready to share your memory box. You can decide when, where and with whom you feel comfortable sharing it.

Remember, There Is No Right or Wrong Way

Your memory box is personal to you.

You can add to it, take things out, decorate it or simply look through it whenever you want. You might want to use it when you're missing the person who has died, on their birthday or anniversary, or when you simply want to remember a special time you shared together.

Some days you may want to look through everything, while on other days you may not want to open it at all. **That's okay.**

A memory box can be a special place to keep memories safe and help you stay connected to the person who has died.

Your memories are yours to keep, in whatever way feels right for you.