

Fathers' Day this year is on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> June and there are reminders everywhere. Many children look forward to it as a day to spend special time with their Dad but for children and young people who are grieving the death of their Father – whether that be last week, last month, last year or even many years ago - this can be a time of year that is particularly hard to manage.

Over the years bereaved children and young people have told us what they find difficult about Fathers' Day and what has helped them to cope. Here are some of their suggestions which you may find helpful:

1. Planning ahead often helps – talking with the rest of the family about what you remember about Dad and what was special about him will help you decide how you want to spend your day to feel closest to him.
2. You could collect things together which remind you of your Dad and put them in a memory box.
3. You could make a card for your Dad, or write a letter, telling him how you feel and all about all the things you have done that you would want him to know about if he was here. You could either put it in your memory box or take it to his grave or where his ashes are buried.
4. You might want to cook one of his favourite meals, or watch one of his favourite films, or have a day listening to his favourite music (however bad his taste was!!)
5. You might want to go back to a place which you and your Dad enjoyed together so you can revisit some of those special memories of the things you did there.
6. You might want to plant something in the garden in his memory.
7. You might just want some quiet time away from everyone for a while to just sit and remember.
8. You might find lighting a candle helps with focusing your thoughts and memories.
9. Photos often help with remembering – you might want to make up a special photo album or chose a particular picture to put in a frame if you haven't already got one.
10. You might even want to hold a party or get together with friends and family who loved your Dad so you can all spend Father's Day telling stories about him and sharing your memories.
11. You might want to hold a fundraising event supporting a cause that was dear to your Dad's heart
12. Or you might want to start up a new Fathers' Day Family Tradition which will become part of coping with the new life you now all must lead.

Remember, everyone grieves differently, so whatever you do, however you chose to spend this (and future) Fathers' Days, you should do what feels right for you – it is your Dad and your grief – and only you know how you want to spend this day. By talking together with the rest of your family you will, in time, find ways of managing this difficult time of year.