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*Please do not hesitate to consult your health care professional if you have any questions or concerns*

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## Making a Memory Box



 **Hospice Taranaki**  
**Te Kahu Pairuri ki Taranaki**

## What is a Memory Box

A memory box is a container to hold special things belonging to you that you want to share with someone dear to you.

The things in the box can help your loved one hold on to memories.

A memory box can be made for an adult, or a child of any age.

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## What goes into a Memory Box

Before you decide what you want to put in your memory box, you may find it helpful to think about some different types of memories.

- A special time you shared and enjoyed together such as photographs of happy times.
- A memory that offers your loved one some comfort such as souvenirs of a special trip.
- Something you especially love about your loved one or about your relationship with them.

What you put in the memory box is really a personal choice. Anything that's important to you or your loved one or in the case of a child, that helps them to remember a specific memory, can go into the memory box.

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## Where to begin

It's sometimes difficult to know where to start. Here are some suggestions:

- A photo of you, or you with your loved one can be attached to the lid. This provides a visual reminder of the connection between you.
  - It can be nice to include a letter to your loved one, or some short stories about things you've done and enjoyed together.
  - Postcards from holidays and trips.
  - Pressed flowers or leaves on a card.
  - Small cards with messages on. Examples include, 'I love you because...', 'Thank you for...', 'Remember when...'
  - In the case of children, a written memory of how you felt when your child was born, or went to school, or a sporting moment.
  - Any symbols meaningful to you and your family, such as artwork, feathers, beach shells or stones.
  - Some people like to write birthday cards or a wedding card to be given in the future.
  - Anything that has a personal story attached to it can be included. This might be jewellery, keepsakes, things that are dear to you that you would want your loved one to have and treasure.
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## How is the Memory Box used

Grief is not about forgetting the person who has died; it's about finding ways to remember them and take their memory forward.

Whatever you choose to put into a memory box can be used to tell your loved one stories of your life. These can be repeated again and again so even young children can build up a store of memories that they may have been too young to remember by themselves.

You may want to choose a family member or close friend as 'memory-holders' for your child as they grow up.

Creating a memory box can be a sad thing to do. But it can also be satisfying to do something that will help your loved one to connect with memories of you and the times you shared. It also gives you a chance to reflect on your own memories and may make you laugh as well as cry.

Deciding to make a memory box can feel overwhelming, and it can be difficult to start. You may find it helpful to have a member of your family, your spouse or a close friend to support you and help you gather the objects you want to put in your memory box.

Everyone has their own way of coping with difficult situations. Some people find it helpful to talk about their feelings with their partner, their family or a close friend.

Or you may want to talk over your feelings with a counsellor. You can ask your Hospice nurse for a referral. The important thing is to do what feels right for you, when it feels right.

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