

remembering a
life

A warm, intimate photograph of a family celebrating a birthday. An elderly woman with white hair is smiling as she looks at a large, round cake on a table. A younger woman and a child are also present, looking at the cake. The table is set with lit candles, wine glasses, and plates. The scene is lit with soft, warm light, creating a cozy and celebratory atmosphere.

REMEMBERING A LIFE

An Idea Guide for End-of-Life Professionals

Every family has a story. Help them tell it.



EVERY FAMILY HAS A STORY.

Help them tell it.

**We created
Remembering A Life
for one simple reason:**

**To inspire people to
start the conversation
about life, death and
how they want to be
remembered.**

Remembering A Life resources help demystify a taboo topic by encouraging people to have healthy, meaningful discussions about life, death and how they want to be remembered. When used by end-of-life professionals, these resources connect families and individuals to the information they need every step of the way. From having conversations about how people want to be remembered to planning a meaningful tribute and beginning the grief journey, Remembering A Life resources provide valuable information and complement the important work you do to serve families.

Questions? Call NFDA (800-228-6332) and ask to speak with a member of the Remembering A Life team.

NFDA

NATIONAL
FUNERAL
DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION

Remembering A Life is a consumer outreach and education initiative of the National Funeral Directors Association



The Continuum of Care

As an end-of-life professional, you know how important it is to connect and collaborate with other end-of-life professionals on the continuum of care. If you're a hospice professional or death doula, it's valuable for you to connect with funeral service professionals who will assist families after their loved ones leave your care. If you're a grief counselor or chaplain, connecting with other end-of-life professionals helps you better serve families who come to you for guidance. Collaboration among end-of-life professionals helps you better serve families and meet them where they are, whether they are planning in advance, have a family member who is terminally ill, have recently experienced the death of a loved one, or are on their grief journey.

Remembering A Life resources are for:

- Grief counselors and specialists
- Hospice professionals
- Clergy/chaplains
- Hospital personnel/medical professionals
- Funeral service professionals
- Death/end-of-life doulas
- Mental-health professionals
- Cemetery professionals
- Other end-of-life professionals

The Role of Volunteers

If you're part of an organization that benefits from the dedicated work of volunteers - or you are a volunteer yourself! - you know how critical this work is and how it contributes to being able to serve families with a high degree of compassion and excellence. Ensuring volunteers are aware of Remembering A Life resources, and how they can use them with families, will provide them with tools they can use to both get to know families better and guide them through what can be a very difficult grief journey.



Collaborating With Your Local Funeral Professional

Collaborating with your local funeral service professional and funeral home is beneficial for you, your profession, the families you serve and your community. When you work closely with your local funeral home, you will:

- **Gain** the knowledge to educate families about the service options available in their community, including casketed burial, cremation, celebrations of life, green funerals/natural burial, viewing options, interment options, cremation jewelry and more.
- **Expand** your network of end-of-life professionals.
- **Grow** your business.
- **Meet** others who share your compassion and commitment to serving families.

A Little Background on Funeral Homes

There are roughly 20,000 funeral homes in the United States. Some are small, family-owned funeral homes that might only have one or two staff members who do everything, from meeting with families and making arrangements, to embalming and managing the funeral the day of. Those one or two staff members also likely handle all maintenance of the funeral home facility themselves. Other funeral homes are larger with more staff who each specialize in one or more aspects of funeral service – things like making arrangements, embalming, and managing the funeral the day of.

What all funeral directors have in common is that they are united in helping families remember their loved ones in meaningful ways and helping them move forward in their grief journey. Whether they help families plan a more traditional service in a funeral home or church, a graveside service with a natural burial, or a celebration of life at a local restaurant, the commitment to serving families is the same.

Making the Connection to Better Serve Families - Getting Started is Easy!

1. **Identify local funeral homes.** Perhaps you already have a relationship with your local funeral home (that's great!). If not, Remembering A Life makes it easy to find one with its **Find a Funeral Home** search tool on the home page of RememberingALife.com.
2. **Connect by phone, online or in person.** It's as simple as saying, "I'd like to learn more about what you do."
3. **Exchange tours of your facilities/places of business.**
4. **Ask questions of funeral home staff.**
 - How does your staff work with families to help them remember loved ones?
 - What service options do you offer?
 - How do you work with families regarding budget?
 - How can we work together to better serve families?
 - How can I communicate the options you offer so the families I serve can create meaningful services for their loved ones?
 - When do you start working with families when a loved one has a terminal diagnosis?



Remembering A Life Resources

Remembering A Life resources help you connect with families during difficult days and inspire them to connect with each other about what matters most.



Follow Remembering A Life on Facebook and Instagram

Remembering A Life provides end-of-life professionals with resources and information that enable them to better serve families, including families that have experienced a loss, have a terminally ill loved one, or families and individuals who see value in having conversations about life, death and how they want to be remembered.

A great place to start is RememberingALife.com.

When you make RememberingALife.com available to the families you serve, you instantly connect them to the resources they need to plan or preplan a funeral or celebration of life, support others and begin the grief journey. The easiest way to do this is to link to RememberingALife.com on your website.

Visit: RememberingALife.com

Learn more about using Remembering A Life as an end-of-life professional:

RememberingALife.com/EOL



Podcast

Listen in! Voices from throughout funeral service and other end-of-life professions are stepping up to the mic to talk about the topics that matter most to consumers. From grief and loss to honoring a loved one, the Remembering A Life podcast inspires families to have conversations about life, loss and how they want to be remembered.

Visit: RememberingALife.com/Podcast or wherever you listen to podcasts

- Link from your website or social media

The Blog

Have five minutes for a quick read? Visit the Remembering A Life blog for short but insightful posts, written by end-of-life and other professionals, about everything from planning a funeral and grieving a loss to honoring a loved one.

Visit: RememberingALife.com/Blog

- Share on your website or social media channels

Remembering A Life Journey Cards

Remembering A Life Journey Cards (above) help individuals and families explore memories of their loved ones in meaningful ways by providing them with the opportunity to reflect and share stories with others. They are a perfect gift for someone who is beginning a grief journey - or even weeks or months down the road.

- 52 journey cards - each features an activity that honors a loved one in a meaningful way
- Journaling, activity, storytelling and reflection prompts invite the user to make each activity even more meaningful.

Have the Talk of a Lifetime

Tools and resources, including conversation cards, to inspire families to get the conversation started:

- Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards (Original deck in English and Spanish; Kids deck, Celebrations deck) - 52 questions that help people get to know their loved ones
- Workbooks

Visit: RememberingALife.com/HaveTheTalk





Brochures

NFDA's popular line of consumer brochures guides families as they plan a funeral and begin the grief journey. Each brochure directs readers to visit RememberingALife.com for additional resources.

- The Value of Viewing Your Loved One
- Funerals Are for the Living
- Every Life Deserves a Tribute (suicide, overdose)
- Creating a Meaningful Funeral
- Embalming - Answers to Your Questions
- Grieving the Loss of a Pet
- Healing After the Loss of a Loved One
- Helping Children Through Their Grief
- Preplanning a Meaningful Funeral
- Understanding Cremation

Visit: RememberingALife.com/Store

- Have on hand to give to families/individuals

Youth & Funerals

Conveying the importance of a child's participation in a memorial or funeral service can be difficult to discuss with families. To assist end-of-life professionals in having meaningful conversations with families, caregivers and the community, the Funeral Service Foundation has developed a suite of Youth & Funerals resources, including a booklet and video.

Visit: FuneralServiceFoundation.org for booklets, and RememberingALife.com/YouthAndFunerals to link to content

- Provide to individuals/families - **Booklets are free; just pay shipping.**
- Link to content from your website

When a Child Dies

You are caring for the heart and soul of a family when you bring a child into your care. No words or actions can take away the family's pain, and funeral professionals often say, "The death of a child never gets easier." The Funeral Service Foundation's community care resource, "When a Child Dies: Planning Acts of Love & Legacy," offers guidance and inspiration to help families say goodbye.

Visit: FuneralServiceFoundation.org for booklets, and RememberingALife.com/Children to link to content

- Provide to individuals/families - **Booklets are free; just pay shipping.**
- Link to content from your website



Self-care Box

The items in the Remembering A Life Self-care Box were carefully selected to help grieving individuals find relaxation, reflect and remember. How and when they are used is up to the individual – there is no "right" or "wrong" way or time. The important thing is to use them when ready to do so, whether that's today, tomorrow or weeks – even months – from now. The box makes a thoughtful gift for the families you serve.

- Grief Journal
- Memory Jar
- Essential Oil
- Candle
- Dragonfly Keychain
- Rose Quartz Stone
- Water Bottle
- Remembering A Life Button

Visit: RememberingALife.com/Box

- Contents subject to change - visit RememberingALife.com/Store

Book Club

Calling all book lovers! The Remembering A Life Book Club puts a literary twist on remembering a life and grieving a loss with a suggested reading list, book reviews, featured books, giveaways and more.

Visit: RememberingALife.com/BookClub

- Link from your website or social media
- Hold a book club at your facility

Checklists for Families

Looking for a simple way to help families during their time of need? Provide them with timely checklists that help them stay organized and informed on what they need to do after a death has occurred. From a list of organizations to contact, to how to contact reporting agencies and memorialize social media accounts, our Remembering A Life checklists are free to download and give to families.

Visit: RememberingALife.com/FreeResources



Workshops and Events

Reaching out to your community demonstrates your commitment to helping families connect, grieve and heal.

There are a variety of events you can host in your community, whether at your place of business, a local funeral home or in a community center or other gathering place.

Remembering A Life makes it easy with resources and tools that help you create a meaningful experience for attendees, whether you educate them about the importance of remembering loved ones in meaningful ways, help them on their grief journey, or inspire them to tell the story of their loved ones.

Use the ideas for classes, workshops and events on the pages that follow to begin planning an event in your community.

RememberingALife.com/EOL



Classes, Workshops and Events

The Value of a Funeral and Funerals Are For the Living

- Invite participants to talk about meaningful funerals they've attended; discuss how they would want to be remembered, and how they would want to pay tribute to their loved ones.
- Invite your local funeral service professional to attend, talk about the value of a funeral and answer any questions.

Coping With Death by Suicide

- Partner with a suicide prevention professional in your community to give a presentation/hold a discussion about suicide.
- If suicide is affecting young people in your community, consider partnering with a school and its counselors to hold an event in the school.
- Invite attendees to put a memory in a memory jar, which can be read at the end of the session.
- **Important:** If you choose to hold an event related to suicide, ensure you have qualified individuals participating as facilitators and counselors. Do not personally facilitate discussions of a sensitive nature unless you are specifically trained to do so.

Have the Talk of a Lifetime

- Invite families in your community to come to your place of business and Have the Talk of a Lifetime with fellow community members using Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards.
- Facilitate a discussion about how the answers to the questions might inspire creative ideas for a meaningful service. Invite a funeral service professional to attend and offer inspiration.
- Give each attendee a deck of Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards.

Grief Journaling Workshop

- Partner with a grief therapist to guide attendees in how to begin journaling.
- Give each attendee a Remembering A Life Grief Journal.





Aromatherapy for Grief Workshop

- Partner with an aromatherapist to educate attendees about essential oils and how they can use them during their grief journey.
- Provide each attendee with the Remembering A Life Essential Oil Roller.
- Consider incorporating yoga into the session. Many yoga instructors also use aromatherapy as part of their practice.

Meditation Workshop

- Partner with someone who can lead a group in guided meditation.
- Invite families who experienced a loss during the last month or quarter.
- Give each participant a Remembering A Life Essential Oil Roller.

Memory Jar Embellishment Workshop

- Invite family members and friends of loved ones who have died to embellish a memory jar with photos and mementos of their loved one. (If you aren't "crafty," invite someone who is to facilitate the workshop.)
- Give each attendee a Remembering A Life Memory Jar.
- Provide basic supplies such as stickers, Mod Podge glue/sealer, paint, etc., and ask participants to bring photos and other mementos.

Remembering A Life Dinner Party

Remembering A Life dinner parties are a meaningful way to have thoughtful conversations about life, death and how we want to be remembered. Whether you gather in memory of a loved one who has died or simply want to open up dialogue about life and loss, an intimate dinner party is a wonderful way to start the conversation. We've put together a simple how-to for each: RememberingALife.com/DinnerParty

Learn more about merchandise:
RememberingALife.com/Store



Host a Remembering A Life Book Club

- Visit RememberingALife.com/BookClub and review the recommended reading list to select a book.
- Use social media to announce the selected book and the date of the book club (allow about a month for people to read the book).
- Host a guided discussion at your facility or another location. (Your book club can also be held virtually!) Use provided discussion prompts (available at RememberingALife.com/BookClub) to guide the conversation.

Group Painting Event

Creating a piece of art can be cathartic and give people a meaningful way to honor the life of a loved one. There are many ways to incorporate painting into your event:

- Purchase Remembering A Life Memory Jars and invite attendees to paint the tops with acrylic paints (pictured).
- Some communities have local "paint and sip" bars that will come to your location and lead attendees in a group painting project. Each attendee leaves with their own personal painting.
- Invite attendees to contribute to a group painting. Purchase a large canvas and invite each attendee to add a splash of color that speaks to them. The finished product will be a beautiful reflection of the community's grief and reflections. The painting can then be donated to a local community center or displayed in your facility/place of business.

Rock Painting

Rock painting has become a popular hobby and can also be a beautiful way to remember a loved one. Provide rocks and paint pens and invite attendees to paint a rock in memory of a someone who has died. Attendees can take their rocks home, or you can display them at your place of business/facility - perhaps in a community garden.

Annual Remembrance Service

- Give each attendee at your annual/quarterly remembrance service a small gift, such as the Remembering A Life Journey Cards, Candle or Essential Oil Roller.
- Invite each attendee to talk about a particularly meaningful aspect of the funeral, memorial service or celebration of life held for their loved one.



Community Activity Ideas

Hosting an event in your community demonstrates your commitment to helping families connect, grieve and heal.

There are a variety of community-wide events you can host, whether at your business/facility, a local funeral home, in a community center or other gathering place.

We've made it easy with resources and tools that help you create a meaningful experience for attendees, whether you plant and dedicate a tree, hold a candlelight vigil, or host a community meal.

Use the ideas for workshops and events on the pages that follow to begin planning an event in your community. Collaborating with other end-of-life professionals, including funeral service professionals, helps you reach even more people.



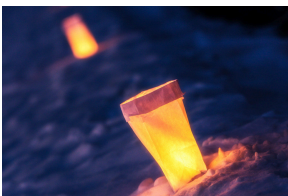
Candlelight Vigil

A traditional candlelight vigil is a wonderful way to gather and remember. Hold your event in a local park, outside your facility or in another public space. Distribute candles to those in attendance, light, and invite attendees to share a minute of silence, sing a song, or share stories about a loved one.



Community Concert

Invite local musicians to participate in a concert open to the public. This event allows for the flexibility of an indoor or outdoor event. Encourage the musicians to perform meaningful songs depending on the circumstances for the gathering.



Luminaria Display

Invite members of the community to come to a designated location (your place of business, a local park, etc.) and decorate a paper luminaria to display outside that evening. Line them up along a path so people can enjoy them as they stroll. Keep it simple by incorporating a minute of silence or invite a local musician to play as people walk through the display.



Community Meal

A community meal is a meaningful way to gather and share stories of people who have died. Invite members of the community to come with a dish to pass and a story to share. This event is scalable, from a small gathering at your local community center to a larger community event. Some communities close a street and set up tables that span the length of the block, offering an experience that establishes a sense of belonging for the entire community.



Tree Planting/Dedication

A tree is a living reminder of the people we miss. Plant a tree in a local park and invite the community to participate in the dedication. Each attendee can write the name of their loved one on a ribbon and tie it to the tree. The ribbon-tying can also be done with an existing tree or an artificial indoor tree.



Minute of Silence

A minute of silence gives participants permission to stop whatever they are doing and spend some time reflecting on their losses. A minute of silence can be incorporated into many of the activities mentioned in this guide.



Story Sharing

Host an open house at a community center, place of worship or your facility. Offer refreshments and invite attendees to share stories of their loved one. This event can be held indoors or outdoors. Invite attendees to bring a photo of their loved one or an object of importance to them. Both of these items are wonderful conversation starters. You may even want to display a large piece of foam core or other material where people can write a special message to their loved one or affix a special photo.



A Day of Volunteering

Sometimes the most meaningful way to honor the life of a loved one is by donating time or money to a cause important to them. Organizing a day of service and mobilizing members of the community to volunteer for a day can be a beautiful way to do this.

- Plan a community-wide event (such as a community clean-up) and invite everyone to participate,
- Invite people to choose an organization of their own to support through their volunteer work on the day chosen.



Sidewalk Chalk Art

This activity is wonderful for people who are young or young at heart. All you need to provide is chalk and the canvas - a sidewalk or driveway. Invite attendees to draw meaningful pictures or write messages to their loved ones. This activity also pairs nicely with many of the other activities in this planning guide, and it's a perfect way to include children.



Community Garden

A public garden is a beautiful way to keep the memories of loved ones alive in your community. Invite individuals and families to come to your facility (or other location in your area) to plant a flower or vegetable garden. Encourage them to return to the garden to tend it, or simply enjoy it in quiet reflection.



Getting the Word Out

Use these simple tactics to help spread the word about your event.

Once you have planned the details of your event, it's time to spread the word!

Include the following in your communications:

- Date and Time (and rain date if applicable)
- Venue/Address
- Event Details
- RSVP Information (if you need to know the number of attendees in advance)
- Recommended Attire (if applicable)
- Health Safety Protocols (if applicable.)

Tactics

- Social Media
- Invitations
- Local Media
- Targeted Email
- Word of Mouth
- Website
- E-Newsletter



- Determine event scale.** Will your event be for the community at large or are you limiting it to the families you serve?
- Select a date and time.** Make sure to choose a date that gives you plenty of time to plan the event and enough time for attendees to make arrangements to attend. If your event is outside, it's a good idea to choose a "rain date" in the event of inclement weather.
- Select a location.** Whether your event is indoors or outdoors, book the venue early, and ensure you have all required permits and permissions. Or, make it simple by holding the event at your place of business.
- Choose an activity.** Use the suggestions provided in this guide or create your own event.
- Arrange for entertainment and speakers.** If your event involves vocalists, musicians, readers or others, make sure you contact them early to ensure their availability.
- Establish necessary health safety protocols.** Research health concerns in your community, plus any local or state recommendations or mandates, to determine if you need to take any action to keep attendees safe.
- Get the word out.** Use marketing tactics such as news releases, mailings and e-newsletters to spread the word.
- Order supplies.** Order any supplies or giveaways that you might need well in advance of your event.
- Order/purchase refreshments.** If you're offering refreshments, make arrangements to have them delivered, or assign the task of picking them up to someone willing to help.



Planning Worksheet

Type of Event: _____

Date/Rain Date: _____ Time: _____

Location/Venue: _____ Capacity: _____

Budget: _____

Permissions/Permits Needed (if applicable): _____

Invitees (general public, select list, etc.) _____

Participants (speakers, entertainers, etc.): _____

Supplies Needed: _____

Promotional Tactics (social media, news releases, invitations, etc.): _____

Staff/Volunteer Needs: _____

Health Safety: _____



In Your Business

Small, thoughtful touches can make visitors to your business feel welcome, appreciated and cared for.

Using Remembering A Life resources in your waiting area can help put family members and friends at ease during a very difficult time.

Whether they engage with a deck of Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards or review a brochure on a topic of interest, Remembering A Life tools and resources inspire conversation about what matters most.

Even the youngest family members, who might be unsure about what to expect, will appreciate being offered activities that will help them feel valued and part of the discussion.



Do It Today!

Download free coloring pages at RememberingALife.com/Activities



Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards

- Use Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards to get to know a family.
- The kids' version of the cards is perfect for getting to know children and putting them at ease.
- Give each family a deck of the cards to use at home.

Consumer Brochures

- Make Remembering A Life consumer brochures available to the individuals and families you serve to better educate families about embalming, the value of a viewing, and more.
- Use the brochures as talking points when discussing relevant topics with families.

Remembering A Life Coloring Pages

- Engage young and young-at-heart alike with these free, downloadable coloring pages. Coloring can be a relaxing and soothing activity for people of any age. Visit RememberingALife.com/Activities for the free downloads.

Remembering A Life Water Bottles

- Give each family member a filled Remembering A Life water bottle. Remind them of the importance of staying hydrated during this difficult time.



Little Free Libraries

Connect with families in your community by placing a little free library on your organization's property and fill it with books about coping with loss. These take-a-book/leave-a-book little libraries are popping up all over the world. Visit LittleFreeLibrary.org to get started.

Bonus: Let us know you have a little free library (call us at 800.228.6332) and we'll send you two Remembering A Life Grief Journals, plus grief booklets produced by the Funeral Service Foundation, to help you stock your little free library!



Meaningful Gifts

A thoughtful gift can make individuals and family members feel cared for and appreciated.



Do It Today!

Visit RememberingALife.com/Store for ideas!

Thank-you Gift

Show appreciation to a family for entrusting their loved one to your care by giving them a Remembering A Life Self-Care Box, or an individual item from the box. Include a personal note about special stories you heard about their loved one.

Follow-up Gift on a Special/Meaningful Day

Send a self-care box or individual item in honor of a date special to the deceased or the family, such as the death anniversary, the deceased's birthday, a wedding anniversary, or a meaningful holiday.

Attendee Gift

A small gift can be a lovely way to thank attendees for coming to your workshop or community event, and can help them keep the memory of their loved one close, long afterward.

The sky is the limit when it comes to lovely gift ideas:

- Remembering A Life Journey Cards
- Remembering A Life Essential Oil Roller
- Remembering A Life Memory Jar
- Remembering A Life Candle
- Remembering A Life Journal
- Packet of seeds or a plant
- Book of meaningful quotes
- A small photo frame



Get Started

Getting started is easy and there are several things you can do today!

Today

- Explore RememberingALife.com.
- Link to RememberingALife.com from your business website.
- Follow Remembering A Life on social media and start sharing.

Start Planning

- Review ideas for community events or open houses and consider which ones would be effective in your community.
- Consider how Remembering A Life resources can help you help families navigate what can be a very difficult time.



RememberingALife.com

For end-of-life professionals: RememberingALife.com/EOL

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