



## CONVERSATION STARTER RAIN STICK

A commonly used tool in Safe Crossings Program's groups is our trusty rain stick. Our rain stick is used to call the attention of group participants in a calming, soothing way, and often serves as a talking object to facilitate group sharing. We love our rain sticks and the conversations they have helped foster, and want to share this tool with families for use at home!

This activity will walk you through how to create your own rain stick. After you have created a rain stick consider participating in the rain stick sharing activity as a family. In Safe Crossings our number one rule is that all sharing is optional and it's always okay to pass. We hope you enjoy this activity!



# Directions

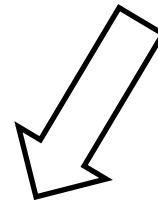
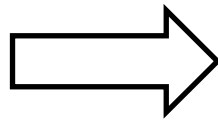
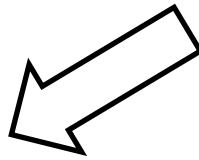
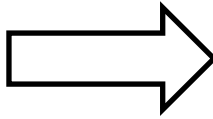


**Materials:** An empty paper towel roll, construction paper, scissors, glue, materials to decorate (examples: paint and brush, markers, wrapping paper), aluminum foil, packing or scotch tape, handful of rice or popcorn kernels.

- 1) Use the end of your cardboard tube to trace two circles on the construction paper.
- 2) Cut out two circles you traced.
- 3) Place one of the cut-out circles on one end of the tube and tape them to the end of the tube. It's important to use a generous amount of tape so the circle seals the end of the tube.
- 4) Pull out a large piece of aluminum foil and roll it lengthwise.
- 5) Create a spiral with the aluminum foil by wrapping it around the cardboard tube.
- 6) Remove the aluminum from the outside of the tube and place the aluminum foil inside the cardboard tube.
- 7) Pour your heaping handful of rice or popcorn kernels (or rice) into the tube.
- 8) Place the other circle on the other end of the cardboard tube and seal the tube with tape.
- 9) Make sure each end is securely taped.
- 10) Decorate your rain stick. You can do this by wrapping it in wrapping paper, coloring it with markers, or painting it. If you plan to do the activity with it, make sure to write numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 on your rain stick. (See questions for conversation stick.)
- 11) Your rain stick is now ready for the activity described on the following page!



# Example



# Questions for Conversation Starter Stick

## **How to play:**

Turn the conversation stick upside down to hear the sound it makes. Once the sound has been made whatever number your thumb is on or your thumb is near will determine the category of the question shared by players. Below is a list of questions divided into categories. Please feel free to choose whatever question/s feel comfortable. You do not need to follow the order that the questions are listed. Additionally, please feel free to create your own questions within the categories and/or create your own categories that best fit you and your family. After a question has been asked and responded to pass the conversation stick to the next person and repeat the cycle.

There is no wrong way to play or engage in this activity. Grief is as unique as each individual. This is an opportunity to share together and help one another understand how each individual is processing your loss at this time. As with anything regarding Safe Crossings each participant may always pass.

## **There are four different categories:**

#1. Memories/Moments/Stories

#2. Grief and Feelings

#3 What Helps/Coping/Healthy Distractions

#4 Action

## **Category Questions**

#1: Memories/Moments/Stories

Sharing stories and moments of your special person helps keep their memory alive in your heart and mind. Sometimes hearing stories from other people helps remind you of your own that may have been forgotten.

- Share one of your favorite memories of you and your special person?
- Was there a time that your special person surprised you? What happened? What surprised you most?
- What is something you remember about the day your special person died?
- What is the silliest memory you have of your special person?
- What is something the special person who died learned from you?
- What are some things that you learned from your special person who died?
- What are some ways you can remember the person/s who died?
- Was there a favorite story that your special person shared with you? Bedtime story? Family story?
- Is there a certain time of day that reminds you of your special person?
- Is there a specific season that reminds you of your special person?

#2: Grief and Feelings

- A Grief Wave is when strong, powerful feelings come out of nowhere when you least expect it. Have you experienced a Grief Wave? If so, how would you describe what a Grief Wave feels like for you?
- Grief is a mixture of many different feelings and thoughts sometimes occurring at the same time. What feelings have you been feeling? Have you experienced more than one feeling at the same time? If so, what feelings have you noticed feeling at the same time?

- Name 5 different feelings as fast as you can?
- For some people, “Big feelings” can feel uncomfortable. It’s difficult to feel uncomfortable feelings. What is important to remember and know is that there are no wrong feelings and all feelings are important to feel and understand even when they feel uncomfortable. What are some uncomfortable feelings that you have noticed since your loss?
- Feelings live in our bodies. One way to help us understand our feelings is by understanding where they live in our bodies. Where do you feel “Happy” in your body? Where do you feel “Angry” in your body? Where do you feel “Sad” in your body? “Hopeful”, “Worried”, please add more feelings to the list and where they live in your body.

### **#3: What Helps/Coping/Healthy Distractions**

When uncomfortable and big feelings occur due to your loss it is helpful to know what helps you safely manage and navigate through those challenging moments.

- What have you found to be helpful when you’re experiencing a Grief Wave?
- What have you found to be helpful when you’re feeling angry?
- What have you discovered feels soothing for you?
- What have you found to help you when you are feeling lonely?
- What would be helpful for people to understand about your grief?
- What would be helpful for people to understand isn’t helpful for you?
- What makes you laugh?
- What can you do to feel less anxious if you’re feeling anxious and worried?
- Who do you feel most comfortable being with when you’re needing support?
- Do you have a place that feels safe and comforting for you? Do you feel comfortable sharing where that place/ space is?
- What have you found to be a positive distraction during this time?

### **#4: Action**

During this time of Covid-19 stay-at-home restrictions, it can be challenging to find ways to get active. Physical activity is a powerful way to help relieve stress and a wonderful way to express big feelings.

- Do 25 jumping jacks as fast as you can
- Pretend you are jumping rope and jump for 60 seconds
- Dance to a favorite song
- Make up your own yoga pose
- Create your own push ups
- Shake your body as fast as you can for 15 seconds
- Stretch your body as wide as you can without hurting yourself/scrunch up your body as small as you can without hurting yourself: Repeat stretching and scrunching 3 times
- Play freeze tag
- Create a lip-sync act