

Providence Children and Teen Grief Support Programs

King County, 206-749-7691

Snohomish County, 425-261-4844

Thurston, Mason and Lewis Counties, 360-493-5928

In memory of Rex Allen

A Guide Book for Children and Teens



Experiencing the Death or End of Life Illness of a Loved One

Providence Hospice Children and Teen
Grief Support Programs

Use this page to write or draw any other thoughts and feelings . . .

Answers to Children's Questions on Death and Dying

**A guide book for kids and families provided by
Providence Hospice Children and Teen Grief Support Programs**

Dear caring adult,

This guide book was created for children should a death or a pending death of a loved one occur.

As children attempt to process the reality of a death and the impact that it has on their lives, there are often many questions that arise. Recognizing that each family is unique, we hope this guide book helps support their needs. The following questions were chosen from those we have experienced from the children and families we have served during these challenging times.

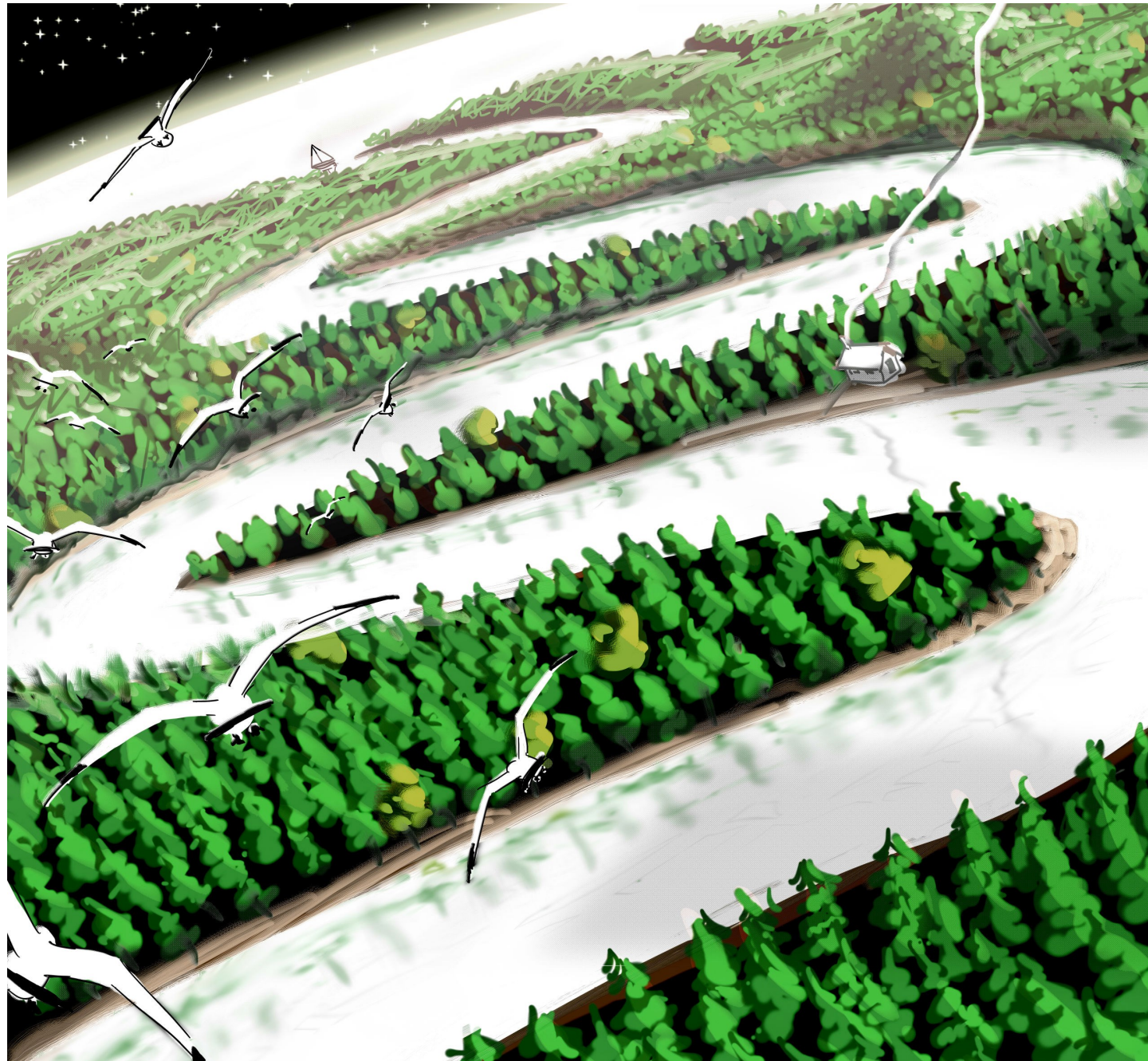
The illustrations provided may offer an additional opportunity for your child to reflect on a topic. This often helps continue the conversation and processing of information. Drawing can also provide a sense of soothing and comfort for children as you allow them time to process their thoughts and feelings.

If you have received this guide book and have questions or concerns that you would like to discuss with a children's grief support counselor, you will find contact information on the back of the guide book for Providence Hospice Grief Support Programs.

We hope the enclosed information will offer you guidance as you walk this journey alongside your children. We invite you to trust in their innate resilience and to offer them truth whenever possible.

Sincerely,

Providence Hospice Children and Teen Grief Support Programs



Is it okay to talk about my loved one?

It is always okay to talk about and remember your loved one. You don't have to go through this process alone. It is helpful to identify trusted family members, friends, and teachers whom you feel may understand what you are going through at this time. There are also special groups and community activities that are there to support you through your grief.

How would you like to remember your loved one? Please use the river to write or draw a hope or remembrance in honor of your loved one.

How did my loved one get so sick?

Doctors work very hard to figure out how best to help people who get sick. Sometimes we just don't know why people get so very sick. What we do know is having a serious illness is no one's fault. We hope that someday doctors will be able to find cures to illnesses that cause people to die.

What do you suppose the girl's questions may be? Are there questions that you have about your loved one's illness or death? Please write or draw your questions on the park bench where the girl is sitting.



What is death?

Death is when a body stops working forever. When a body dies it doesn't feel, breathe or think anymore.

Sometimes a serious illness or death can feel like a wild wind bursting through life, with many new changes. In the blowing leaves, please write or draw some of the things that have changed due to your loved one's illness or death.



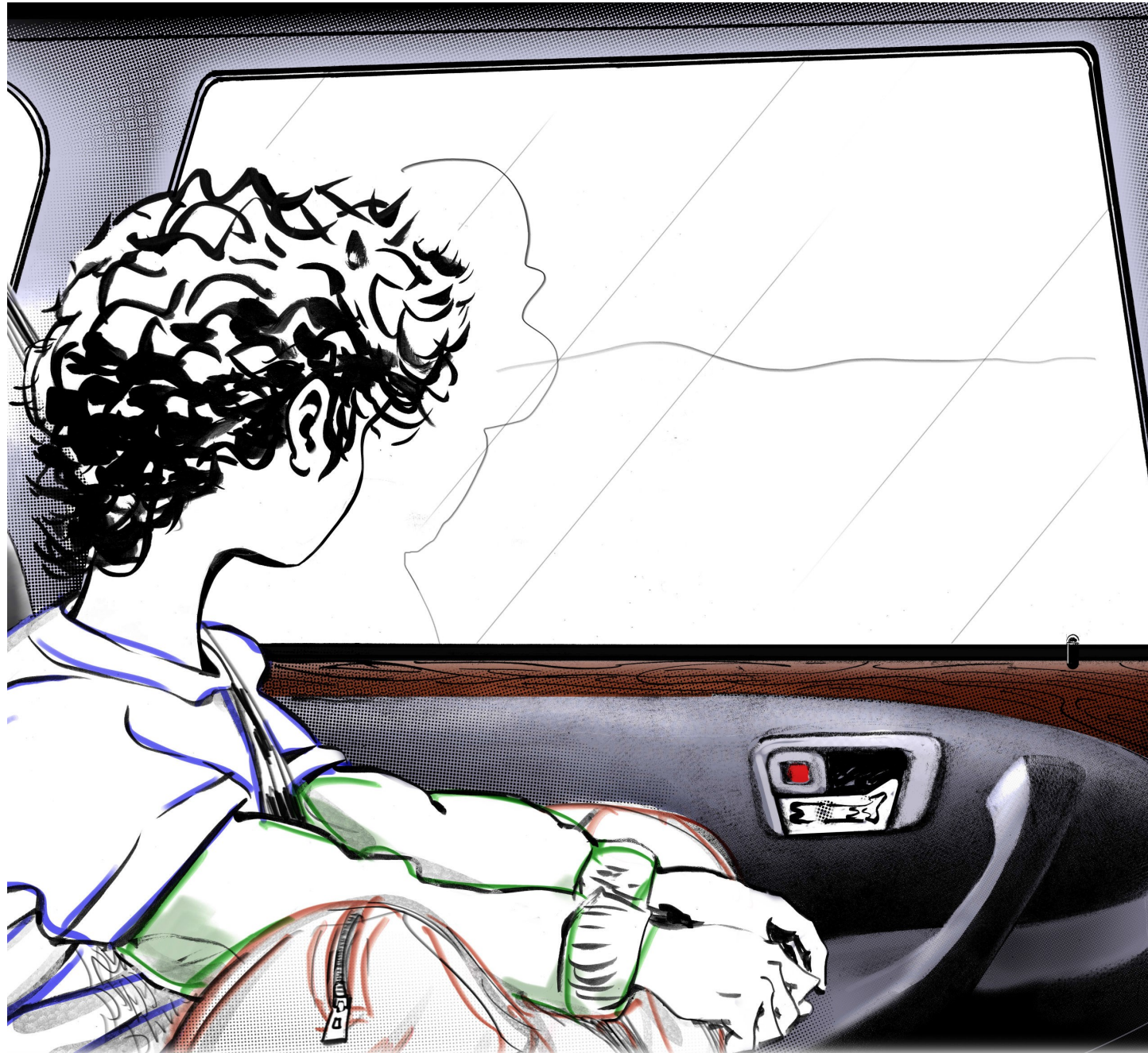
What if my other parent gets sick or dies?

Most people live very, very long lives before they die. Your parent or guardian is working very hard to take extra good care of themselves in order to keep you safe. It's normal to wonder about who will take care of you. Talking with a parent or trusted adult about your concerns can help you learn about the plan they have put in place to keep you safe.

What will happen to my family?

When a loved one dies, a lot of changes may happen and it can feel like things will never be the same. Life will be different but you and your family will be okay. You and your family will grieve. Grief is a natural response to loss. There are no wrong ways to grieve.

Sometimes questions and worries pop up in the most unexpected places: in a hallway at school, at lunch, at recess. Please fill in the question marks your worries and what would be helpful for you to understand at this time.



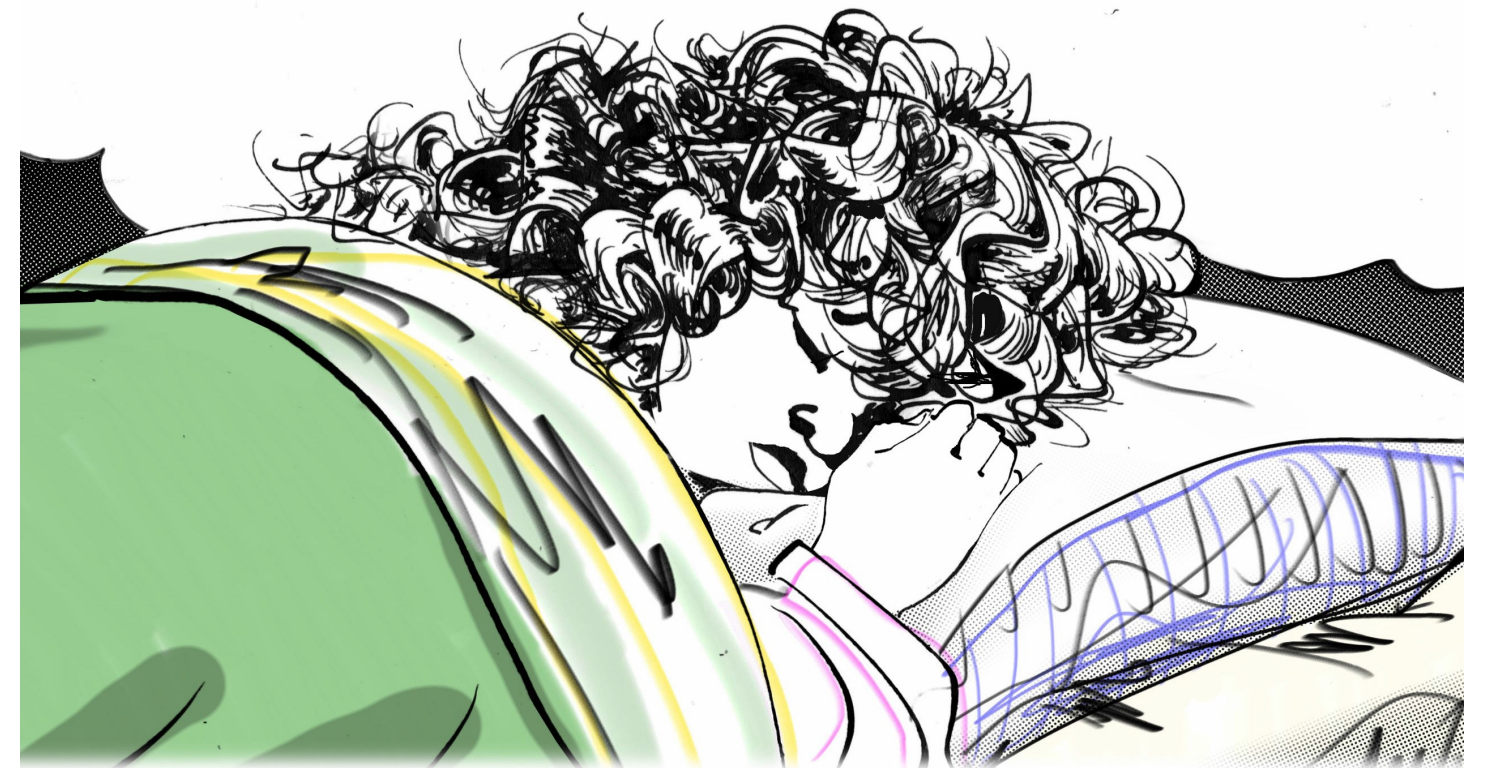
Why me?

That is a very good question. It can feel extremely unfair to have a loved one die. Unfortunately, no one knows why some children have a loved one die and others do not.

Did I cause my loved one's death?

Nothing you did, said or thought made your loved one die. Thoughts and words cannot make a body stop working.

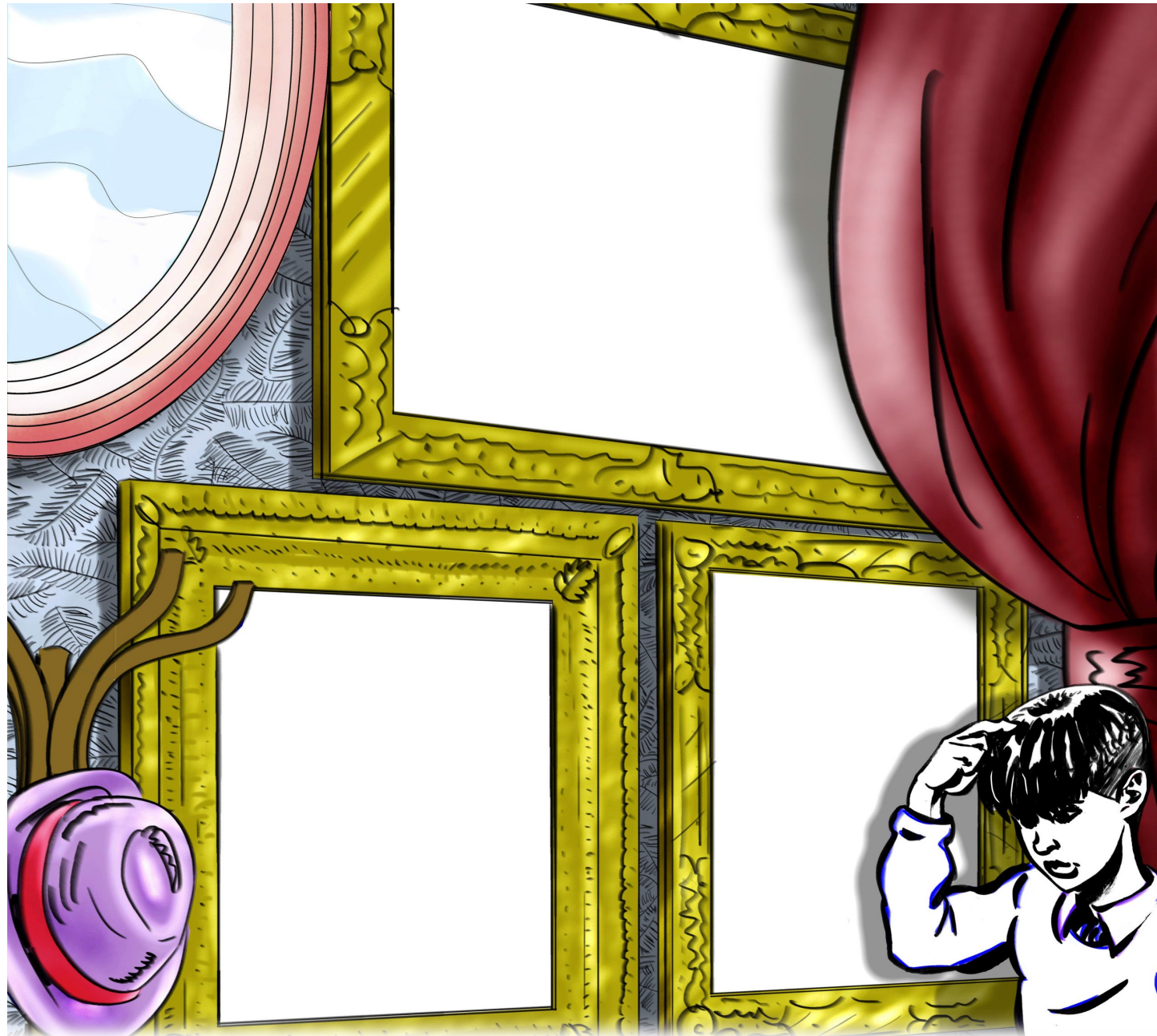
What do you imagine the boy is wondering or thinking about? Please use the window to express your thoughts and wonderings.



Will I see my loved one again?

When a body dies it does not come back to life as we know it. Some people believe the spirit of their loved one continues on after death in a different form. Some people see their loved one during sleeping dreams. It is important to know whatever you believe is right for you. There are no wrong beliefs.

In the dream bubble above, please draw or write what you believe.

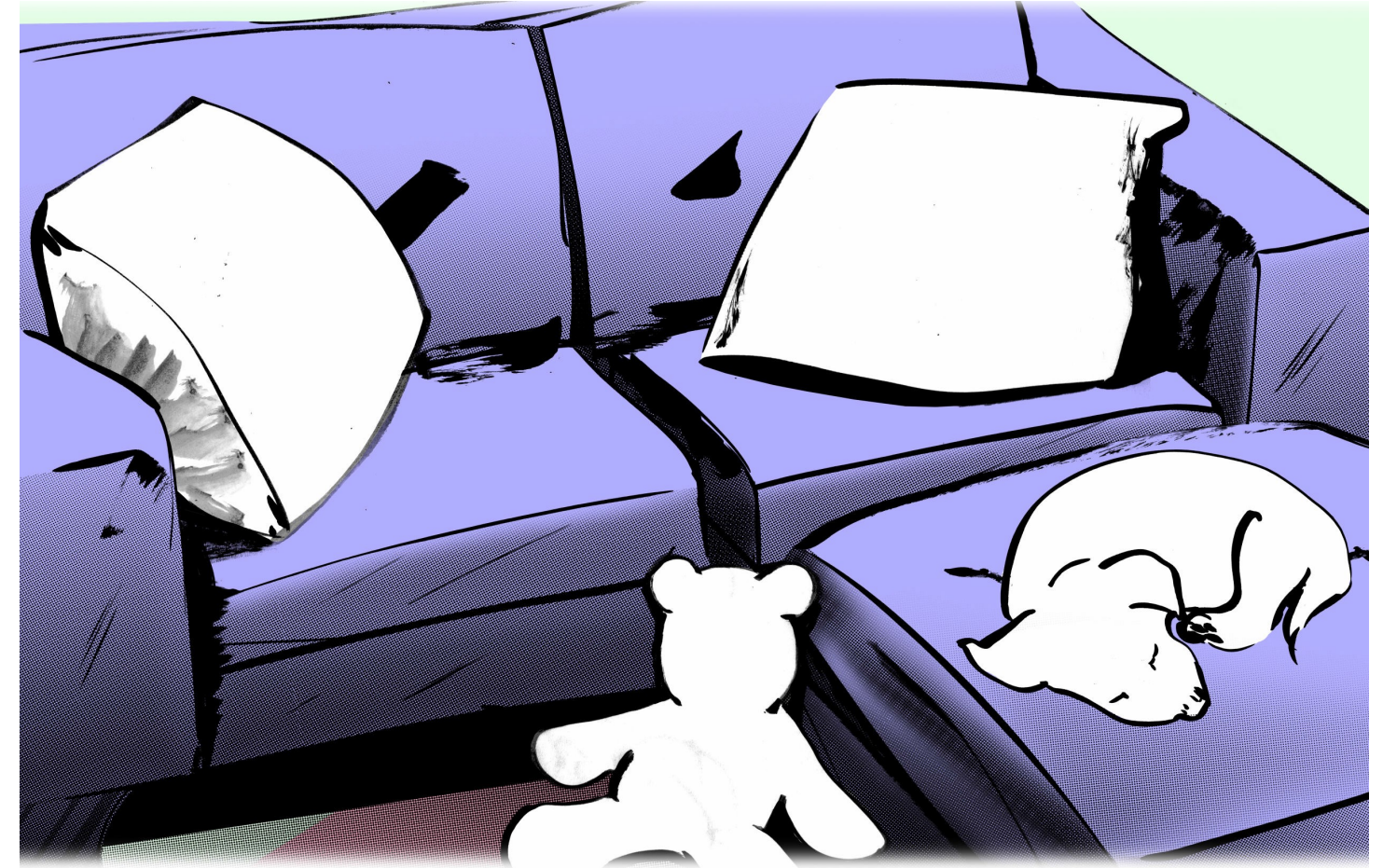


What is cremation?

Cremation is a process that families can choose after a loved one's body has died. With cremation, the body is placed in a special room created only for this process. The room is placed at an exceptionally high temperature that allows the body to turn to ash.

What is a funeral?

A funeral is a ceremony where people come together and honor the person who has died. Sometimes a funeral is created as a celebration of the person's life. There is no wrong way to have a funeral.



What happens after a body dies?

Every family has its own set of beliefs and traditions regarding what happens to a body after it dies.

Sometimes, families choose to have the body go to a funeral home. A funeral home is a safe place where highly-trained people take care of the body after it dies. Depending on what your family has chosen, the body may be placed in a special box called a coffin. It may be helpful to ask your family how your loved one's body will be cared for after death.

Please write or draw your questions in the picture frames above. Remember, there are no wrong questions.

Do I have choices about being at the funeral?

Having a choice to attend the funeral depends on each individual family and situation. While every family is different, we have learned that being offered a choice is helpful along with receiving information about what to expect at the ceremony. Please know there are no wrong choices and you may always change your mind.

Sometimes hugging a pillow, a stuffed animal or being with a pet provides comfort during difficult experiences. In the white spaces above, please write or draw what brings you comfort during difficult times. What helps?