Father's Day can be a reminder of the absence we feel from the loss of a father, grandfather, favorite uncle or father figure. This is especially true for children and families impacted by grief or addiction. For many of us, it's a reminder that another year has passed and we may feel a deepened sense of isolation. It can seem like everyone else is celebrating the traditions that we used to share with that person.

For everyone grieving their father, grandfather, uncle, step-father, foster father, friend or father figure, it's an important day to acknowledge how it feels. So, in order to help, we have provided some ideas and strategies to approach Father's Day whether it's taking the day to remember and honor your father, or taking the day off from everything.

Whatever you decide to do on this day, please remember that you are not alone. Consider the peer support experience of Camp Erin or reach out for a personalized set of resources from Eluna. If you are looking for ways to support people in your circle that may struggle with this day, reach out and ask how they are feeling.
Father's Day Ideas:

At Eluna we believe in the transformative power of peer support. To connect with other grievers consider joining The Dinner Party. They know what it's like to lose someone and aren't afraid to talk about it. Here is another great list of ways to prepare and cope with Father's Day from The Dougy Center.

Father's day can be extra hard on teenagers. Consider writing a blog post and sharing it on a site like Teenage Grief Sucks. Peer support is especially important for this age group. This might be a good time to find a peer support group near you. Enter your zip code in the search bar and find a local or virtual teen support group.

Write an email, send a card or call up one of your father's friends or another family member who might be missing him as much as you do. Talking about the father they miss and saying their name is often sited as one of the most helpful acts to support grievers.

Build a Memory Jar: We have been sharing this activity for many years and have witnessed the supportive power of creating a special place for memories. We recommend jars like this filled with a little string of lights or a little electric candle placed in a special place with a pad of paper so that anyone can contribute to the jar and anyone can visit the jar when they are moved to visit their loved one.

Light a Virtual Candle: Our friends at Experience Camps have created a page where you can light a virtual candle in tribute to anyone you are grieving. This is a nice idea to honor your father with his name and a flickering candle. It’s a powerful way to find communal mourning.

Read: We are big fans of Hope Edleman because she brings her accessible tone and innovation to the conversation around grief. In her 2020 book The Aftergrief, she works to redefine commonly held ideas about the process and stages of grief. Another book that addresses modern grief is It's OK that you're Not OK. More book recommendations can be found here. The What I Love about You books are a good way to memorialize your favorite things about your loved ones.

Tribute Ideas:

- Did your father have a cooking specialty or a favorite meal? Try replicating his favorite recipe.
- If you have a legacy book, revisit the things that your father wanted you to know about his life. If you don’t have this kind of book, try looking through old family photo albums or make a list of questions you would want to know about him. Reach out to someone in her life who may want to explore these questions with you.
- Watch your father's favorite movie or listen to his favorite song. Watch his favorite sport.
- What was his favorite color? Create a collage or just grab that color crayon or maker, take a deep breath and start drawing or writing.
- Go outside and take a walk - give yourself and your child permission to feel, talk, cry, and laugh. Breathe, and remember your dad.