

33 Marking your losses through ritual



If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, these two exercises and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on pages 124-126. These two exercises assume you have completed exercise sheets **1 Starting an activity journal** and **4 Creating a 'mood box' or 'mood basket'**.

Acknowledging your losses

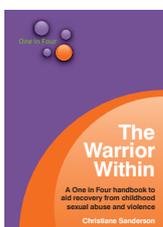
Gather together photographs or clippings of both sad and nice memories. Put the photographs in your memory book or album and write or make notes alongside these. If you are making a memory box put in things that remind you of your losses. This could include images of childhood, a favourite childhood book, or film, a stuffed toy, or reminders of a childhood hobby or collection. Write down any associated thoughts or feelings in your memory book and put it into your memory box.

Keep your memory book or box in a place where you can easily find it and look at it whenever you feel sad and are in contact with your losses. You can also make specific time to grieve such as in the following activity.

Grieving your losses

Set aside a specific time as a 'night to remember' to grieve away from any distractions. Light some scented candles, or spray your favourite scent or aftershave to ground you. You might use an aromatic scent that is commonly used in commemoration ceremonies such as sage, sandalwood, or rosemary or burn incense to create the right atmosphere. This is not a good idea if such scents are associated with the childhood sexual abuse (CSA), such as in clerical abuse. You might also put on some celebratory music to accompany the ceremony.

Take out and look at your memory book or memory box and add things to these. You might consider writing a special letter to the source of the loss such as the young child, the innocent self or the lost parts of the self. This letter can then be 'sent' by burying or burning it and scattering the ashes.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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