

GET INVOLVED...

If you like the idea of *To Absent Friends*, join in – organise something big or small, celebratory or reflective, share it or keep it private.

Visit www.toabsentfriends.org.uk to:

- Learn more about creating a *To Absent Friends* wall and be part of an interactive public art project originating in Scotland.
- Write on the online wall of remembrance.
- Share a story of someone you miss.
- Find out more about social media activities happening during *To Absent Friends* week.
- Receive a pin badge to wear in memory of an absent friend.

Share what you're doing or to find out more visit:
www.toabsentfriends.org.uk

CREATE SOMETHING SPECIAL

with family and friends

- invite cousins to the pub to reminisce about grandparents and days gone by.
- invite friends to a bring and share lunch - everyone brings a dish that reminds them of someone who they miss.
- hold a family afternoon tea and get the photo albums out - show children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces photos of the people who died before they were born.

at work or in the community

- Organise a *To Absent Friends* concert, ceilidh, labyrinth walk or storytelling evening.
- Host a *To Absent Friends* music night – people each choose a piece of music that reminds them of someone special and listen to the choices of others.
- Initiate a minute's applause at a sporting event, in memory of absent friends.

in private

- Light a candle.
- Go for a walk.
- Visit a grave.
- Cook something that reminds you of someone you miss.

For more ideas, information and a resource pack, visit:
www.toabsentfriends.org.uk



to absent friends ...

People who have died remain a part of our lives – their stories are our stories, yet many Scottish traditions relating to the expression of loss and remembrance have faded over time.

To Absent Friends, a People's Festival of Storytelling and Remembrance is an opportunity to revive lost traditions and create new ones. Held during the first week of November, *To Absent Friends* gives people across Scotland an excuse to remember, to tell stories, to celebrate and to reminisce about people we love who have died.

A people's festival of storytelling and remembrance

Because dead ordinary people live on in the memories and stories we share



People who have been bereaved can often feel isolated because people don't know what to say to them or how to behave around them.

Death is personal and people experience loss differently.

Many people want to recognise and celebrate the legacies of people who have died, whether they have been dead a year, a decade or longer.

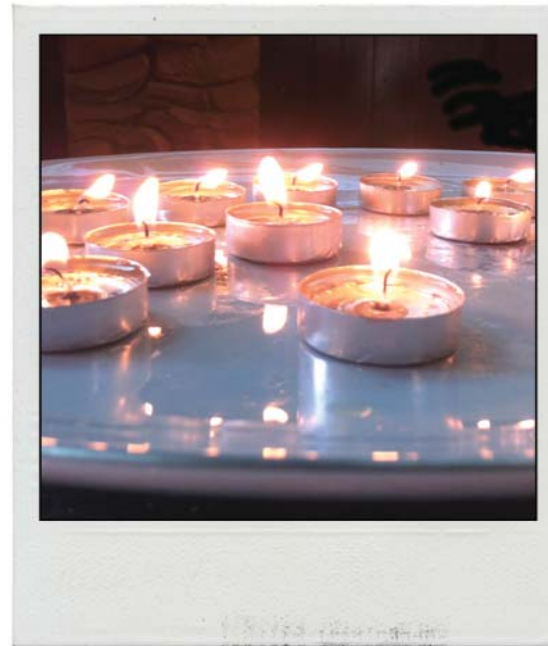
In a culture where talking about someone who is dead causes discomfort or embarrassment to the listeners, how do we support people who have been bereaved?

Everyone has a story to tell of someone who is dead who they miss – a grandparent who had a fascinating life; a friend with a unique sense of humour; a child who loved to dance.

A person's death does not lessen the meaning of the relationship we have with them.

But Scottish culture doesn't often support active remembrance of dead people.

In a culture where death can be seen as being too morbid, too difficult or too disturbing to mention, how do we remember and pay our respects to the dead?



In Mexico, they hold a holiday each year – Mexican Day of the Dead – dedicated to remembering family and friends who have died. Graves are tidied and decorated, special meals are prepared, and people remember, respect and celebrate those who have died.



Can we create a Scottish version of the Mexican Day of the Dead?

Scotland has a rich heritage of storytelling, especially as winter approaches and the nights draw in. Let us revive Scottish customs of remembrance that have lain dormant for so long in Samhain and All Souls Day. Can we recreate a meaningful opportunity for storytelling and remembrance in the Scottish tradition?

For a few days each year in November we should give ourselves the license to talk about our memories of those who have died. Share photo albums with your grandchildren. Invite your friends round to try your granny's favourite recipe. Light a candle for the child you lost.

Unlike most festivals, events that take place as part of *To Absent Friends* are not bound by a particular venue. *To Absent Friends* will happen across Scotland in the first week of November- in public spaces, over social media, among friends, families and communities, and in people's minds and hearts.



To Absent Friends is an opportunity for people to remember dead loved ones in whatever way works for them and their community.

Who do you remember?

Join in at:

www.toabsentfriends.org.uk