

REMEMBERING LIVES LOST DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In recognition of this unprecedented time and the many lives lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, StoryCorps would like to create a space for reflection and remembrance.

StoryCorps invites families and friends to record a conversation celebrating the life and legacy of loved ones who have died. Each conversation will be archived at the Library of Congress, where family members can access these memories for generations to come.

Your conversations can center around memories of the person who has died — what they mean to you, how they changed you, or anything else you'd like to share. You might describe the person's character, what brought them joy, or the impact they had on your life. You may complete your tribute by uploading photos as well.

We hope these conversations can bring comfort and space for reflection by helping families and communities mourn. We acknowledge that people process loss in different ways and on different timetables and hope this guide can be helpful as you consider recording a memorial conversation.

HOW TO RECORD A MEMORIAL CONVERSATION

1. Find someone with whom you feel comfortable speaking about your loved one, and set aside time to record an intentional conversation. Together, review our list of memorial questions, and choose 5-10 to begin your conversation. Decide on a date and time to record.
2. If you two are social distancing, record on [StoryCorps Connect](#). If you are physically together, record with the [StoryCorps App](#). You'll need an account to start, so [create one](#) ahead of time.
3. Discuss the privacy settings with your partner. Your interview may be public, private, or available only to the StoryCorps online community. You can agree ahead of time; you can also choose after finishing your conversation. Additionally, you'll be able to change your privacy settings at any time.
4. Start the memorial by sharing your names and the date. Then introduce the name of the person you're remembering, their relationship to you and the other person recording, and when and where they died.

"My name is [name of person 1], and my name is [name of person 2], and we're recording on [date]. Today we are remembering [name of person remembered], our [relationship]. [He / She / They] passed away from COVID-19 on [date] in [location]."

EXAMPLE: *"My name is Rhonda Petrovic, and my name is Jovan Petrovic, and we're recording on June 24, 2020. Today we are remembering our mother, Dragana Petrovic. She passed away from COVID-19 on May 19, 2020 in Brooklyn, New York."*

5. Continue by asking questions of one another and sharing important memories. You can find additional interview tips on the following page.
6. After your interview, enter your summary, title, and keywords, including the keywords **COVID MEMORIALS** and your loved one's name.
7. Thank your partner for sharing this experience with you. Share your memorial with people who knew your loved one and might want to listen to the conversation. You can also share your memorial on social media, and tag **#COVIDMEMORIALS** and **@StoryCorps**.

QUESTIONS FOR COVID MEMORIAL CONVERSATIONS

- Tell me about _____.
- When did you first meet _____?
- Do you have one or two favorite memories of _____ you can share?
- What did _____ mean to you?
- If you are comfortable, can you talk about your last interaction with _____?
- How do you want _____ to be remembered?
- What will you remember most about _____?
- What do you miss most about _____?
- Are there any lessons you've learned or wisdom you've gained from this experience?
- How has this experience changed you?
- If you could talk to _____ right now what would you say?
- What are the hardest times for you?
- Are there any ways in which you hope to memorialize _____ in the months to come?
- Who have you turned to for support in your grief?
- What advice would you offer to others who are going through this experience?
- Is there anything else you want the world to know about _____?
- Is there anything else you want to say? / Is there anything else I should ask you?

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE MEMORIAL CONVERSATION

- ▶ There is no right or wrong way to have this conversation. All feelings are welcome.
- ▶ Be curious and open to surprises. Conversations about grief can go in unexpected directions.
- ▶ What you discuss is up to you. You don't have to share anything that you don't wish to talk about.
- ▶ Listen closely to one another. Repeating back what your partner says can be affirming for them and helpful in forming your next question.
- ▶ It's okay to move on from certain questions, have moments of silence throughout your conversation, or try recording another day.
- ▶ Allow your partner to talk about their experiences in their own words; try asking general, open-ended questions that don't assume answers.
- ▶ Remember to check in with each other before, during, and after your conversation.

Watch, listen to, and share other stories of loss and love [here on storycorps.org](https://www.storycorps.org).

WHAT IS STORYCORPS?

Founded in 2003, StoryCorps has given people of all backgrounds and beliefs, in thousands of towns and cities in all 50 states, the chance to record interviews about their lives. We preserve the recordings in our archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Today, it is the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered.