

examples of rituals. Rituals provide guidance about behavior, time, and emotions in response to death and loss. They organize emotional expression and pattern behavior during a chaotic period of transition (DeVries, 1996). Rituals allow for both collective and individual expression of loss. The significance is both social and personal (Doka, 2002; 2008). Grief therapy with families can focus on creating an appropriate and meaningful ritual to commemorate the loss. Practitioners can offer ritual as a form of intervention and can help the family create a therapeutic ritual that emerges from the narrative of the family's experience of the loss event. It is imperative that children and adolescents be included in planning the ritual because it empowers them to be part of the healing process. Doka (2002) outlines various therapeutic rituals beyond the funeral ritual:

- Rituals of continuity identify the importance of the ongoing presence or impact of the death. An example is the lighting of a candle on an anniversary, holiday, or birthday to commemorate a person or event. This offers an opportunity to grieve.
- Rituals of transition indicate movement or growth since the occurrence of the crisis. This may include a child moving from elementary school to middle school, an adolescent graduating high school and going on to college, or children welcoming a stepparent.
- Rituals of reconciliation allow people to offer or accept forgiveness or to complete unfinished business regarding the crisis.
- Rituals of affirmation acknowledge the lessons learned or growth gained from the experience of the loss.