

Experience Map

Name- Tara

Age-17

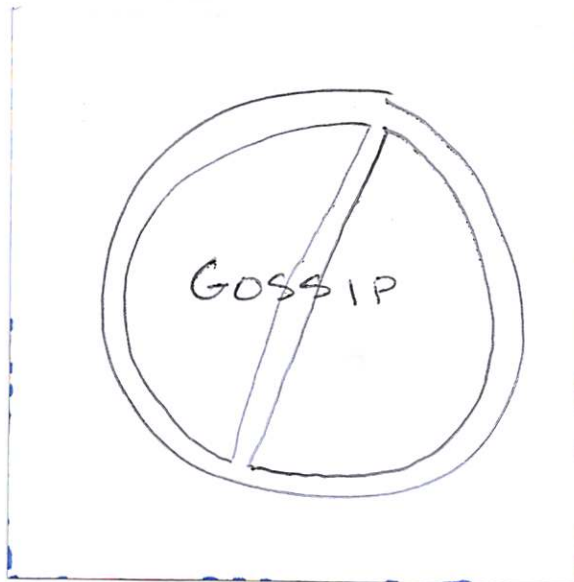
Profession- High School 1st semester senior



Key Characteristics- Lives with 2 parents and 2 younger siblings. Has a grandfather living nearby who is in and out of the hospital. Tara often goes to her grandfather's apartment to take care of his cat when he is either too sick or in the hospital.

What's Happening? Tara's mother is stressed, missing a lot of work and home-life because she is helping Tara's grandfather. Tara is excited about graduating, yet also distracted by her pull to help her mom and grandfather. She feels uncomfortable talking to her friends about the situation, and feels they would be too uncomfortable. She is beginning to spend less time with her friends and feels lonely.

Title- Creating a Safe Space



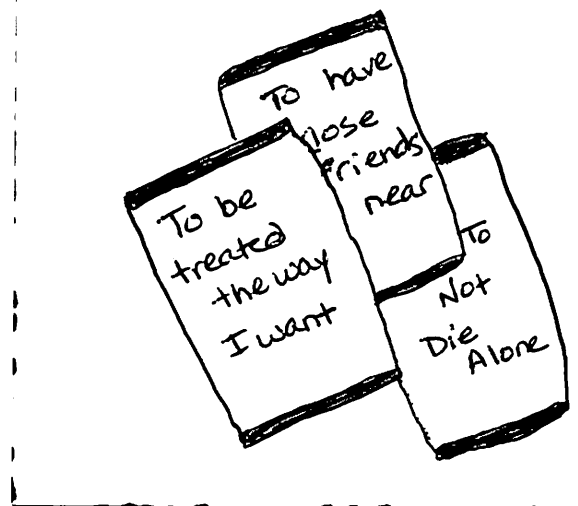
Tara enters her first Death Ed class. The instructor creates ground rules and safe space, so Tara feels comfortable talking with her peers about her experience with her grandfather. A friend talks about their classmate who died, something that no one had been talking about. Everyone shares. Class runs overtime.

Title- Myth versus Reality



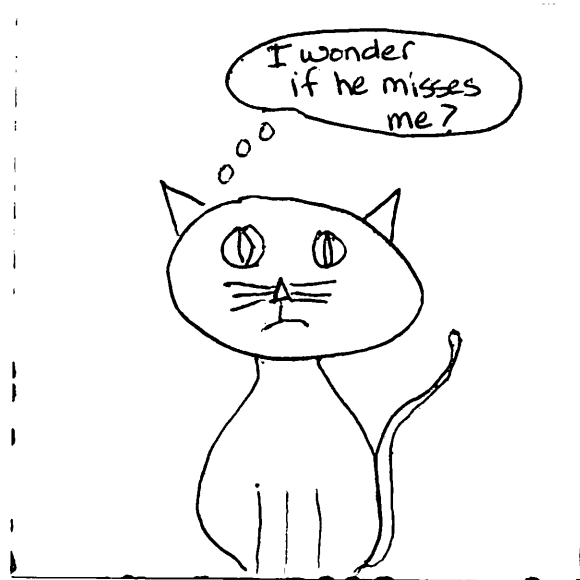
Tara joins her classmates for module 2, which begins with a clip from an "ER" episode she had seen in the past. She is surprised to learn that the survival statistics on the TV show are completely inflated from reality. She also learns that 30% of people die in ICUs attached to machines. She wonders how her grandfather would feel about dying this way.

Title-Thinking about what matters



After the lecture, the instructor asks the class to pair up and then gives each pair a card game of "Go Wish". Tara and her partner sort the cards into their top priorities for how they would want to be treated if they became really sick. Tara shares with her partner her top 3 cards which state that she would "want to be treated the way I want," and would want "to have close friends near," and would not want to die alone. She brings her pack of cards home with her in order to complete her homework assignment, which is to play "Go Wish" with a family member.

Title- Bringing it home



Tara decides that she will do her homework with her grandfather. She thinks it will be helpful to him because she does not think he would want to die in a hospital, away from his beloved cat. But when she describes her homework and asks her mother for the car to go and play the game with her grandfather, her mom gets angry, saying that it will just upset him. Tara is disappointed but says "OK, but on the condition that you do this homework with me."

Title-A New Conversation



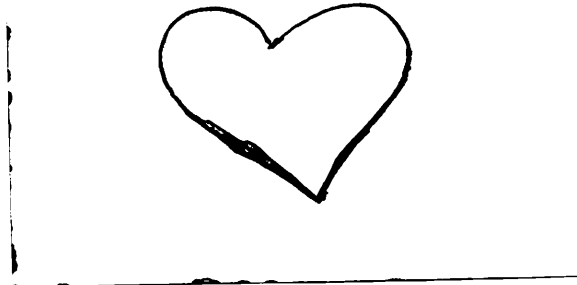
As Tara prepares the deck, she says to her mother, "Mom, did you know that 70% of patients prefer to die at home, but only 20% actually do." Her mother is shocked, and says that her top priority would be to die at home. She begins to realize that her father likely feels the same way and says "Grandpa really is spending a lot of time in the hospital. I'm worried he might die there."

Title- A New Plan



Tara's mother grabs the car keys and says "get the Go Wish game and let's go and see grandpa." During the car ride, Tara and her mother feel a connection, as they are able to talk about something they have both been worrying about alone for months. They arrive at the hospital. Grandpa is having a small dinner. He smiles when he sees them. "I was feeling so lonely. I'm so glad you're here." His daughter, Tara's mother says, "Dad, Tara taught me something today. We want to talk with you about what's important to you." After an hour-long conversation, it is clear that Grandpa really doesn't want to be in the hospital anymore, and would prefer to be cared for in a familiar place with his cats and family around him. They explain this to the doctor, who arranged for a palliative care consultation and an eventual hospice referral.

Title-Death Ed Debrief



Tara reports back to her Death Ed class about her experience playing "Go Wish" with her mother and grandfather. Tara is feeling much more at ease with her peers, her mother, and herself. Her grandfather comes home the next day with hospice care. He dies a month later in his home, his family around him. Tara is able to share this with her friends who come to his memorial service to support her.