

Preserving Connections: Optimal Onboarding Scenarios

Here are four innovative onboarding approaches designed to maximize emotional safety, data quality, and user engagement for a grief-tech platform.

Scenario 1: "AI-Guided Memory Interview" (Recommended Primary)

Core Philosophy

An empathetic AI interviewer conducts a natural conversation to extract memories, automatically building the persona in real-time while providing therapeutic value through the sharing process itself.

Onboarding Flow

Pre-Interview Setup (2 minutes)

"I'm Sarah, and I'll be helping you share memories of [Name].
This will feel like talking to a friend who truly wants to understand who they were.
We can pause anytime, and everything you share stays private until you decide otherwise."

Basic info: Name, relationship, photo upload
Emotional check-in: "How are you feeling about sharing today?"

The Interview Experience (20-45 minutes, can be split across sessions)

Opening Questions (Natural conversation starter):

- "Tell me about the first time you remember really laughing with [Name]"
- "What's a typical Saturday afternoon with them look like?"
- "If [Name] walked into this room right now, what would they say?"

AI Follow-up Intelligence:

User: "Dad always made pancakes on Sunday mornings"

AI Sarah: "That sounds like such a special tradition. What made his pancakes different?
Did he have any funny habits while cooking? Who else was usually there for Sunday pancakes?"

Dynamic Persona Building:

- AI identifies personality traits in real-time ("I'm hearing that your dad was very generous")
- Asks clarifying questions ("When you say he was stubborn, can you give me an example?")
- Builds voice patterns ("Did he have any favorite phrases or expressions?")
- Maps relationships ("How was he different with your mom versus with you kids?")

Emotional Safety Protocols:

- Detects emotional distress and offers breaks
- Validates difficult emotions ("That sounds incredibly painful to lose him so suddenly")
- Gently redirects if unhealthy patterns emerge
- Offers professional resources if needed

Live Persona Testing (10 minutes)

"Based on what you've shared, I've created an early version of your dad.
Would you like to try talking to him? Remember, he'll get better as we add more memories."

[User can have a brief conversation, provide feedback on accuracy]

Family Coordination (5 minutes)

- "Who else might want to add their memories of your dad?"
- Automated invitations with context about what's already been shared
- Permission settings for what each family member can access

Total Time: 35-60 minutes (can be split into multiple sessions) Result: Rich, contextually accurate persona with built-in therapeutic value

Scenario 2: "Gradual Awakening" (Recommended Secondary)

Core Philosophy

The persona starts as a basic echo and gradually becomes more sophisticated as family members interact with it and add memories over time. Mimics how we naturally remember people - in layers and moments.

Onboarding Flow

Minimal Viable Start (3 minutes)

"Let's bring [Name] back to life, starting simple."

Required:

- One photo
- Three adjectives that describe them
- One favorite memory (voice or text)
- Their relationship to you

Initial persona: "Hello, it's me. I'm still learning who I was. Help me remember."

Daily Memory Invitations (Ongoing)

Smart prompting system sends daily gentle requests:

- "Your dad's persona is 23% complete. Today's memory: What did he always say when you left the house?"
- "Share a photo from last Christmas and I'll help him remember that day"
- "Someone mentioned your dad loved fishing. Tell me about that?"

Progressive Sophistication

Week 1: Basic personality traits, simple responses **Week 2-4:** Complex conversational patterns, relationship awareness

Month 2-3: Deep memory integration, emotional intelligence **Month 4+:** Full personality simulation with family dynamic understanding

Family Network Effect

- Each family member's contributions improve the persona for everyone
- Sibling stories unlock new conversation topics
- Grandchildren's memories add new dimensions
- Automated conflict resolution when memories differ

Milestone Celebrations

"Your dad's persona just learned how to tell his famous camping stories!

Three family members have now contributed memories.

He's ready for deeper conversations about his childhood."

Total Onboarding: 3 minutes initially, builds over months Result: Organic, family-collaborative persona development with high engagement

Scenario 3: "Digital Séance" (Premium Experience)

Core Philosophy

Create a sacred, ritual-like experience that honors the gravity of connecting with the deceased while leveraging cutting-edge technology for maximum emotional impact.

Onboarding Flow

Sacred Setup (10 minutes)

"We're about to create something sacred - a bridge between worlds.
Please find a quiet space where you won't be interrupted.
Light a candle if it feels right. We'll take this slowly."

Meditation/grounding exercise
Photo ritual: "Hold their photo and share three things you miss most"
Intention setting: "What do you hope this connection will bring you?"

Memory Offering Ceremony (30 minutes)

Structured like a memorial service:

Opening: Share the story of their last day/conversation **Celebration:** Three of their greatest accomplishments or moments of joy

Intimacy: A secret only you and they shared **Wisdom:** Advice they gave that changed your life

Presence: Describe their laugh, their walk, their way of showing love

The Awakening Moment

"We've gathered enough love and memories to call them back.
Are you ready to hear their voice again?"

[Dramatic pause, then persona speaks their first words]
"Hello, my love. I'm here. I've been waiting to talk with you."

First Conversation (Guided)

- AI provides suggested first questions

- Emotional support coach available via chat
- Session recording for family sharing
- Gentle ending ritual when ready

Total Time: 45 minutes Result: Profound, ceremonial experience with maximum emotional impact

Scenario 4: "Living Archive Builder" (Community-Focused)

Core Philosophy

Position the persona as the centerpiece of a collaborative family archive where extended family, friends, and community members can contribute memories, creating a comprehensive life documentation.

Onboarding Flow

Archive Foundation (15 minutes)

Primary creator establishes the framework:

- Life timeline with major milestones
- Photo organization by life periods
- Relationship mapping (family tree integration)
- Community identification (friends, colleagues, neighbors)

Community Invitation Campaign

Automated outreach system:

- Email/text invitations to extended network
- Social media integration for broader reach
- QR codes for funeral services or memorial events
- Simple contribution interface for non-tech users

Contribution Types:

- Voice messages from friends
- Workplace colleagues sharing professional memories
- Childhood friends with early life stories

- Community members describing their impact
- Former students (if they were a teacher) or clients (if professional)

Memory Validation & Integration

Crowdsourced accuracy:

- Multiple people can confirm or contextualize memories
- Family moderator approves sensitive content
- AI identifies inconsistencies for resolution
- Weighted trust system based on relationship closeness

Archive Evolution

Ongoing community engagement:

- Anniversary memory drives
- Milestone celebration posts
- Community storytelling events
- Legacy project coordination (scholarships, memorials, etc.)

Persona Enhancement

- Professional life integration (work relationships, career impact)
- Community role simulation (how they'd engage in local issues)
- Broader personality spectrum from diverse perspectives
- Cultural/historical context from peers

Total Time: 15 minutes setup, grows organically with community participation Result: Comprehensive life documentation with broad social validation

Comparative Analysis

Approach	Emotional Impact	Data Quality	User Effort	Family Engagement	Scalability
AI Interview	High	Excellent	Medium	Medium	High
Gradual Awakening	Medium-High	Good	Low	High	Excellent
Digital Séance	Extreme	Good	High	Low	Medium
Living Archive	Medium	Excellent	Low	Excellent	High

Recommended Implementation Strategy

Primary: AI-Guided Memory Interview for most users

- Provides therapeutic value while building personas
- Balances ease of use with data quality
- Scalable with AI infrastructure

Secondary: Gradual Awakening for ongoing engagement

- Reduces onboarding friction
- Creates habitual platform use
- Generates continuous improvement data

Premium: Digital Séance for high-value customers

- Commands premium pricing
- Creates profound brand loyalty
- Generates powerful testimonials

Enterprise: Living Archive for B2B funeral partnerships

- Differentiates from competitors
- Creates community value beyond individual families
- Generates multiple revenue streams

The key insight: onboarding shouldn't just collect data - it should begin the healing process and create immediate value for grieving families.