

FOCUS, PLEASE!

Take five

before responding

Materials: Worksheet copies, rumor written on an index card*

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Someone tells you something they heard about someone else and it isn't nice.

Is it true? Or, is it a rumor?

A rumor is unverified information. We simply don't know if it's true or not. But in the "heat of the moment," we may pass it on anyway.

When we're relaxed, rumors impact us differently. In today's activity, we'll use a rumor and a relaxation technique to learn if our focus makes a difference.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

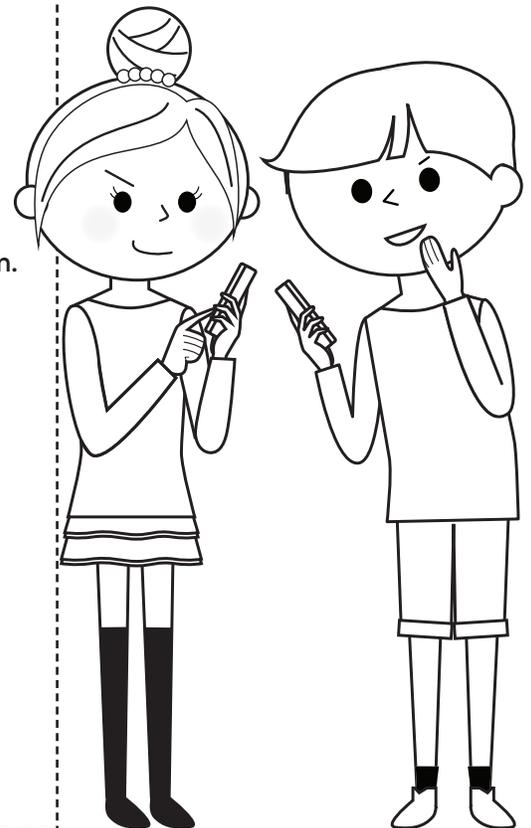
- 1 Divide equally into Team A and Team B and stand in a circle.
- 2 Show the written rumor to one person on Team A. That person will whisper the rumor to the team member next to them. Continue whispering the rumor around the circle to all members of Team A. The last person will share the rumor they heard aloud.
- 3 Show the same written rumor to one person on Team B. That person will whisper the rumor to the team member next to them. Continue whispering the rumor around the circle to all members of Team B. The last person will share the rumor they heard aloud.

Between whispers, Team B will practice breathing together to relax. Team B will breathe in slowly as they count to five; then breathe out slowly as they count to five.

One... two... three... four... five... breathe in.

One... two... three... four... five... breathe out.

- 4 Let's compare and discuss the written rumor to the final whispered rumor said aloud on each team. Were they the same? Did relaxed breathing help Team B's outcome? What tips can aid you when you hear words that may be untrue?



* Use one of the rumors below or write your own rumor:

Never wear green flip-flops at the beach or jellyfish will sting your toes.

Heath Hite hates Healy Middle School and hopes to hop a train to Houston.

IN REVERSE

How actions affect others

Materials: Worksheet copies, paper plates (one per youth)

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We often don't consider the consequences of our actions.

But that's a mistake.

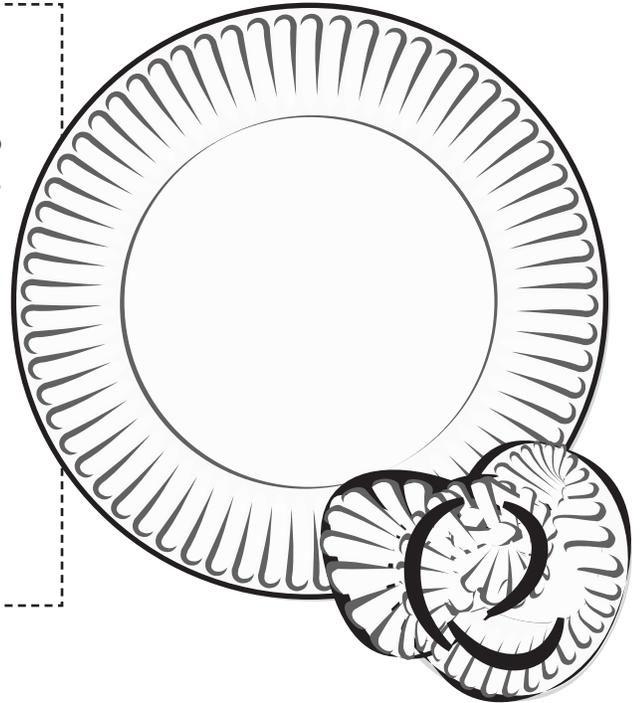
Our actions carry tremendous weight. Weight that can echo for a lifetime.

Intentional or not, negative actions can hurt those around us. When intentional, the pain digs even deeper.

In today's activity, we're going to explore how our actions affect others.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Look at your paper plate. What does the plate look like?
- 2 Now, handle your plate roughly. You can squeeze it, ball it up or stomp on it. You can do anything except tear it. What does the plate look like now?
- 3 Next, try to get your plate back to its original state. Try smoothing out the wrinkles or anything else to improve its appearance. What does the plate look like now?
- 4 So, what's the purpose of this activity? After trying to repair the plate, did it return to its original state? How do bullying actions affect people? Will an apology reverse the damage done or will the actions always "hang in the air"?



MY SUPERHERO

Stop bullying in a single bound

Materials: Worksheet copies, large sheets of paper (one per youth), various art supplies like markers, colored pencils, crayons, stickers, glitter and glue, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

What important quality sets a superhero apart from the crowd? The ability to fly? To crawl up skyscrapers? A cool outfit?

What distinguishes a true superhero is compassion. When a superhero sees someone in need, they act.

With superheroes, it's not about their powers. It's about their character. It's about standing up for what is right.

Today, your job is to draw a superhero who's able to "Stop bullying in a single bound"! Let's begin.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

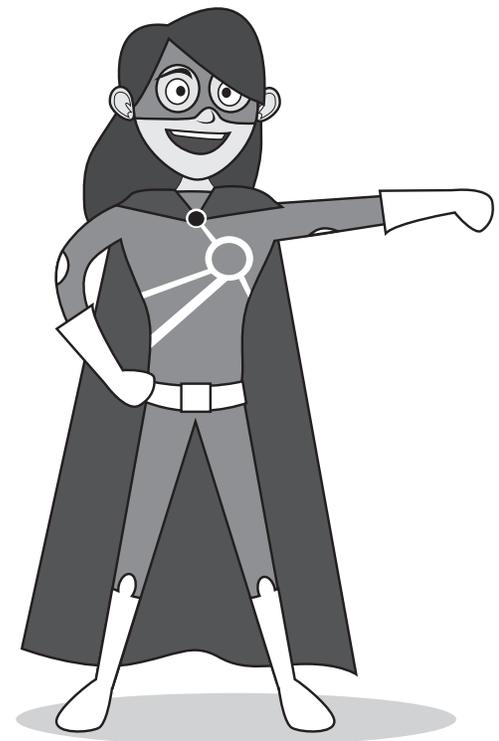
- 1 On your sheet of paper, draw and decorate a superhero using the art supplies.
- 2 Name your superhero and write it at the top of the drawing. On the side, list the attributes of your superhero — those qualities that allow the superhero to stand up to bullies. You'll have 10 minutes to draw and write.

(Set the timer for 10 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, we'll share our superheroes and some of their qualities. Let's discuss skills that can stop bullying behavior the next time we encounter it.



HEROIC
NEAR-SIGHTED
FUNNY
CARING



BRAVE
FUN
TALL
FAST TYPER

NOT MY TYPE

Bullying comes in many forms

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

What does a bully look like?

Mean, dirty, unhealthy, aggressive, loud and scary?

Maybe... Or maybe not. There is no one-size-fits-all bully.

Today, we're going to learn about different forms of bullying and discuss ways to counteract them.

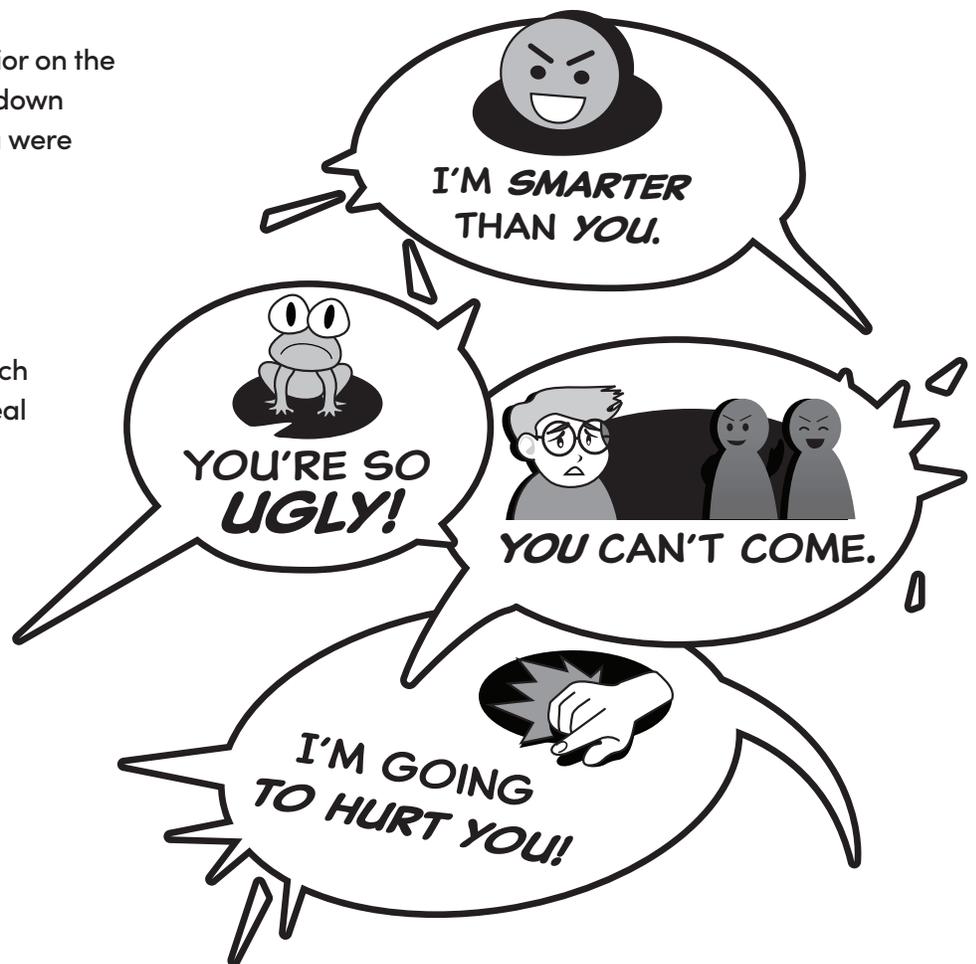
STEP ONE

Read each definition of bullying behavior on the template. Below each definition, write down how you'd deal with the behavior if you were bullied. You'll have 8 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)

STEP TWO

When the timer sounds, let's discuss each type of bullying and share how we'd deal with the behavior.



TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Directions: Read each definition of bullying behavior. Below each definition, write down how you'd deal with the behavior if you were bullied.

Physical bullying is the most obvious form of intimidation. It includes kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, hair pulling and making threats.

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Verbal bullying often accompanies physical behavior. It includes name-calling, spreading rumors and persistent teasing.

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Emotional intimidation is closely related to the former types of bullying. For example, a bully may deliberately exclude someone from a group activity, like a party or school outing.

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Racist bullying can take many forms: Making racial slurs, spray-painting graffiti, mocking cultural customs and making offensive gestures.

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Cyber-bullying is using electronic devices and communications (emails, websites, chat rooms, instant messaging, texting) to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or target another youth.

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ON A ROLE

Smart responses to verbal teasing

Bullying frequently starts out as teasing. That's why it's important to understand the differences between teasing and bullying.

Materials: Worksheet copies, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Teasing is annoying, hurtful and random. Bullying is intentional, abusive and repetitive.

Bullies act mean for multiple reasons. They may hold a sense of entitlement. They may feel powerless and seek control over others. They may have been bullied themselves. Because they are miserable, they look for someone they can make miserable.

Let's read some tips on how to respond to verbal teasing or bullying. Then, we'll use the tips to role-play three situations.

TIPS ON RESPONDING TO VERBAL TEASING*

- Stay where you are, don't ignore the person and initially handle the situation yourself.
- Don't tease back.
- Act like you're unaffected by what the person says.
- Say a brief comeback suggesting what the person said was lame. For example:

Whatever.	Who cares?
Anyway.	(Shrug your shoulders)
Yeah and?	Was that supposed to be funny?
So what?	Am I supposed to care?
Big deal!	And your point is?
(Roll your eyes)	

- Walk away from the situation.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Choose one of the situations below.
 - Situation 1: A bully makes fun of something you say.
 - Situation 2: A bully makes fun of something you're wearing.
 - Situation 3: A bully makes fun of something you did.
- 2 Using the tips, devise and role-play a response to stop the bully from teasing you. You'll have 5 minutes to practice your role-playing.

(Set the timer for 5 minutes.)
- 3 When the timer sounds, we'll take turns role-playing our response for the group. After each turn, let's discuss why the response worked or didn't work.
- 4 The next time you're bullied or see someone else being bullied, respond using the tips we learned today.

* Tips for dealing with verbal teasing, Kidsinthehouse.com and PEERS guidebook



PROTECT YOURSELF

Strategies to prevent cyber-bullying

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Bullying is never appropriate on any level. Whether it's physical, verbal or emotional.

Cyber-bullying adds a different dimension to bullying behavior.

Cyber-bullying is using electronic devices and communications (emails, websites, chat rooms, instant messaging, texting) to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or target another youth.

Cyber-bullying reaches victims anytime, anywhere, on any electronic device. Because cyber-bullies can act out their behavior anonymously, it's frequently aggressive and cruel.

Today, we're going to learn some strategies to help protect ourselves from cyber-bullying. Then, we'll apply the strategies to five bullying scenarios.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, read the strategies on how to prevent cyber-bullying.
- 2 Read each scenario and write one strategy that could prevent cyber-bullying. You'll have 8 minutes to write.
(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)
- 3 When the timer sounds, let's each share one of our scenario strategies to prevent cyber-bullying.



STRATEGIES TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING

- Only post and send G-rated content and photos.
- Never post personal info, like addresses or phone numbers, online.
- Be careful of what you say about yourself and others.
- Remember what’s shared electronically can’t be retracted.
- Check your emotions before sending or posting messages.
- If you’re angry or sad, **WAIT** until you’re calm to send or post messages.
- Only send and post positive comments and content.
- Verify links, texts, emails and social media messages before opening.
- Use privacy settings to protect your accounts.
- Always protect and never share your passwords.

SCENARIO	STRATEGY TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING
1. Alexis uses a public computer at the library and leaves her email open when she leaves.	
2. Robert sends multiple texts to a classmate calling him names.	
3. A friend uses Mary’s Snapchat account to send threatening messages to another classmate.	
4. Daniel asks friends to come over after school and posts his address on Instagram.	
5. Sharon posts swimsuit photos of herself on her brother’s Facebook page.	



SQUEEZE PLAY

The lasting power of words

Materials: Worksheet copies, butcher paper, toothpaste, Popsicle® stick

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We often say things without a thought to the impact of our words.

After all, they're just words.

But words do matter. Words can elate — or deflate.

Your choice of words is important. Words influence how people view you, and impact how others view themselves.

Today's activity visibly demonstrates how quickly our words can pour out and leave a lasting impression.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Place the butcher paper, toothpaste and Popsicle stick on a table. Select two youths to demonstrate the activity. Designate one Youth A and the other Youth B.
- 2 When we say "GO," Youth A will count 10 seconds while squeezing the toothpaste onto the butcher paper. After 10 seconds, Youth A will stop squeezing.
- 3 When we say "GO," Youth B will count 30 seconds while using a Popsicle stick to stuff the toothpaste back into the tube. After 30 seconds, Youth B will stop trying to stuff the toothpaste back into the tube.
- 4 Let's discuss what happened:
 - Why was it hard to replace the toothpaste?
 - Why did it take only 10 seconds to empty the toothpaste, but more than 30 seconds to try and replace it?
 - How are our words like toothpaste?
 - How does this activity compare to saying something you can't take back?



BRANCH OUT

Create

a tree of life

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, brown and green crayons or pencils, pens or pencils, scissors, glue

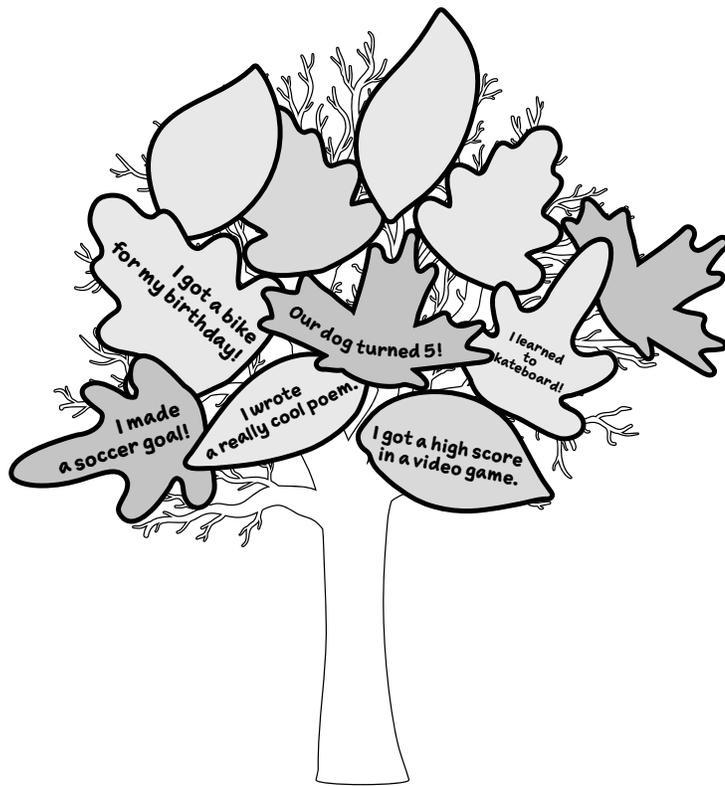
Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

When loved ones deploy, they miss out on everyday activities and events. Things like receiving an A on a biology exam, making the soccer team or celebrating a birthday.

It's important to chronicle your activities and events to share in the future.

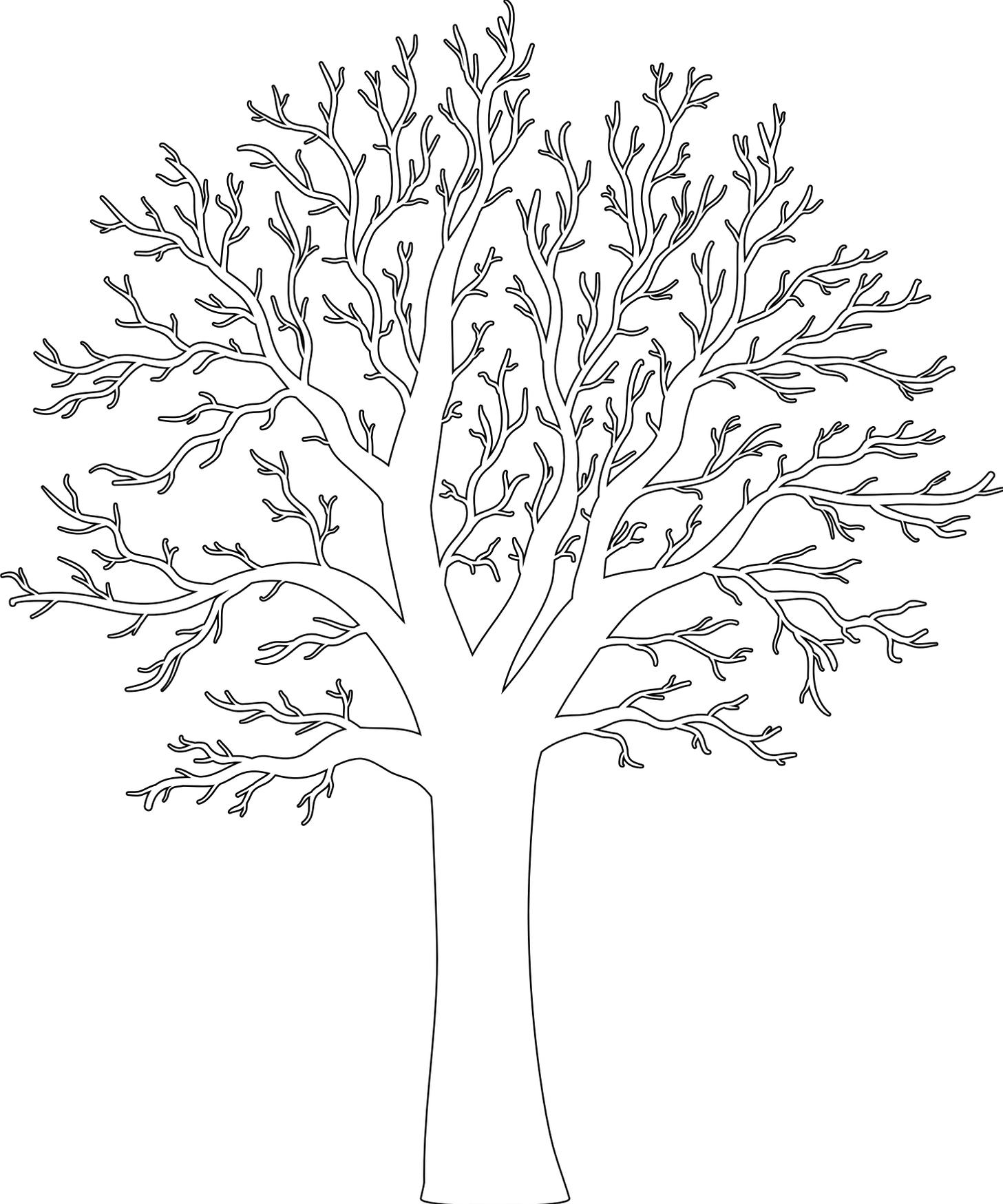
Today, we're going to create a tree bearing all we want to share with our deployed loved one.

Before we begin, let's brainstorm ideas as a group. What do you want to share? What important activities and events do you want to remember?



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the tree template, color the trunk brown. On the leaves template, color the leaves green and cut them out with scissors.
- 2 Write something you want to share with your deployed loved on a leaf. Then, glue the leaf to one of the tree branches.
- 3 Let's discuss what we wrote on our leaves.
- 4 Every week, write something on a new leaf and glue it to the tree. When your loved one returns from deployment, present the tree and share what happened while they were away.





FEELIN' BETTER

Confront deployment bugaboos

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Deployment can send your loved one to a distant land, often for a lengthy period of time.

For those left at home, deployment can mean dealing with a swirl of emotions.

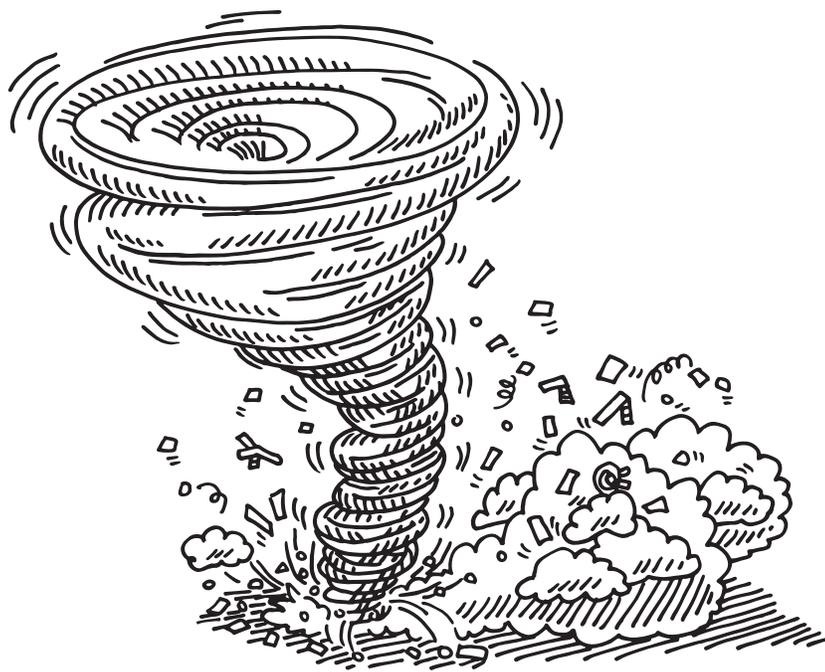
It's important to share your feelings about deployment. Instead of suppressing them, acknowledge your emotions.

Today, we're going to explore how to confront and handle negative emotions.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, read the deployment emotions. You may have felt all of them, or perhaps only a few. If you've felt an emotion that's not on the template, write it on one of the blank lines in the first column.
- 2 In the second column, write why you've felt the emotion. You'll have 6 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 6 minutes.)
- 3 When the timer sounds, we'll discuss what we wrote. Let's talk about ways we can handle each emotion in a positive way. Write those solutions in the third column.
- 4 Take your template home. Use your list of solutions whenever you're feeling different emotions about deployment.



EMOTIONS	WHY I FEEL THE EMOTION	WAYS TO HANDLE THE EMOTION
Frustration		
Happy		
Depression		
Positive		
Angry		
Hopeful		
Fear		
Relief		
Confusion		
Proud		
Sadness		
Courageous		



HAT'S ON!

Handling roles and responsibilities

Materials: Worksheet copies, pre-cut role cards stacked face down, variety of hats (made or purchased), bucket

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

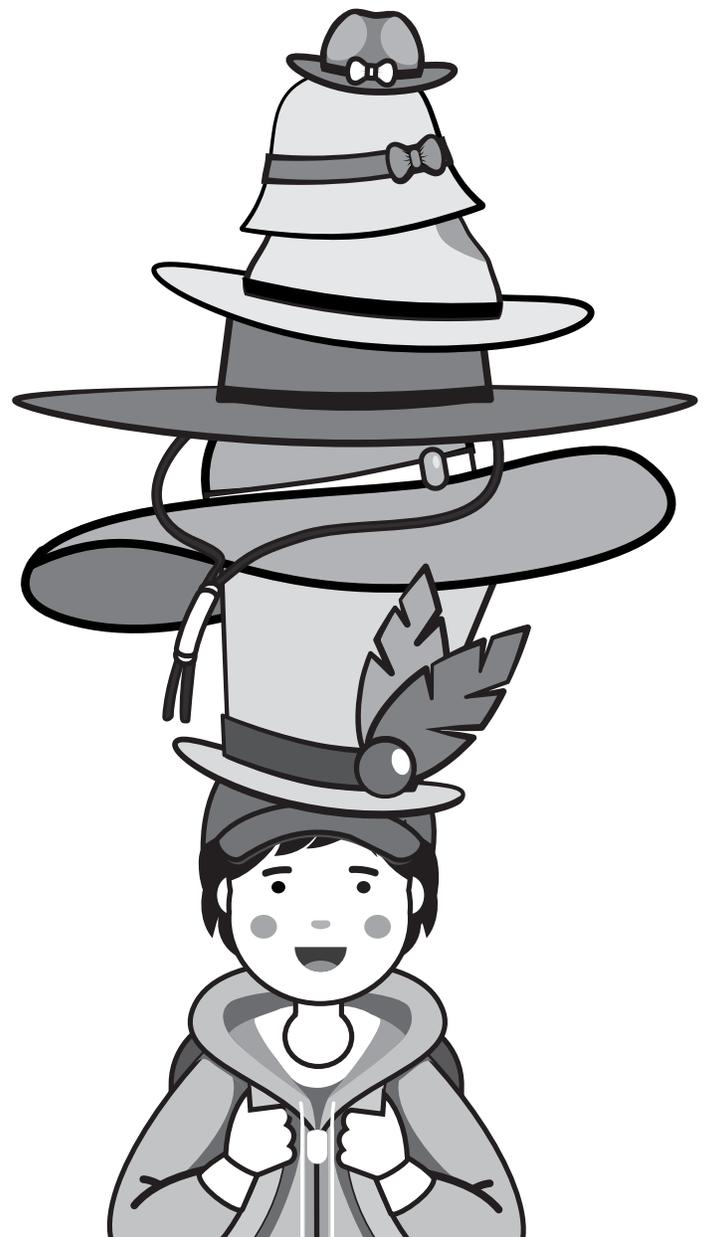
All of us have duties at school and around the house. When a loved one deploys, we take on additional roles and responsibilities.

When we're wearing numerous hats, it can be tough to complete all our tasks.

Today, we're going to role-play different responsibilities. We're going to try on a lot of hats!

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Taking turns, pull a hat out of the bucket and put it on. Then, pick a role card from the stack and try to figure out how to add the role to your current duties. Explain to the group how you'll balance your "hat duties" with your card role.
- 2 Continue putting on hats, picking role cards and figuring out how to balance responsibilities until everyone has had a turn.
- 3 Let's discuss the activity. Can wearing too many hats and playing too many roles be overwhelming? When we're overwhelmed, where can we turn for help? How can family members share these roles and responsibilities?





Coach

Detective

Babysitter

**Garbage
collector**

Landscaper

Sports player

Nurse

Chef

Housekeeper

Cheerleader

Dishwasher

Timekeeper

IN TOUCH

Stay connected across the miles

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Many families feel disconnected from their deployed loved one. They miss sharing important dates, events and treasured routines.

To avoid feeling isolated, it's important to maintain communication.

By sharing important contact information prior to deployment, your family can decide on the form and frequency of communication. Knowing what to expect will help smooth the deployment transition.

Today, we're going to create a communication plan.

**STEP ONE**

Using the template as a guide, let's discuss various methods of communicating. What will be your favorite way to stay in touch when your loved one deploys? How many forms of communication will you and your family use?

STEP TWO

Take the template home, sit down with your family and discuss how each of you would like to stay in touch. By completing the communication plan *before* your loved one deploys, you'll have a solid way to stay connected. Be sure to have some flexibility built in, as schedules can change.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR DEPLOYMENT

Directions: Check which forms of communication you'll use. Then, fill in the information for each form.

Communication form	How to log on/access
<input type="checkbox"/> Skype	Account login Account password How often
<input type="checkbox"/> Facetime	Phone number Best times How often
<input type="checkbox"/> Google Photos	Account login Account password How often
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram	Account login Account password How often
<input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat	Account login Account password How often
<input type="checkbox"/> Email	Address Account password How often
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters	Favorite subjects How often Mailing address
<input type="checkbox"/> Care packages	Favorite items How often Mailing address



IT'S A DATE

Record the days of your life

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Deployment extends over several months — even to a year or longer. During that timeframe, many holidays and events occur.

Maintaining a calendar of special occasions lets you share your life with your deployed loved one.

Today, we're going to start a calendar to record our life's events.

STEP ONE

On the calendar template, write down important dates and activities that will occur each month during your loved one's deployment. Remember to record events like birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and special occasions. Use the worksheet examples to help guide you.

STEP TWO

Let's discuss our calendars. How can we continue to share important dates even when our loved one is absent?

<p>February</p>  <p>Valentine's Day</p>	<p>March</p>  <p>My piano recital</p>
<p>May</p>  <p>Mom's birthday</p>  <p>Joe's graduation</p>	<p>June</p>  <p>Last day of school!</p>



January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December



JUST ASK

Seek support to help you cope

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

When a loved one deploys, you experience different emotions. Sometimes, you think no one understands or knows what you're going through.

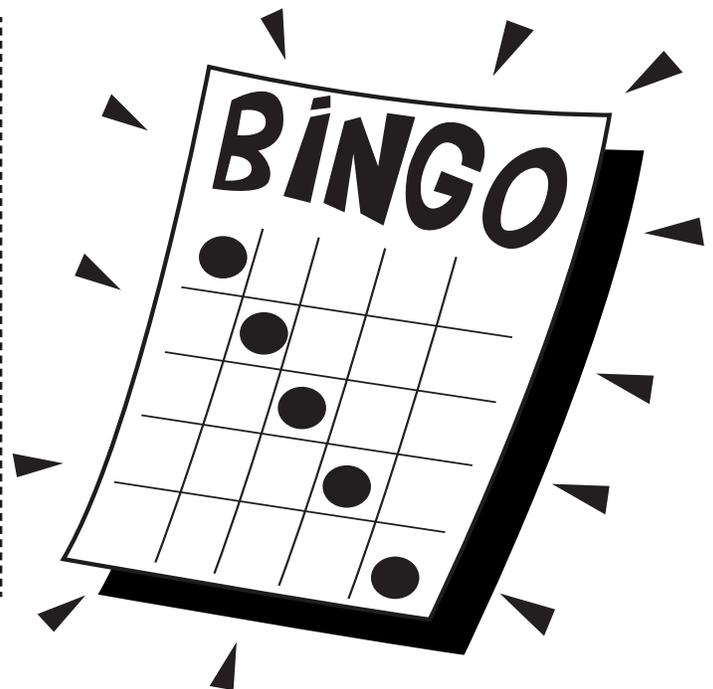
But you're not alone.

Your parents, family, friends, teachers and others can offer support and encouragement. With their help, you can learn to see deployment as a time of growth and confidence building.

Today, we're going to play deployment bingo using emotions and coping skills.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 We'll randomly call out emotions and coping skills on the template. If during deployment you've experienced the emotion or used the coping skill, write an X beside it.
- 2 When you have five X's across, down or diagonally, say "Bingo." We'll continue to play until everyone has a bingo.
- 3 Let's discuss emotions we can feel when a loved one deploys, and how we can help others when their loved one deploys. What coping skills can help us through tough times?



DEPLOYMENT BINGO: EMOTIONS AND COPING SKILLS

B ★ I ★ N ★ G ★ O

Anger	Pride	Count backwards	Think positive thoughts	Share with a teacher
Loneliness	Do a fun activity	Sadness	Connect with loved ones	Happy
Left out	Joyful	FREE SPACE	Disappointment	Nervous
Feel proud of myself	Anxious	Help others through it	Mad	Fear
Take deep breaths	Exercise	Talk to friends	Feel thankful	Deal with things positively



TELLING TIME

Capture events for the future

Materials: Worksheet copies, shoeboxes (one per youth), yarn, scissors, various art supplies like construction paper, markers, colored pencils, crayons, stickers, glitter and glue

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We change while our loved one is away on deployment.

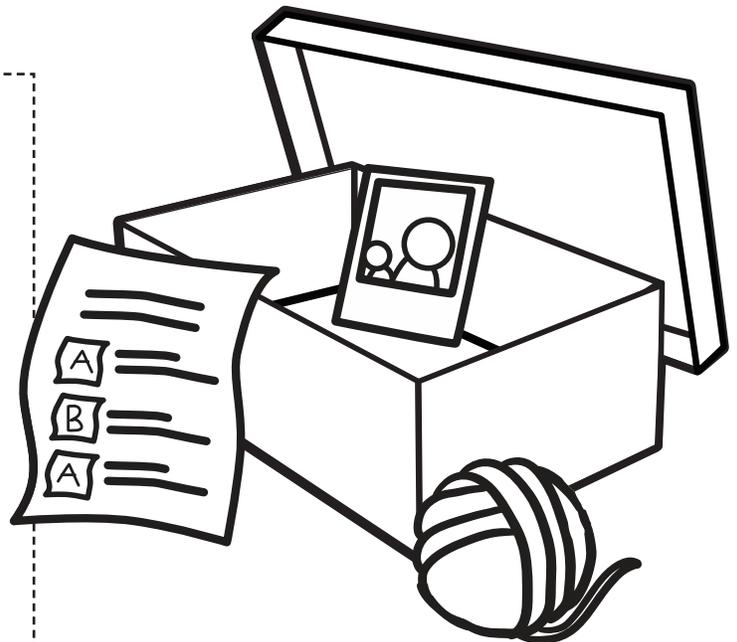
How can we keep track of all the changes and memories over time?

A time capsule can capture important events for communicating in the future.

Today, let's make a time capsule to record what's currently happening in our lives. When our loved one returns home, we'll share the contents of our capsules.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Using the art supplies, decorate your shoebox any way you'd like. Title your time capsule and write your name on it.
- 2 Think about what you'll place inside the time capsule. One thing we can include today is a piece of yarn the length of our shoe size. Measure your shoe size, cut the yarn to the size and add it to the time capsule.
- 3 Let's discuss other items to add to the time capsule. For example, a list of our favorite things to do, places to go and people to see. Whatever you want to share with your loved one.
- 4 When you've added everything you'd like to the time capsule, tuck it away in a safe place. When your loved one returns home, "discover" the time capsule and open it together. Enjoy all the surprises inside that occurred during deployment!



ACT OUT

Realize

you are not alone

Materials: Worksheet copies, index cards (three per youth), pens or pencils, bag

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Divorce creates conflicting emotions. We can feel sadness, anger, confusion, even guilt.

How can we cope with all that we feel?

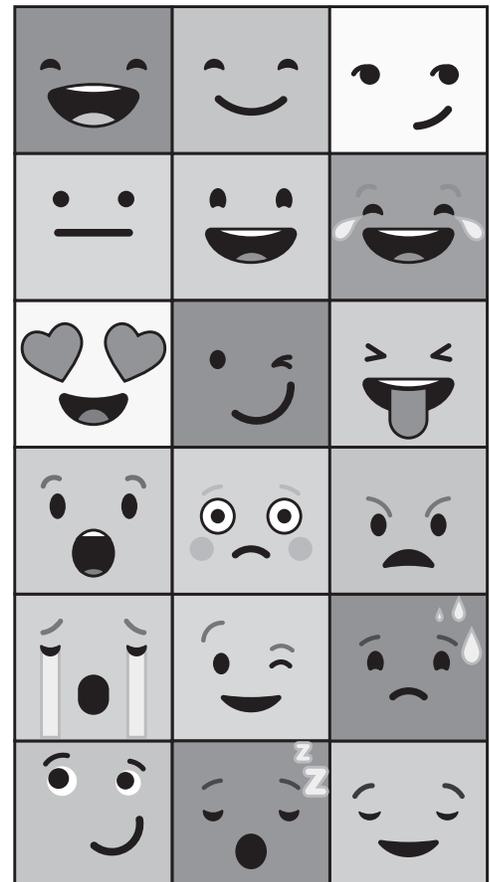
Sharing our emotions says we're not alone, because others are experiencing similar emotions. Others may even offer ideas to help us handle our own feelings.

Today we're going to play charades by acting out our feelings. Let's get started!

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On each of your three index cards, write down one feeling you've had since learning about the divorce. You'll have 3 minutes to write.
(Set the timer for 3 minutes.)
- 2 When the timer sounds, fold each of your index cards in half and drop it in the bag. Then, we'll each pick a card out of the bag.
- 3 We'll take turns acting out the feeling on the card. If you need help, call on someone in the group. Continue to provide clues until someone correctly identifies the feeling.
- 4 As each feeling is identified, share how you handle the feeling. If you handle it in a positive way, explain how others can do the same. If you handle the feeling negatively, explain how you could deal with it more positively.

At the end of the activity, we'll have plenty of ideas on how to cope with our feelings. Put them to work the next time you're facing a difficult time.



HOME x 2

My special go-to drawer

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, scissors

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

When our parents divorce, we'll have to go back and forth between homes. In doing so, we may forget important items necessary for school or other activities.

Organizing a special “go-to drawer” for each parent’s home can solve the problem.

For today’s activity, we’re going to design a drawer to hold all our necessities.

STEP ONE

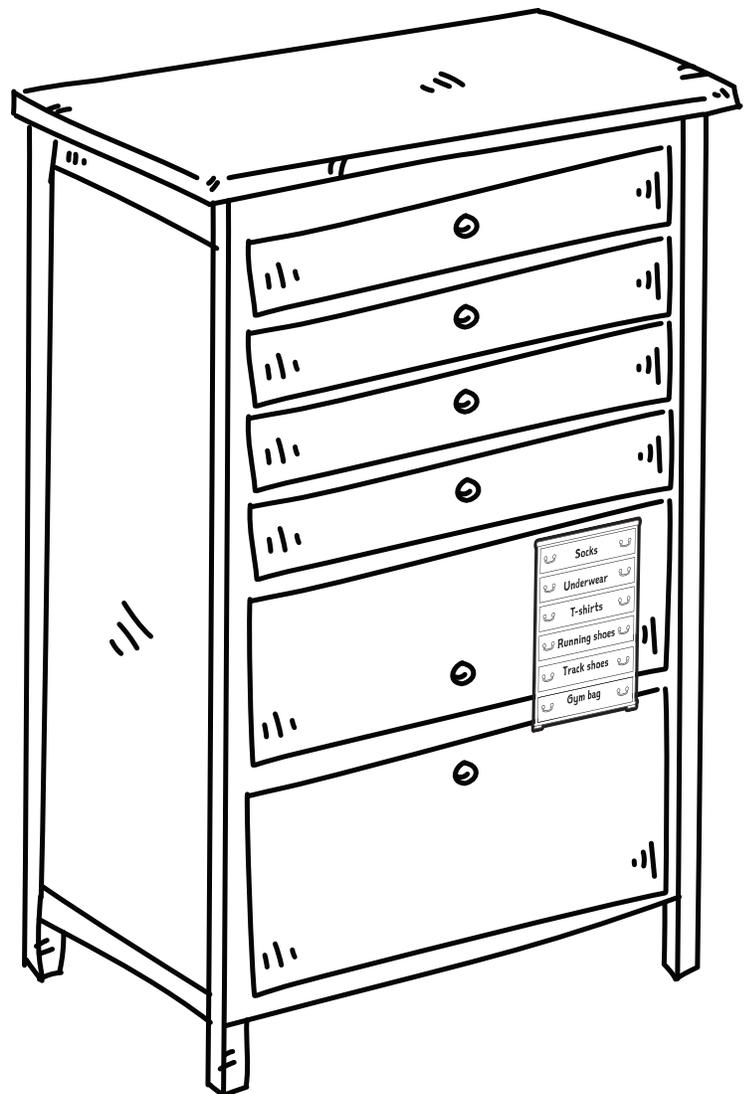
On the template, designate one parent’s dwelling Home A; the other parent’s Home B. Think about what you need when going between the two homes. What items do you need at both homes? What items do you need at only one home? Write the items on the lines on the drawer template.

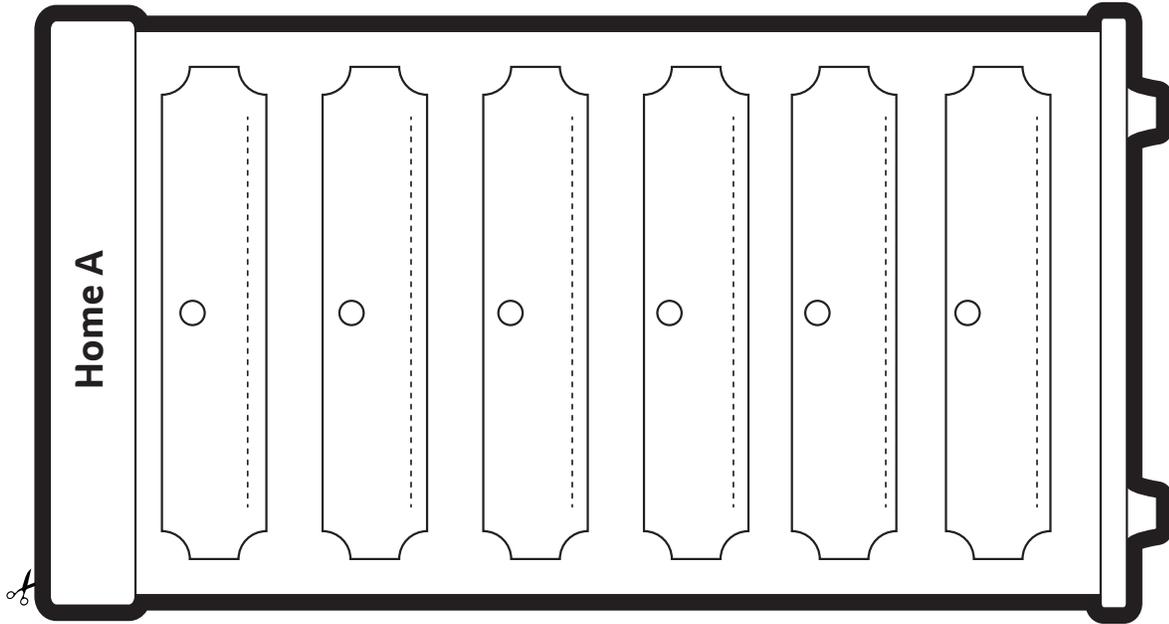
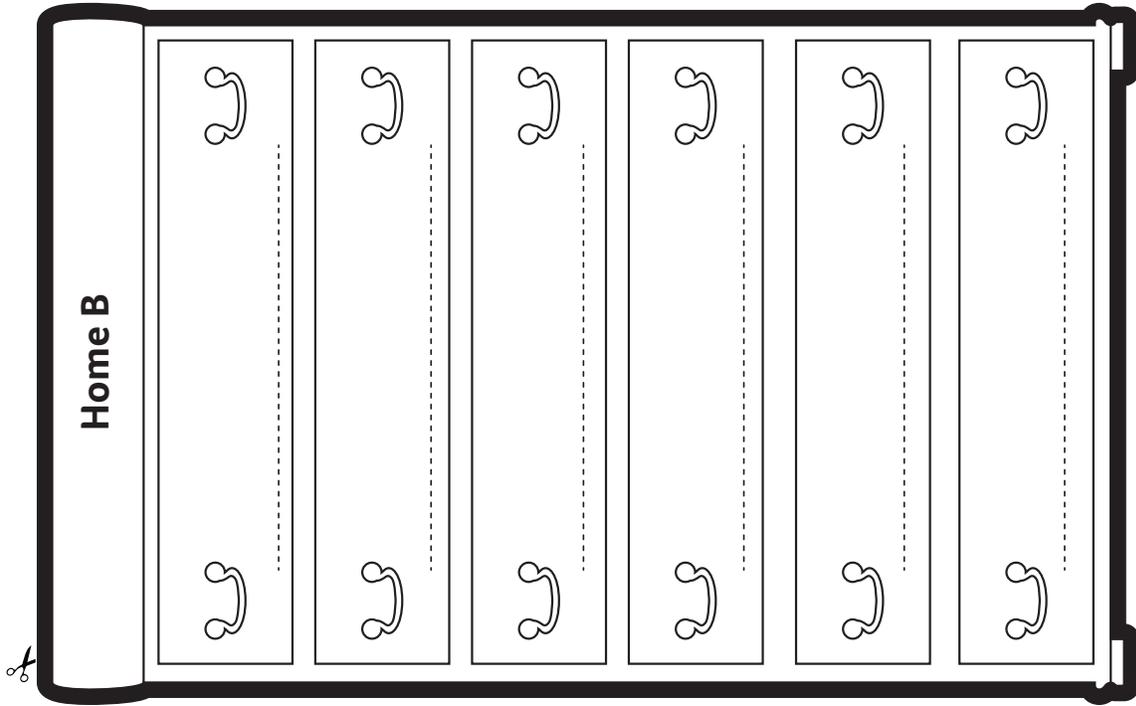
STEP TWO

Decorate both chests of drawers and cut them out. At each parent’s home, tape your template drawer on your real drawer so you’ll always know what’s inside!

STEP THREE

Let’s discuss how organization can help reduce our stress level.





REALITY CHECK

Write a letter

about divorce

Materials: Worksheet copies, paper, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Divorce causes upheaval in our lives. Relationships change, routines change, homes change. We may even have to relocate to a new city and school.

Acknowledging your feelings about these changes can help you understand and manage your new reality.

Today, we're going to write down our feelings about the divorce. You have the option to tear up the letter and throw it away, keep it for yourself or give it to your parents.



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Write a letter to one or both of your parents stating how you feel about their divorce. Don't hold back. Remember: You will decide what to do with the letter. You'll have 7 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 7 minutes.)

- 2 When the timer sounds, those who feel comfortable can share their letter with the group. You can share parts of the letter or the entire letter, depending on your comfort level.

- 3 Let's discuss the following questions:
 - Did writing the letter help you? How?
 - Why is it important to express your feelings about the divorce?
 - What will you do with your letter — keep it, give it to your parents or tear it up? Why?



STORMY WEATHER

Learn to cope with emotions

Divorce can be overwhelming. It can shake up your life and leave you an emotional “wreck.”

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Experiencing a storm of emotions about divorce is normal. Learning skills to cope with your emotions will see you through tough times.

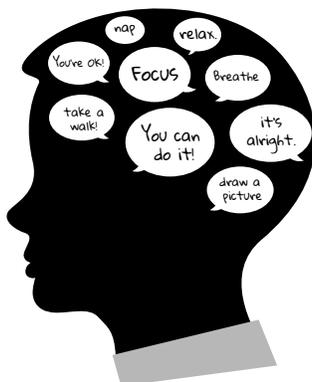
In today’s activity, we’re going to explore the emotions triggered by divorce.

STEP ONE

Read the list of emotions on the worksheet. If you’ve felt the emotion since learning about the divorce, write why you’ve felt it and how you cope with it.

STEP TWO

Let’s share what we wrote with the group. As others share, write down their coping skills to use in your own situation.



EMOTION	WHY I'VE FELT THIS EMOTION	HOW I COPE WITH THIS EMOTION
Fear		
Sadness		
Anger		
Relief		
Confusion		
Anxiety		
Worry		
Shock		
Hurt		
Embarrassment		
Loneliness		
Guilt		
Abandonment		



UNBOTTLE IT

Express your feelings in writing

Materials: Worksheet copies, paper, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss.
This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Divorce triggers many emotional responses, from confusion to sadness to anger. Because the family is already under stress, we may feel the need to hide our emotions from others.

It's unhealthy to keep your emotions about divorce bottled up inside.

Having strong feelings about divorce is normal. Expressing those feelings can help you cope with and productively handle your new situation.

STEP ONE

Write a letter to "Divorce" expressing how you feel. Be as open and honest as possible. You'll have 7 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 7 minutes.)

STEP TWO

When the timer sounds, let's discuss our letters. How did writing help you open up about divorce? Do you feel relief after expressing your feelings?



UNMASKED

Put a true face on feelings

Materials: Worksheet copies, paper plates (one per youth), markers, crayons, timer

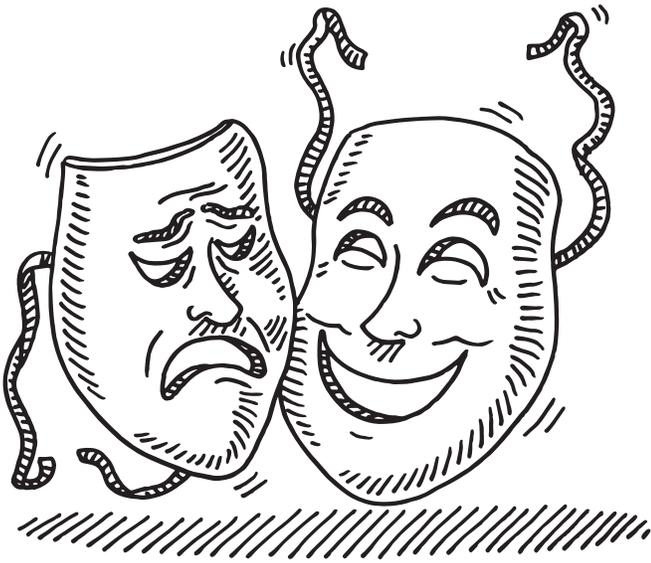
Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Divorce or separation creates a whirlwind of feelings — sometimes all at once! These feelings may come and go, or stick around for a while.

Whatever feelings you face, it's important to acknowledge them.

But acknowledgement can be tough. Instead, some of us become experts at “putting on a face.” Presenting how we feel one way, when we actually feel quite differently.

Today, we're going to draw our internal and external feelings. These feelings may be the same, but often they're different.



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the back of the paper plate, draw your face expressing how you feel on the inside. On the front, draw your face expressing how others perceive you. You'll have 5 minutes to draw.
(Set the timer for 5 minutes.)
- 2 When the timer sounds, we'll take turns sharing the back of our plate and the internal feeling it expresses. Then, we'll share the front of the plate and the external feeling people see.
- 3 Let's discuss how our outside expression can mask what we feel on the inside, which can lead to being misunderstood.
- 4 Think of two things you'll do before our next meeting to help you release feelings hidden inside.



BLOWN AWAY

Thaw your fear and take control!

Materials: Worksheet copies, pre-cut 2x2 squares of paper (five per youth), deflated balloons (one per youth), pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Have you ever felt frozen? Felt such intense distress that it interferes with how you function?

If so, you may have experienced anxiety.

Anxiety is a normal emotion in response to uncertainty. It's how you react to anxiety that can make the difference.

Remaining calm and examining why you're anxious and fearful is a good place to start. In today's activity, we'll explore ways to conquer some of our internal reactions to fear.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1 On the lines below, write down five of your fears. Then, write those same fears on the paper squares, one fear per square. Roll up each square and place it inside your deflated balloon.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2 When everyone has placed their squares into the balloon, we'll take turns saying one of our fears aloud and blowing air into our balloon:

- Blow once for an occasional fear.
- Blow twice for a weekly fear.
- Blow three times for a daily fear.
- Blow four times for a continuous fear.

3 We'll continue around the room, adding air for each fear we've experienced. As we're doing the activity, notice how your feelings change as your balloon gets closer to popping. Are you thinking, "The pop will be loud"? Are you plugging your ears or slowing down by adding smaller breaths? Let's discuss how we manage the anxiety of being startled by a popping balloon.

4 When the first balloon pops, release your balloon and let it squeal and flutter around the room. How do you feel now after the anxiety of the first balloon popping is over? How did it feel to witness your balloon deflate? Did you feel relief?



NO WORRIES

Let go of your what ifs

Materials: Worksheet copies, pre-cut strips of paper, pens or pencils, bag

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We all worry — especially when we dwell on the “what ifs?”

What if it happens?

What if I can't?

What if...?

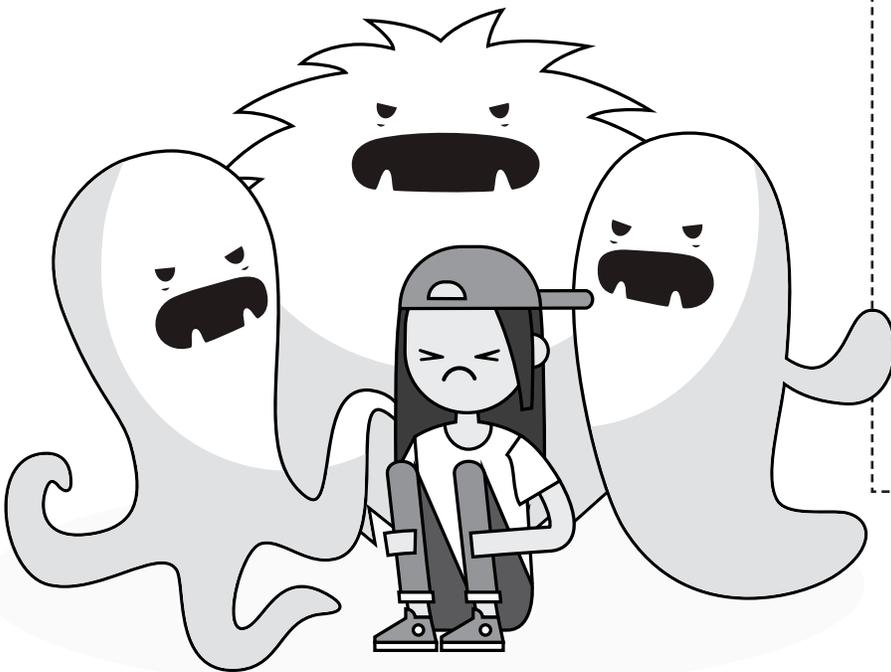
Worry can be a constant companion if we don't try to calm down and refocus our thoughts.

Worrying is inevitable, but it doesn't have to stop us from reaching our goals. Learning how to use appropriate life skills can ease worries and allow us to move forward.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Write a worry you experience on a paper strip and place it in the bag.
- 2 When everyone has placed a worry in the bag, we'll take one out and read it aloud. Listen for worries you've also experienced. If the worry you wrote down is read, don't share additional details.
- 3 After every worry has been read, let's discuss our common worries.

Why do you think they're common?
What life skills can help us overcome our worries?



OUT WITH IT!

An action plan to conquer fear

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

It's the first day at your new school... and you're scared you won't fit in. As lead actor in the school play... you're worried you'll forget your lines.

So many fears!

Without controlling our thoughts and unease, fear can escalate and prevent us from enjoying our lives.

Today, let's start working on conquering our fears. Let's create an action plan!

STEP ONE

Think about your fears. What are you afraid of? Why are you afraid? Who can help you overcome your fears? As you explore your feelings, write them on the worksheet.

STEP TWO

We'll share our plans to conquer fear with the group.



MY PLAN TO CONQUER FEAR

My fear is

.....
.....

To get help in conquering my fear, I will talk to

.....
.....

Even though I might be afraid, I will try to

.....
.....

My goal date to conquer my fear

.....
.....

My reward for conquering my fear will be

.....
.....

SWEET DREAMS

Confront fear and self-doubt

Materials: Worksheet copies, red and blue construction paper, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

You have a goal. You've dreamed about it, perhaps you've begun working towards it.

But then... Fear takes over and your dream is on hold.

Overcoming fear and self-doubt puts you on the road to reaching your dreams.

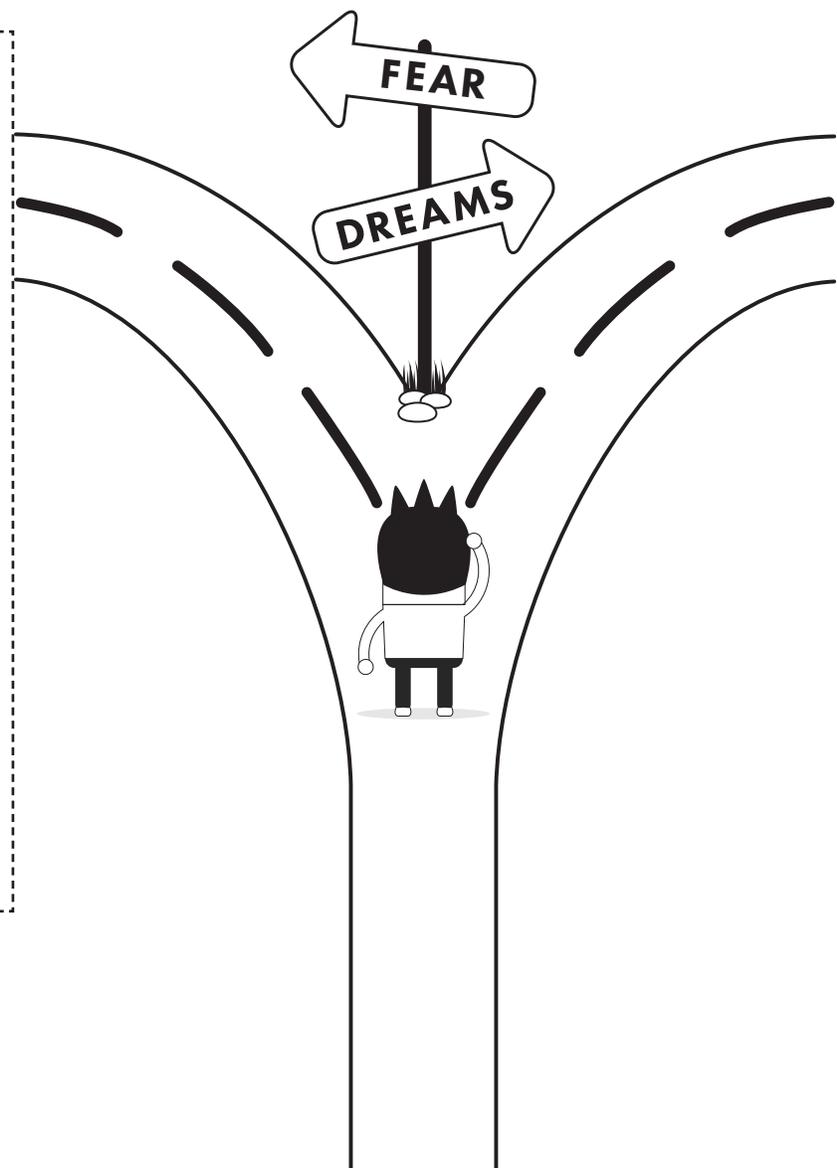
It's not always easy, but facing fear can put us in the driver's seat of life.

Today, let's explore our fears and dreams so we can stay focused on meeting our goals.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Think about your fears. Write your fears on the sheet of red paper. Then, crunch the paper into a ball.
- 2 Think about your dreams. Write your dreams on the sheet of blue paper. Then, crunch the paper into a ball.
- 3 Form a circle. On a count of three, toss both balls of paper into the center of the group. Everyone will pick up one red ball and one blue ball. Taking turns, first read the red fears, followed by the blue dreams.
- 4 Let's discuss how fears can slow us down, while dreams can move us toward our goals. How can we move past fear and push forward toward our dreams?

Whenever you feel stuck in reaching your goals, make a list of ways to confront your fears.



THE WRITE STUFF

Overcome fear

through poetry

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, chalkboard or whiteboard, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Fear is universal. We all experience fear at some point, often about different things.

Fear can lead to other negative feelings if we don't confront it, and learn positive ways to handle it.

One method to deal with our fears is to write about them. And then talk about our fears with someone we trust.

Today, we're going to write poems about fear, working in pairs so we can practice discussing our fears with others. Before we begin, let's brainstorm words that describe fear and ways to overcome our fears. We'll write the words on the board.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide into pairs. Using words from the board, each pair will write either an acrostic or cinquain poem on overcoming fear. Use the worksheet and template examples to help guide you. You'll have 6 minutes to write your poems.
(Set the timer for 6 minutes.)
- 2 When the timer sounds, each pair will read their poem to the group.
- 3 Let's discuss what we learned today. What strategy will you try the next time you experience fear? How does writing and sharing help to overcome your fear?

Funny thoughts
ChEerful smiles
Happy fAces
Goodbye feaR!



ACROSTIC AND CINQUAIN POEMS

Acrostic poems are created when certain letters in each line spell out a word or phrase. Typically, the first letter of each line is used to spell the message, but the letters can appear anywhere.

Example:

Directions: Spell out "spring" using the first letter of the line.

Sunny days

Plants awakening

Raindrops on the roof

Interesting clouds

New flowers

Green grass

Example:

Directions: Spell out "poem" using different letter positions.

Pick uP a pen

Think of a tOpic

Be crEative

Use your iMagination

Directions: Spell out a fear word using the first letter of the line.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Directions: Spell out a fear word using different letter positions.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Cinquain poems are non-rhyming poems with five lines and 11 total words.

Example:

Watermelon

Juicy, sweet

Dripping, slurping, smacking

So messy to eat

Yummy

Example:

Butterflies

Colorful, delicate

Flitting, flapping, flying

Graceful beauty in motion

Elegant

(line 1: one word topic)

(line 2: two descriptive adjectives)

(line 3: three action verbs)

(line 4: four words on how it feels)

(line 5: one word synonym for line 1)

(line 1: one word topic)

(line 2: two descriptive adjectives)

(line 3: three action verbs)

(line 4: four words on how it feels)

(line 5: one word synonym for line 1)



WHAT A RELIEF!

Use humor to remedy fear

Materials: Worksheet copies, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We all have fears.

But fear doesn't have to stop us in our tracks.

We can relieve the stress of fear through humor, laughter and smiling.

Today, we're going to practice using humor to defuse our anxiety.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide into teams of no more than four. Each team will choose one of the situations below to role-play:
 - You didn't submit a project on its due date.
 - You're experiencing problems with a teacher.
 - You're unable to make new friends.
 - It's lightning and thundering outside and you can't sleep.
- 2 When your team has chosen a situation, decide how to use humor to solve the problem. Practice role-playing the solution for 6 minutes.
(Set the timer for 6 minutes.)
- 3 When the timer sounds, each team will act out their solution for the group. Afterwards, we'll share ways in which humor can improve each situation.
- 4 Next time you're nervous or scared, try using what you've learned to relieve your anxiety.



WHEEL OF FEARS

Round up those worries!

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, colored pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Fear is a natural human response. When we're confronted with new situations or things we don't understand, it's normal to feel anxiety.

But fear becomes a problem when it causes problems.

When fear holds you back and prevents you from doing things, it's a problem.

You may not completely alleviate fear, but you can learn how to manage it.

In today's activity, we'll explore our fears and discuss coping strategies. And maybe learn how to banish the fear for good!

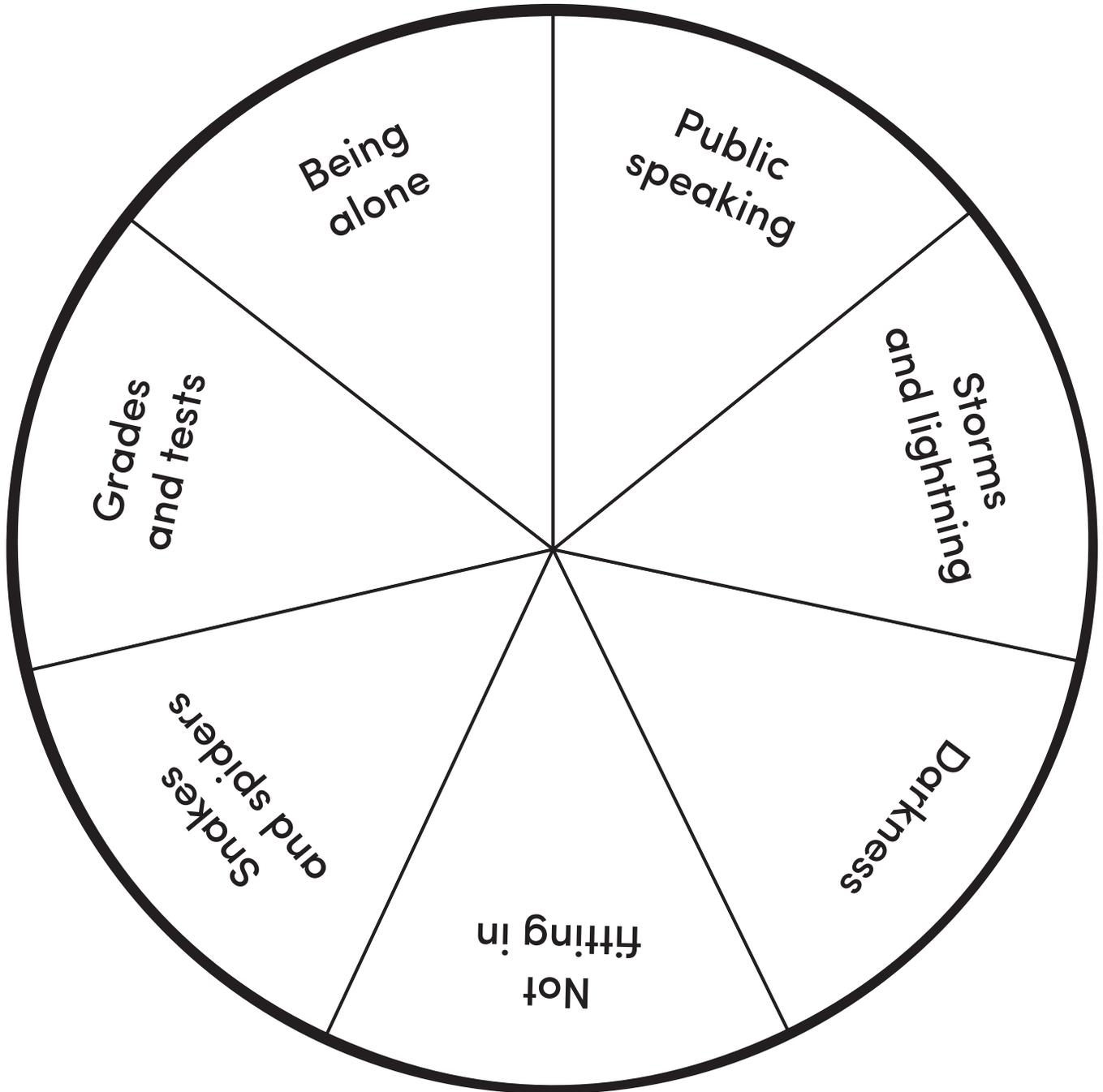
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 The Wheel of Fears contains situations you may or may not fear. Choose three different colored pencils. Color things you fear one color and things you don't fear a second color. Use a third color to decorate one fear you'd like to overcome. You'll have 5 minutes to color.

(Set the timer for 5 minutes.)

- 2 When the timer sounds, let's discuss our fears and learn if we have common fears. What tips can we share to help one another overcome fear?





A FITTING TRIBUTE

Bring your memories to life

Materials: Worksheet copies, construction paper, various art supplies like magazine pictures or illustrations, feathers, jewels, stickers, scissors, glue, markers and crayons

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Grief is real. When a loved one dies, life as we once knew it changes.

And sometimes, we just don't know what to say.

It's important to learn how to express your grief.

Today, we're going to make a memory collage to honor our deceased loved one or pet.

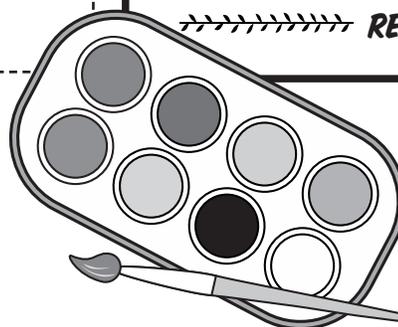
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- Starting with a sheet of construction paper, select art supplies for your collage. You can use pictures, create your own drawing or write a poem. Whatever you feel is the best way to express your memories.

You'll have 10 minutes to create your collage.

(Set the timer for 10 minutes.)

- When the timer sounds, let's discuss the following questions:
 - What did you like about making the collage?
 - What did you dislike about making the collage?
 - Are you surprised how the collage turned out?
 - Do you have special memories of your loved one you'd like to share?



BALLOON GOODBYE

Send a message into the great beyond

Materials: Worksheet copies, paper, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, balloons, helium, scissors, string

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

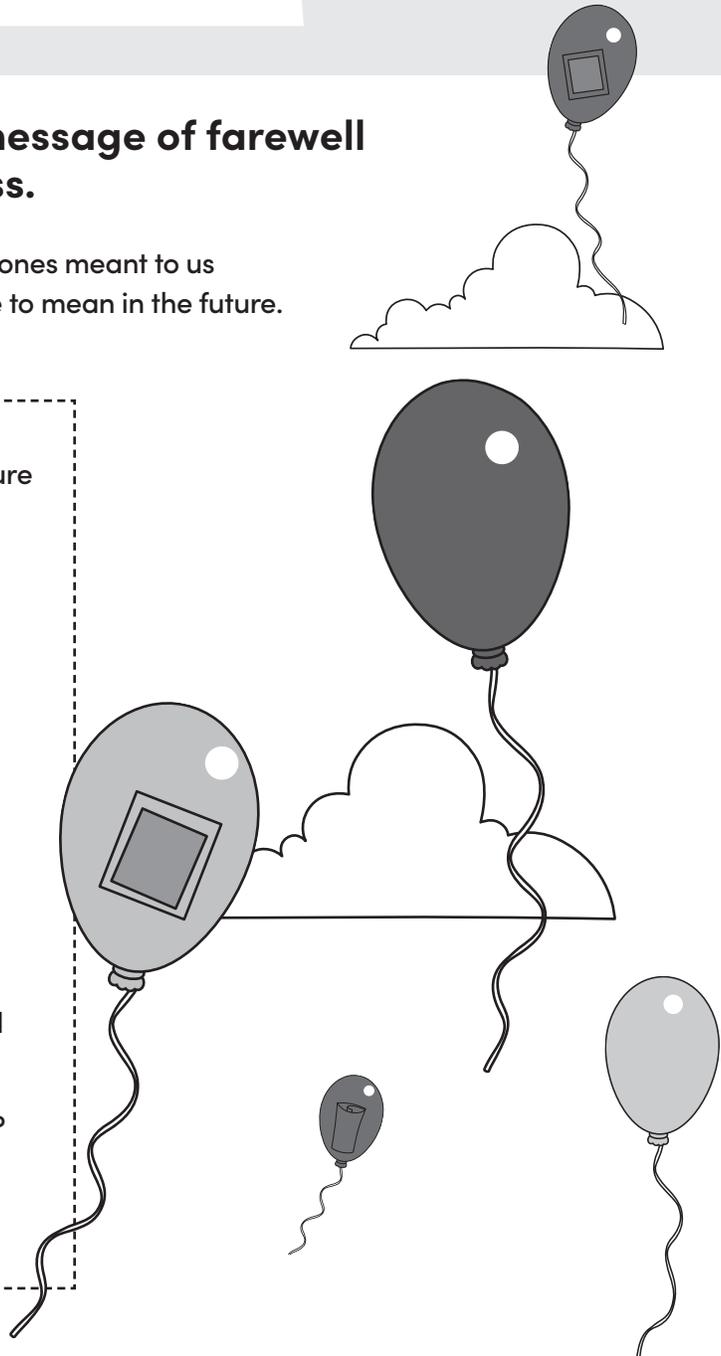
Many of our loved ones died before we could say “goodbye.” We’re left without the chance to tell them what they meant to us.

Honoring your loved one with a message of farewell can help bring closure to their loss.

Today, we’re going to express how much our loved ones meant to us during their lifetime. And how much they’ll continue to mean in the future.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On your paper, write a letter or draw a picture to your deceased loved one. It can express happy times, lessons learned or how you’ll remember them. When you’re finished, roll it up and place it inside the deflated balloon.
- 2 Blow up the balloon with helium, tie it and add a string. When everyone is ready, we’ll go outside, say a message of goodbye, and release our balloons into the air.
- 3 Afterwards, let’s discuss what this activity meant:
 - How did it feel to remember your loved one through writing or drawing?
 - How do you feel after saying goodbye?
 - How do you feel after releasing your balloon?



Source: San Diego Hospice and Institute for Palliative Medicine Intern Training Program

Note: A qualified adult will facilitate all Grief activities.



EXPRESSING NEEDS

The MNOs

of communication

Materials: Worksheet copies, chart paper, scissors, marker, tape, timer

Directions: Cut a large triangle from chart paper, label the points M, N, O (see illustration) and tape it to the floor. Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

The death of a loved one is shattering. We can feel alone and frightened, with nowhere to turn.

And unsure of just who to turn to.

Grief can make it difficult to communicate our sorrow and needs.

The goal of today's activity is to communicate our needs in a healthy way and have them understood by others.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 We'll use the MNOs of communication to express our needs:

M = feeling N = behavior O = change in response

The MNOs will help us use "I" statements when we're talking about ourselves. For example:

To express a feeling (M), you could say, "I feel lonely."

To express a behavior (N), you could say, "When I feel lonely, my face looks sad."

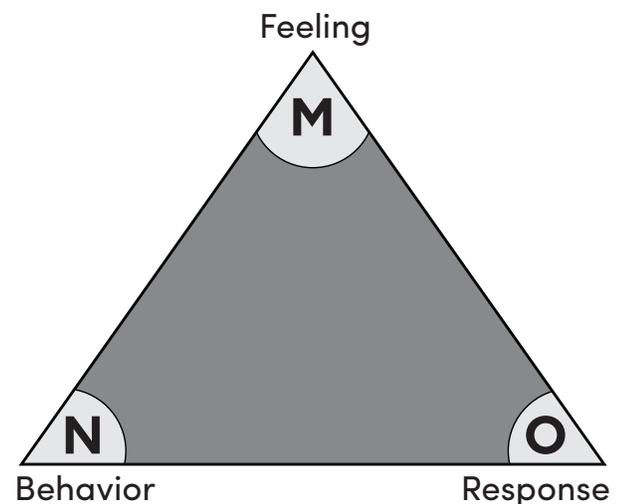
To express a change in response (O), you could say, "When I feel lonely and my face looks sad, I want to see friends and smile."

- 2 Using the triangle, we'll take turns saying an "I" statement starting with the letter M to express a feeling. Then, we'll move to N and express a behavior. And finally, we'll move to O and express how we want to change our behavior. We'll do the activity for 10 minutes.

(Set the timer for 10 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, let's discuss the following questions:

- What did you learn from the activity?
- How can this form of communication express your needs when you're grieving?



Source: San Diego Hospice and Institute for Palliative Medicine Intern Training Program

Note: A qualified adult will facilitate all Grief activities.



FEELING FLOWER

Multiple emotions at the same time

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, crayons, scissors, glue

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

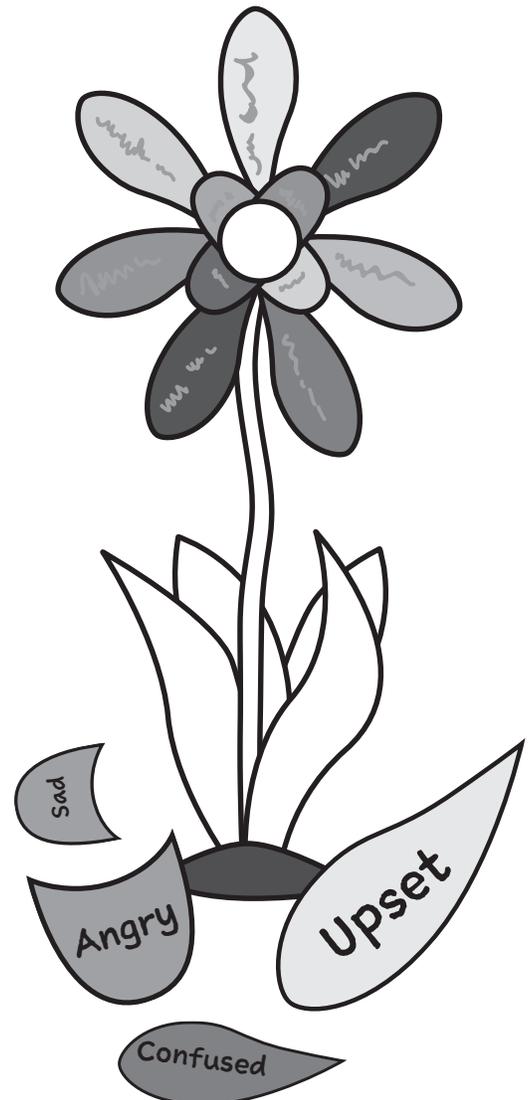
The death of a loved one generates many feelings, often simultaneously. We can be angry one minute, and sobbing the next.

Grief affects how quickly our feelings develop and change.

Let's take time to identify our emotional states using a flower.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template under "My different feelings," write down emotions you've experienced since the death of your loved one or pet.
- 2 Assign each feeling a color. For example, if you wrote "anger," you might assign it red. If you wrote "loneliness," you might assign it yellow. Write the color next to each feeling.
- 3 Write your feelings on the petals. Using crayons, color each petal its assigned color. Use as many petals and colors as you need to match the range of feelings you've experienced.
- 4 Cut out the colored petals and glue them onto the stem template. As you're gluing the petals, let's discuss the following questions:
 - What feelings did you identify?
 - What are safe ways to release your feelings?
 - What's it like to experience multiple emotions at the same time?
 - Who can you talk to about your feelings?



Source: San Diego Hospice and Institute for Palliative Medicine Intern Training Program

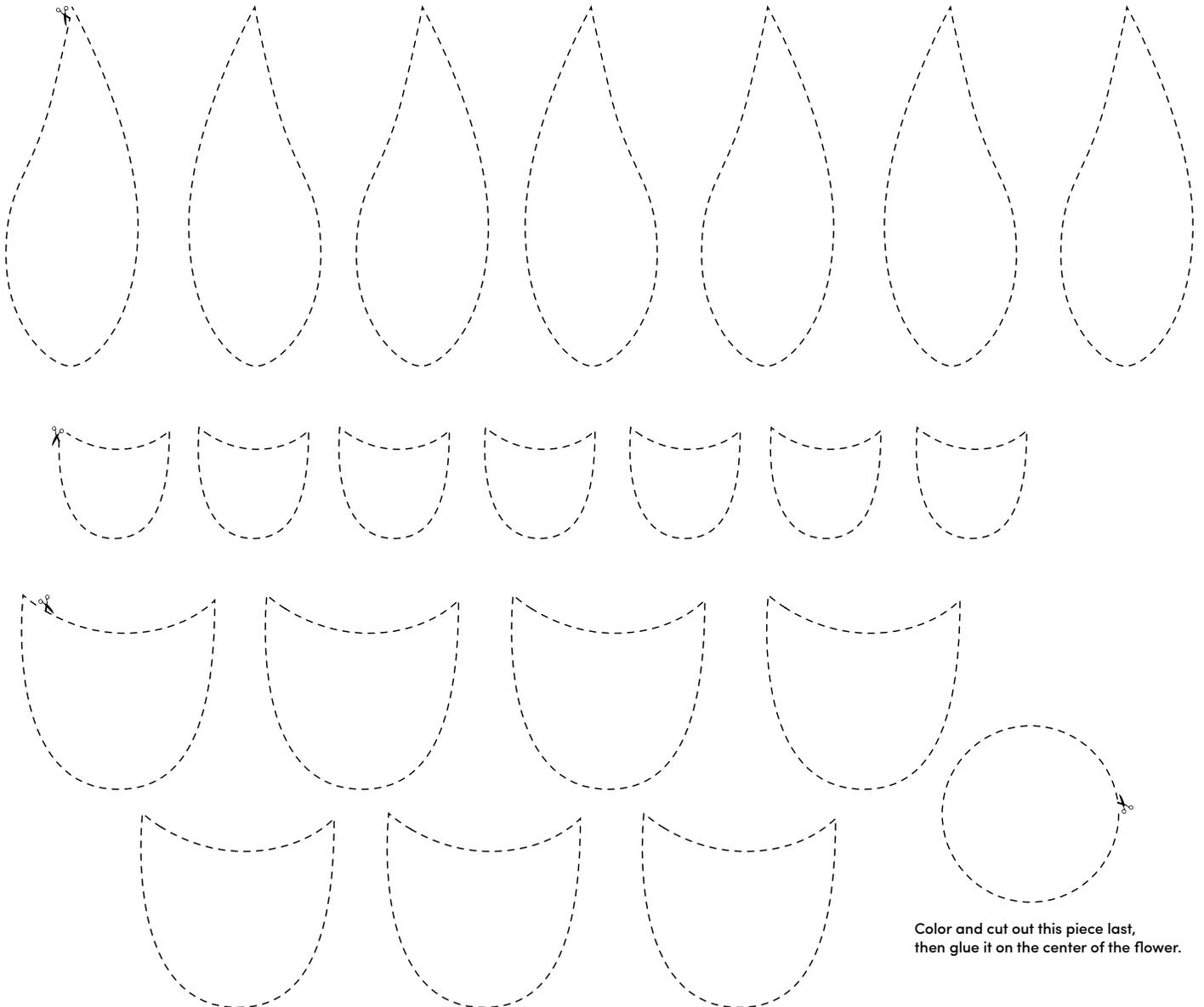
Note: A qualified adult will facilitate all Grief activities.



MY DIFFERENT FEELINGS

Feeling	Color	Feeling	Color
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		

PETALS FOR MY FEELINGS



Color and cut out this piece last, then glue it on the center of the flower.





GIFT BOX

Always remember what they gave you

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, small boxes (one per youth), construction paper, various art supplies like pencils, markers, crayons, stickers and glitter, wrapping paper, ribbons, scissors, tape, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

During their life, our loved ones gave us many gifts. These gifts are reminders of the impact they had on our lives.

The gifts our loved ones shared will be with us forever.

Today, we're going to honor our deceased loved ones by remembering their gifts to us. These gifts can be material, like a bicycle or doll, or nonmaterial, such as lessons learned, memories and feelings.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Using construction paper, write down or draw images of the gifts your loved one gave you. Decorate your gifts any way you'd like using the art supplies.
- 2 Place the gifts in your box and wrap it like a present.
- 3 Using the template, create a tag with your name and the date you'll open the gift. You'll have 10 minutes to create and wrap.

(Set the timer for 10 minutes.)

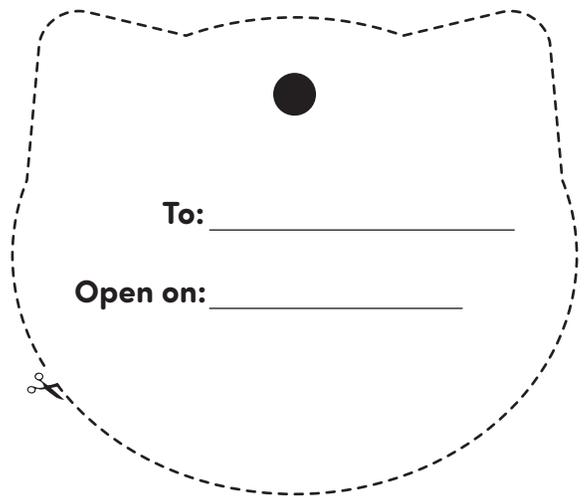
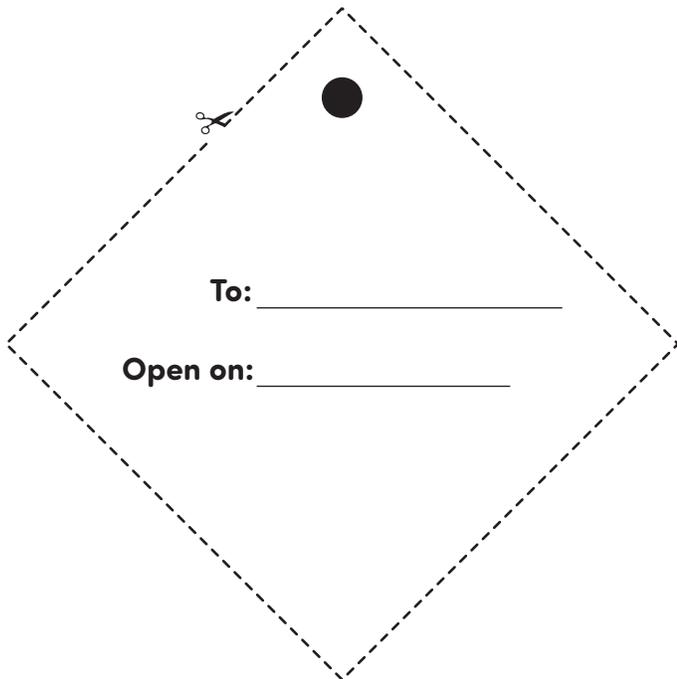
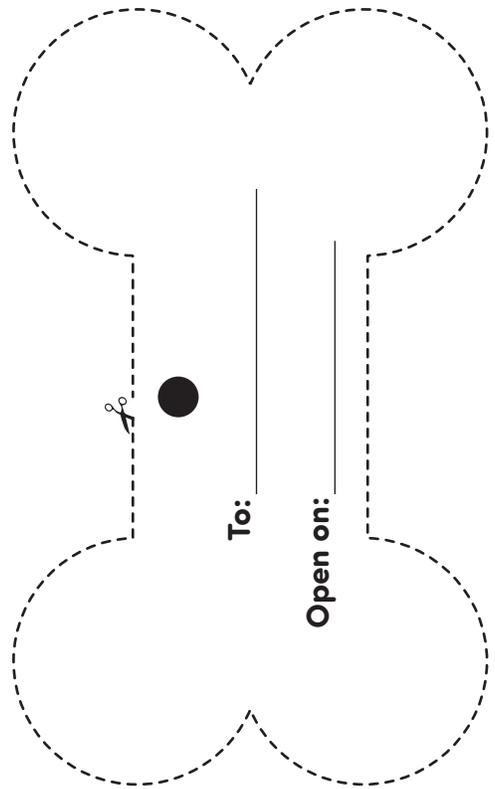
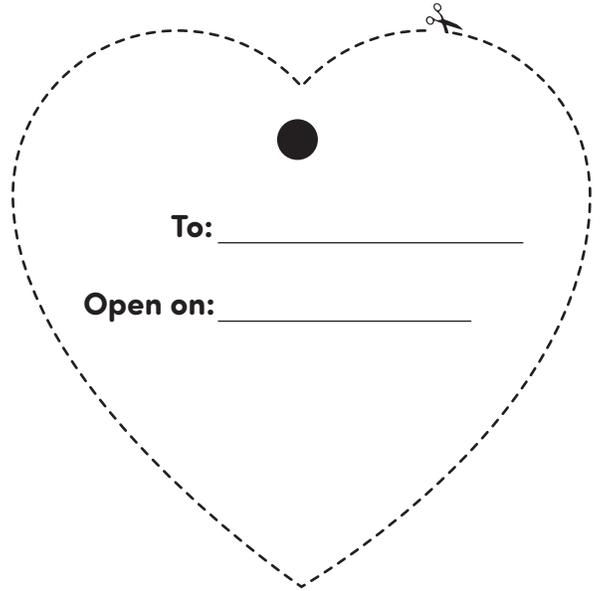
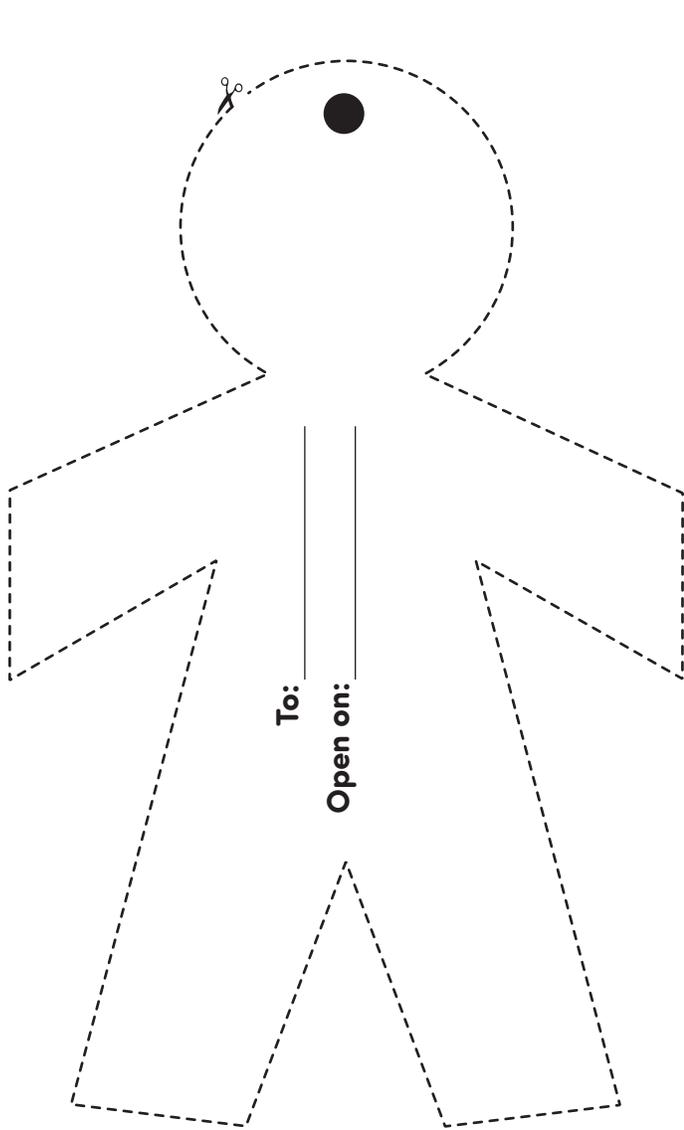
- 4 When the timer sounds, let's discuss the following questions:
 - Was it easy or hard to remember the gifts your loved one gave you?
 - What will you remember about creating a box of gifts?
 - When will you open the box of gifts? Why did you choose that time?



Source: San Diego Hospice and Institute for Palliative Medicine Intern Training Program

Note: A qualified adult will facilitate all Grief activities.





OUT OF THE WOODS

Work through the grief process

Grief affects people differently, and people grieve differently. But we must all go through the grief process.

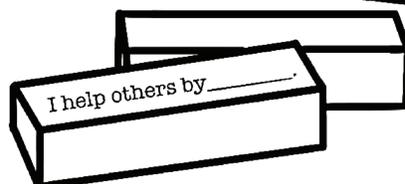
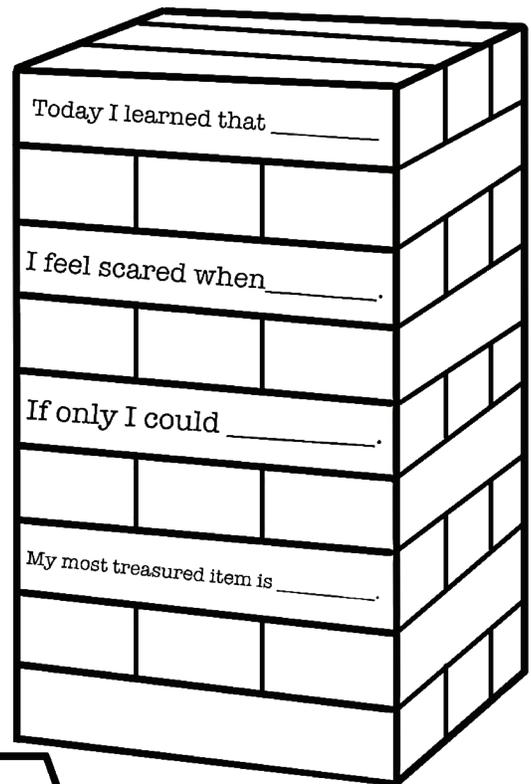
- Materials:** Worksheet copies, template copy, wooden blocks, scissors, tape
- Directions:** Make a copy of the template, cut out the statement strips and tape each strip to a wooden block. Stack the blocks into a tower (see illustration). Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

Working through the grief process means talking about the death and recognizing our feelings.

For today's activity, we'll use wooden blocks. Each block has a statement taped to it that you'll complete.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Taking turns, each of us will carefully remove a block from the tower. Try not to let the tower fall.
- 2 Once you've safely removed a block, read the statement and complete it aloud.
- 3 Afterwards, let's discuss the following questions:
 - What did you like about this activity?
 - What did you learn about yourself and others going through the grief process?



Source: San Diego Hospice and Institute for Palliative Medicine Intern Training Program

Note: A qualified adult will facilitate all Grief activities.



Grief is _____.	I'm different because _____.
I want to get rid of _____.	I admire _____.
If only I could _____.	My most treasured item is _____.
I wish people would start _____.	Others tease me about _____.
Something I do well is _____.	Life is _____.
When I feel lonely, I _____.	I wish I knew about _____.
I feel alone when _____.	My heart is _____.
I feel scared when _____.	If I could change the past, I would _____.
The best advice I ever got was _____.	I believe that _____.
I feel embarrassed when _____.	I am learning that _____.
I dream about _____.	When I am happy, I like to _____.
I help others by _____.	I have discovered _____.
One person I can talk to is _____.	I will never understand why _____.
Today I learned that _____.	When I get angry, I _____.
When I am older, I want to _____.	I really miss _____.
My safe place is _____.	My favorite memory is _____.
I want to be _____.	Go again!
I worry about _____.	My favorite music is _____.
I feel jealous of _____.	I spend a lot of time thinking about _____.
I wish people would stop _____.	My best friend _____.
Something I like about others is _____.	My favorite activity is _____.
If I had a magic wand I would _____.	Nobody understands _____.



TAKE A BREATH

Paying attention pays off!

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, buttons (one per youth), pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss. This activity can be completed as a group or individually.

When a loved one dies, we experience a stream of ever-changing emotions. This often makes it difficult to concentrate.

By sharpening our focus, we strengthen our ability to get through each and every day.

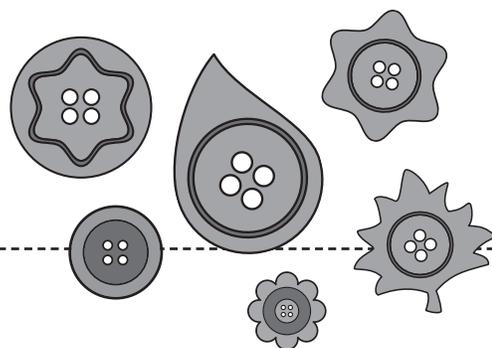
In today's activity, we're going to learn how to relax our minds and heighten our focus.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Place the button beneath your legs and close your eyes. Breathe in slowly as you count to four; then breathe out slowly as you count to four.

One... two... three... four... breathe in.
One... two... three... four... breathe out.
- 2 Open your eyes. On the template under "Before," draw a picture of your button from memory.
- 3 Now, pick up your button and focus on it intently. Ask yourself: What does it look like? What color and shape is it?
- 4 Once again, place your button beneath your legs and close your eyes. Breathe in slowly as you count to four; then breathe out slowly as you count to four. As you breathe, keep your mind focused on the button you've just studied.

One... two... three... four... breathe in.
One... two... three... four... breathe out.
- 5 Open your eyes. On the template under "After," draw a picture of your button from memory after focusing on it.
- 6 Pick up your button and place it in the center circle of the template. Now, let's discuss the following questions:
 - How do the two drawings compare? Are they different?
 - What button details did you add after focusing?
 - Did relaxed breathing help you focus?
 - How can this activity help when you're grieving and struggling to focus?

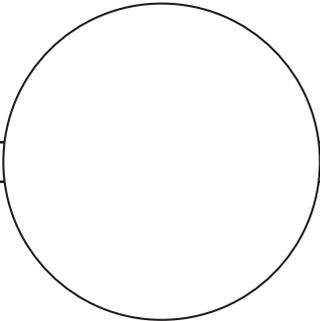


Source: San Diego Hospice and Institute for Palliative Medicine Intern Training Program

Note: A qualified adult will facilitate all Grief activities.



AFTER



BEFORE

CLIMB HIGHER

Sweat it for the long haul

Materials: Worksheet copies, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Physical activity that gets our hearts pumping is vital to good health.

Endurance, or stamina, allows us to keep going without tiring or quitting too soon.

We increase our endurance through repetition and lengthening our exercise routines. For example, you may start out walking half a mile the first week; extending the walk to one mile the second week.

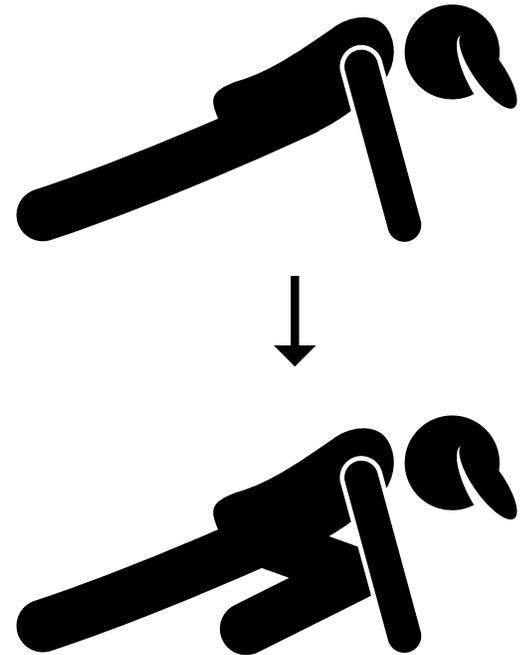
In today's activity, we're going to evaluate our endurance levels by doing the mountain climber exercise.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Get into an upright pushup position with your arms straight and directly beneath your shoulders. Bend your right leg into your chest, while keeping your body straight and left leg extended. As you perform the exercise, squeeze in your abs.
- 2 Now, switch legs. Bend your left leg into your chest, while keeping your body straight and right leg extended. As you perform the exercise, squeeze in your abs. We will continue to switch legs and repeat the exercise for 3 minutes.

(Set the timer for 3 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, stop exercising. Did anyone stop before the time was up? Who is out of breath? What does this activity tell you about your endurance level?
- 4 Keep practicing the mountain climber exercise and others to increase your endurance!



Mountain Climbers

EAT RIGHT

Get into the health habit

Materials: Worksheet copies

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Middle school is a time of fast-paced growth. Choosing the right foods to fuel that growth affects your mental outlook and long-term health.

Natural and nutrient-rich foods provide our bodies with vital energy to go and grow!

We're going to play a game called "Stand Up, Sit Down" to better understand our eating habits.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Sit in a circle. We'll call out the name of a healthy food. If you sometimes eat the food, stand up. If you never eat it, remain seated.
- 2 If you eat the next food we call out, sit if you're standing or stand if you're sitting. If you've never eaten the food, remain in the same position.

We'll continue to play until we've gone through the list of healthy foods.

- 3 Let's talk about our eating habits. Are they unhealthy, somewhat healthy or really healthy?
- 4 Show your parents the list of healthy foods on your worksheet and discuss healthy eating habits. Try to incorporate at least one healthy food into your weekly diet.

HEALTHY FOODS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| brown rice | lean beef |
| whole-grain bread | whole-wheat crust pizza |
| chicken (grilled or roasted) | lentils |
| tortilla chips (baked) | water |
| eggs | fresh vegetables |
| popcorn (air popped, no butter) | hummus |
| seafood | trail mix (low-fat) |
| milk (2% or fat free) | tuna fish (packed in water) |
| oatmeal | avocados |
| granola bars (low-sugar) | low-fat yogurt (not frozen) |
| fresh fruits | fruit juice (100%) |



GET MOVIN'!

Use music

to inspire activity

Materials: Worksheet copies, recording of a catchy tune (Team Leaders' choice)

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

How do you feel when you hear a catchy tune?

A song that has you tappin' your toes and wigglin' your hips?

Music is magic. It can motivate, stimulate and elate!

We feel good when we move — and nothing gets us moving like a snappy song.

Today, we're going to learn a few moves to stay active. Let's listen to a song we selected. Then, we'll create a dance routine.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1 We're going to demonstrate four moves. After each demonstration, we'll practice the move together three times.

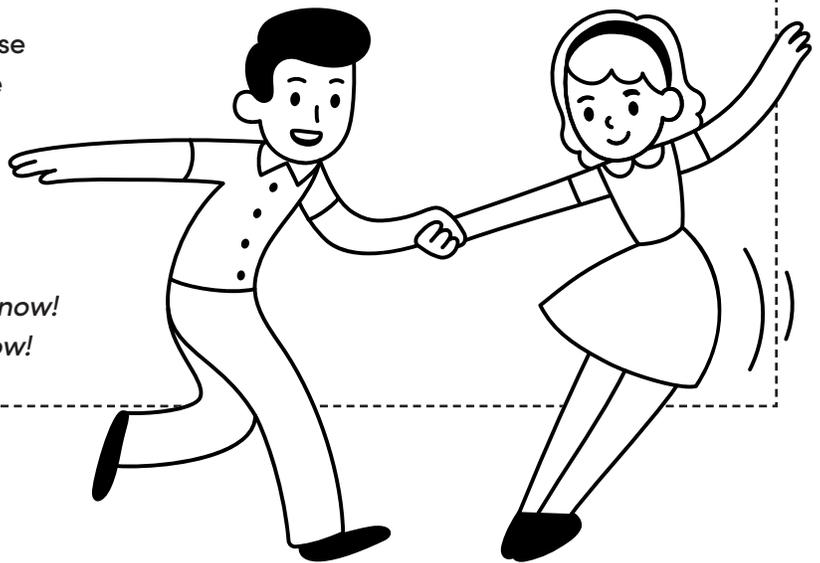
- Touch your toes
- March in place
- Jumping jacks using arms only
- Jumping jacks using legs only

2 Now, we'll put it all together into an exercise routine. Once we start the song, begin the following routine as we call it out and say "now"! (*Start the song.*)

- Do 8 touch your toes... *now!*
- Do 16 march in place... *now!*
- Do 8 jumping jacks using arms only... *now!*
- Do 4 jumping jack using legs only... *now!*

3 After we've completed the routine, let's discuss how we feel. Did the music motivate you? Did it energize you?

The next time you hear a jazzy tune, get moving. Let's all stay motivated, active and healthy through music!



INNER PEACE

Relax

and breathe s-l-o-w-l-y

Materials: Worksheet copies, small cups, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Your essay is due...

Your favorite pair of pants shrunk...

You can't find the house key...

Sometimes, the stress of our lives is overwhelming!

Relaxation decreases stress and tension. A relaxed state brings inner peace.

When we relax, we give our body a chance to recover from daily anxieties. Deep, controlled breathing reduces stress while calming our minds.

Let's learn a breathing technique to relax.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Lie down on the floor and close your eyes. Breathe in slowly as you count to seven; then breathe out slowly as you count to seven.

*One... two... three... four... five... six... seven... breathe in.
One... two... three... four... five... six... seven... breathe out.*

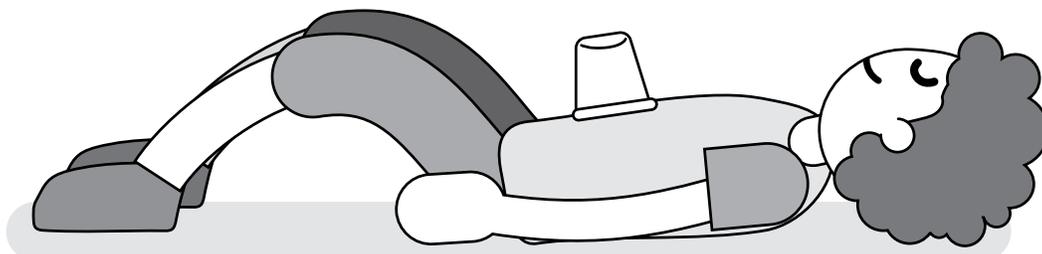
- 2 Place the cup on your abdomen. Breathe in slowly as you count to seven; then breathe out slowly as you count to seven. Watch the cup rise up and down as you breathe.

*One... two... three... four... five... six... seven... breathe in.
One... two... three... four... five... six... seven... breathe out.*

We'll do the cup exercise for 3 minutes.

(Set the timer for 3 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, let's discuss the breathing exercise. Do you feel any different? How did slow, deep and controlled breathing affect your mood?
- 4 Use the breathing exercise every day this week. When you've completed the exercise, take time to think about how you feel.



MOVE IT

Exercise

every part of you!

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

“The heel bone’s connected to the foot bone.
The foot bone’s connected to the toe bone...”

Remember that song from years ago?

Well, it’s true!

Every part of your body is connected. Exercise benefits your entire body — from the top of your head right down to your toes.

Regular exercise keeps your mind alert and your body flexible. Before we begin today’s activity, let’s read some healthy exercise habits.

HEALTHY EXERCISE HABITS

- Get at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.
- Warm up for 5-10 minutes to prepare for exercise and prevent injuries.
- Cool down for 5-10 minutes to help your body recover from exercise.
- Stretch after warming up or exercising to increase flexibility, range of motion and blood flow to muscles.
- Drink plenty of water.

STEP ONE

We’re going to set some goals to keep our bodies healthy for one month. Complete the following sentences.

For one month, I will:

Exercise at least this number of days per week

Exercise for this length of time on those days

Play these sports or do these activities for exercise

.....

.....

.....

Drink this many glasses of water every day

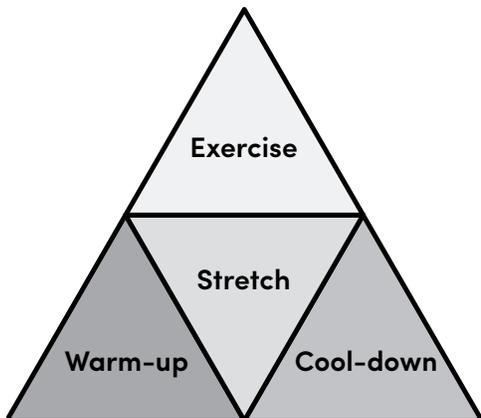
I will continue to exercise regularly, because

.....

.....

STEP TWO

Let’s discuss our goals to keep our bodies healthy. Then at the next meeting, we’ll share how our exercise plans are progressing.



PICK ME!

Reach for a healthy snack

Materials: Worksheet copies, samples of packaged pretzels, cookies and whole grain cereal (one healthy choice, two unhealthy choices), pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Some processed foods contain additives and preservatives. Many are unhealthy when consumed in high quantities.

Food additives and preservatives are chemicals used to transform a food’s color, taste or shelf-life. Some of the long-term effects of these chemicals are unknown.

We’re going to do a little detective work today and uncover the ingredients in three familiar snack foods.

STEP ONE

We have three options for a packaged snack. For each package, read the ingredients and determine if it’s a good choice or poor choice. Write why you feel it’s a good choice or poor choice.

STEP TWO

Let’s go around the room and share why you feel your choice is good. Why is it better than the other two choices? What healthy choice will you reach for the next time you snack?

SNACK	GOOD CHOICE / POOR CHOICE	WHY?
Pretzels		
Cookies		
Whole grain cereal		



SOCIAL MEDIA

Connecting is a balancing act

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Most of us enjoy staying in touch through Instagram, Snapchat and other social media sites.

But time spent managing “streaks” and staying current can be time lost on other activities.

It's important to balance our social media use with other ways to stay connected.

Today, we're going to examine the pros and cons to social media.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, fill in your answers to the questions. You'll have 8 minutes to write.
(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)
- 2 When the timer sounds, let's share our answers with the group. How does your personal social media use compare to the group's use? Will you rethink how much time you spend on social media?
- 3 Practice balancing your social media use with alternative methods to stay connected to friends and family.



MY SOCIAL MEDIA USE

1. List social media sites you use daily and how much time you spend on each site.

DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES	TIME SPENT ON THE SITE

2. Write at least one alternative to connect without using social media.

.....

3. Write at least one pro and one con about using social media.

Pros:

.....

Cons:

.....

4. Write at least one pro and one con about using alternatives to social media.

Pros:

.....

Cons:

.....

5. How much time per day should be spent on social media?

.....

6. How much time per day should be spent on alternatives to social media?

.....



BREAK TIME

Bust a move and get in the groove!

Materials: Worksheet copies

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

S-T-R-E-S-S. We often experience it when trying to complete our homework.

So, how can we lower our homework stress level?

Breaks are a simple way to calm homework stress. Breaks allow us to rest, reset and return to work.

Think about commercial breaks during TV shows. How do they help? Well, they allow us to refill our drink, grab a bite or let the dog out.

The truth is, we all benefit from breaks. Just as breaks are helpful to TV shows, breaks are helpful during homework. Let's do an activity that explores taking a break.

STEP ONE

Stand in a circle. Taking turns, show the group a dance move or any movement, such as stretching or exercising, that lets you take a break. After each person demonstrates their move, the group will mimic the move a few times.

STEP TWO

After everyone has shown their move, let's discuss how movement allows us to re-energize and refresh for homework tasks. Which moves did you learn today? How can they reduce homework stress in the future?



BREAKING NEWS

Homework

is a hot topic

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

What do you think when you hear the word “homework”?

Does your stomach churn, your heart sink and your brain hurt?

Homework is all about how you think of it. Homework is about attitude.

Everyone has issues with homework from time to time. But changing your mindset, refocusing on why homework is important, can turn angst into oomph!

For today’s activity, we’re going to create a news segment about this often-dreaded subject.



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide equally into Team A and Team B. Each team will create a news segment on the importance of homework. Using the template as a guide, assign each team member a role.
- 2 Answer the questions on the template. You’ll have 8 minutes to assign roles, answer the questions and create your news segments.

(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, Team A will act out their news segment. When Team A is finished, Team B can ask questions about the news segment. Then, Team B will act out their news segment with Team A asking questions.
- 4 When both teams are finished, let’s discuss the following questions:
 - What new ideas about homework did you learn today?
 - What new actions will you take to complete your homework?
- 5 This week, try one new thing related to doing homework. Next week, report back on how it worked!

Directions: Below are roles for your news segment. As a team, check which roles you want to include and the name of the person who will play the role.

NEWS SEGMENT ROLE	PLAYED BY
News anchor	
Reporter	
Teacher(s)	
Student(s)	
Parent(s)	
Counselor(s)	
Other roles	

POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT HOMEWORK

Directions: Discuss the following questions as a team and fill in the lines. Each team will include the answers in their news segment.

Why is homework important?

.....

.....

.....

Why should you be motivated to do homework?

.....

.....

.....

What long-lasting results will doing homework achieve?

.....

.....

.....



GET IT DONE!

Tips for doing homework

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

It's a beautiful afternoon for biking...
A friend invited you to the mall...
The dog needs brushing...

It's easy to make excuses why *NOT* to do homework, isn't it?

But homework is an important part of learning. Homework is practice in retaining knowledge.

Teachers don't assign homework just so they'll have something to grade. They assign it to reinforce the concepts they've taught.

Let's read a few tips on completing homework assignments. Then, we'll apply those tips to two activity scenarios.



HOMEWORK TIPS

- Write down assignments to ensure you don't forget what to do.
- Mark your calendar with assignments and projects due farther out.
- Set aside a specific time every day to complete homework.
- Finish your homework before doing other activities.
- Ask the teacher for clarification if you don't understand an assignment.
- If your school offers tutoring, take advantage of it.
- Ask a family member or friend for help.
- Always complete and turn in assignments on time.
- Ask the teacher how to improve your work.

STEP ONE

On the template, read each scenario. Using the homework tips, write various ways to complete the homework assignment below each scenario. You'll have 8 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)

STEP TWO

When the timer sounds, let's share how we'd handle each scenario. How will you apply the homework tips in the future?



HOMEWORK TIPS: COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS

Scenario 1: On Monday, Jane is given an assignment to do research and write an essay on a famous inventor. The assignment is due in one week, but Jane will be out of town over the weekend.

Write a detailed response on what you think Jane should do to complete the assignment on time.

.....

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.....

Scenario 2: John returns from the office and realizes the teacher assigned homework due tomorrow, but he missed it. The assignment is on geometry, his worst subject.

Write a detailed response on what you think John should do to complete the assignment on time.

.....

.....

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MY SPACE

Design

a study environment

Materials: Worksheet copies, pre-cut template cards, bag

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

You're ready to begin your assignment and the phone rings. Or, you're reading a required passage and your little brother turns on the TV...

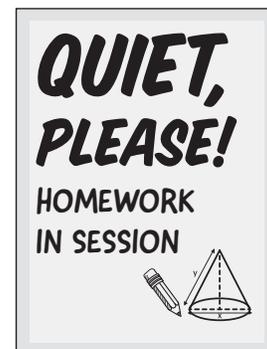
How can you complete homework with so many distractions?

Designating a regular, quiet homework area sets you up for academic success.

Today, let's learn how to design a great homework environment.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Taking turns, pick a card out of the bag. Read it aloud and decide whether the card advice is helpful or unhelpful in completing homework. After each card is read, place it face up onto a helpful or unhelpful pile.
- 2 When all the cards have been placed in piles, discuss how the helpful cards can create a great homework environment. For the unhelpful cards, discuss how omitting them from your homework environment is beneficial.
- 3 When you get home, think about where you do homework. How can you change it into a better homework space?





**Use
appropriate
books**

**Dim
the lights**

**Take notes
or use notes**

Lay on the bed

Turn on the TV

Use social media

**Sit at a desk
or table**

Ask for help

**Text friends
frequently**

**Keep supplies
handy**

**Play
loud music**

**Use a
desk lamp**

**Organize
assignments**

**Talk on
the phone**

Procrastinate



ON TASK

Organize

and prioritize

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, paper, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

What time is my piano lesson?

When is my essay due?

Do I have soccer practice this week?

With so much going on, how do you stay on track?

Knowing what we need to do, and when we need to do it, is organization.

Today, we're going to create a handy organization tool — a prioritized list of our weekly tasks.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, write a list of your weekly tasks next to the day you'd likely do them. For example, walk the dog and clean your room. If you have weekly appointments, such as a piano lesson, include those as well. Use the examples to help guide you.
- 2 Prioritize each task into three categories:
 - High** = Must be done today.
 - Medium** = Must be done in the next two to three days.
 - Low** = Must be done by the end of the week.

You'll have 8 minutes to create your list.

(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, let's discuss how prioritizing can keep us on task.
- 4 Use this prioritized list technique to stay organized for the upcoming week. Next time we meet, let's share how it went!



High = Must be done today.

Medium = Must be done in the next two to three days.

Low = Must be done by the end of the week.

TASK DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY
EXAMPLE Piano lesson at 4:30 pm Mow the lawn	High Low
MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	
SUNDAY	



STAY ON TRACK

Tell my time where to go!

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

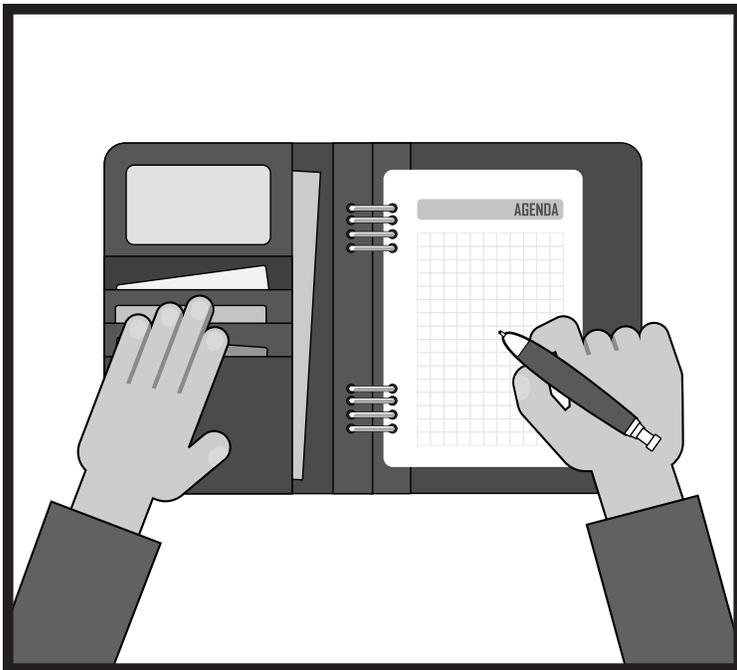
You seldom feel your best when you're overwhelmed and rushed...

How can I get it all done?
Where will I find the time?

Scheduling helps you fulfill responsibilities at school and at home.

Keeping track of weekly responsibilities lets you plan and accomplish your tasks. By taking control of your time, you take charge!

Today, we're going to create a personalized, weekly schedule calendar.



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, block out each hour of your day with the appropriate task. Next to each time period, write down when you'll be doing the following:
 - Morning routine (wakeup, shower, breakfast, transportation)
 - School
 - Homework
 - Sports practice/games
 - Appointments
 - Chores
 - Dinnertime
 - Bedtime
 - Free time (your choice)

For homework, remember to plan for upcoming deadlines. And don't forget to use downtimes, such as study period and waiting for the bus, to schedule homework. You'll have 8 minutes to write your weekly schedule.

(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)

- 2 When the timer sounds, let's discuss our schedules. How will scheduling help you?
- 3 Follow the schedule for a week. Avoid using your phone or getting distracted. If necessary, revise the length of time for each activity. Next time, we'll share the benefits of scheduling.

Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6 am							
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							
10 pm							

TALL ORDER

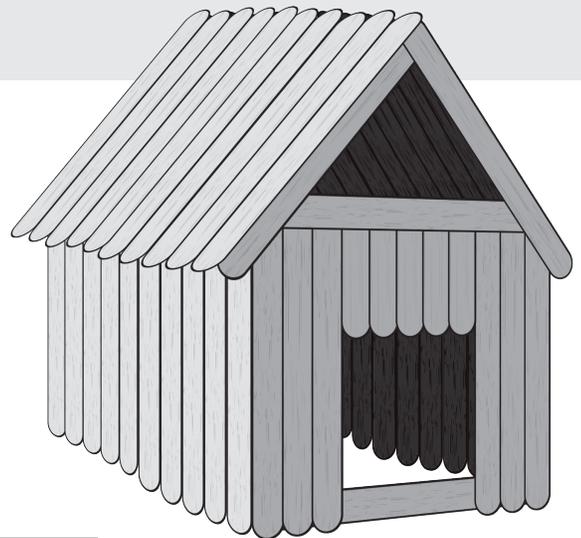
Develop an action plan

Materials: Worksheet copies, 200 Popsicle® sticks (100 per team), tape measure, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Middle school often means more of everything – more students, more classes and yes, more homework.

How do you cope with all this “more”?



Get to your homework before it gets to you!

It's helpful to plan ahead to accomplish your assignments. Planning allows you to function at your best, without distractions and interruptions.

Let's do an activity that demonstrates the benefits of planning.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide into two teams. Using Popsicle sticks, each team will build the tallest house they can on a stable, hard surface. Team members must remain silent while building. You'll have 5 minutes to build.

(Set the timer for 5 minutes.)

- 2 When the timer sounds, stop building, measure the house and write the height below.

House height:

- 3 Next, each team will develop a plan to build the tallest house. You'll have 3 minutes to plan.

(Set the timer for 3 minutes.)

- 4 When the timer sounds, each team will build another house using their plan. Team members can discuss as they build. You'll have 5 minutes to build.

(Set the timer for 5 minutes.)

- 5 When the timer sounds, stop building, measure the house and write the height below.

House height:

- 6 Compare the height of each house without a plan to each house with a plan. How did planning aid in building a taller house? How can homework planning help you complete it?

BUILD IT

Is it a group or a team?

Materials: Worksheet copies, red and blue balloons (10 of each color), masking tape, marker, timer

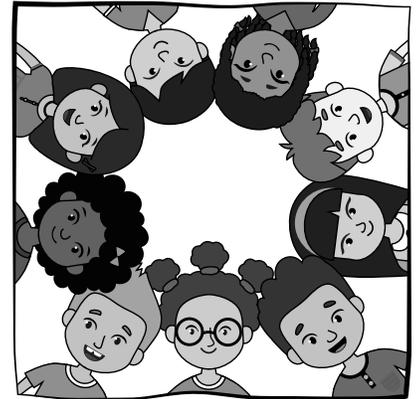
Directions: Clear a space in the room. Tape a 4-foot-long strip of masking tape to the floor at each end of the space to indicate goals. Label one goal Team Red, the other Team Blue. Mix and scatter the balloons across the space between the goals. Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We often hear the words “group” and “team” used interchangeably. But what’s the real difference between the two terms?

A group is loosely structured with no clearly defined goals. A team is carefully structured and committed to achieving a mutual goal.

Strong teams have high levels of trust and support a collaborative environment. Their strength lies in their ability to communicate and listen.

Today, we’re going to play indoor soccer using balloons. At the end of the activity, we’ll have discovered some key elements in building friendships. Let’s get started.



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide into two teams of equal numbers. Designate one Team Red, the other Team Blue. The object of the game is to get as many balloons of your color past your goal line as possible. You can’t use your hands and there are no goalies in this game.
- 2 Team Red will have 4 minutes to discuss a game plan. Team Blue cannot speak during this time and must remain silent.
(Set the timer for 4 minutes.)
- 3 When the timer sounds, we’ll reset it and signal for both teams to begin playing. We’ll play one round for 7 minutes.
(Set the timer for 7 minutes.)
- 4 When the timer sounds, let’s discuss which team had the advantage — Team Red or Team Blue? Did using a game plan help? Are communication, listening and collaboration an advantage? How can we apply what we learned to our friendships?

GREAT TRAITS

Qualities that define a friend

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

What defines a great friend? Is it someone who wears cool clothes? Always has extra cash? A person who seems to have everything?

It's not possessions that define a great friend. It's the qualities they possess.

Friendships are mutual. I like you and you like me. But what qualities are most important to you? Today, we're going to explore the qualities of a great friend and dig deeper into what friendship means to each of us.

QUALITIES OF A GREAT FRIEND

- Loyal
- Honest
- Trustworthy
- Fun to be around
- Easy to talk to
- Good listener
- Supportive
- Helpful
- Dependable
- Caring
- Unselfish
- Forgiving
- Level-headed
- Kind
- Celebrates good times
- Encouraging

STEP ONE

Using the "Qualities of a great friend" list, order your Top 10 qualities starting with what's most important and ending with what's least important. This will help you recognize someone who could be a great friend.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

STEP TWO

We'll take turns role-playing our top quality. After each turn, the group will guess which quality was role-played and why the quality is important in a friendship. Think about the qualities you'll consider the next time you want to make a new friend.



LEND A HAND

Solve

a knotty problem

Materials: Worksheet copies

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Have you ever been on a winning team?

What skills made it a winning team?

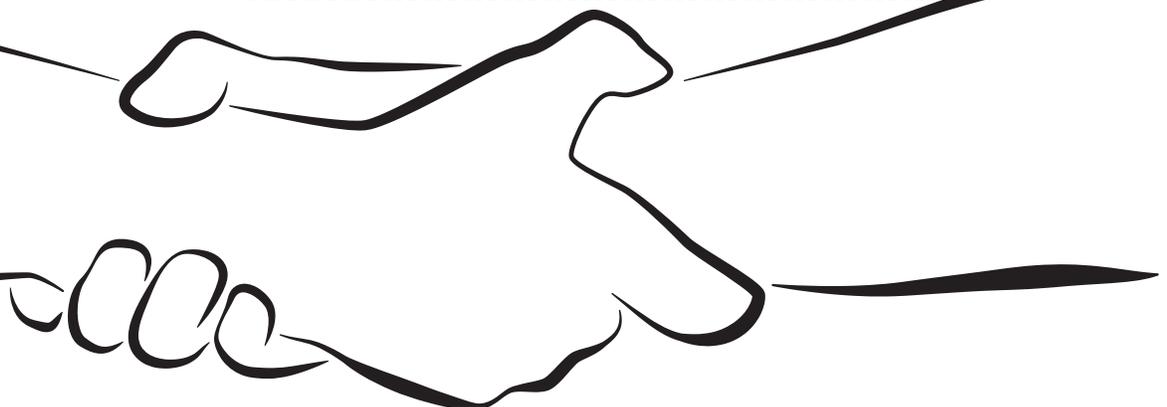
Successful teams understand the spirit of cooperation and power of communication.

Effective teams support and depend on one another and solve challenges together.

Today, we're going to learn how to cooperate while problem-solving. We'll see if we can untangle a human knot!

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide into two teams and form two circles. (If fewer than eight youths, form a single circle.)
- 2 Reach out your right hand towards the center of the circle and take someone's right hand. Don't take the hand of the person beside you.
- 3 Next, reach out your left hand and take a different person's left hand. Again, don't take the hand of the person beside you.
- 4 While communicating and working together, try to untangle the human knot *without letting go* of the two hands you're holding. The goal is to return to your original circle with no hands in the center. Attempt as many options as possible – twisting, bending, ducking and other movements – without breaking the human knot.
- 5 Let's discuss how this activity brought us closer together. How did the team cooperate? What communication skills did you need to untangle the knot?



LETTER PERFECT

Friendships

for a lifetime

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, chalkboard or whiteboard, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Friendships change throughout our life. Some don't stand the test of time and are lost. Others grow and gain greater importance over the years.

Making and maintaining friendships is a skill we'll use all of our lives.

It's important to know the qualities to seek in a friend. Equally important are the qualities necessary to be a good friend to others.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Let's spend a few minutes brainstorming how to initiate a friendship and how to keep our current friendships strong. We'll write the ideas on the board.
- 2 On the template, write a letter for a younger student to read when they reach middle school. In the letter, talk about friendships at your age. Use the ideas on the board and the worksheet example to help guide you. You'll have 7 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 7 minutes.)
- 3 When the timer sounds, we'll take turns sharing our letters. As we share, think about additional ways to meet new friends and strengthen existing friendships.
- 4 Use at least one of the examples the next time you're working on a friendship.

Dear Future Middle-Schooler,

I met my best friend Carrie in sixth grade history class. She is loyal and funny and the smartest person I know (besides me!). She listens to my problems and cares about my feelings...

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Sincerely,



MAKE 'EM SMILE

Give and receive compliments

Materials: Worksheet copies

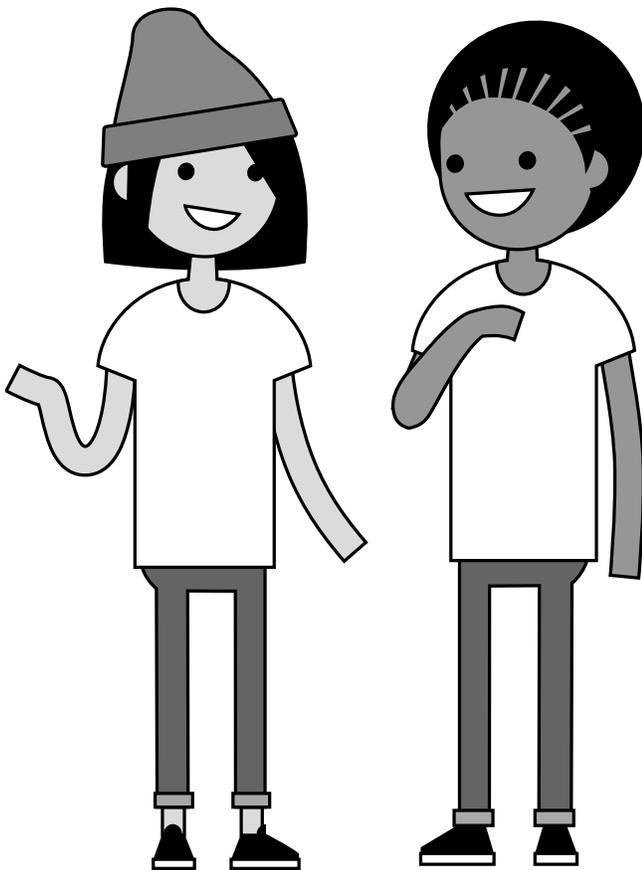
Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Positive words have “feet.” Hearing them can literally transport us from a ho-hum day to feeling elated!

Sharing positive words can provide an equally uplifting boost.

Learning how to give and receive compliments is an important life skill.

Today, let's practice complimenting one another. See if you can make someone smile!



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Stand in a circle and choose a person to start. The starter will give a compliment to the person on their left. Then, that person will give a compliment to the person on their left. We'll go around the room until everyone has given and received a compliment.
- 2 First, we'll share how we felt when we received a compliment. Then, we'll discuss how we felt after giving a compliment.
- 3 Your goal for the upcoming week is to “hand out” a minimum of three sincere compliments to different people. Take mental notes on how giving the compliments felt and share it with the group next time we meet.

A PERFECT FIT

Blend into your new community

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

“Blooming where you’re planted is easier done than said.”*

Yes, it is easier *done* than *said*!

* *10 Things Military Kids Can Teach Civilians*
Raleigh Duttweiler, Spousebuzz.com

Opening up in a new environment is stressful. Because friends don’t come to you — you go to them.

If you stress over how to fit into a new community — and perhaps a new country and culture — you may exhaust yourself before you arrive! Remember: You’re still *you* wherever you are.

Today, we’re going to discuss strategies to fit in and make new friends. It can be as simple as saying, “Hi!”



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, write down different strategies below each column head. You can share strategies you’ve used in the past or ones you’ll try in the future. Use the examples to help guide you. You’ll have 7 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 7 minutes.)

- 2 When the timer sounds, we’ll discuss our strategies. If you hear a strategy you think would work for you, write it on the template.

SMART TIPS

From acquaintance to friend

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

When we meet someone, they can become one of two types of people in our lives: Acquaintances or friends.

An acquaintance is someone we don't know well and rarely spend time with. A friend is someone we bond with and share time together.

Do you have an acquaintance you'd like to become a friend? In today's activity, we'll look at ways to make it happen!

TIPS TO BECOMING A FRIEND

- Remember their birthday and other special occasions.
- Participate in joint activities, like homework or sports.
- Invite them to hang out at your house.
- Listen to their problems and frustrations.
- Take them along on family outings.

STEP ONE

On the worksheet, list some of your acquaintances. Do you want to become friends with any of them? If so, write how to turn them into a friend using the tips and example to help guide you.

STEP TWO

Let's discuss what we wrote about turning an acquaintance into a friend. What tips will you use?

ACQUAINTANCE	TURNING THE ACQUAINTANCE INTO A FRIEND
Sarah	I'll ask Sarah to eat lunch with me.



ATTITUDE FIX

Turn moving into a positive

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Uh oh. It's those often-dreaded words: "We're going to move."

How many times have you faced the challenge of moving? Of uprooting your life and starting over?

Every time we move, it's a different experience.

Moving can be positive, but we have to look at it in a positive light. We have to readjust our attitude!

Today, we're going to share what it's like to move — both the negative and positive aspects. Let's think about the cons and pros of moving to learn how we can better prepare for our next relocation.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the worksheet under the CONS column, write down the negatives of moving to a new location. Use the examples to help guide you.
- 2 Under the PROS column, write down something optimistic that would turn each con into a positive. Think about all the new opportunities and situations you'll encounter when you move. Use the examples to help guide you. You'll have 6 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 6 minutes.)

- 3 When the timer sounds, we'll share one con and one pro about relocating. As we discuss the cons, think about how a positive outlook can move each con into the pro column. When we focus on possibilities instead of pitfalls, a whole new world opens up to us!

CONS	PROS
Going to a different school.	Having new teachers.
Living in a snowy climate.	Getting to ski!



JAZZ IT UP!

Make a fresh start

Materials: Worksheet copies, pre-cut template cards, small bag, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Maybe you're in a rut. You do the same things, with the same people, in the same way.

You always know what to expect and when to expect it.

Face it. Your current situation lacks excitement.

Moving can pump up the possibilities and jazz up life!

Today, we're going to explore how moving can reinvigorate our lives. We're going to think about making a fresh start.

STEP ONE

Taking turns, pick a card out of the bag. Read your card and figure out how you'd make a fresh start in the area written on the card.

For example, let's say you select a card that says, "Sports." If you played catcher on your former team, why not make a fresh start and try out for pitcher on your new team?

Write down everyone's tips and strategies on your worksheet.

STEP TWO

Let's share how we'll refresh various parts of our lives when we move. Next time you move, you'll be prepared to jazz up your life!

TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR MOVING

A large rectangular box containing 18 horizontal dotted lines for writing.





Friends	Organizations or clubs	Neighborhood
House	School	Sports
Teachers	Sightseeing	Family
Hobbies	Bedroom	Extracurricular activites

LOOK AHEAD

What's waiting for you?

A wealth of opportunities awaits us when we move. Think about it: New friends, neighbors, schools, sport clubs, restaurants... and the list goes on.

- Materials:** Worksheet copies, computer with Internet access, paper, pens or pencils
- Directions:** Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Why not start thinking about these opportunities today?

Things like how you'll participate and enjoy your new surroundings. Where you'll play ball or bike to on weekends. How close you'll live to the library.

Today, let's investigate our new community and start making plans!

STEP ONE

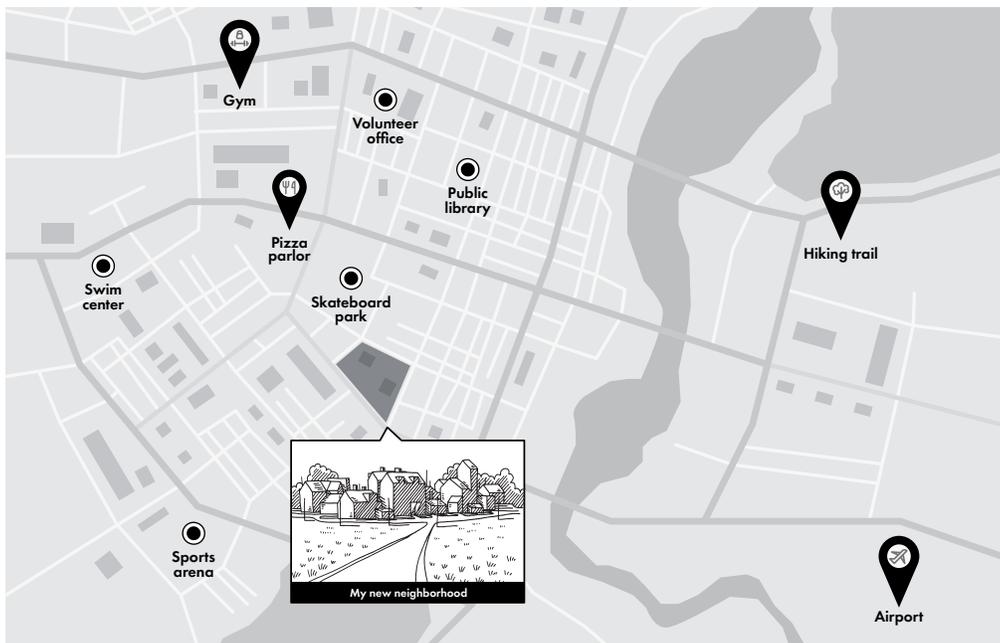
Divide into teams of three or four. Taking turns on a computer, Google the location you'll be moving to. On your paper, write down anything you find interesting or want to explore further.

STEP TWO

We'll discuss what we found during our searches. What activities excite you? What's the first thing you'll do? What will be useful to know when you move?

STEP THREE

When you go home, share the exciting opportunities you discovered with your family. If possible, continue to discover all that's available in your new community.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Focus on a new direction

Materials: Worksheet copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We're moving? Again?

That means boxes to pack... Farewells to say...
And the realization *almost everything*
will change.

Moving isn't easy. But it doesn't have to feel like punishment!

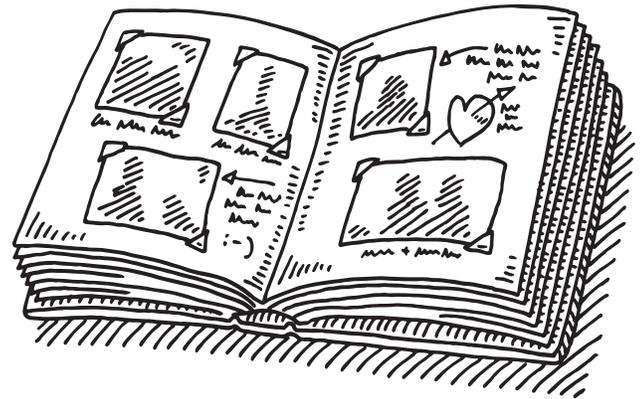
When you're facing a move, it helps to think positively. Don't dwell on what you're leaving. Instead, focus on the opportunities that lie ahead.

In today's activity, let's identify some positive strategies to cope with moving.

STEP ONE

Rank the following strategies from 1 to 10 (1 being best). As you rank each strategy, concentrate on how the action could help you deal positively with moving.

- Create a scrapbook of things to remember.
- Start a journal devoted to moving.
- Take super-silly selfies with your pals.
- Make a time capsule to hide at the home you're leaving.
- Draw plans for how you'll decorate your new room.
- Research outdoor areas near your new home.
- Make a list of restaurants and shops to visit.
- Google your new school and uncover fun facts about it.
- Plan activities for traveling to your new home.
- Get contact info from your friends to stay connected.



STEP TWO

Let's discuss our rankings with the group. As you listen, think about which strategies you'll use on your next move.

(Note: For Team Leaders only. Do not copy for the group.)

WORD SEARCH

h q w n q p a e z r e h j d o l z q y u m u s i c p x w i c
 z r j d a l z q y f p x w i c t h e a t e r s i w n q p a e
 l z q y u t e c h n o l o g y h d w n q p a e z r e h j d a
 q y s p x w i c p o o l s m x h c i w n q p a e z j d a l z
 x i c c o m m u n i t y c e n t e r h j w n q r p a e z r e
 e z r e h j d a l z q y j p x w i c c l u b s h n w n q p a
 l z r y u l x w i c s p o r t s h t w n q p a e z r e j d y
 r e h j d a l z q y x p x w i m e x c u r s i o n s p b l z
 j d a l z q y x p h i k i n g t r a i l s h x w n u q p a e
 p a e z r e h j d a l z q y d p x w i c d r a w i n g w n q
 e h j d a l z q y j p x w i c p h o t o g r a p h y a e z r
 z r e h c u l t u r a l a c t i v i t i e s h k w n q p a e
 k q y m p x w z c h w n q p a r k s w f a e z r e h j d a l

What I found:

- music.....
- theaters.....
- technology.....
- pools.....
- community center.....
- clubs.....
- sports.....
- excursions.....
- hiking trails.....
- drawing.....
- photography.....
- cultural activities.....
- parks.....



STORY LINE

Get through those first day jitters

Materials: Worksheet copies, chalkboard or whiteboard, paper, markers, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Moving and attending a new school can generate a swirl of emotions. Some up, some down.

Why? Because we're uncertain about things.

It's especially emotional on the first day of school with all those "unknowns."

As a group, we're going to take turns writing a story line-by-line about what happens on Blake's first day at his new school. For example, we could start the story with the following, beginning with Line 1:

(Line 1) On the first day of school, Blake was nervous about being the new kid.

(Line 2) Blake walked to the bus stop, but almost turned around to go back home.

After Line 2, the next person would write Line 3 and so on. Remember, these are just examples; be sure and think of your own ideas. Include feelings you might experience, as well as skills to successfully make it through those first day "unknowns"!

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Select someone to begin the story and write the first line on the board.
- 2 Take turns adding lines. Use your paper to write down the story after each person's turn.
- 3 When the story is complete, choose someone to read it aloud.
- 4 We'll discuss skills that helped Blake successfully maneuver through his first day. Share some of your own real-life experiences of being new. Or, if you're moving soon, describe something you learned and will use on your first day. If you're not moving, describe how you could help a new student feel welcome.



WHAT'S WHAT

Is it the same, different or better?

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

It's a strange fact: Family and furniture are among the only things that remain the same in a military family's life!*

* 10 Things Military Kids Want You to Know fact sheet

By the time they're teens, military youths have attended several schools, made numerous new friends and memorized half a dozen new addresses.

Moving frequently means familiarizing yourself with different locations and places. Comparing your new home to your old home. So, why not learn if your new community will be the same, different or better than your current one?

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, write down ways life will be the same, different or better in your new location. Use the template examples to help guide your answers. You'll have 8 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 8 minutes.)

- 2 When the timer sounds, let's discuss what we wrote. What's something you hope will be better? How can you or your parents help achieve it? Has this activity changed the way you'll think about moving?



A NEW LIGHT

Recognize growth and change

Materials: Worksheet copies, die

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

We all change. These changes become more apparent when there's been a separation.

It's helpful to recognize the changes that took place while a loved one was deployed.

In today's activity, we're going to explore possible changes in our loved ones. By doing so, we'll be able to accept the changes during reintegration and begin to see our loved one in a new light.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 We'll take turns rolling the die. The number you roll corresponds to one of the worksheet questions about possible changes a loved one may have experienced during deployment. Read your question and answer it aloud.
- 2 We'll continue to go around the room, rolling the die and answering the questions.
- 3 When everyone has had a turn, let's discuss each question. How will the changes affect your loved one moving forward? How will the changes affect you? Will the changes be better? How can you support your loved one? Will the changes help in your own growth?
- 4 As you become "reacquainted" with your loved one, be patient and understanding. Spend time doing simple things together, such as preparing meals, talking or even reading a book.

POSSIBLE CHANGES DURING DEPLOYMENT

Roll	Question
1	Did your loved one become more skilled at their job?
2	Did your loved one meet and make new military friends?
3	Did your loved one meet people from different cultures or learn a new language?
4	Did your loved one see new places or experience unusual events?
5	Did your loved one try different foods they'd never eaten before?
6	Did your loved one learn new skills or attempt new ways of doing old things?



FAMILY REUNION

Balance hope with reality

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Your loved one is coming home...
finally!

The thought of reuniting with your loved one is exciting. But reality doesn't always meet our hopes and expectations.

Many returning service members require rest to recover from a long deployment. Some need quiet time to reacquaint themselves with home life.

After all, the tempo and environment at home are very different from their deployment experience. In today's activity, we'll explore how to balance our excitement with the needs of our loved ones.

STEP ONE

Let's discuss our reunion hopes and expectations, but also the expectations of our returning loved one and other family members. Does everyone feel the same? If not, what are the differences? How can we look at things in a similar way?

STEP TWO

On the template, write down your expectations for the reunion. Be honest and open. It's important your family understands your hopes. Empathy and understanding will help everyone work together and reconnect.



MY EXPECTATIONS FOR THE REUNION

EXPECTATIONS FOR DAY 1

I hope we can...

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The first things I will say...

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EXPECTATIONS FOR WEEK 1

I hope we can...

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Things we'll talk about...

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EXPECTATIONS FOR MONTH 1

I hope we can...

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Things I want to be
the way they used to be...

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HERE FOR YOU

Support those in transition

Materials: Worksheets, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

When our special person comes home, it sometimes can be a difficult transition for a variety of reasons.

Things have changed during deployment: We've grown and our special person has grown. And it's likely our friends are experiencing the same emotions and challenges over their own transitions.

One of the most important life skills to learn is how to reach out and ask for help.

If you or a friend is struggling with a transition, it's time to act. Today, we're going to explore ways we can help one another by providing support and encouragement.

STEP ONE

On the worksheet, you'll see a list of transitions. After we read each transition aloud, let's brainstorm ways we can support and encourage others going through the transition. Be sure to write the ideas on your worksheet.

STEP TWO

Take your worksheet home. Whenever you or a friend faces a transition, refer to the worksheet. You'll be able to get the support and encouragement everyone deserves!

TRANSITION	WAYS TO OFFER SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT
Accepting why a special person deployed.	
Moving to a new location	
Trying to fit in and make new friends.	
Learning a new role at home.	
Dealing with change when a special person returns home.	
Understanding why a special person acts differently.	
Sharing how you've grown and changed.	



IN THE BUCKET

What's important to you?

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils, timer
Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Does it seem life is spinning around and around? That there aren't enough hours in the day to accomplish all that needs to be done?

How can you regain control?

Creating a "bucket list" lets you prioritize what's important. It highlights the goals and activities you want to achieve.

A bucket list helps communicate what matters to you. Let's start a bucket list to share with our loved one!

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 On the template, write a list of things you'd like to do with your loved one when they return home. Think about activities you enjoyed before they deployed, and what you'd like to do on their return. Use the worksheet examples to help guide you. You'll have 7 minutes to write.

(Set the timer for 7 minutes.)
- 2 When the timer sounds, let's discuss some of our favorite bucket list items. How will you share your bucket list with your loved one? Will they participate in your bucket list activities?





JUST A NOD

The power of feedback

Materials: Worksheet copies, paper, pens or pencils, timer

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

When a loved one returns from deployment, life is different. Why?

Because everyone has changed.

Feedback is a powerful tool. It can help your family accept change and reconnect.

Even a small bit of feedback like a nod can impact how we think and speak. If you say something we agree with, for example, a nod lets you know we feel the same.

In today's activity, we'll discover the power of feedback through a speaker-listener activity.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Divide into pairs. Choose a speaker and a listener. Everyone will have a turn to be both.
- 3 Let's start the first round now. Each pair will have 2 minutes to try and say the target sentence.

- 2 For the first round, the listener will choose a topic from the list below and write a target sentence about the topic. For example, "I like talking to my friends on the phone." The listener will tell the speaker the topic, but won't let the speaker see the target sentence.

Friends	Family	Routines
Communication	Chores	Transitions
Activities	Family gatherings	Holidays

The speaker will begin talking about the topic and watch the listener for feedback. If the speaker says something close to the target sentence, the listener will give a nod. No other feedback can be given. The goal is to get the speaker to say the target sentence without knowing what it is.

(Set the timer for 2 minutes.)

When the timer sounds, we'll begin the second round and switch roles. The partner who was the speaker becomes the listener, chooses a topic and writes down a target sentence. The listener will tell the speaker the topic, but won't let the speaker see the target sentence. The partner who was the listener will now try to say the target sentence without knowing what it is.

Remember: The listener can't speak. You can only provide feedback through a nod. We'll start the 2 minutes for round two now.

(Set the timer for 2 minutes.)

- 4 When the timer sounds, let's discuss the activity. Who was able to say the target sentence based on the nod feedback? How can feedback help your family reconnect?



STEP UP

Adjust to new responsibilities

Materials: Worksheet copies, soft ball

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

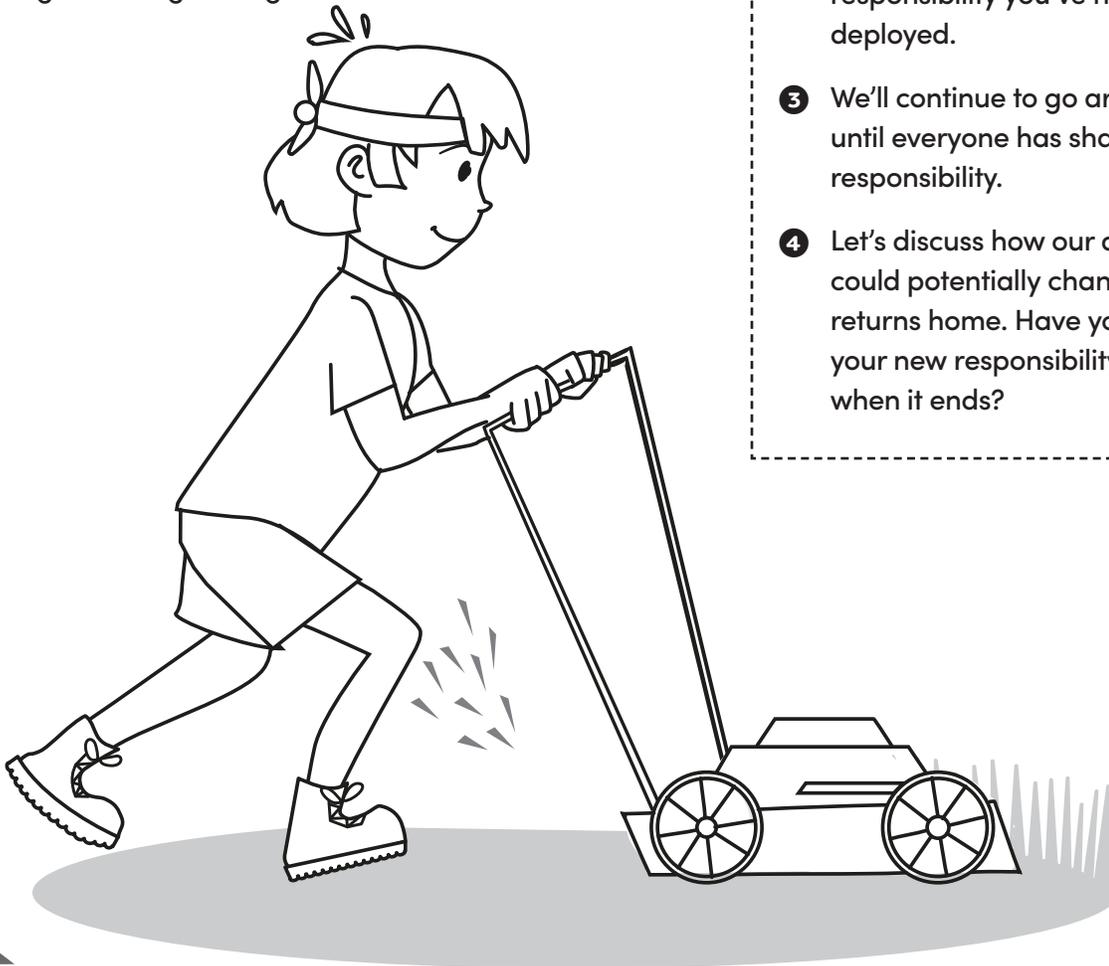
Family members step up and assume additional responsibilities when a loved one deploys.

Maybe you mow the lawn now. Or, prepare your own school lunch in the morning.

Our family roles and responsibilities change during deployment. They change again when our loved one returns.

Understanding our expectations about reintegration and the adjustments we must make are vital to a healthy family situation.

Today, let's spend time talking about how our responsibilities have changed and will change again during reintegration.



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Sit or stand in a circle. Give the ball to a youth.
- 2 Taking turns, pass the ball around the circle. When it's your turn, share one additional responsibility you've had since your loved one deployed.
- 3 We'll continue to go around the circle until everyone has shared one additional responsibility.
- 4 Let's discuss how our added responsibilities could potentially change when our loved one returns home. Have you grown accustomed to your new responsibility? Or, will you be happy when it ends?

THE INSIDE SCOOP

Interview

by your loved one

Materials: Worksheet copies, template copies, pens or pencils

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss as a group.

Your loved one has been deployed for a while. During that time, you've met new friends, attended school and participated in numerous activities.

You've changed inside, as well.

An interview is an insightful way to converse and connect with your loved one.

Conducting an interview is an opportunity for your loved one to discover new insights about you. To learn how you've grown and changed during their deployment.

STEP ONE

On the template are questions about various facets of life. Check the questions you want your loved one to ask you during the interview. You also can add additional questions of your own.

STEP TWO

With your loved one, schedule a date and time for the interview. Share the outcome with the group.



MY LIFE: FEELINGS, INTERESTS AND BELIEFS

Directions: After you schedule an interview date and time, give your loved one this list of questions. You also can add additional questions of your own. Tell your loved one to ask you the checked questions.

Questions about you

- What makes you proud of yourself?
- Would you choose a different first name? Why?
- If you could travel back in time, what year would you travel to? Why?
- What makes you laugh?
- Who is your hero? Why?

Questions about interests

- Who is your favorite band or solo artist?
- What's your favorite movie?
- What do you do for fun?
- What's your favorite outdoor activity?
- What motivates you?

Questions about the future

- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- If you won the lottery, how would you spend the money?
- What are your thoughts about a career or job?
- What do you wish you could do that you can't do now?
- What are your goals for the upcoming year?

Questions about family

- What family activities and events do you enjoy?
- What do you do at family mealtime that's important to you?
- What are your favorite family traditions?

Questions about friends

- Do you find it easy or difficult to make friends?
- Who is your best friend?
- What are the qualities of a good friend?

Questions about school

- Who is your favorite teacher?
- What should you learn more about in school?
- What should you learn less about in school?

Questions about behavior

- Do you have any bad habits?
If so, what are they?
- What do you do when you're bored?
- What are your thoughts about politics?
- What frightens you the most?
- What makes you angry? Why?
- How do you handle stress?

Add your own questions

-
-
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-
-
-
-
-

