

Bear Us In Mind

A Psychological Toolkit For Children



Toolkit Contents

Hello, and welcome to your
PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOLKIT

Whether you are a child's parent, their host in the UK or a supporting adult from their school or local community, this kit is for you.

This toolkit has been compiled for families displaced due to the war in Ukraine, but it can be easily adapted for refugees from other countries.

A small team of us have collaborated on a range of tools that we hope will help you to support any child or young person impacted by separation, loss or bereavement. So often, with just a little support and understanding, a child can manage the most unthinkable of circumstances and so can their parents. They find strength they didn't know they had. The hope and determination of the Ukrainian people has been an inspiration to the world and has guided us in the production of this special toolkit.



Over 30 years' experience working directly with families who are trying to rebuild their lives after great loss has allowed us to choose tools that are simple and safe for you to use. It is our hope that you will build a deeper connection to the children you have chosen to share this toolkit with, at times having fun with it, and at other times allowing for complex emotions like sorrow and anger to be expressed.

The tools will help with the letting go of trauma, holding on to special memories and rebuilding strength and trust. Grief is a natural reaction, and these tools will help you support both the expression and management of grief. If a child shows more severe signs of trauma, then you may need to seek specialist help. There are several specialist national helplines and partners at the end of 'toolkit guidelines' who you can contact if needed.

AIMS OF THE TOOLKIT

- To support an adult (parent, teacher, volunteer etc.) who wants to help a displaced child to process separation, loss and/or bereavement
- To provide videos and written information to build confidence to use the eight tools
- To provide practical, simple and safe tools to help all children adjusting to change

Please visit our website to register your box and watch the nine short films about how to use the tools to optimum effect. We have also written worksheets for each of the tools, which can be found both on our website, alongside the corresponding video, or towards the end of these guidelines. The films and written guidelines are available in both English and Ukrainian.

Please stay in touch and let us know how you are getting on.

Children need to know they are not alone. Equally, a Ukrainian parent may want to swap stories with others who will understand. We have therefore created a Bear Us In Mind community on our website and Instagram pages. We are unable to respond to individual queries on an individual child, however we will try to respond to any themes that emerge on our website under FAQs.



www.bearusinmind.org.uk

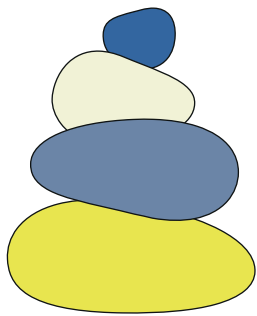


@bearusinmindUK

@juliestokesobe



A psychological toolkit for children who have experienced loss and separation



Balancing
Memories

- To encourage a child to describe difficult memories and the different impact on their **senses** (what they thought, heard, smelt, touched etc.)
- To encourage a child to **edit** and **balance** their memories
- To help reduce the frequency of **flashbacks** and improve **concentration**

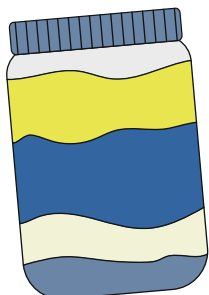
This tool is a simple collection of three stones to help a child process trauma and balance difficult and precious memories. On our website you can find our films, which will help to explain how trauma can impact a child's brain. The Balancing Memories video will also demonstrate how this work can help to reduce the challenge of unprocessed trauma.



There Will Be Light,
There Will Be Hope

- To build **trust** between a child, their parent and their supporter
- To experience **shared grieving**
- To have a positive way of recognising **important dates**

The tool in the kit for this activity is a candle, which can be used to establish a sense of calm when it is time to work with the child; to create a special ritual for the family and host family to enjoy together; to mark significant dates for the family; and simply to make a wish, keeping the flame of hope alight in these young people. The candle in our kits is infused with soothing essential oils and is inscribed with '**There Will Be Light, There Will Be Hope**', a phrase chosen by a Ukrainian woman to inspire strength in others affected by the war.



Friendship Rainbow

- To hold on to **friendships from home**
- To allow others to understand what these **relationships** mean to the child
- To acknowledge the importance of **new friendships**

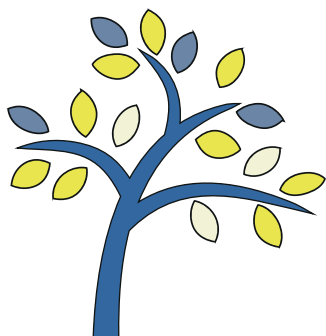
This is a simple but impactful tool that will help a child to share thoughts of their friends back home. The child colours white salt with chalks chosen to represent each friend and then stores this collection of colours in a jar. They can add to it as they develop new friendships: this is what we call 'the grief swing' - allowing oneself to both hold on and let go during an experience of loss.



We Are Family

- To create a strong symbol for **family unity**
- To enable a child to manage **separation anxiety** and night-time fears
- To use **sensory connections** to soothe (e.g. scent, touch)

A family of bears, both large and small, to represent the solidarity and strength of the family unit and provide comfort to children experiencing separation anxiety. The child can then take photos of the bears with drawings or messages for loved ones. These can be shared with the Bear Us In Mind community online, and especially with family members in Ukraine where possible.

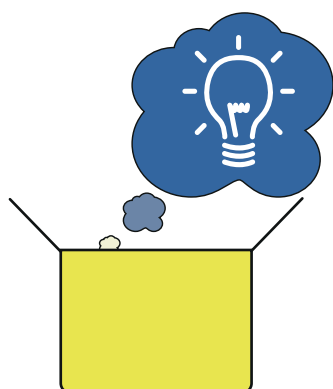


Growing Around Grief*

- To engage the child in the **outdoors** and show the importance of **movement** when managing grief
- To show the benefits of a **growth mindset** when managing grief
- To create a greater sense of control and mastery of **skills the child values**

With all the many losses, a child can feel quite suffocated by grief. This tool – sunflower seeds to plant with their family – is all about growing around their grief, not ignoring it, but looking at how they can begin to rebuild their lives, as symbolised by the growing of tiny green shoots.

My Family Tree and Me is another powerful tool in this collection that helps a child to build a stronger sense of self and where they have come from. Their drawing of a tree will help them identify and share the most important people who have shaped their lives (the roots), their strengths (the trunk), their hopes for the future (the branches), the new people they trust and respect (the leaves) and the things they love to do that gives them energy, as symbolised by the sun.

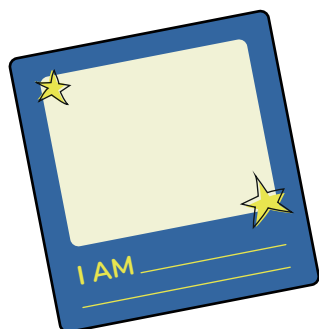


Little Box of BIG Thoughts

- To **expand the stories**, we tell ourselves about other people in our family
- To **strengthen the connection** between an older child and a parent
- To promote the **continuing bonds** that reassure a child separated from family through displacement or bereavement

A simple but impactful gift for both parents and children of all ages, these small cards carry a series of incomplete sentences for each family member to complete, prompting conversations and the expression of a range of emotions, hopes and fears. There is an electronic version of this tool that can be filled in and sent to someone or you can make a set of cards to give as a gift.

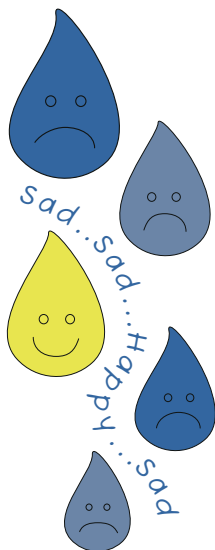
*Lois Tonkin - Growing around Grief - another way of looking at grief recovery. Bereavement Care Volume 5, 1996 issue 1



This Is Me

- To encourage a child to explore what makes them **unique** – their identity
- To hold on to a sense of **PAST** and **PRESENT**
- To help them to share their **personality and culture** in a new setting/country

These tools are designed to help a child talk about life before, life now and to retain a sense of what can never be lost. You will use simple worksheets to choose photographs or capture drawings and words to describe what is important to the child. Together you can make a photo book and then send it off to be printed. It will give them something tangible to have to hand and read if they are feeling lost or lonely.



You Will Be Okay

- To find **strength**, stay **hopeful** and get to grips with grief
- To support a child when someone **important** to them has **died**
- To help an adult supporter to have **empathy** and an **expanded grief toolkit**

Not all children you support with separation and loss will use this tool. This book is only to be given to a child if they have been bereaved. We recommend the supporters who are using the Bear Us In Mind toolkit read it. The seven grief muscles involve a range of practical tools that will help the child to start a more open conversation. Acknowledging the child's feelings and thoughts may help to avoid the more complicated aspects of grief that can be shown in their behaviour.

You Will Be Okay was published in 2021 by Hachette Children's Group. It is one of the first non-fiction books about grief for children aged 9 and above. The book helps children deal with bereavement from all types of death and we are currently working with the publisher on a translation into Ukrainian.

Bear Us In Mind

A Psychological Toolkit For Children



Toolkit Guidelines

Tips for supporters

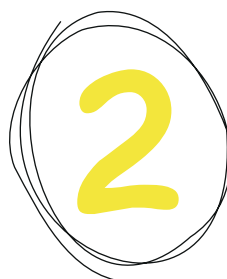


BE LED BY THE CHILD

When exploring the various activities in the toolkit, try to understand the dynamics in the family – it's possible, for example, that a parent may need to be present to translate. Your role is to support a strong connection between the parent and child without the parent taking over or feeling overly responsible.

A parent is likely to be emotionally vulnerable too.

Focus on allowing the child to have **choice** and **control** over what they are doing, the length of time they spend on it and even where they choose to do it. As a supporter you can help to structure what you are doing together, but ultimately the child can choose the pace and flow of the activity. **They are the experts on how they feel, you simply need to listen and ask the questions that will help them to unlock their feelings and have a sense of mastery over their situation.**



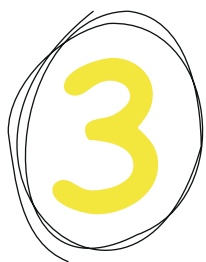
ACTIVELY LISTEN

Active listening is different from passive listening (e.g. nodding your head and not speaking)

Respect what they are choosing to share and actively listen to what the child is saying, by “playing back” what you have heard and checking the meaning of what you have heard.

‘When you said you were annoyed about school, what did you mean by annoyed?’

After a child has said something it can be useful to say, *‘Can I just playback what I think I’ve heard?’* This will give the child the opportunity to add more detail and clarify. It is not a test of how well you are listening, it's a way of helping a child to think and reflect on how they feel.

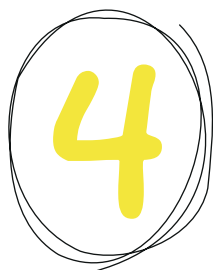


ASK THE CHILD FOR THEIR HELP

For some people, asking for help might make them feel like they are not good enough. But consider for a moment how flattered you feel if someone asks for your help. Use this mindset to **empower** the child and ask for their help.

'Help me to understand what it was like to leave your school friends and the tennis club.'

'Help me to understand what you saw when you returned to your village after the bomb had hit the church.'



SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Children generally find **routines** and **boundaries** help them feel safe. When life is so deeply unpredictable and threatening, regular routines that you can rely on are important. You might find it helpful to work together with the child's parent or carer to find some ways to support them, particularly around routines such as bedtime.

When setting up any activity, it can also be useful to set clear boundaries before you start, so the child knows what to expect, for example,

'Mum will be in the next room while we work here in the dining room. We may need to ask Mum to help us translate.'

'I finish work at 3pm on a Friday so I will come and see you for the next 8 weeks each Friday if you think that would work for you too? We can play a game first and then do an activity from the toolkit – how does that sound?'

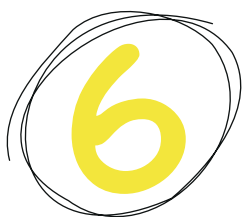


BE CURIOUS

Ask questions that begin with the word **WHAT** rather than **WHY**. 'What' questions may be less challenging for children and feel safer to answer. 'Why' can make a child feel defensive.

'What would need to happen for you to feel less scared?' rather than, 'Why do you feel scared?'

'What would "good" look like with your exams?' rather than, 'Why are you not working for your exams?'



USE SCALING TECHNIQUES

Scaling feelings from 1 to 10 is a way of helping children, parents and their supporters work out how things could be improved.

Supporting adult: 'With 1 out of 10 being very difficult and 10 out of 10 being amazing, how many marks out of 10 would you give being at your new host home?'

Child: 'I'd give it a 7.'

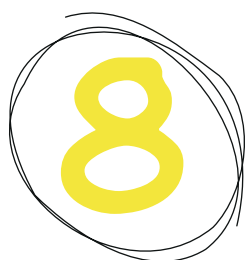
Supporting adult: 'What would need to happen to make it an 8? Are there any days when it drops to a 6?'



ALLOW EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

If the child shows emotion, try not to panic. You are not making them cry or triggering anger but rather allowing them to safely explore their emotions. It is okay to comment with respect and curiosity, and to offer reassurance, but try not to shut it down immediately. For example, *'This is a very tough topic to think about,'* or *'You sound like you miss him so much?'*

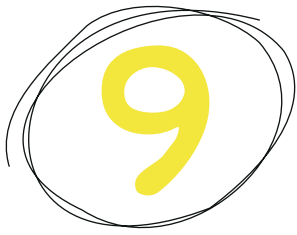
It can be helpful to say, *'Let's take some deep breaths,'* and to do this with the child. Remember that, sometimes this might amplify the emotion rather than calm it, so be prepared to say something like *'Do you want to find Mum for a hug?'*



BE HONEST AND TRUSTWORTHY

An environment of **trust** is based on honesty, and it is important for you to establish a trusting relationship with the child you are supporting, to enable them to process what has happened. If you don't know the answer to a difficult question, then it may be best to be truthful. An age-appropriate, honest answer, even if it is *'I don't know that yet,'* may be more helpful than a promise you may not be able to keep.

For example, if they ask, *'How long can we stay with you for?'* you may need to acknowledge the child's mixed feelings: *'I guess we don't know that for sure. We expect you to be with us for 6 months, which I know is so tough as you are away from your dad and all your other home friends. I also know that you are enjoying school, and are very close mates with Jack...'*

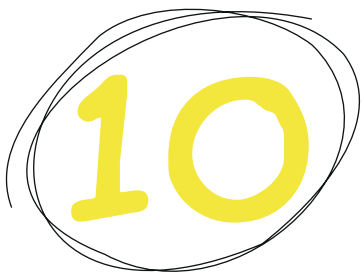


BE SAFETY AWARE

The children you are supporting need to be and feel safe. Helping a child feel safe can be very simple: this could be with a smile, their own space to sleep and play or access to a regular meal and warm water. Giving them a voucher so they can choose the clothes and toiletries they like can feel empowering. Often the little things bring huge comfort.

If you are sourcing your own items for the toolkit, please ensure they are safe to use. Be aware of the use of candles and never leave a child unattended with a lit candle. You may often have another adult from the child's family with you as you do an activity, but if you are alone, we recommend letting other people in your house or work setting know what you are doing, and consider leaving the door open, so that the space feels private but not isolated. Be aware of internet safety and the sharing of photos and videos of the child or their name. Any sharing of photos should always be done with the consent of both the child and the parent and you should consider any risks involved with this. Being outdoors with a child can be an effective way of opening up conversations but consider carefully where this is done and how safe the child feels.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – if you think any child may be at risk of harm or has suffered abuse, contact your local authority's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or, in an emergency, call the police. Ensure the child is safe, make a record of what you were told and keep it.



REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Children notice and appreciate humility, kindness and curiosity, rather than a know-it-all attitude or a professional mask.

You are part of a network of support around the child and you do not have to do everything yourself. Please reach out for further support or guidance when you need to, to ensure you are effectively supported, particularly if you are listening to very real and traumatic situations. We have included several helplines at the end of these guidelines (p. 6-7) and on our website to talk through any specific concerns you have. The child's welfare is always at the centre of what you are trying to achieve, and your own welfare is a key part of their recovery.

In the final of pages of this booklet, please find some helpful information on recognising trauma and signposting to useful links and additional help.

Signs of trauma

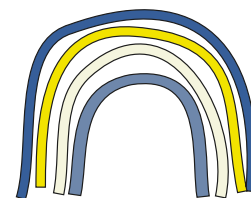
Supporting a child or young person through this time in their life can be challenging and it can be helpful to have some understanding of what you are seeing or hearing. Here are some of the signs of trauma that you may notice. While it is only natural that children will experience any or all of these reactions, if any are both persistent and severe you may find it helpful to contact some of the specialist organisations listed overleaf.

- Fear of being separated from their parent or carer
- Crying or screaming (particularly in pre-school age children)
- Bed wetting
- Difficulties sleeping
- Nightmares
- Having thoughts or flashbacks that seem to come from nowhere
- Angry outbursts
- Difficulties calming down once distressed
- Being fearful or anxious
- Feeling guilty about being safely away from the war
- Easily startled
- Difficulties in concentration
- Withdrawing from family or activities that they would normally enjoy
- Complaining of stomach or headaches more often than normal

Thank you for being open to supporting a child or family with this toolkit. It is important that you also take some time to look after yourself, so that you feel more able to cope with what you may be hearing and seeing. We are often more able to help others if we are also looking after our own wellbeing. The organisations listed at the end have considerable expertise and can also suggest others for your particular concern. We will also post on Instagram any themes that are coming up for supporters.



Useful links to additional help



MENTAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA

- Anna Freud – www.annafreud.org
- David Trickey on Trauma – www.annafreud.org/insights/blogs/2017/01/david-trickey-traumatic-events-how-children-and-young-people-can-react-and-how-adults-can-respond
- ASSIST Trauma Care – www.assisttraumacare.org.uk
- Beacon House – www.beaconhouse.org.uk/?section=welcome-to-beacon-house
- MIND – www.mind.org.uk
- PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide) – www.papyrus-uk.org
- UK Trauma Council – www.uktraumacouncil.org
- Young Minds – www.youngminds.org.uk

BEREAVEMENT

- Cruse (help in Ukrainian language) – www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/understanding-grief-information-in-other-languages/ukranian
- Child Bereavement UK – www.childbereavementuk.org
- Childhood Bereavement Network – www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk
- Grief Encounter – www.griefencounter.org.uk
- Winston's Wish – www.winstonswish.org

REFUGEE CHARITIES

- AMAR foundation – www.amarfoundation.org
- Amna (Refugee trauma initiative) – www.amna.org
- British Red Cross – www.redcross.org.uk (Help for Ukrainian Nationals: www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine)
- Children and War – www.childrenandwar.org
- Refugee Council – www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/information-on-ukraine
- City of Sanctuary – www.cityofsanctuary.org/get-involved/ukraine/

FOR PARENTS OR HOSTS

- NACCOM (good practice guide) – www.naccomm.org.uk/naccomm-launches-hosting-good-practice-guidance
- NHS – www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/services-and-support-for-parents/
- United Nations – www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/prevention-through-family-skills.html
- Ukraine Parenting – <https://ukraineparenting.web.ox.ac.uk/eng>

FOR CHILDREN

- Childline – www.childline.org.uk
- The Mix – www.themix.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

- NSPCC – www.nspcc.org.uk/
- NHS – www.england.nhs.uk/safeguarding/how-to-raise-a-safeguarding-concern/
- The UK Government – www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse
- UK Police – Emergency: call 999 / Non-emergency: call 101



Bear Us In Mind

A Psychological Toolkit For Children

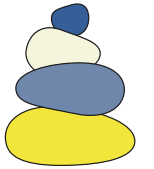


Worksheets



WORKSHEET

Balancing Memories



- To encourage a child to describe difficult memories and the different impact on their senses (what they saw, thought, heard, smelt, touched etc.)
- To encourage a child to edit and balance their memories
- To help reduce the frequency of flashbacks and improve concentration



Some memories are fantastic and spark joy, others can be very difficult for a child to manage. Balancing separation and grief is about balancing memories so, while talking about a range of memories is often hard, a child's memory muscle must be exercised and strengthened. This activity can help a child to understand that we can't ignore the difficult stuff, nor can we let it dominate, and it will guide you in supporting a child as they think and talk about different types of memories.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- One dark-coloured rock that is rough to the touch
- One light-coloured or smooth pebble
- Pieces of colourful glass or a polished gem stone(s), or just a pretty stone from the garden
- A small bag or box to keep the stones together; the stones need to be small enough to fit in a child's hand together

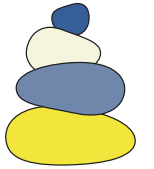


'Since the war all my different memories are like actors coming into a stage. I can't stop them coming on. Some actors are scary, others make me smile. With my stones I now have learned how to shine a spotlight on the memories I want to remember most.'



WORKSHEET

Balancing Memories

**WHAT TO DO:**

- When you know you have plenty of time, sit with the child in a quiet place where they feel comfortable. Perhaps invite them to light a candle to signal this is some special work you are doing together.
- Explain that you have an activity that may help them to think and talk about their different types of memories, whether from before the war, during it, or more recent memories from their time with you. Allow the child to look at, touch, and hold the stones in their hands.
- The first memory stone to use is the smooth and light-coloured pebble, representing ordinary, normal days before the war. Ask the child to hold it and encourage them to tell you what everyday life was like for them. This can often be the most important stone for a child, as they recall things they miss all the time, like school, family, friends and even food. If the pebble is flat and pale enough, you could ask the child to draw a little picture on it of something that symbolises the safety and simplicity of ordinary life.
- The second memory stone is the rough rock. Ask the child to clench this tightly. Notice how it is different from the smooth, warm pebble. Holding this rock, feeling its rough or sharp edges, say, **'I wonder if you can think of a memory that is difficult to handle, just like this rough rock?'** The child may be able to tell you about a difficult memory they have, or they may prefer to draw it out on paper. Please remember, children can get very anxious about drawing, so reassure them it is okay to use stick people and simple outlines to express their memory.
- If it's too hard to talk about on this occasion, you could say, **'I can sense this memory is very important but also very tough and difficult to share right now... do you think we could maybe come back to this rough rock next week?'**



- When you meet again remind them that you are aware there is a rough memory that you want to help them to share so it is not taking up so much space in their minds. To support them with this, you may want to show them the part of the 'Balancing Memories' video where we use a wastepaper bin to reflect what is happening in the brain (www.bearusinmind.org.uk).



- The third type of stones are for exploring special memories, using coloured glass, gemstones or a shiny small stone. While they hold this stone, encourage the child to think about the very special memories they might want to share. Allow them to really connect with these stories and, if they start to cry, allow the tears to flow. Your role is to see beyond the sadness and realise that you are giving the child a gift to engage with aspects of their life that were very special (and always will be) despite being 'happy/sad tears' at this moment in their lives. If they talk about them regularly then they will become more happy/sad/happy tears.
- Finally, holding all three stones together in one hand can be a way of symbolising that these different memories can sit alongside each other in our minds, in a balanced way.

As a child uses the stones to think about their memories, there may be emotions. In your role as a supporter, it is important to remember that you have not made them cry, or made them feel guilt, shame or anger, but rather you have allowed them to safely explore a range of emotions.

The stones can also be used to regularly check in at the start of your session. For example, the smooth stone may represent something that is feeling okay now, the rough stone could be something that feels difficult or is worrying the child, and the special stone could be a way of sharing one nice thing that has happened since arriving in the UK.



WORKSHEET

There Will Be Light, There Will Be Hope



- To build trust between a child, their parent and their supporter
- To experience shared grieving
- To have a positive way of recognising important dates



Candles can inspire a sense of wonder and warmth for a child, and remind them of happy and peaceful times. This candle has a memorable fragrance of soothing essential oils. Whenever you use the candle, please be aware of where the child is at all times, and make sure they don't touch or play with it. These boundaries are important, and you want them to feel safe. The inspirational phrase **'There will be light, there will be hope'** was suggested by a young woman in a bunker, during an air raid in Kyiv.

WE SUGGEST THREE WAYS YOU COULD USE THE CANDLE:



STARTING A SESSION

Using candlelight can signal you will be spending special time together, exploring tools from the toolkit. When normal daily life is SO disrupted, children crave routines and boundaries as it helps them to feel safe. Equally they can find the idea of facing their fears overwhelming. Showing your warmth and a slightly firmer approach to boundaries can be very reassuring for the child.

Find a quiet, private space to come together. Setting and sticking to a regular time and place may help build trust and a sense of consistency in the child. PREDICTABILITY matters when your life feels out of control. If they are young and English is not yet easy for them to navigate, they may wish to sit with a parent or older sibling.

- Explain to the child that whenever the candle is lit, it is their time to be with you and/or their family, to sit, think and talk if they want to. They may only be able to manage a few minutes initially, and trust will need to be built before difficult conversations are started – sometimes you may just sit there together quietly, and that is okay. It may feel right to do an activity together when the candle is lit, such as colouring or playing a game.

Reassure the child that they can blow the candle out to show you when they wish to end this time together. When a trusting relationship is established, you may wish to use some of this time to explore the other products in the box.





WORKSHEET

There Will Be Light, There Will Be Hope



A FAMILY CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY

This is a very special thing to do together and can be quite emotional for all involved.

The shared ritual of lighting a candle and taking turns to remember together can help bond a family unit. Host family members can also join in with this ceremony and remember people in their own lives. We often make assumptions about how people are feeling in a family – ‘Amelia doesn’t seem to be that bothered’; ‘Christopher is just interested in gaming and never speaks about his father’; ‘Mum just tells us off all the time’, and so on. This ceremony can provide a respectful and helpful insight into the collective, and can become a soothing ceremony, either as a one-off, or perhaps a monthly commitment. We do know some families where younger children ask for it every week, but this will be too intense for most at first.

- Sit in a circle on the floor or around a table and encourage one person to light the candle, say who they would like to remember and one thing they miss about them. It may be that someone would like to show others a photo or an item that reminds them of their chosen person. Encourage children to get the photo before the candlelight ceremony begins so as to maintain a calm and special atmosphere once the candle is lit.
- Carefully pass the lit candle on to the next person and encourage them to do the same. It may be that some simply want to say a person’s name, for example, **‘I’m lighting this for my friend Zelda’**. It is important that no one feels under any pressure to talk – they are engaging just by being present in the ceremony.
- After the final person has held the candle, they leave the candle burning in the centre of the circle. This signals a time to listen to a song or piece of music together. It also signals the time to darken the room. As the music is switched on, turn down the lights and let the candlelight give space to any emotions while the music plays. Allow different children to have the responsibility of turning on the music, placing the candle in the centre, closing the curtains and turning off the lights, so that they become a part of carefully staging this ceremony.



- Sometimes as the music plays and the privacy of the darkness allows the connection to sadness over missing people, pets and places, you may hear a gentle sobbing. Have a box of tissues to hand so it is not so difficult to reach for a tissue during the ceremony.
- To signal the end, you could prepare something to enjoy together – a special treat and a film, or if the child wants to let off steam, perhaps a quick walk or play outside.



IMPORTANT DATES

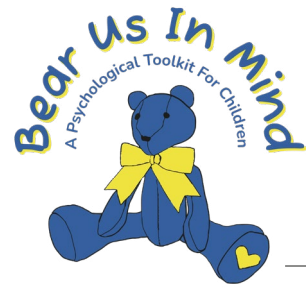
There may be many special moments when the family will want to light their candle – important days when you want to celebrate while being mindful of those missing from around the table.

When the family first arrives, try to make a calendar of dates that may be important to recognise – birthdays and anniversaries, for example – as well as dates when things ‘should’ have happened, like a family wedding or a party. Celebrate those dates with a candle ceremony so they don’t go unmarked.

Also include personal moments of celebration the children would have wanted to share with their family, for example, getting picked for the football team or receiving a good report from school. Lighting the candle can help recognise that their family are – or would have been – proud of their achievements.

Our special family dates

- Mum’s Birthday – June 15th
- Dad’s Birthday – July 6th (40!)
- A week with Grandpa on the farm – August
- Tom and Chelsea’s wedding (my cousin) – October 3rd
- My Birthday – November 5th
- The day Grandma died last year – Dec 23rd



WORKSHEET

Friendship Rainbow



- To hold on to friendships from home
- To allow others to understand what these relationships mean to the child
- To acknowledge the importance of new friendships



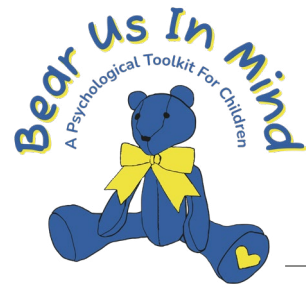
Children often love doing this simple yet impactful activity. Even a child who is less artistic can easily create a jar that they feel proud to retain. As they get lost in colouring the white salt you can talk about their friendships from home. A special bond will be established between you and the child as you understand more fully what friendship means to them.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- An empty jar with a lid
- Salt
- Coloured chalks or pastels
- 5 pieces of A4 paper





WORKSHEET

Friendship Rainbow



WHAT TO DO:

- Encourage your child to fill the jar right to the very top with salt. Using the Friendship Rainbow postcard in the toolkit pack, or simply on a piece of paper, write down the names of their friends and one thing they remember about them.

Ask them to choose a colour from their chalks or pastels for each friend and put some of that colour on the postcard or piece of paper near their name. Five friends is a good number for the jar, but you could do fewer.
- Fold each piece of paper across the middle like a greetings card (this helps when the salt is poured back into the jar later on!). Spread out a piece of paper for each friend and divide the salt from the jar between them.
- Have the child colour in each pile of salt using the chalk or pastel shade they have chosen for their friends. They must rub each chalk or pastel backwards and forwards into the salt; the harder they rub, the brighter the coloured salt will become. It can be easier if you turn the chalk onto its side rather than holding like you would to draw. As the child is colouring each pile of salt, you may be able to ask some questions about this particular friendship, finding out more about the things they liked to do together, or what they miss most about them.

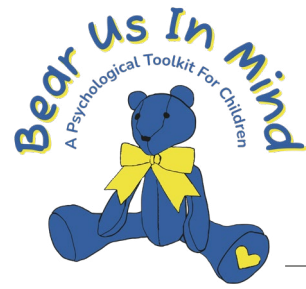


- Carefully pour the coloured salt – one piece of paper at a time – into your jar. Tap the jar gently on a hard surface to help the salt settle, but try not to shake the jar as it may mix up the colours.
- If there is some space left at the top of the jar, you can place a piece of cotton wool on top, before putting the lid on the jar tightly. This helps to ensure that the different colours of salt don't mix together.
- Keep the jar with the postcard or piece of paper, which shows their friends' names and their memory of them, in a special place. Your child may like to show someone else their jar now, and tell them about their friendships. They may even like to take it into school to show their new friends.



In time, they may like to do a second jar to represent their new friendships in the UK, a wonderful opportunity to celebrate those new relationships.





WORKSHEET

We Are Family



- To create a strong symbol for family unity
- To enable a child to manage separation anxiety and night-time fears
- To use sensory connections to soothe (e.g. scent, touch)



.....

These activities use soft toys to encourage children to open up about how they are feeling, as well as bringing them comfort and helping them to feel safe and secure. Soft toys can become trusted companions to children and help them to manage fear and separation anxiety, and to feel connected to people they care about.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

- One large teddy bear or soft toy, and enough smaller soft toys for each child in the family you are supporting. You may already have toys or teddies, but if not, it can be a lovely experience to choose these together with the child. Children often like to choose animals that are reflective of their personality and how they want to be seen.

A SYMBOL OF FAMILY UNITY

Encourage the family to give a name to their larger soft toy and family group, one that represents their family,

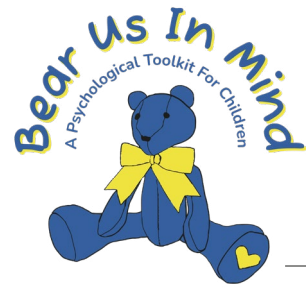
'We decided to call our large bear Big Courage and the little ones are called Tiny Courage.'

'We called our bears Kovalenkos – it was our grandfather's name.'

Put the soft toys in a prime location in the home so that they're visible to everyone and visitors to the host's home can see the strength of the family unit – both those that live in this setting and those who live elsewhere.

On a piece of paper or a postcard (available to download on our website), family members could write or draw a message to those who are not with them. This message or picture could be propped up on or close to the toy or teddy for a photo, which could then be sent home digitally, if technology allows. This will help build a sense of connection; the child can also be in these photos if they want. Photos can also be uploaded to the Bear Us In Mind social media platforms so they can see that they are part of a community of children in a similar situation. Please ensure only first names are shared and that the child only participates if they are happy to do so.





WORKSHEET

We Are Family



MANAGING SEPARATION ANXIETY AND WORRIES

It may be that the child you are supporting is worried whenever they need to separate from family members, or about family members from whom they're already separated.

'I miss my mummy when I go to school – I want to stay with her.'

'I saw on the news that there are bombs near Odessa where Daddy is fighting.'

'Mum has managed to get a job but I worry about her travelling on a bus in a strange country at night.'

'Our grandfather is returning home to get Grandma – I am worried he will be shot.'

The smaller soft toys mentioned before can be given to each child as a way of keeping them connected to the family unit, reminding them that they are not alone.

With younger children, the little cubs can also be used as a puppet to chat to the larger ones or to each other, encouraging an open dialogue about the child's concerns.

'Little Lemon Cub was telling Big Blue Bear about something that really helped on the days when he was most scared...'

The child can keep their small toy or teddy close to them, clipping it on their rucksack, or taking it to bed. Or if an adult must leave them for a short or longer time frame, the small one can go with the adult to keep them safe, while the big bear stays with the child. Allow the child to be in control and come up with what they think is best. If a soft toy from the family does need to leave, encourage the adult to take a photo of them with the toy and send it back to the child so they can manage their separation anxiety.

Each soft toy could be sprayed or dabbed with a familiar scent, for example, the mother's perfume, or an essential oil. This can be soothing for the child and remind them of their loved one. For some children, more traumatic memories will be connected to the smells of burning explosives and other products of war, so it is helpful to offer an alternative, more positive smell for the brain to focus on.



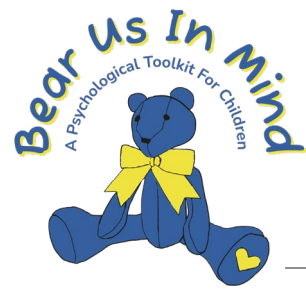
BEDTIME WORRIES

Encourage the child to speak to their soft toy at bedtime, sharing whatever is on their mind by saying quietly out loud into the ear of a cuddly toy, before cuddling it or tucking it in next to them. This is a gentle way of finding out what is worrying them and can help aid restful sleep when trauma has potentially made bedtimes trickier. Processing trauma at night is very common – so expect nighttime fears (sometimes called 'night terrors'), nightmares and occasional bedwetting. For a teenager, you could use a more direct 'face your fears' approach. For example, you may like to ask them what one worry they would most like to describe and think through, so that it does not interfere with their sleep.

These are just a few ideas that we hope can help with separation and maintaining a sense of connection. Even teenagers – who may consider themselves too grown-up for soft toys – can value these soothing associations, although your approach may need to differ.



If the child doesn't want to engage in these teddy bear activities or doesn't make an attachment, that is okay; it is important that you follow the child's lead in the moment. You can always suggest it again another day. Above all, try not to take it personally if one day they dismissively throw it across the room. Many will be outraged that their sense of family has been so disrupted – they simply want to get back to normal life, their school, their mates, their hobbies, their favourite foods, their home and their country.



WORKSHEET

Growing Around Grief*



- To engage the child in the outdoors and show the importance of movement when managing grief
- To show the benefits of a growth mindset when managing grief
- To create a greater sense of control and mastery of skills the child values



Faced with so much change and loss, a child may feel overwhelmed and suffocated by their grief. This worksheet describes two activities you can use to support a child to grow around their grief, not by ignoring it, but by looking at how they can begin rebuilding their lives.

GROWING FLOWERS OR VEGETABLES

The first activity is practical and will happen slowly. So often it is while you are doing things like planting, pruning and watering that the all-important side conversations happen more naturally as the child suddenly feels able to say what's on their mind.

Helping a child to plant seeds, nurture the seedlings and watch them grow is a therapeutic way to appreciate growth and how things evolve in time. The national flower of Ukraine is the sunflower, so we have suggested sunflower seeds, but please adapt to suit you and your resources.

If, for any reason, the plants you decide to grow do not succeed, then you could use the activity to talk about the disappointment. You could reflect on how it's important to bounce back when things don't work out as planned. This may be a nice opportunity to think about what you learnt about growing seeds and how you might try again.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Sunflower seeds (or any other seasonal flower seeds you can source)
- Plant pots and compost, or a small garden area with space to plant

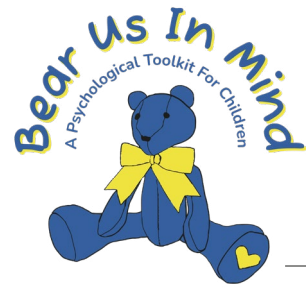


WHAT TO DO:

With the child (and other family members if they would like to be involved), plant some seeds in small pots or seedling trays, caring for them as suggested on the packet. Eventually you'll need to move them into a garden bed or window box as they begin to grow.

The child may want to measure the plants, plot their growth, take photos of them or draw them, and share these with others. They may feel pride in having grown something themselves, so remember to celebrate with the child and to have fun with this activity! If digital connections back to Ukraine allow, then take photos of the child with their produce or flowers to send them back home. Or make a scrapbook to capture all the lovely memories you are making with this child so they have it to look back on when they're ready to make sense of this important time in their lives.

*Lois Tonkin - Growing around Grief - another way of looking at grief recovery. Bereavement Care Volume 5, 1996 issue 1



WORKSHEET

Growing Around Grief*



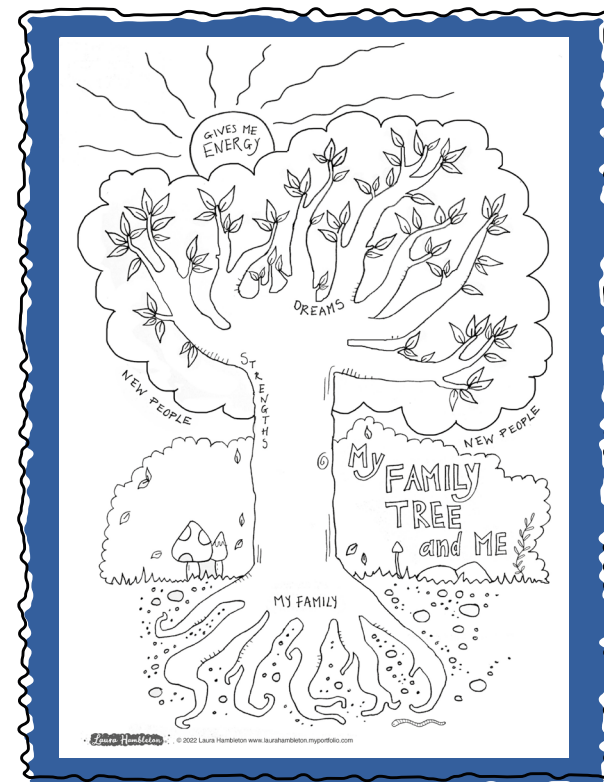
MY FAMILY TREE AND ME

This activity can be a powerful, visual way for a child to build a stronger sense of self and to think about where they have come from, who they are today, and their hopes and dreams for the future.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Plain A4 paper, or a printout of MY FAMILY TREE AND ME worksheet, available on our website (www.bearusinmind.org.uk)



WHAT TO DO:

- Begin by showing the child the worksheet and explaining the purpose of the activity – to show how they are still growing despite all the losses they've experienced. Just as their bodies are **growing**, so too is their **strength** and **resilience**. Their anxiety also grows but they are finding ways to keep it from growing too large.
- Start with the roots. Ancestry is very important to Ukrainian children, so use the image of the **roots** to identify **key people** from their **family** (alive and dead), for example their parents, grandparents, siblings and the other important people who have shaped their life.

'Rita wasn't my birth mother but she was always there for me growing up – she would cook all our meals while Mumma worked away.'

'My grandpa died before I was born – he was a soldier in the war before. People say I am very like him when I smile. I am also good with my hands and can make things, just like him.'

- Next is the **trunk**. Encourage the child to identify their **strengths** – this can be a new process for a child so they may need some support or curiosity from you to get them started. For example, what has helped them to build resilience? What qualities of the people in their roots may be helping them? What nice things do other people say about them?
- Move on to the **branches**. They represent the child's **hopes and dreams** for their own future, such as 'What I want to be when I grow up'.

'I had wanted to be a dancer but now I can't go to my dancing school as it was bombed. I will still be a dancer though because I can learn from YouTube for now.'

- The **leaves** of the tree are all the **new people** they trust and respect, those who are helping them with this new life away from home.

'My teacher here has Polish parents. She is very kind and knows when I am struggling to understand.'

'The pastor at the church is very kind – he visits us at home and we play football out in the garden.'

'My host father is so good to me – he takes me each week to learn judo. He says I will get a black belt one day.'

'Bill loves football so he takes me to the game every Saturday with his own grandson, Adil, who is now my best friend.'

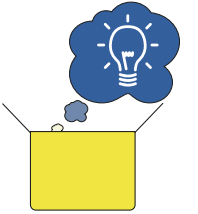
- Finally, they can add the **Sun**; this is where they capture the things they **love to do**, things that give them energy, for example talking with a friend or playing football.

This is an activity that can be revisited at another time, to see if the child would make any changes when they meet new people, or start a new hobby.



WORKSHEET

Little Box of BIG Thoughts



- To expand the stories we tell ourselves about other people in our family
- To strengthen the connection between an older child and a parent
- To promote the continuing bonds that reassure a child separated from family through displacement or bereavement



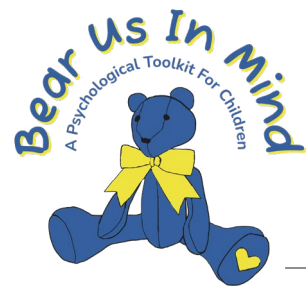
This tool will help by starting every sentence for them. It is simply a collection of sentence starters (in both Ukrainian and English), which a person can finish on paper or say out loud to you, helping them to voice their feelings and memories as well as processing complex, commonly bottled-up emotions, such as anger, shame, survivor guilt and regret.

Sometimes when life holds such uncertainty, the answers to these simple sentences will feel incredibly important and grounding.

Sometimes it's hard to tell people who are important to you how you feel about them. When someone is upset, stressed or overwhelmed by the threat of war, knowing where to start can be even trickier.

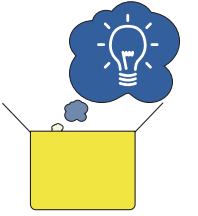
The Little Box of Big Thoughts is designed to help older children or adults have a conversation with someone close by who is important to them, or perhaps to process thoughts and feelings about someone who has died. To aid natural healing in this event, it can be used to show a young person that just because someone is gone, their connection to that person remains.

The Little Box of Big Thoughts is one of the most useful tools to help understand the 'unsaid's; however, it can provoke strong and complicated feelings that you may not expect. Before suggesting it to a child, young person or parent, watch the film on our website and (if possible) sit down quietly and try to do the activity yourself. Do this activity about someone in your own family, imagining that you are separated from that person... you will quickly see how these small incomplete sentences connect you emotionally and why the exercise should not be rushed.



WORKSHEET

Little Box of BIG Thoughts

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

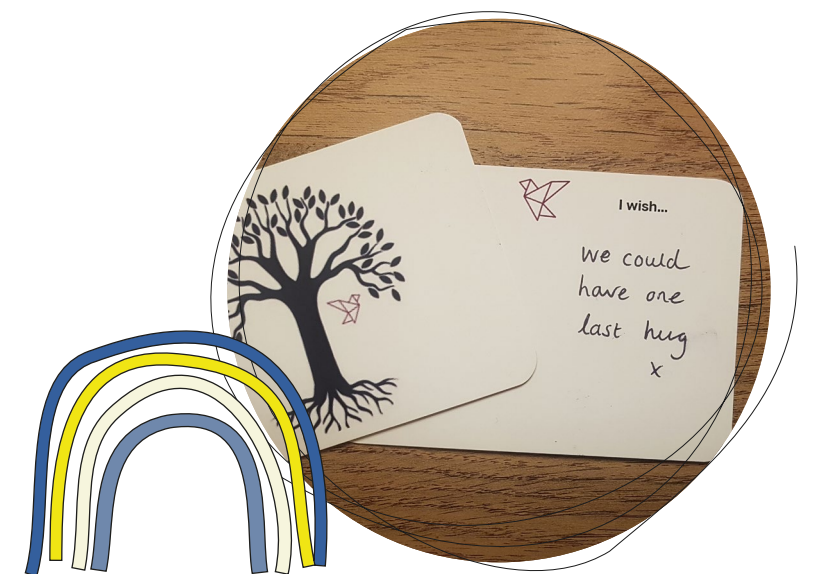
You may have a Little Box of Big Thoughts in one of our toolkits, or you may need to source your own – you will find templates on the Bear Us In Mind website that you can copy or print. Try to find a little box to keep all the messages safely together, or if the person wants to give it to someone as a present, it can make a very special gift at a time of great vulnerability.

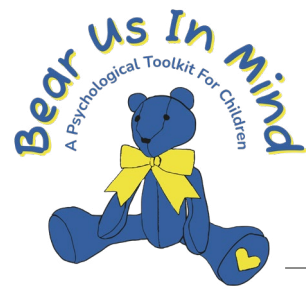
We have also created an electronic version of this tool available on our website to allow you to use it multiple times and, if digital channels allow, they can be sent to people who are separated from the family unit. The recipient could also be sent this link to complete a set to send back. So often in communications we 'assume' how others are thinking and feeling; this tool will remove the unhelpful assumptions and make for frank, honest exchanges.

**WHAT TO DO:**

- The first step is to support the child or adult to carefully choose who they may want to have a conversation with.
- It may be a person they feel close to, but it can also help with difficult relationships. Perhaps a child may put one parent on a pedestal as a 'hero' parent if they are back home fighting, but may naturally show anger and frustration to those close by. A more balanced view can be created by completing the sentences. For example, **'I want to do this for my mum as I think she is struggling without Dad and although we argue sometimes, I think she is doing a great job'**.
- The incomplete sentences are carefully constructed to allow a person to have a different and wider conversation with someone than they usually manage, so this activity can be surprisingly emotional. Many people will struggle to do it alone, and you may want to do it verbally together rather than writing it down, with you leading with the sentence prompt and the other person completing it aloud.

- I hope that you...
- Always know that...
- I feel so proud when...
- I laugh when...
- I wish...
- I remember when...
- I regret...
- It was your choice to...
- Thank you for...
- You shine when...
- When times get tough...
- I love you because...
- If we're not together, what I miss about you is...
- You are special because...
- I hope that I can be more...
- I will try to be less...
- Sometimes I feel we are similar because...
- Something that really matters in family life...
- A favourite memory I will always have is...
- War cannot break...



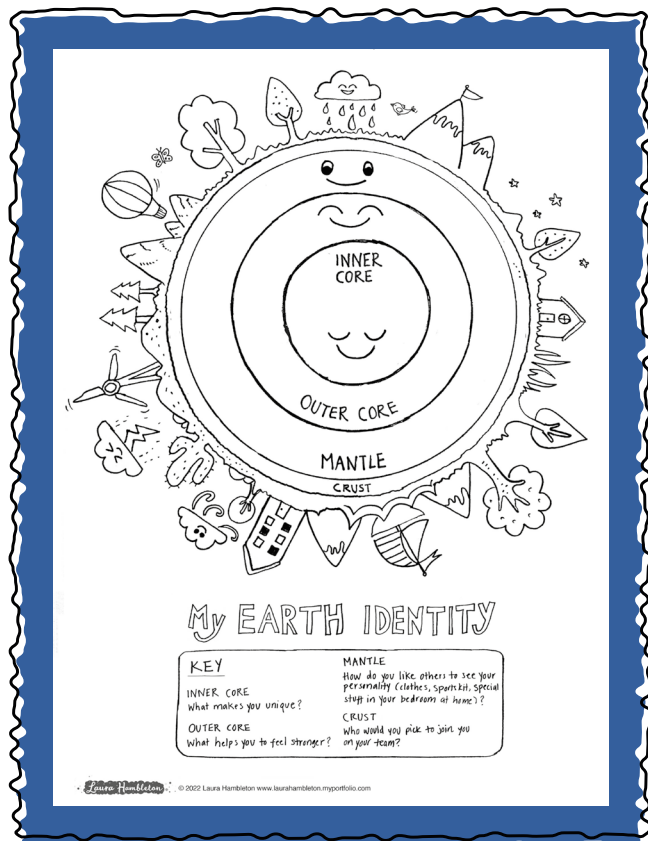


WORKSHEET

This Is Me



- To encourage a child to explore what makes them unique – their identity
- To hold on to a sense of PAST and PRESENT
- To help them to share their personality and culture in a new setting/country



MY EARTH IDENTITY

On the website or in your pack you will find a beautiful illustration of Earth. We chose Earth as the world often seems to expand when the place you live is under attack and you must leave your home for safety elsewhere. However, for this exercise we also encourage the child to think about aspects of their inner world.

There are 4 different questions which will help a child strengthen their confidence to talk about their identity. Answers can be written on the inner circles of the illustration.

1. INNER CORE

Explain that no one human being is the same as another. Encourage the child to think of a couple of things that make them unique – what is special about them?

It is important to note here that children with lower self-esteem will find this quite hard to do. You may want to help with phrases like, 'Would you mind if I make a suggestion? I've noticed that you enjoy drawing?' or, 'Maybe we can ask Mum/Dad how they would answer this?'

2. OUTER CORE

Here the child can make a note of what helps them feel stronger. For example, talking to a friend, writing a message to Dad, or listening to their Favourite music.



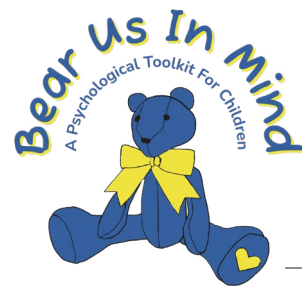
3. MANTLE

The mantle will share how the child likes their personality to be perceived by others. Here they can note down details of how they project themselves, for example, what clothes do they most like to wear, what sports kits do they like, and what items in their bedrooms do they most treasure?

4. CRUST

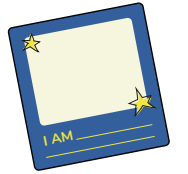
Ask the child to write down the people they most value – they can be people they know in real life, or famous people they admire. The questions will be, for example, 'If you had the chance to create a team that could do something amazing, who would you pick to join you?'

When all the answers are written down, the child might like to colour the rest of the page in, and even share it on the Bear Us In Mind website, where they'll find other children's worksheets to explore.



WORKSHEET

This Is Me



LIFE BEFORE, LIFE NOW

Take two pieces of paper. On the first, encourage the child to use words or drawings to capture life as it was BEFORE the war, at home in Ukraine. Ask about the kinds of things that happened on an average day as well as at the weekend and on holidays. On the second sheet, ask the child to consider life NOW, living in a new country. Ask the child if there is anything in their new home life that is surprising or different to what they expected. Is anything better? What has disappointed them? As the child explains the difference between life then and life now, try to ask what they mean by certain words – active listening is important to ensure you understand what the child is sharing with you.

This may give you some insights into things they liked or disliked, or even the things that were hard back at home before the war, or situations that feel difficult now. All of this will help you support them with their new way of living and in preparing for the future.



PHOTO BOOK – THIS IS ME WHEN... THIS IS ME WITH...

When life feels so fragile – like homes reduced to rubble by bombs – it can help to create something that feels permanent and tangible, especially for those times when children feel most lost or lonely.

We therefore suggest helping the child to create a photo book, something physical to hold and to share memories of happier times. The child may or may not have their own phone with photos on already, so one suggestion is to try and source photos from, for example, a family member's phone, and encourage the child to describe the photo in their own words, writing this down next to the photograph. For those who do not have any photos with them, they may like to download pictures of their school or home from the Internet, or even draw pictures in the book themselves.

The photo book may be a personal and comforting bedtime story that they can go through each night, anchoring them to their sense of self.

If it is possible, you could help them to locate photos that show them as a baby, a toddler and a child, to give a sense of time passing and personal growth.



Children may also decide to include photos of adults who are important to them, such as their host family, a friend at their new school or a teacher who is looking out for them.

Some examples of captions might include:

- **THIS IS ME...** making pancakes with Grandma – people say we are alike as we both love to dance
- **THIS IS ME...** with my football team when we won the league
- **THIS IS ME...** with my twin sister making our first Holy Communion – it was a happy day, and we had a party in the garden after church



CULTURAL IDENTITY

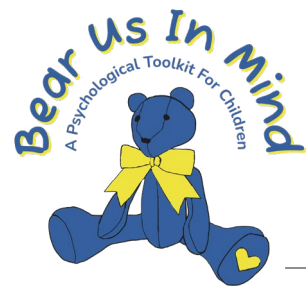
MEANINGFUL MUSIC

If the child loves music, try to find some songs that really centre ideas of personal strength and identity, like 'This is Me' from *The Greatest Showman*. Also be sure to ask them which songs they love and why, and listen to them together. Some older children may even like to compose some music or write a song or poem about the conflict.



A-Z OF UKRAINE

Together you could create an A to Z of Ukraine – 26 wonderful things that are special to Ukraine, from people, places and foods, to football teams, songs and books. This lovely list of Ukrainian culture will help the child talk about home at school and with their host family. The host family may want to make an A to Z of British culture, too, so they can slowly begin to feel like there are connections that feel secure.



WORKSHEET

You Will Be Okay



- To find strength, stay hopeful and get to grips with grief
- To support a child when someone important to them has died
- To help an adult supporter to have empathy and an expanded grief toolkit



This is a book written for children which adults may also find helpful to read. We strongly advise all supporters of the 'Bear Us In Mind' toolkit to read it as it may help you to process any bereavements from your own life.* It will also help you to step into the shoes of a child, and guide you both as you explore their own particular grief experience. You will need to try to understand the meaning of their relationship with the person who died (not everyone's relationships are loving and straightforward) and the circumstances and timings that surrounded the death. You also need to establish the child's relationships with those who remain alive.

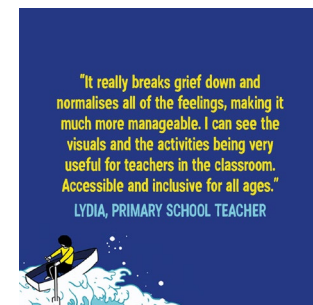
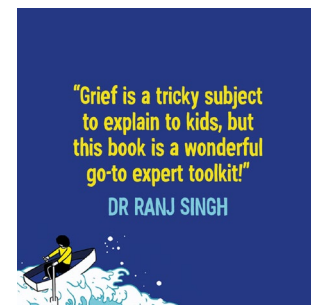
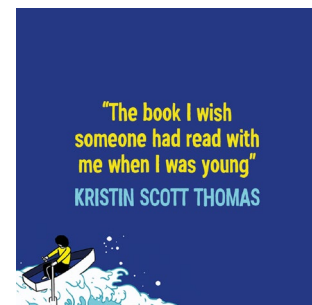
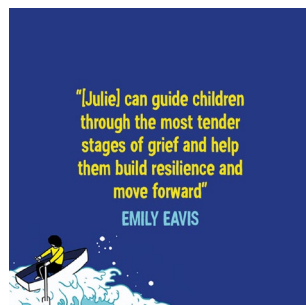
The death of a parent, sibling, grandparent or friend is one of the most difficult experiences a child can go through and it can be hard to know how to talk to them about it.

Bear Us In Mind is a project that helps children cope with separation and loss. It was started following the multitude of losses children experienced following the invasion of Ukraine.

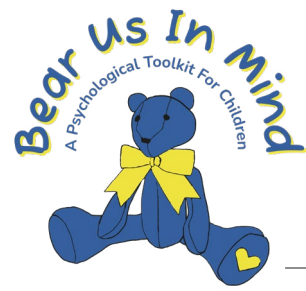
We have put together a psychological toolkit with 7 tools that we hope will help all children adapting to loss; however, for those children dealing with the additional pain of a death in their family, we plan to translate and publish – *You Will Be Okay*.

'In my book I wanted to capture the voices of children from 30 years' experience. I hope it will be helpful to any adult seeking to support a bereaved child. Our illustrator Laurene portrays brilliantly the mask of "FINE". A mask that we so often show the world when underneath we actually feel Fed up, Insecure, Nervous and Exhausted by grief'

Julie Stokes



*We have a grant from the Churchill Fellowship that allows us to provide a limited number of copies to those supporting Ukrainian families. These are in English and will help supporters to understand grief from a child's perspective. Alternatively you can order direct from Amazon (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/You-Will-Be-Okay-Strength-ebook/dp/B08Q7T267Y>) or any good bookseller. We are also currently working with the publisher to translate 'You Will Be Okay' into Ukrainian. Bear Us In Mind will then seek to supply Ukrainian copies to you and your book club.



WORKSHEET

You Will Be Okay



THE GRIEF SWING

A child's grief can often involve deep sorrow followed by a sudden step into the distraction of happiness. Grieving adults often find this harder to do, especially in the early months of a family death. In the book, Julie provides a friendly way to understanding the parallel process of being focused on emotion and then being focused on rebuilding your life. She talks about the reality of swinging backwards and forwards from the 'land of loss' to the 'land of rebuilding'. For a family displaced from their home this process can be exhausting and yet needs to be fully understood as natural. Your job as a supporter is not to judge the speed at which they are ready to rebuild. Your job is to understand that both sides of the riverbank belong to grief.

Please note this book is only relevant to a child where there has been a death in their family or friends.



BEREAVEMENT BOOK CLUB



Step 1

In your local community perhaps you can create a small group of adult supporters. Ask each person to read *You Will Be Okay*.* This will take an average reader a few hours. It is very likely that as an adult you may have experienced a bereavement yourselves. Try to apply the exercises to your own situation as you read the book.

Step 2

We then suggest your book club arranges 3 meetings to discuss the content of each chapter in more detail. Take a couple of chapters for each meeting. In the book club, share with each other your own experiences before thinking about how to use the various exercises with a child.

Step 3

Creating a bereavement book club for children.

When children have arrived and settled for a few months in your community you may find that there are a small number of children who want to form their own bereavement book club. The tools from *You Will Be Okay* are more suited to children 9 years and up. If it is a younger group, then *Muddles Puddles and Sunshine* by Diana Crossley is an excellent workbook.

To get further advice on bringing groups of children together (we call this peer support) look for a local service provider in the UK on <https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/> or see our additional support page in the Toolkit Guidelines. Julie is unable to provide advice on individual children, however @juliestokesobe will publish regular posts to guide adults supporting bereaved children.

*Please note this book is only relevant to a child/ young person when there has been a death in their family or friends.

Contact Details



Before starting an activity with a child please read the worksheet and watch the corresponding training film on www.bearusinmind.org.uk.
Prior to this, please also read the Toolkit Contents and Toolkit Guidelines so that you are able to create a safe and special space for the child to participate in this important work together.

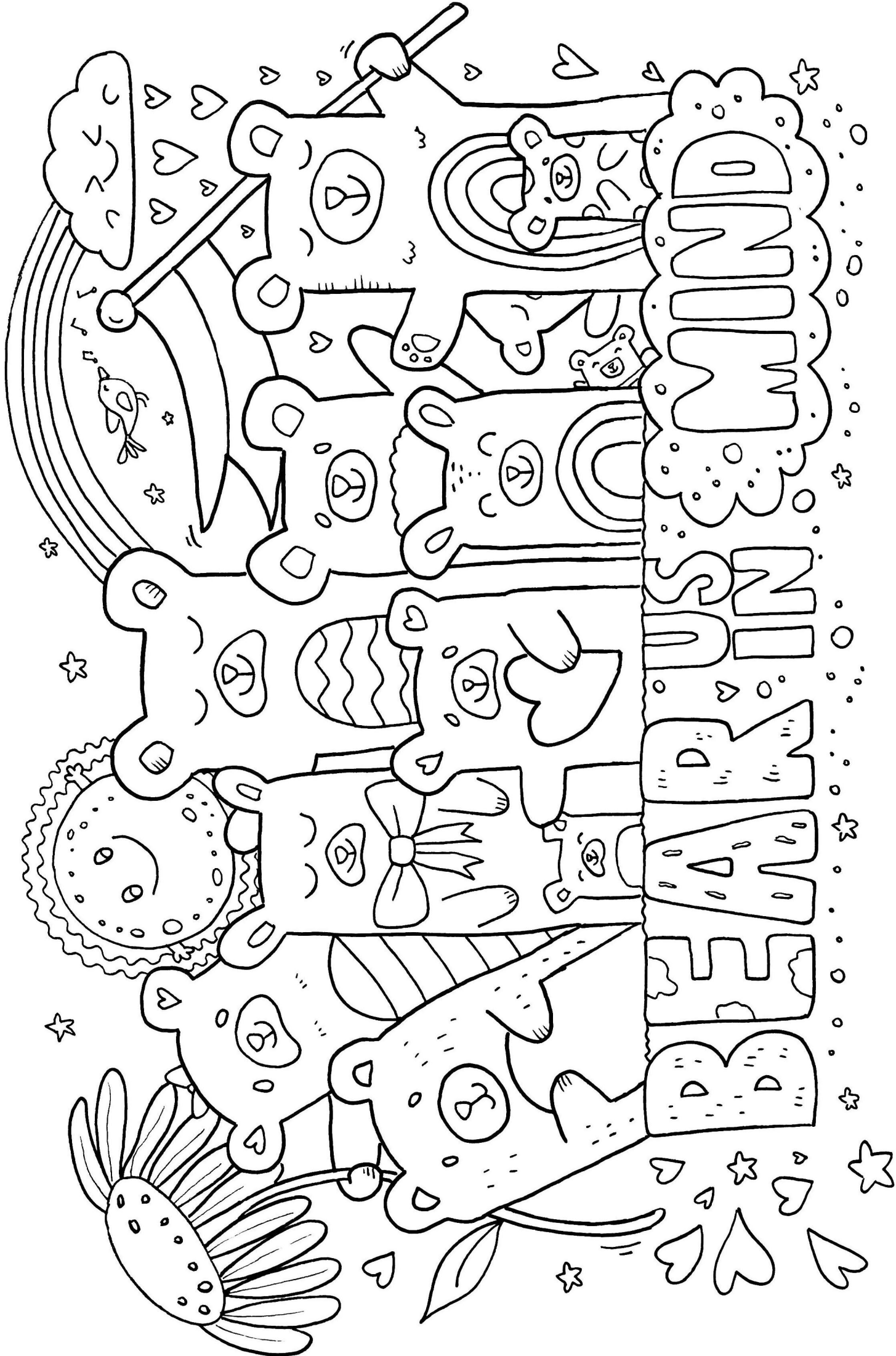
www.bearusinmind.org.uk

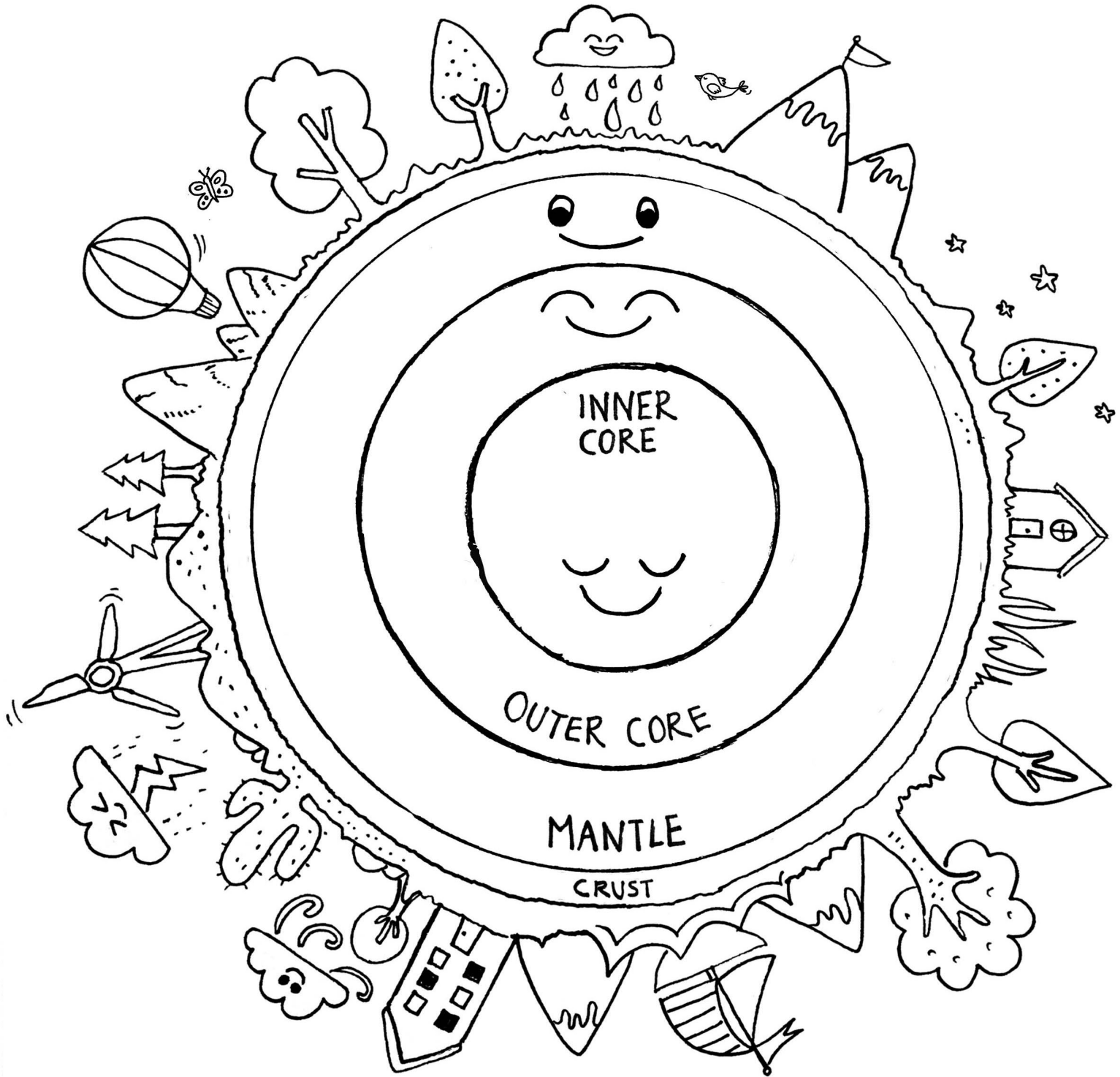
@bearusinmindUK

@juliestokesobe



Supplementary Materials





My EARTH IDENTITY

KEY

INNER CORE

What makes you unique?

OUTER CORE

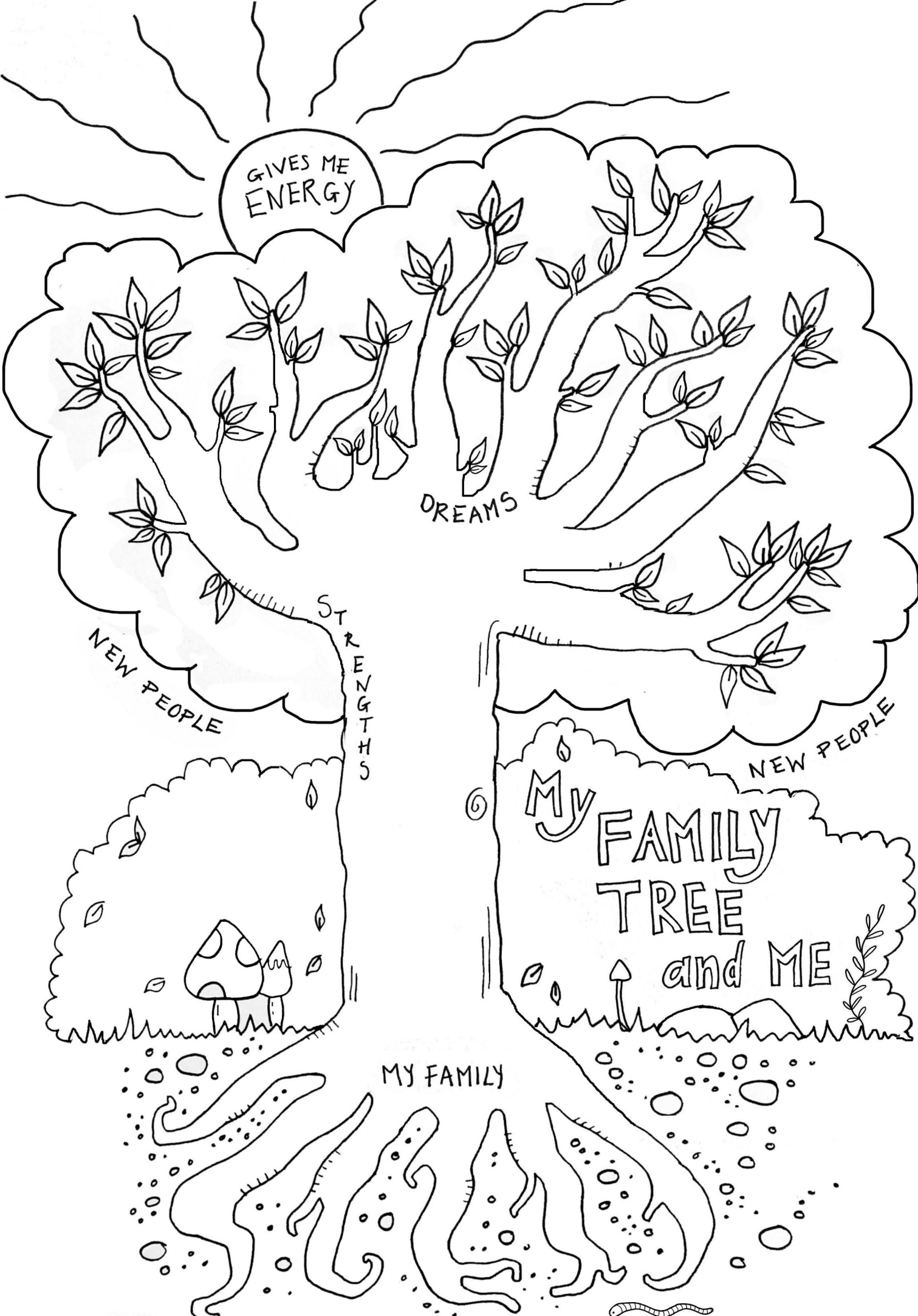
What helps you to feel stronger?

MANTLE

How do you like others to see your personality (clothes, sports kit, special stuff in your bedroom at home)?

CRUST

Who would you pick to join you on your team?



GIVES ME ENERGY

DREAMS

NEW PEOPLE

STRENGTHS

NEW PEOPLE

My FAMILY TREE and ME

MY FAMILY