



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



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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.



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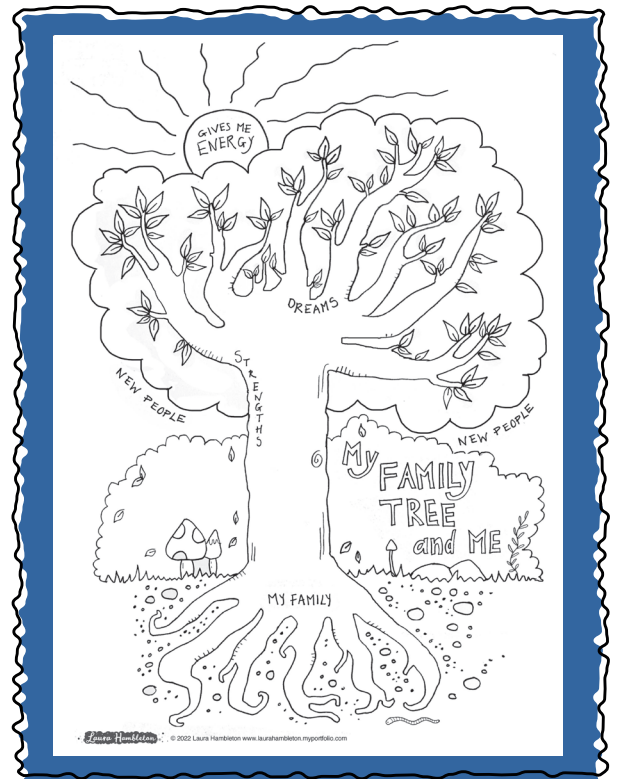
MY FAMILY TREE AND ME

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.



GIVES ME ENERGY

DREAMS

STRENGTHS

NEW PEOPLE

NEW PEOPLE

My FAMILY TREE and ME

MY FAMILY