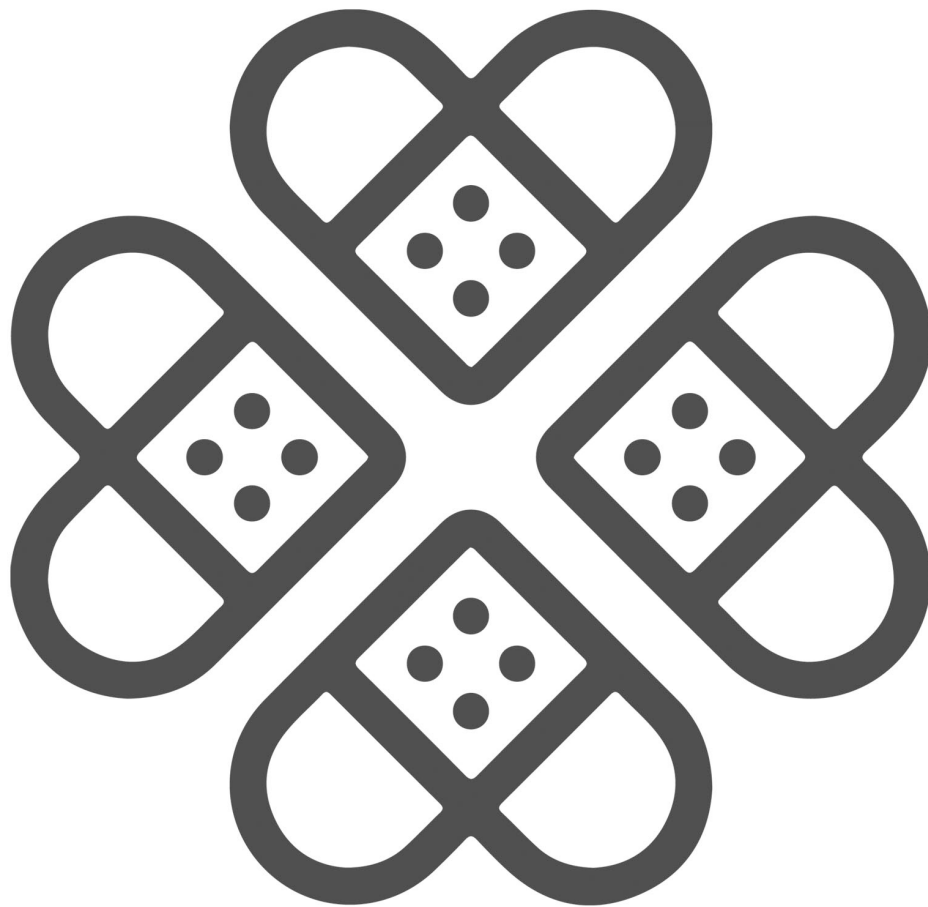


# **FiRST + AiD<sup>TM</sup>** **FOR FEELINGS**

## **Life Lessons for Children**



**By Denise Daniels RN, MS**  
**Founder of The National Childhood Grief Institute**



Dear Parents, Grandparents, and Caregivers,

In the aftermath of the recent hurricanes, floods, and other severe weather events, many families have been thrust into extraordinary circumstances that can be life-changing, with short and long-term effects on children's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Even children who live far from these weather events can experience anxiety based on the images they've seen on TV, in print, or online.

Whether your child is upset by seeing the devastation on the news, or he is personally recovering from a natural disaster, previous experience has taught us that when a disaster strikes, grown-ups can make an enormous difference for children by providing safety, comfort, age-appropriate information, guidance, and reassurance.

Children's reactions are greatly influenced by the behavior, thoughts, and feelings of grown-ups in their lives. Parents can be most effective when they remain calm and have the needed support to understand and manage their own emotions during these challenging times. Having a family action plan will strengthen children's sense of safety and security.

Once a child's immediate physical needs have been met, meeting their emotional needs is key to helping them deal with their confusion, anxiety, and fear. Children's reactions will vary, but it's important to observe children's behavior, while listening carefully to what they are saying. Acknowledge their concerns and validate their feelings; in addition to helping them in the moment, this will foster future conversations about what will happen next. Encourage children to talk about their thoughts and feelings and, if they are having difficulty expressing their emotions, encourage them to draw a picture or tell a story of what happened. Teach simple coping strategies – such as taking a few deep breath's and slowly exhaling, or getting some exercise, or playing – to help reduce and manage children stress and anxiety.

The First Aid for Feelings children's workbook can be used to enhance communication and encourage the expression of feelings associated with grief and loss. These activities can also teach coping skills that can last a lifetime. Please ensure that children use this workbook under the guidance of a parent.

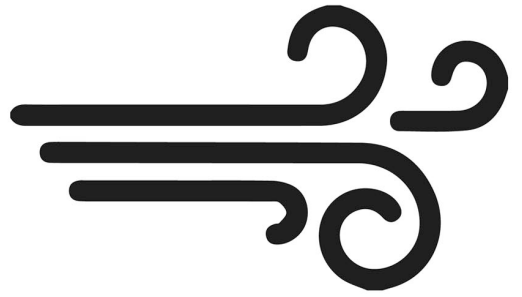
*Denise Daniels*

**Denise Daniels RN, MS**



The world around you is changing all the time. Weather, the seasons, and even our bodies change. You might change houses or schools. Sometimes you even change friends! Some changes are easy, but some are hard. Some happen slowly, but some may happen suddenly. There are changes that last for a very short time, and some that last for a very long while—even forever. They are a natural part of living and although they may seem scary, they can also be a chance to learn and grow.

The really big changes that people are talking about now are the severe hurricanes and flooding that have taken place recently in the United States. If you are like most kids, this has probably been a scary and upsetting time for you. Perhaps you have been watching it on the news, or heard people talking about it. Maybe you know someone who has been hurt, or is missing, or maybe you have been evacuated and are temporarily living in a shelter with your family. The grown-ups around you may also be upset. These kinds of changes can be very disturbing for everyone—but especially for kids!



**Take this important time to tell your own story or draw a picture about what has happened to you and your family.**



Every change brings with it many kinds of feelings.

Your feelings are a special part of you.

And even though you can't see them, your feelings are always sending messages to your brain and to your body that affect how you think and what you say and how your body feels.

Circle the feelings you are having right now. You may even want to add some of your own (You may have many different feelings at the same time—that's normal!).

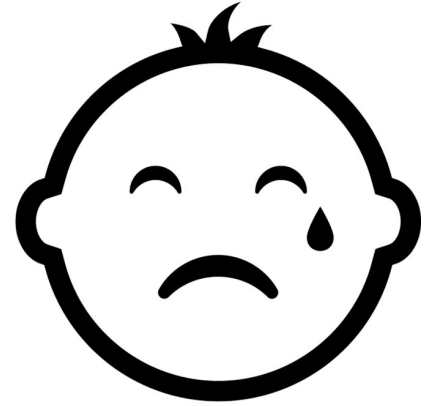
**loved**   **scared**   **sick**   **lonely**  
**worried**   **helpless**   **anxious**  
**excited**   **sad**   **tired**   **relieved**  
**friendly**   **nervous**   **confused**  
**guilty**   **numb**   **angry**   **unsafe**  
**frustrated**   **grumpy**   **tired**  
**upset**   **proud**   **concerned**  
**surprised**   **thankful**   **curious**  
**embarrassed**   **happy**   **brave**





Some big changes can cause feelings of loss. When we lose someone or something that is important to us, we may experience all kinds of feelings. When these feelings come together all at once, they are called grief.

Sometimes grief can feel powerful like a strong wind during a storm. Other times, it may seem like a gentle shower. That's because grief comes and goes. Feelings of grief can feel different for everyone and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grieving takes a lot of energy and is hard work, which is why it's sometimes called 'grief work.'



**If you know someone who is grieving, or if you think you may be grieving, you can use the space below to write or draw a picture of what grief feels like for you.**



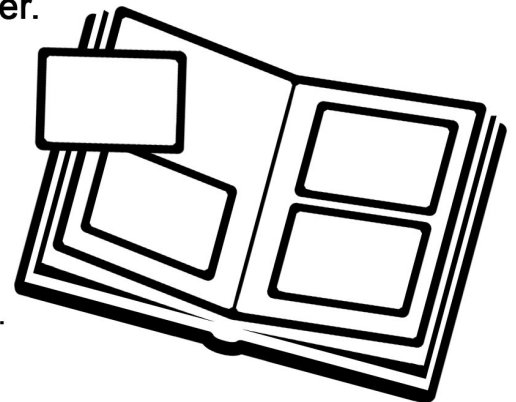
Feelings of grief can cause people to behave differently. They may seem grouchy or irritable. They may want to spend some time alone, or maybe they are having a hard time paying attention, or giving hugs. Sometimes they may want to have fun and laugh, and forget all the sadness for a while.

It's important for you to know that if someone you love is acting this way, it is not your fault! It is a normal part of grieving and in time they will feel better again. For now, it will be helpful to be understanding and patient with those you love, as well as with yourself.

**If you have lost someone or something that is important, this can be an especially difficult time for you and your family. Draw a picture below of something special that you have lost.**

**Here are some ideas that might help you feel better.**

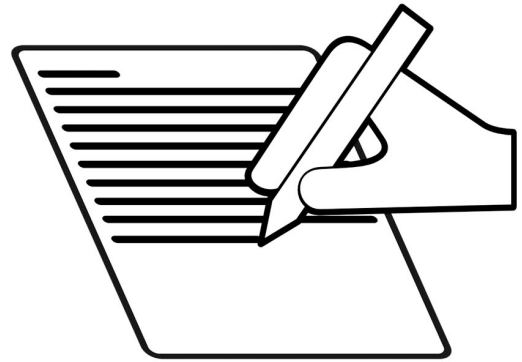
- Keep a special memento.
- Make a My Memories scrapbook.
- Say a prayer.
- Look at photos of what you have lost.
- Make a phone call to someone who cares about you.
- Share special memories with family and friends.
- Write a letter to say goodbye—it's never too late to say goodbye.
- Talk with someone who cares about you and about your loss.





If you know someone who has been affected by a hurricane, you may not know what to say or what to do. Below are some suggestions for offering support:

- ☐ Send a note, or color a picture to show that you care.
- ☐ Be a good listener.
- ☐ Volunteer as a family.
- ☐ Bring a meal to someone in need.
- ☐ Offer someone a place to stay.
- ☐ Invite someone to play.
- ☐ Help raise money for relief efforts.
- ☐ Provide hugs.
- ☐ Bring a friend books to read.
- ☐ Pray for people who have been affected.
- ☐ Tell your friend that you are sorry for their loss.
- ☐ Collect needed supplies like toothpaste, soap, and blankets.
- ☐ Donate clothes or school supplies.
- ☐ Hold a hand.
- ☐ Share funny stories.
- ☐ Visit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_





Many caring Americans are feeling sad about what has happened to people affected by the hurricanes and floods. Perhaps you are feeling sad, too.

In times of sadness, it is good to spend extra time with those who love and care about you. Sometimes sad feelings can cause tears. That's okay, because crying is a good way to let your feelings out. Keeping upset feelings inside can cause all kinds of aches and pains. Feelings are meant to be shared.

**If you are feeling sad, you can write or draw a picture of why you feel that way.**

**Try these strategies to help you feel better when you are feeling sad:**

- Have a conversation with your parents.
- Write a poem about why you are feeling sad.
- Have a good cry (it's okay for boys to cry, too!)
- Talk to a friend who is also experiencing a loss.
- Talk to a counselor or your clergyperson.
- Listen to music. It's a great way to express your feelings.
- Ask for a hug when you need it.
- Read your favorite book.
- Help those in need. Helping others is a good way to help yourself!





People may also be feeling angry about what happened in the aftermath of the severe weather. It is normal to feel angry when something you love and care for is gone.

If you are feeling angry about what has happened, it is important to find good ways to express your anger out without hurting yourself or others. Below you will find ways to let your anger out that are helpful, not hurtful:

- Yell into your pillow.
- Hit a punching bag (not your brother or sister please!).
- Tell someone when you are feeling angry. Talking about it helps!
- Run around outside—it's a good way to let off steam.
- Do some jumping jacks—exercise is a great stress buster.
- Listen to loud music and march around.
- Write a letter to yourself about why you are feeling angry.
- Take some deep breaths, slowly exhale, and relax.
- Do something fun to get your mind off your angry feelings, like going for a walk.
- Tell a grown-up that you're feeling angry and why.
- Do some slow stretches or yoga poses. If you don't know any, make up your own!



**If you are feeling angry, you can write or draw a picture of why you feel that way.**



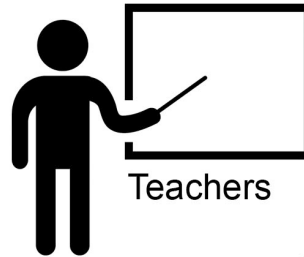
It's important for you to know that many caring Americans are working hard to keep you safe and make things better. When there are emergencies, people reach out to help others, especially the kids. Some people who are working to keep you and your family safe are:



The President



Police & firefighters



Teachers



The Military



Emergency rescue crews



Doctors & nurses



Construction workers

Everyone needs to know that someone cares about them – even grown-ups. Your life is important to others because there's just one you!

**Make a list below of all the people who care about you. You might be surprised how many people there are!**

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It may seem like only grown-ups have jobs, but you have a job too—your job is to play! Take time to plan some fun. It's especially helpful during stressful times.

**Write or draw some of the things you like to do for fun.**

**My favorite sports to play:**

**My favorite TV show to watch:**



Did you know that having information about what has happened can take some of the confusion away and it can even make you feel better? It is particularly important for you to have information now.

Asking questions is a good way to find information. There are people who want to help you with your questions. Never be embarrassed or afraid to ask. There are no bad questions!

Here are some questions other kids are asking:

*Am I safe?*

*Who will be there to  
take care of me?*

*Will we have to move?*

*Why did this terrible  
thing have to happen?*

*Will my pet be okay?*

*When will things get  
back to normal?*

**Write some questions that you have below.**

Here are some places you can go to have your questions answered:

Your parents  
Your coaches  
Your neighbors  
Your local librarian

Your teachers or principal  
Local Police or Fire Chief  
Your clergyperson  
Your doctor







# Action Plan



Having an action plan, and practicing your plan, will help you feel safer and more comfortable. An action plan can give you a map to follow along the way.

It can be as simple as planning what you will do over your next school vacation, or where you will meet your parents if you get lost, or thinking about what you would like to be when you grow up.

It can be helpful to ask a caring grown-up to help you with your action plan. Make an action plan below.

## My Action Plan for the Future

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Remember when we talked about change? In times of change, it is especially important for you to stay healthy and take good care of yourself. Here are some things you can do to stay healthy and feel better:

- Exercise your body and brain.
- Visit your doctor regularly.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Plan some fun.
- Enjoy a hobby.
- Spend time with those you love.
- Try to relax each day with some meditation: Sit comfortably, hold your hands together, close your eyes, and picture yourself in your favorite peaceful, beautiful place. Take slow, deep breaths. Do this for about 5 minutes.
- Eat a healthy diet, including drinking plenty of water and eating fruits and veggies.
- Get help from a counselor if you need someone to talk with (your parents can help you with this).



**Things I can do to take care of myself:**

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Remember when we talked about feelings of grief?

Well, there's one more thing you need to know:  
Grief doesn't last forever!

The powerful feelings we talked about in this workbook will give way to hope and healing. In the future, those feelings will become important memories that will become a special part of you.



You've done a great job sharing your feelings in this workbook. Congratulations on your hard work and courage!

**Fill in and color the Feelings Certificate below:**

**WAY TO GO!**

Let it be known that

\_\_\_\_\_

did an awesome job  
sharing their feelings!

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## Life Lessons for Children



### Created by Denise Daniels.

Denise is a Peabody Award-winning broadcast journalist, author, and parenting and child development expert who specializes in the social and emotional development of children. She is the creator of The Moodsters, a first-of-its-kind brand designed to help young children develop social-emotional skills.

To download a copy of this workbook, go to  
**[www.themoodsters.com](http://www.themoodsters.com)**

[www.denisedanielsparenting.com](http://www.denisedanielsparenting.com)

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