

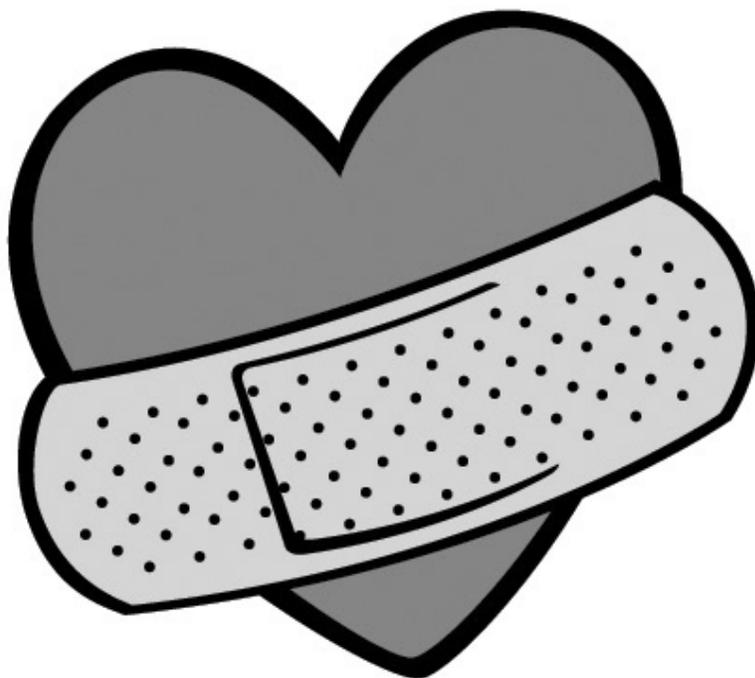
# First Aid for feelings

**Life Lessons for Children**

**By Denise Daniels**

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The National Childhood Grief Institute

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## A Message To Grown-Ups

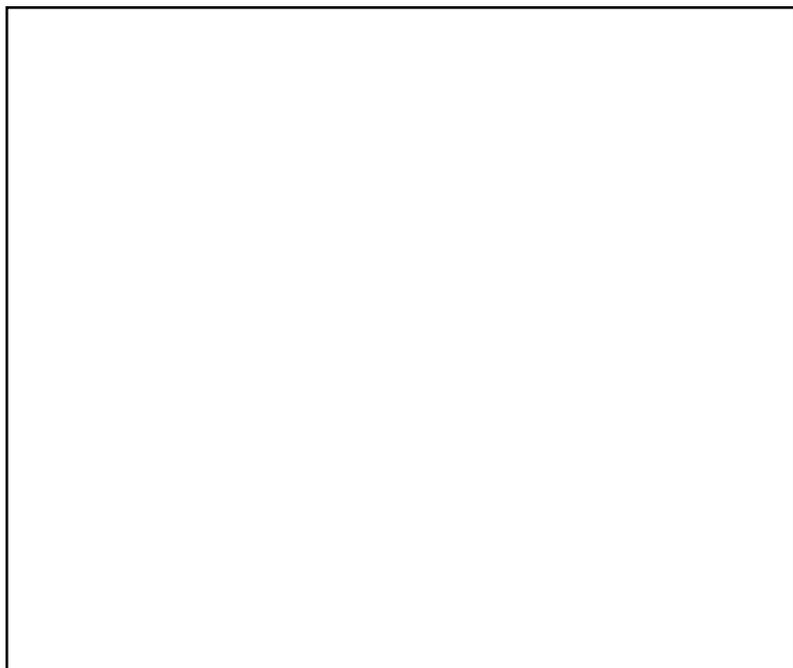
For many of us the horrific events of September 11, 2001 will remain indelible in our hearts and minds forever. For children, the graphic depictions of such a random disaster shattered their innocence and trust in the world around them. While it is natural for adults to want to protect children from the harsh realities of life, we can no longer prevent the emotional and psychological intrusions of violence.

The First Aid for Feelings children's workbook can be used to enhance communication and encourage the expression of feelings associated with fear, loss and change. The exercises in this book have been specifically designed to help children gain mastery over events and develop coping skills for the future. While presently we are dealing with the immediate emotional upheaval of the disaster, other tragedies have taught us that children benefit significantly by learning how to understand and manage their emotions.

It is our hope the First Aid for Feelings workbook for children will not only serve as an emotional guide during this time of national crisis, but will also help children in the weeks, months and years to come.

*It is a goal of Denise Daniels and Toys"R"Us, Inc. that this important workbook be shared with parents, guardians, educators, caregivers and counselors during this difficult time. Additional copies of this document are available for download at [www.toysrus.com](http://www.toysrus.com). Permission is given by the author and Toys"R"Us, Inc. for these materials to be reprinted and/or downloaded for personal, educational and not-for-profit purposes only.*

The world around us is changing all the time. Weather changes, seasons change and even our bodies change. Some changes are BIG and some are small. Some are easy and some are hard! Some happen slowly but some are sudden. There are changes that last for only a short time, but there are others that last for a very long while—even forever! In the space below draw or write about some of the changes you have experienced.



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Changes are a natural part of living and although at times they may seem scary, changes can also be a chance to GROW.

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The really BIG change that many people are talking about are the terrible things that took place in New York City, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. If you are like most kids, this has probably been a pretty scary and upsetting time for you. Perhaps you have been watching the news on television. Or maybe you even know someone who has been hurt, missing or has even died. The grown-ups around you may also be upset. All of these changes can be very disturbing for everyone—but especially for kids! Take this important time to tell your own story about what has happened.

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Change can also cause many different kinds of feelings. Feelings are a special and important part of who you are. They are inside of you and even though you can't see them, touch them or smell them—they are there. Another thing to know about feelings is that there are no right or wrong feelings. All feelings are okay! There are people who care about you and want to know how you are feeling. In the space below are the names of some of the feelings other kids are having right now. You may want to circle the ones you are experiencing.

hopeful  
**EXCITED**  
sad  
*surprised*  
**ANGRY**

*relieved*  
worried  
proud  
*loved*

CONFUSED  
curious  
guilty  
**helpless**  
numb

happy  
lonely  
**EMBARRASSED**  
anxious

*tired*  
thankful  
nervous  
*scared*

Whatever you are feeling, it helps to know what your feelings are. Not all the things you may be feeling are on this list. It will help you to name what your feelings are.

_____	_____
_____	_____
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Some changes can cause feelings of loss. When we lose someone or something important to us, we may experience all kinds of feelings. Sometimes all at once! When all these feelings come together after a loss, they are called *grief*. Sometimes grief can feel pretty powerful—like a strong wind during a storm. At other times, it may seem like it is barely there at all—just like a gentle breeze on a warm summer day. That's because grief comes and goes. Grief can feel different for everyone, and just like feelings, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grieving takes lots of energy and is hard work. That is why some people call it "grief work." If you know someone who is grieving, or you think you might be grieving, use the space below to write about how it feels for you.

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Some feelings in people who are grieving may cause them to behave differently. They may seem grouchy or irritable. They might just want to be alone for a while. There may even be times when they seem like they are not paying attention to you, or they may be unable to concentrate. At other times they might want to have fun and laugh and forget all the feelings of sadness for a while. That's okay too because this is all a normal part of grieving. In time, the grief will go away and they will feel better, but for now, it is important to be understanding and patient not only with others but also with yourself!

Perhaps you have seen a funeral or memorial service on television. Maybe you have even attended one yourself. When someone dies, it is customary for family and friends to gather together to share their loss, love and respect for the person who is no longer here. It is a time to share their grief and celebrate all the wonderful things about that person's life. Some people wonder whether they should attend a service—especially if they are young. Whatever you decide, it is important for people to remember their special person and to have a chance to say good-bye. Below are some suggestions for saying good-bye:

- Keep a memento
  - Make a memory scrapbook
  - Attend a service
  - Write a good-bye poem
  - Visit the cemetery
  - Draw a picture
  - Pray
  - Write a letter to say good-bye
  - Share memories with family/friends
  - Plant a tree
  - Let balloons go while remembering
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Maybe you have a friend who has lost someone or something special. If you are like other kids—sometimes it is hard to know what you should say or do. Below are some suggestions for offering support:

- Send a note
- Bring a meal
- Make a phone call
- Tell your friend that you are sorry for the loss
- Provide hugs
- Share a story about your friend's special person
- Dry your friend's tears
- Hold your friend's hand
- Visit in the weeks and months ahead, too!



Many Americans are feeling sad about what has happened. Perhaps you are feeling sad, too. It is good to spend extra time close to the people who love and care about you. Sometimes sad feelings make us cry. That is okay! Crying is a good way to let your feelings out. Here are some ideas to help you when you feel sad:

- Draw a picture with a blue crayon
- Talk to your parents
- Visit with your doctor
- Have a good cry (it is okay for boys to cry, too!)
- Talk to a friend
- Talk to a counselor
- Attend a service where you worship
- Listen to music
- Ask for a hug
- Go to a movie
- Read your favorite book

Maybe you have some ideas of your own!

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Right now, some people are also feeling angry about what has happened. Anger can be a pretty strong feeling. It is normal to feel angry when someone we love or care about has been hurt. Some people even feel angry at God—but that's okay because God understands your anger. Remember when we said all feelings are okay? That goes for anger, too. It is important for you to find good ways to let your anger out without hurting yourself or others. Here is a list of okay ways to express your anger:

- Yell in your pillow
- Hit a punching bag or pillow (not your brother or sister)
- Draw an angry picture with a red crayon
- Tell someone when you feel mad!
- Run around outside—it's a good way to let off steam!
- Listen to loud music
- Write a letter about your anger to keep or share with someone

Do you have any other ideas for getting your anger out without hurting another person? Sometimes when we feel angry, we want to take it out on someone else—but that is never okay!

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Another thing to know about feelings is that they are meant to be shared. Keeping them inside can cause all kinds of aches and pains. Sharing your feelings with someone who cares about you is a good idea!

Below are some ideas for sharing your feelings.

- Draw a picture of how you feel
- Kick a ball with a friend (outside please!)
- Write in a journal or diary
- Pray or attend services
- Have a good cry
- Give someone a hug
- Laugh out loud
- Exercise
- Take a deep breath and relax
- Write a poem
- Sing a song
- Make a collage by yourself or with a friend

**REMEMBER**—all feelings are okay, but it is never okay to hurt yourself or others to feel better!

Perhaps you have heard President Bush and others say “God Bless America.” People are coming together to pray, worship and show support for our country. Many flags are flying at half-mast in honor of those who have been lost. Families across our country are displaying the American flag and burning candles to show their support and unity. People around the world are showing their support for us, too. It is important for you to know America will always fight to protect and defend our children. And that’s a good thing for you to know!







The world can seem like a pretty scary place. But it is very important for you to know that many people are working hard to protect you and keep you safe. Sometimes things happen that we cannot understand or even control. It is especially hard to understand why bad things happen to innocent people. If you are having a difficult time thinking about all of this, you are not alone! Many grown-ups are trying to understand this, too. But one thing is for sure—everyone will do his or her best to take care of you! Some of these people are:

- President Bush and other countries' leaders who are our friends
- Your parents
- Your teachers
- Police officers
- Firefighters
- Rescue workers
- The United States military—both men and women
- The Red Cross
- and many others

There are some bad people in the world but there are many more good people. Think of all the good people you know.

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There are also some things you can do to help keep yourself safe!

- Always know where to meet your parents if you get lost
- Practice your family's safety rules
- Wear seat belts
- Always tell an adult where you will be
- Wear your bike helmet
- Carefully watch for traffic when crossing the street
- Practice fire drills at school
- Don't play with guns
- Don't get into fights

Can you think of some other ways?

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If you are like other kids across America, you might wish there were something you could do to help the people you are hearing about in the news. That's a really great idea because helping others makes us feel better, too! Below are some ways you can help others:

- Write a note of comfort and support
- Pray for peace
- Volunteer
- Help raise money for relief
- Collect needed supplies
- Donate food for rescue workers
- Be a good listener
- Hug someone who needs it
- Display the American flag
- Do something nice for a friend

Do you have any other ideas? If so, share them with your family, friends or teacher. Helping others is a wonderful way to show you care!

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Everyone needs to know that someone cares about them—even grown-ups. Your life is important to others. There are people who care about you and want to help you through difficult times. Make a list of all the people in your life that care about you. You might be surprised how many people there are!

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You are special and unique. Taking care of yourself is important because there is just one you! In times of loss or change, it is especially important for you to stay healthy and take care of yourself. Here are some things you can do to stay healthy:

- Visit your doctor and dentist regularly
- Get plenty of rest (especially if you are grieving)
- Eat a healthy diet
- Tell others how they can help you
- Plan some fun (you're never too old for fun!)
- Enjoy a hobby
- Spend time with others
- Exercise your body and brain
- Get help from a counselor if you need it (your parents can help you with this)

### **Make sure to do one thing that makes you happy every day!**

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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 and have some fun. It is especially important during difficult times! In the space below, draw a picture or write about some of the things that you like to do to have fun.

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Having an action plan for the future can help make 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 summer vacation or deciding what you want to be when you grow up. You can use this page to work on your action plan for the future. It can be helpful to ask a caring adult to help you with your action plan. Here are a few ideas to get you started with your plan:

- Make a calendar of your activities
- Choose some books you would like to read
- Plan something with a friend

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### ***Pledge of Allegiance***

***I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America  
and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God,  
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.***

Do you remember learning the Pledge of Allegiance in school? This is a good time for all of us to think about what it really means. President Bush said, "America is a kind and generous nation." Our country stands for liberty and justice for all. This includes people who are different because of the way they look, or the religion they practice, traditions they keep or the culture they celebrate. It is important to remember: just because someone is different, it doesn't mean they are bad. Many different kinds of people call themselves Americans. It is our job to be kind and generous to everyone! These are the values we stand for.

Part of loving someone or being a friend is sharing your dreams, hopes and wishes. Together with someone you trust, talk about your dreams, hopes and wishes for the future. Below, you can write them down to keep for yourself or share them with someone you trust.

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Remember earlier when we talked about grief? Well, there's one more thing you need to know—it doesn't last forever! As time goes on, what may feel like a great, big, crashing wave will become just a gentle trickle. Grieving isn't like catching a cold that goes away in a few days after taking medicine, resting and drinking juice. In time, you will feel like your old self again and things will get back to normal. The sad and powerful feelings of grief will give way to thoughts of hope and fond memories, and they will become a special part of you.

***Life is full of hellos and good-byes. Every ending has a new beginning.  
New beginnings mean there will be more changes and more  
opportunities to GROW!***

***Even though these are difficult days for our country, things will be  
better in time. You have learned a lot about change. Change requires work.  
You have done a lot of good work here. The work you have done takes  
courage! Keep working. Keep being brave. There are many new  
and exciting adventures ahead for you.***

***Congratulations for working hard and showing lots of courage!***

## All About Denise Daniels

For the past fifteen years, Denise Daniels RN, MSN, has been offering advice and insights to parents across America, drawing from her clinical background in pediatric nursing and child development. Daniels has reported on virtually every parenting concern pertinent to raising children in an ever-changing world. From children being left behind while their military mothers went to serve in the Gulf War to the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing and the tragedy at Columbine High School, Daniels' lifelong work has been dedicated to the healthy emotional development of children.

Out of her commitment to children, Daniels co-founded the National Childhood Grief Institute in 1988. This non-profit, mental health clinic was established to provide support for children suffering from grief, loss and trauma. In her role as director, Daniels has emerged as a national expert and spokesperson on behalf of children. The Institute has received national acclaim for its work with children and families during times of disaster and crisis.

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