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Let's Talk About Your Feelings

For children of medical
and health professionals.

With Dr. Leo, Therapup

Hi, I'm Leo, I'm a dog and therapup.

Dear children,

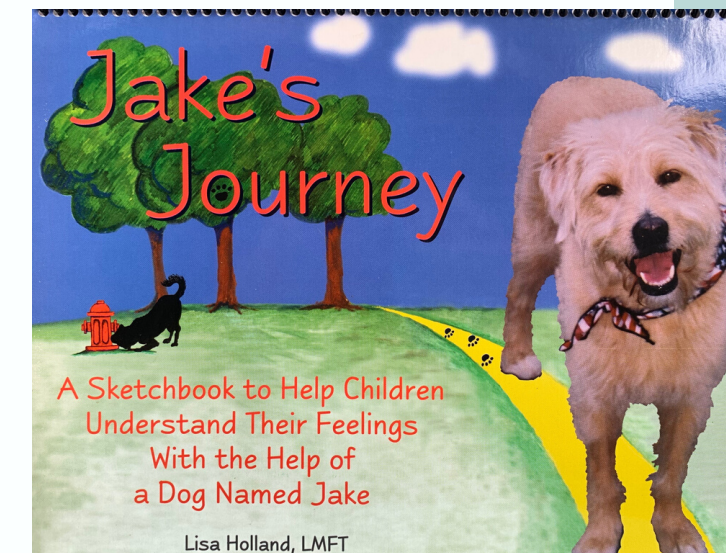
If you're feeling upsetting feelings, especially now, my mom and I created this mini-book just for you.

We want to help you put your feelings into words because when you do, you calm the fear centers in your brain. And this helps you to feel calmer all over.

In this mini-book, I will share some questions we're hearing children ask right now and I'll also ask you to create a drawing.

It's my second job, but not my mom's. She and Jake, my teacher, wrote a sketchbook titled Jake's Journey after 9-11 to help children talk about their feelings.

Let's start digging!



A note to adults:

- Right now, we're all experiencing feelings that are difficult to put into words as we fight something we cannot see.
- When we're able to put our feelings into words we can calm our brain's fear center.

My goal is to offer you a tool that will:

1. Help you acknowledge your child's sense that something feels threatening.
2. Give an example of these feelings within Leo's story.
3. Help your child express their emotions through drawing.

I wish I could do more, but since this isn't therapy, I hope our mini-book will at least give you a tool to help your child talk about what they're feeling.

Thank you for braving the frontlines for our fellow humans in need.

Lisa

I worry about you being safe at work.

Dear children,

It's okay to feel concerned about your parents and the people you love, especially when you can't see them.

When my mom is away at work, I can't see her, and I hope that she is safe, too.

Today she told me that people who work in medicine and healthcare are very serious about being safe. Hearing this helped me feel better.

She said that people in healthcare learn a special way to wash their hands and cover their clothes and bodies for protection and safety.

Like I learned to wait for mom and not chase squirrels, so that I will stay safe.

So, if you feel worried, I hope that you'll remember your parents are doing all the things they've learned in school so that they can stay safe for themselves and for their patients but, mostly for you because they love you.

Let's wash our paws!



To the parents and adults:

- You can easily feel vulnerable trying to answer your child's questions and tending to their reactions when you're leaving for work.
- Sometimes, no answer will be good enough to calm them, so it can be helpful to just confirm what they're feeling. And, to confirm how safe you're being and that you'll see them soon.

Ask your child to create a drawing. As you look at it together, you could say something like this...

- It's okay to be concerned about my safety. I love that you love me so much.
- I want you to know that I'm very serious about safety, for you, for myself and my patients.
- Let's talk about what you feel while you draw a picture of me being safe at work.

On this page, draw a picture of your parent being safe at work.

Sign your artwork here: _____



Why can't we hug?

Dear children,

Do you like hugging your parents when they get home from work and right now you can't?

I love to hug my mom. But when she got back from work yesterday, she said we couldn't hug. I didn't understand, and it made me feel sad, and I cried.

She said that sometimes these days, parents can't be close to their families at home after working all day with people who are sick. And that parents do this to be extra sure that their children are safe.

Today, we created a bank for all the hugs we've missed. I made mine out of a shoebox and decorated it with pictures of us hugging.

On a slip of paper, we wrote down every time we wanted to hug, and couldn't. We put the slips of paper in my bank, and we'll cash them in when things get back to normal.

My bank has hugs in it already - I can't wait to cash them in!

Let's make a hug bank?



To the parents and adults:

- Answering this question is difficult because it just feels wrong not to hug your babies.
- It's natural to say that we can't hug right now. But kids will start calculating, if not now, when? Then you'll need to figure out an answer to that, which is a challenge, given all we're going through now.
- Young children may also think that you're not hugging them because of something they did wrong.

Ask your child to create a drawing. As you look at it together, you could say something like this...

- It's normal to be upset that we can't hug right now. I miss hugging you too!
- Let's write down every time we want to hug, but can't and then put these hugs in a bank.
- Let's talk about what you feel when we can't hug and when we can!

On this page, draw a picture of yourself hugging your parent.

Sign your artwork here: _____



I miss how it used to be.

Dear children,

Are you tired of being at home all the time? Do you feel like you want to go places and do things like you used to? I sure do.

I miss playing at the dog park with my friends. I miss going to fun places with my humans, and I'm feeling frustrated.

Mom said I could try new things like, instead of sitting on my bed, I could sit on her desk. It was fun for a bit, but I miss how it used to be.

What do you feel when you can't change something you want to change? Maybe you feel frustrated like me, or maybe you feel something different.

Whatever it is, sometimes all you can do is just say what you feel out loud.

I'm frustrated! What do you feel?

Let's say our feeling words out loud!



To the parents and adults:

- Most times, just saying the emotion out loud out (especially when you can't change what you want to change). In this situation I used frustration.
- It also helps to add a simple physical activity, like jumping, singing or laughing to help off-load some extra energy.

Ask your child to create a drawing. As you look at it together, you could say something like this...

- I miss how it used to be too.
- I'm also ready to go to places and to go outside and play.
- I'm frustrated - what do you feel?

On this page, draw a picture of yourself saying your feeling word out loud.

Sign your artwork here:_____



A note from Lisa,

- Ask your child about their feelings while they draw.
- The mild distraction helps them connect to what they're feeling.
- When you respond to your child's feelings, use a sensing word like, I see, or I hear, or I sense that...it leaves them open to explore the best word for themselves.

I hope this mini-book helps your child find their feeling words.

Let me know if you have any questions about Leo's work.

Please take care of your emotions too.

Lisa

Yea!

You got it!



Please remember to talk about what you feel because it will help you feel better!

Love,
Leo

