

Seeing the Bigger Picture: Balancing Life's Beautiful & Hard Moments



Mandatory Note to Parents/Caregivers:

This resource is for educational purposes only.

Some topics (loss, tragedy, large-scale events) can feel heavy.

Please read through first and decide whether your child/teen is ready.

Use this as a guide, not as therapy — professional support may be needed. Always use your best judgment.

Why This Resource Matters

Hello Families,

Life is full of different ripples – some joyful, some painful, and some that feel overwhelming. As parents and children, we can celebrate the beauty of friendship, love, and community, while also needing space to face loss, change, and even tragedy.

This resource invites you to explore both sides – the hard and the hopeful. It is not meant to erase big feelings or pretend challenges aren't real. Instead, it offers gentle practices that remind us of Self-as-Context:

✨ You are not only one moment or one feeling.

✨ You are the steady space that can hold many experiences, both stormy and sunny.

By practicing this perspective together, families can build strength, flexibility, and connection – learning to hold both the hurt and the hope.

💡 **Please read through these pages first before sharing them with your child. Choose the activities that feel right for their age, readiness, and your family's needs.**

How to Use This Resource

This resource is built to meet families where they are. Some children need simple images, others enjoy guided cards, and older kids or teens may be ready for deeper reflection.

Choose what feels right for today — you don't need to do it all at once.

Younger Kids (pages 4-7)

Gentle coloring pages with prompts to help them notice feelings in a safe, creative way.

Middle Range (Typical Audience) (pages 8-12)

Practice cards with simple metaphors (ripples, sky, fishbowl) that make big ideas easier to understand.

Older Kids & Teens (pages 13-16)

Creative, discussion-based activities that explore how to hold both hurt and hope, and how to see themselves as bigger than one moment.

For Parents & Caregivers (page 17)

More suggestions on how to use this resource effectively.

Closing Reflection (page 18)

For parents and children.

 Return to these practices again and again — as your child grows, their understanding will deepen too.

✨ Gentle Coloring: Noticing Feelings

For our youngest learners, coloring can be a safe way to explore big feelings. These pages use simple images and prompts to help children notice what's happening inside them without needing many words.

Try these ideas:

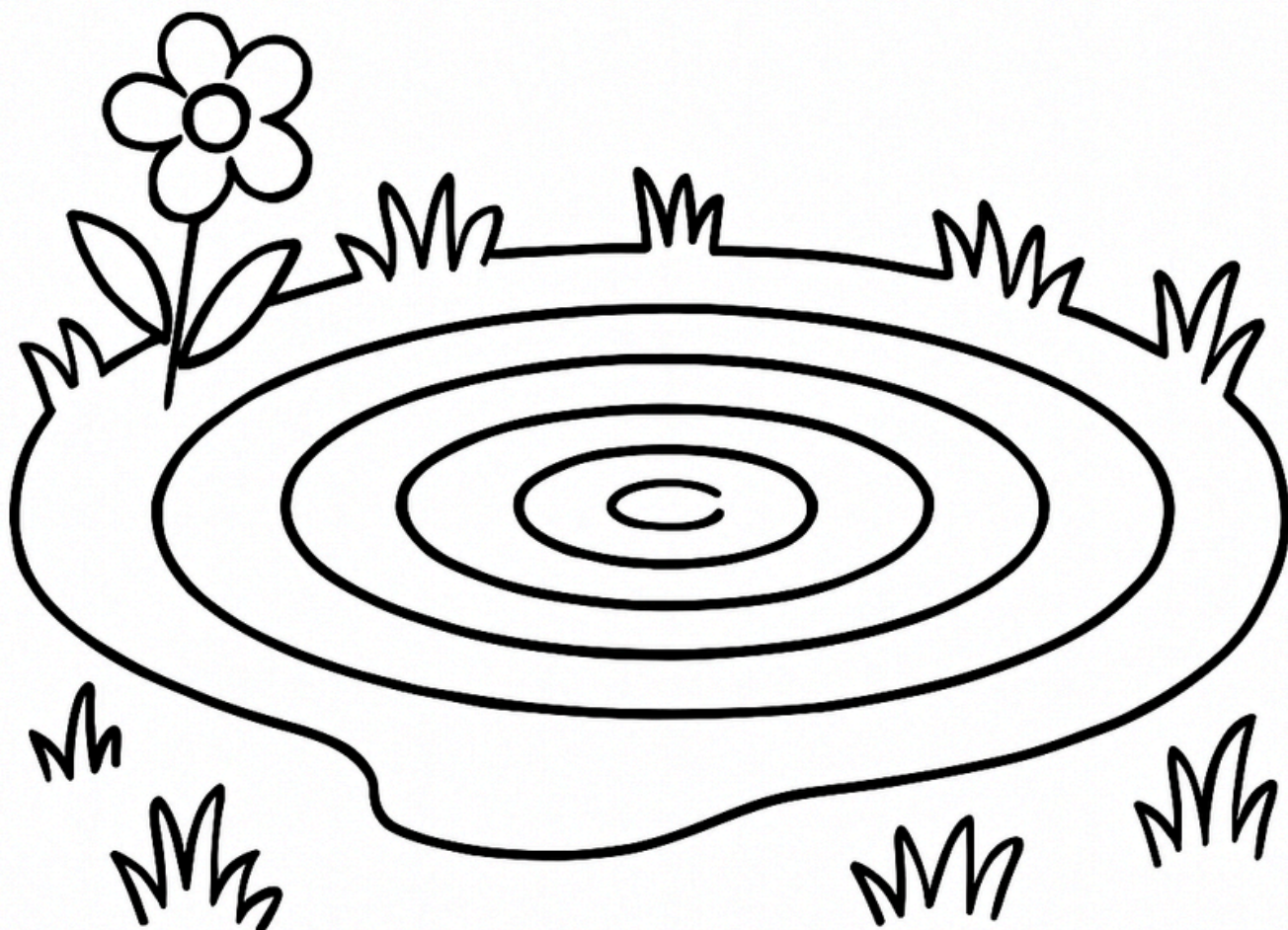
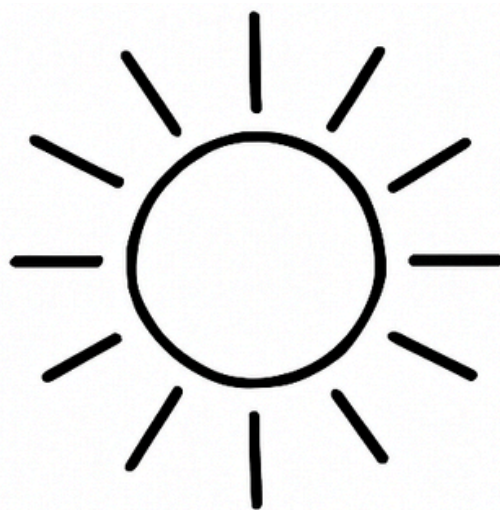
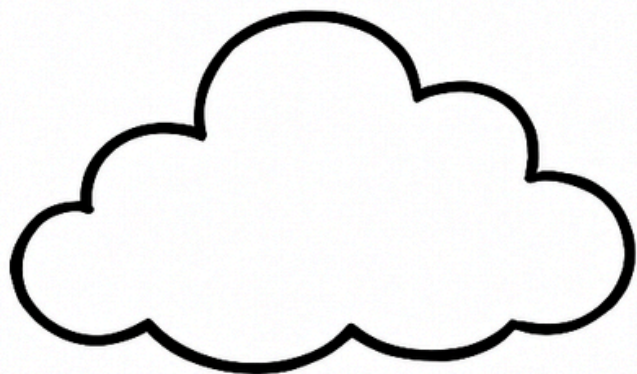
- ✏ Color the pond. Color the ripples for different feelings you may have.
- ✏ Color the cloud for a worry, and the sun for something that helps your worry.
- ✏ Use your favorite colors to show a happy or calm moment.

Why it helps:

Coloring slows us down, gives kids a way to express emotions safely, and opens space for parents to gently ask, “What did you notice while coloring?”



✨ Gentle Coloring: Noticing Feelings





Coloring Activity: The Mirror of Moments

Sometimes our hearts can hold two very different feelings — sad and hopeful, worried and safe, upset and loved. Both can be true at the same time.

Instructions for kids:

On the left side of the mirror, draw or color a feeling that was tough for you today.

On the right side of the mirror, draw or color a feeling that felt good today.

Mantra (say while coloring):

✧ “I can feel more than one thing.”

✧ “Both tough and good moments are part of me.”

Benefit for families:

This activity helps children see that they are bigger than one feeling — their “whole pond” can hold many ripples.

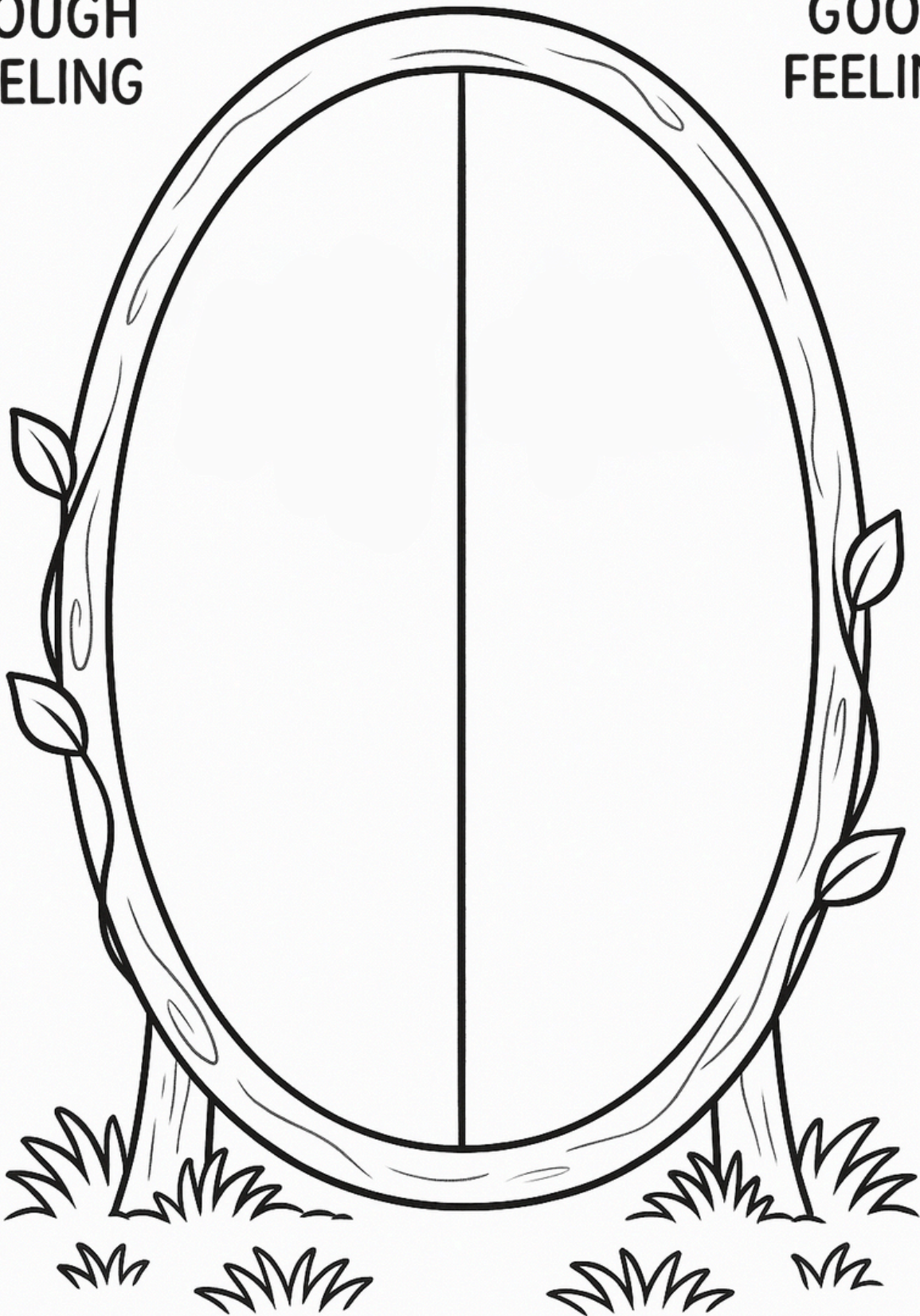




Coloring Activity: The Mirror of Moments

**TOUGH
FEELING**

**GOOD
FEELING**



Steady Steps Cards for Families

Now that we've colored and drawn our way into the idea that life holds both hard and beautiful moments, let's add a tool for everyday use: **Steady Steps Cards**.

Each card has three parts:

Awareness Cue → Noticing what's happening.

Steady Action → Choosing one small step.

Benefit Reminder → Why this choice matters.

💡 These cards are for both kids and parents. They can be read out loud, tucked into a backpack, or taped on the fridge. Each one is a gentle reminder: life brings both losses and joys, but we can meet each with steadiness.

💡 **Tip for parents:** Print and cut these cards. Let your child choose one that feels right for the day. Or pick one together before a family walk, meal, or bedtime.



✧ Self-as-Context Cards: Loss & Friendship

Card 1: Loss of a Friend

Awareness:

"I feel lonely — like no one is sitting with me."

Action:

Picture it like a ripple in a pond.

Try Saying:

"This ripple feels sad... and I am the whole pond."

Benefit:

This helps us remember that one friendship lost doesn't erase all the love and kindness around me.



Card 2: Making a New Friend

Awareness:

"I feel happy — someone smiled at me today."

Action:

Imagine this moment as a bright ripple spreading out.

Try Saying:

"This ripple brings joy... and I am the whole pond."

Benefit:

This helps us notice that joy and connection can also ripple outward and fill us with hope.



✨ Self-as-Context Cards: Death & Loved Ones

Card 3: Death & Loved Ones

Awareness:

"My heart hurts – I miss them so much."

Action:

Imagine this feeling as a cloud moving across the sky.

Try Saying:

"This cloud is heavy... and I am still the sky."

Benefit:

This helps us hold the sadness without being swallowed by it.



Card 4: Time with Loved Ones

Awareness:

"I feel warm – I'm laughing with my family."

Action:

Picture this as sunshine shining through the clouds.

Try Saying:

"This light reminds me... I am the sky that holds it all."

Benefit:

This helps us cherish moments of love and togetherness.



✨ Self-as-Context Cards: School Tragedy & School Joy

Card 5: School Tragedy

Awareness:

"I feel scared – something happened at school."

Action:

Imagine this as a storm passing over a large forest.

Try Saying:

"This storm feels big... and I am still the big forest beneath."

Benefit:

This helps us steady and remember storms do pass.



Card 6: School Celebration

Awareness:

"I feel proud – I tried hard and did well."

Action:

Imagine this as ripples glowing with light."

Try Saying:

"This ripple feels strong... and I am the whole pond."

Benefit:

This helps me notice growth and effort, not just outcomes.



✨ Self-as-Context Cards: Society Tragedy & Society Hope

Card 7: World Tragedy

Awareness:

"I feel heavy — something bad happened in the world."

Action:

Imagine this as dark clouds across the sky.

Try Saying:

"These clouds feel heavy... and I am sky across the world."

Benefit:

This helps us hold worry without being in it.



Card 8: Community Kindness

Awareness:

"I feel inspired — people helped each other."

Action:

Picture this as bright stars shining in the night.

Try Saying:

"These stars remind me... the sky can hold light too."

Benefit:

This helps us notice hope and kindness, even when things are hard.



Exploring Life's Hard & Beautiful Moments


Sometimes older kids and teens carry big questions and strong emotions about the world. This section is built to help you pause, reflect, and see yourself as more than one moment — whether that moment feels heavy or hopeful.


How to Use This Section:

These activities are deeper and may take more time.

They work best when done together with a parent, caregiver, or trusted adult.

They're meant to spark reflection, creativity, and conversation.

 **Goal:** To help teens notice that even when life feels overwhelming — through personal struggles, loss, or even tragedies in the world — they are still the steady space that holds both hurt and hope.

 **Reminder:** You are not just one moment, one story, or one feeling. You are the whole sky, the whole pond, the one who holds it all.

Exploring Life's Hard & Beautiful Moments



📌 What's one 'pie moment' in your week – something small that reminded you life isn't only tough?

✨ Try This:

📝 Write it down on a sticky note and place it somewhere you'll see tomorrow.

🎨 Draw a quick doodle of your "pie moment" – it doesn't need to be fancy.

💬 Share your pie moment with a parent, sibling, or friend. Ask them what theirs is too.

🌱 **Why this matters:** Practicing noticing small moments of hope or comfort helps your brain balance both the tough and the good.

Exploring Life's Hard & Beautiful Moments



📌 Have you ever felt annoyed at someone checking in – but later realized they cared? How can both feelings be true at once?

✨ **Try This:**

📝 Write down one time you felt “both/and” (annoyed + cared).

💬 Share it with someone you trust – see if they’ve felt this too.

🤝 Try checking in on someone you care about – see how it feels on the other side.

🌱 **Why this matters:** Two feelings can exist at once – noticing both helps you see the bigger picture.

Exploring Life's Hard & Beautiful Moments



📌 **When life feels stormy or bleak, what helps you feel steady?**

Storms can be small stresses or bigger tragedies — from school worries to heartbreaking events in the world.

🌟 **Try This;**

🖍️ Make your panel — words or quick sketches.

🤝 Name one support (person, place, or practice).

🌈 Share your panel with someone you trust, or keep it as a reminder that storms can pass and you are more than this moment.

☀️ **Why it matters:** Noticing both the storm and the support builds perspective — you're more than one moment.

For Parents & Caregivers


This resource explores sensitive topics – loss, tragedy, and life’s beauty too. Each child responds differently. Use these practices as invitations, not requirements. Again, this is not clinical support.


Guidance for Using Together:

 Go gently. Try one activity at a calm time, not in the middle of crisis.

 Take it slow. One page may be enough for a week. Repetition builds comfort.

 Stay flexible. If your child resists, pause. You can return later – the goal is steady support, not pushing.

 Co-regulate first. Your calm presence helps your child feel safer and more able to reflect.

 Name, don’t fix. Simply noticing and naming feelings supports resilience, without needing to erase them.

Research Backs This Approach:

Trauma-informed care emphasizes pacing, safety, and trust (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, 2014).

Co-regulation – an adult staying calm and connected – helps children regulate more effectively (Ginsburg et al., 2014).

Naming emotions without judgment strengthens the brain’s ability to manage them (Siegel & Bryson, 2012).

Reflection: What We Noticed

Take time to pause together after using this resource. You can discuss, draw, or write.

For Kids/Teens:

 What's one hard ripple or storm you noticed this week?

 What's one beautiful ripple or hope you noticed?

 How did it feel to hold both at the same time?

For Parents:


 What did you notice about your child's responses?

 What did you notice in yourself while guiding these activities?

 How might you keep supporting gently, even if your child resists at times?

Closing Reminder:

 You are not just one moment or one story.

 You are the steady space that holds both the hurt and the hope.