

Worksheet:

Growing Around Separation

About this activity

Faced with change and loss, a child may feel overwhelmed and suffocated by their emotions, particularly if the loss involves grief. This worksheet describes two activities you can use to support a child to grow around their emotions around separation, loss and grief, not by ignoring it, but by looking at how they can begin rebuilding their lives.

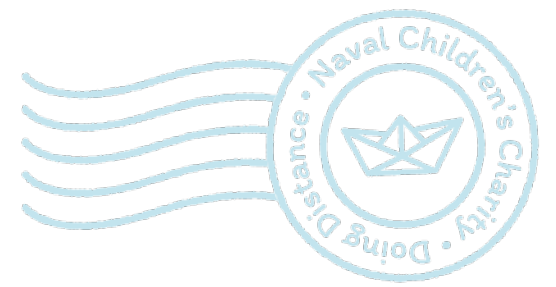


• Available from the Naval Children's Charity on request



Outcomes

- ✓ To engage the child in the outdoors and show the importance of movement when managing separation and loss
- ✓ 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



Worksheet:

We are Family

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. You can use our Forget-Me-Not seeds which can be requested through our website or any available seasonal seeds.

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.

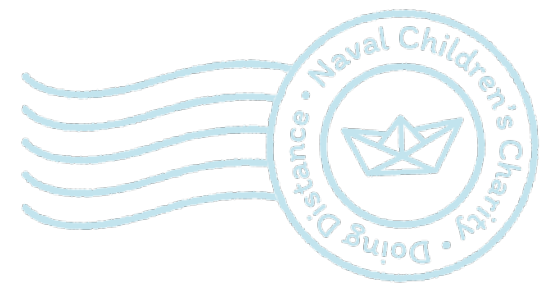


What you will need

- ✓ Forget-Me-Not seeds (or any other seasonal flower seeds you can source)

What to do

- 1 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.
- 2 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 allow, then take photos of the child with their produce or flowers to send to their family member who is serving away from 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.

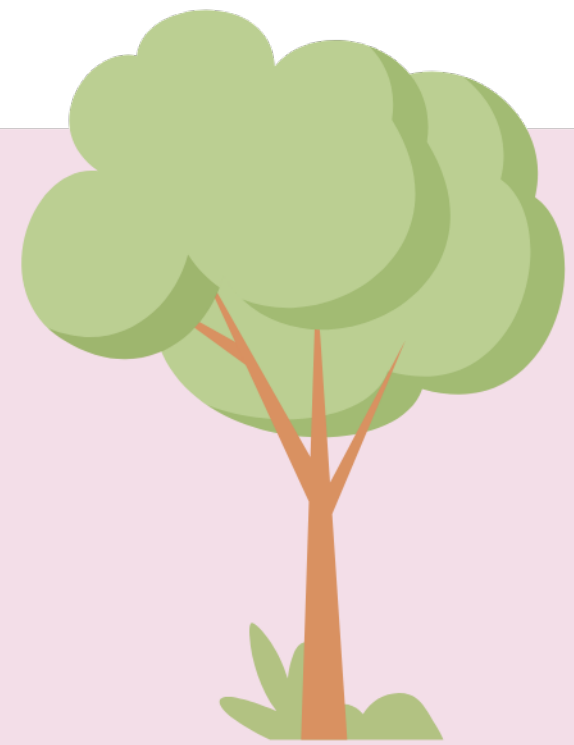


Worksheet:

We are Family

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

What to do

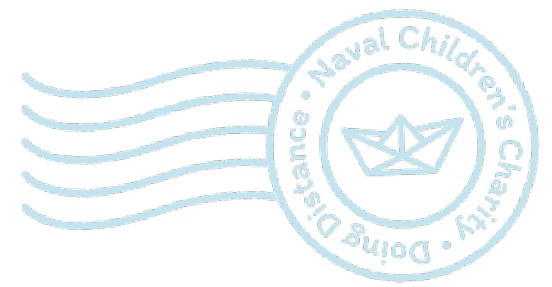
- 1 Begin by showing the child the worksheet and explaining the purpose of the activity – to show how they are still growing despite losses and separation they've experienced. Just as their bodies are growing, so too is their strength and resilience. Their anxiety also grows but they are finding ways to keep it from growing too large.
- 2 Start with the roots. It can be helpful for children to talk about their roots and their family history, so they have a sense of where they have come from. For example, their parents, grandparents, siblings and other important people who have shaped their life.

'My Gran used to look after me when my Mum and Dad had to be away working, she made the best roast dinner.'

'I look after my younger brother when he feels sad, people say it's nice how close we are, he's my best friend.'

- 3 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?
- 4 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'.

'When I grow up, I want to be a vet, I'm doing my GCSEs at the moment and I'm working hard to get my grades.'



Worksheet:

We are Family

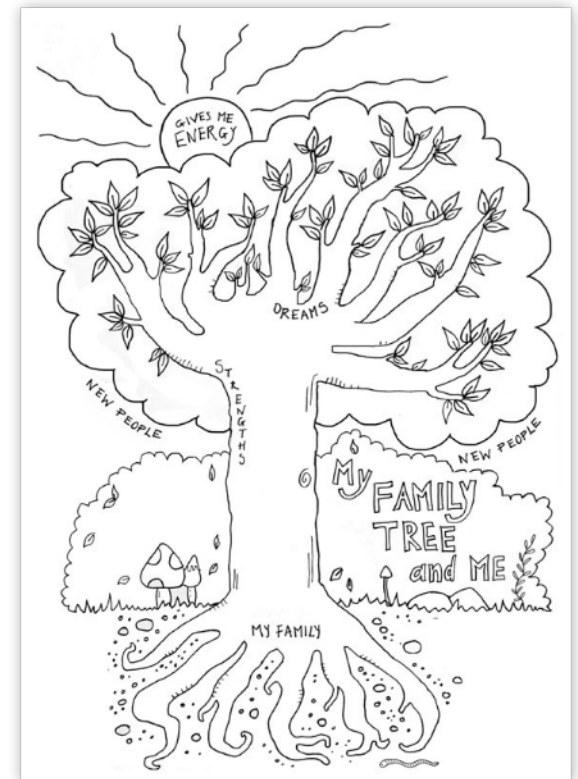
- 5 The leaves of the tree are any new people that have come into their life, people who they respect and trust like new friends or teachers.

'My teacher is a military child too, she is very kind and knows when I am struggling with my mum being away'

'The pastor at the church is very kind - he says prayers with us to keep Dad safe.'

'My friend isn't from the same background as me, but he has been so kind, and has helped me catch up on some of the school work I didn't do in my old school.'

'My swimming coach helps keep me focused and this helps me not to worry so much.'



- 6 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.