

# Reunion Handbook

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## A PRACTICAL REUNION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

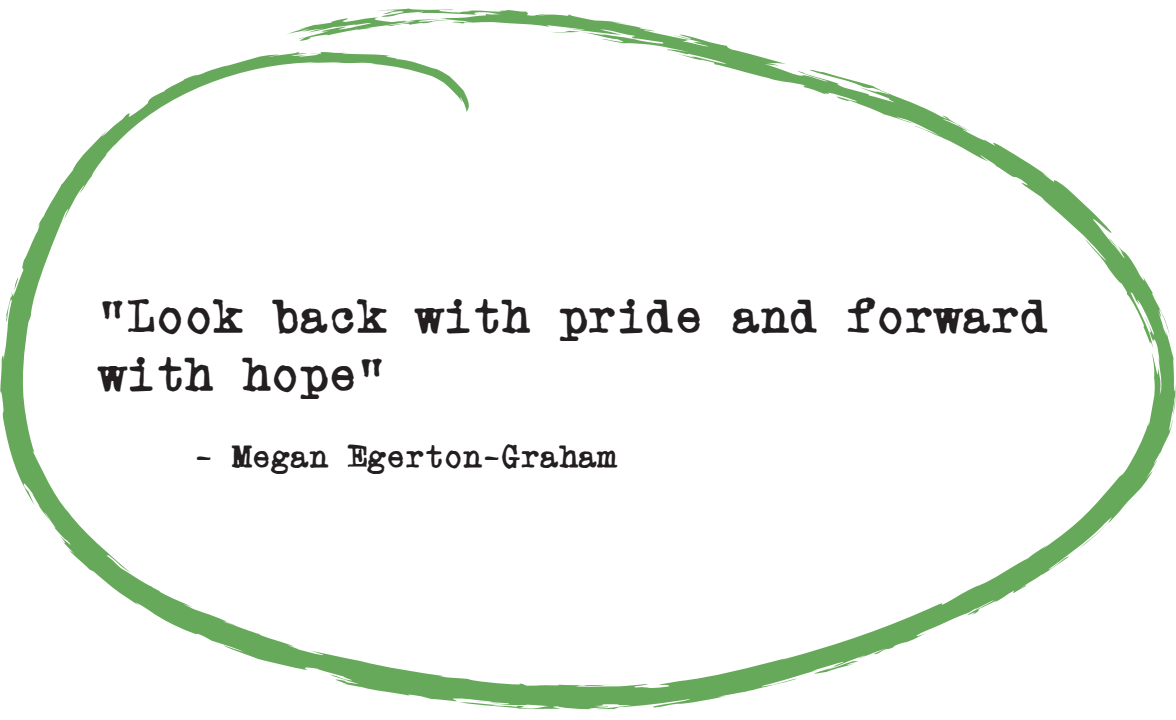
**MFSP**  
MILITARY FAMILY  
SERVICES PROGRAM



**PSFM**  
PROGRAMME DES SERVICES  
AUX FAMILLES DES MILITAIRES

**Canada** 





"Look back with pride and forward  
with hope"

- Megan Egerton-Graham







# Introduction

- Forward
- Reunion Stages



# Anticipation/Homecoming Preparation

- Tips
- Suggested Activities

# Appendix



# Re-integration/Renegotiation

- Tips
- Suggested Activities



## Family Planning/Goal Setting

- Tips
- Suggested Activities



## Appendix



## Identifying and Alleviating Stress

### Stress and PTSD

- Identification
- Tips
- Suggested Activities



### Children & Behaviour

- Behaviours
- Tips
- Suggested Activities

### Grief/Loss

- Common Reactions
- Tips
- Suggested Activities

## Appendix





# Stabilization and Sustaining

- Tips
- Suggested Activities

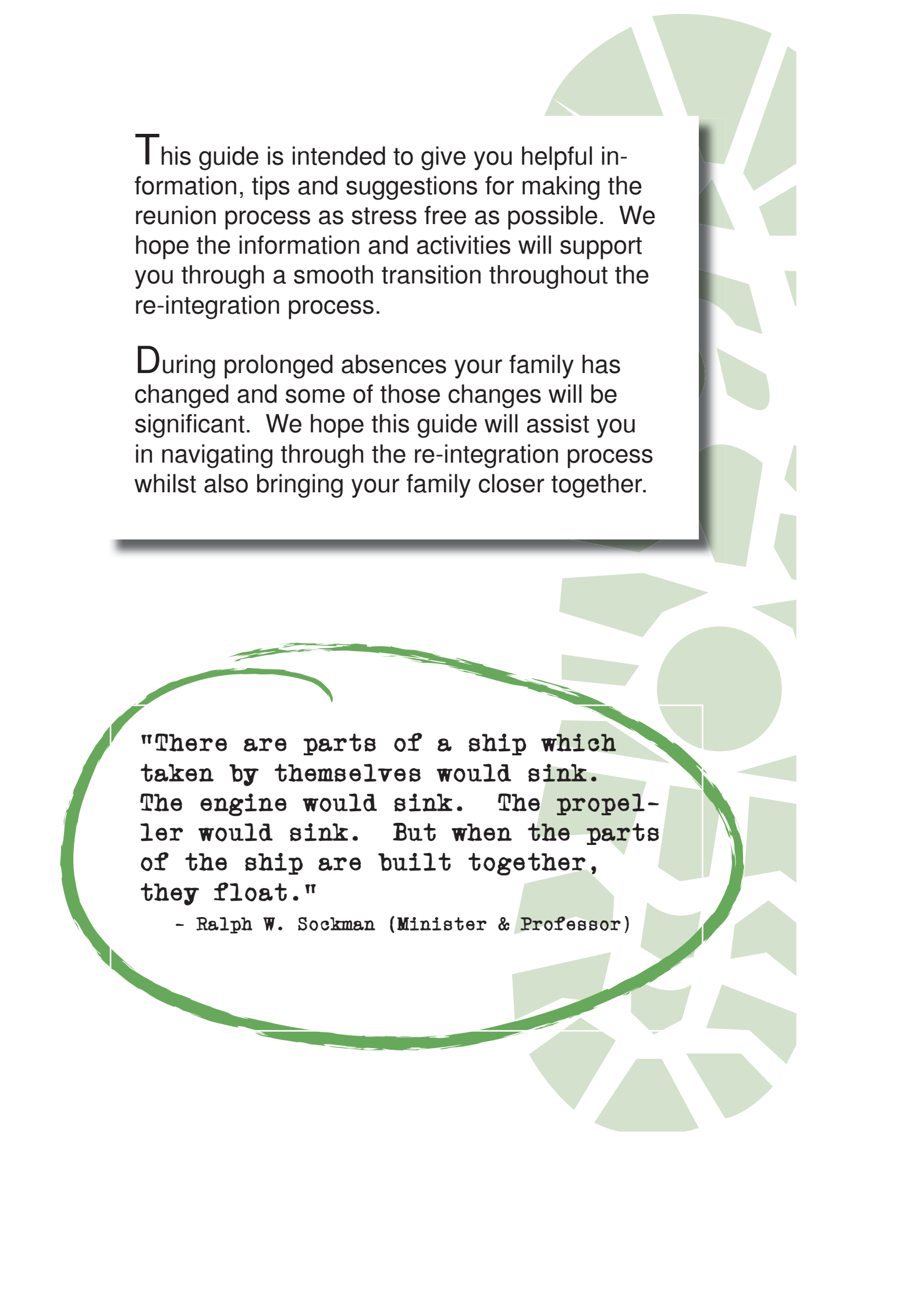
## Appendix



# Resources

- Websites
- Workbooks/Journals
- Reading Materials





This guide is intended to give you helpful information, tips and suggestions for making the reunion process as stress free as possible. We hope the information and activities will support you through a smooth transition throughout the re-integration process.

During prolonged absences your family has changed and some of those changes will be significant. We hope this guide will assist you in navigating through the re-integration process whilst also bringing your family closer together.

"There are parts of a ship which taken by themselves would sink. The engine would sink. The propeller would sink. But when the parts of the ship are built together, they float."

- Ralph W. Sockman (Minister & Professor)



Anticipation

Elation

Reintegration

Re-negotiation

Integration and Acceptance

Stabilization

# Reunion Stages

## Stage 1 - Anticipation

4 - 6 Weeks prior to return

## Stage 2 - Elation

0 - 2 Weeks after returning

## Stage 3 - Reintegration

2 - 6 Weeks

## Stage 4 - Renegotiation

6 - 12 Weeks

## Stage 5 - Integration and Acceptance

12 - 16 Weeks

## Stage 6 - Stabilization

16 Weeks onwards







# Anticipation/ Homecoming Preparation

"The significant problems we  
have cannot be solved at the  
same level of thinking we were  
at when we created them."

- Albert Einstein



# Tips :

- Understand and warn family members that dates are not ‘written in stone’ and could change due to operational need, weather conditions, etc.
- Get your information from a reliable/official source (Mission Information Line 1-800-866-4546 or Unit Rear Party/Naval Shore Element/Air Sponsor Group)
- Do not worry about all the things you didn’t accomplish, focus on what you did accomplish
- Talk to the member about what kind of homecoming they would like to have
- Don’t plan numerous or large events in the first few weeks
- Let extended family and friends know how you will be communicating with them, and when, in regards to his/her safe return
- Create a phone tree to reduce the amount of time you spend on the phone versus with your reunited family
- Remember time zones when getting information about arrivals
- Ignore rumours
- Confirm with your nearest C/MFRC or DSG who and how you will be contacted about your loved one’s arrival, and/or what the notification protocol will be
- Maintain the same routine
- Avoid scheduling days with tight timelines or multiple commitments
- Set and prioritize goals and things you want to accomplish before the member returns
- For approximately 5 days, either side of the return date, do not make any significant decisions or changes as contact with your loved one may be limited, and sometime surprises are not always welcome ones



# Suggested Activities:

- Have a “we thrived, not just survived” dinner before the member returns with the family to talk about perceptions, expectations, and reflect over their accomplishments
- At a family meal use the ‘Conversation Driver’ cards to discuss the reunion and expectations (see appendix at the end of this section)
- Attend any and all reunion briefings
- Have a pamper yourself day or evening
- Make a “Getting To Know Us Again” box and each family adds member add things into the box. This box will then be something the member can look over at their leisure. It can help bridge some of the gaps and generate discussion while focusing on the positive events or happenings that occurred during the deployment or absence.
- Complete a scrapbook or While You Were Away journals so that they are ready for the member to read, at their own pace
- Create a sheet with the headings: Success, Failures, What We Learned with your family
- Set up a phone tree so that your time can be spent with your family, and not on the phone
- Set up a bulk email that can be sent instantly with a photo of his/her return attached, and a brief note that says “Be in touch soon, thanks for supporting us”
- Create a “Welcome Home” banner and place it where the member will see it as soon as they walk through the door
- Put notes under pillows, in the bathroom, in kitchen drawers that have simple messages or sayings on them that they will gradually find (see appendix)
- Make a coupon or IOU booklet from the whole family (see appendix)
- Ask him/her to bring back all letters and copies of emails, postcards etc.









Homecoming

Anticipation




Homecoming

Anticipation




Homecoming

Anticipation




Homecoming

Anticipation




Homecoming

Anticipation




Homecoming

Anticipation




Homecoming

Anticipation



Homecoming

Anticipation





CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What is the first question you want to ask them?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What did you miss the most?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What should be our first vacation together? Where should we go and with who?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Who do you think helped us the most?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What do you think we should do together as a family next month?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

How do you think you did over the entire absence?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER


What do you think we should do together as a family next week?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What is the first thing you want to tell them about?




Homecoming




Anticipation

Homecoming




Anticipation

Homecoming




Anticipation

Homecoming




Anticipation

Homecoming




Anticipation

Homecoming




Anticipation

Homecoming



Anticipation

Homecoming



Anticipation



CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What would  
you do differ-  
ently next  
time?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What chore or  
responsibility  
would you like  
to change the  
most?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What was the  
hardest thing  
about them  
being away?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What do you  
not want to  
have change?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Would you  
want to do  
this again?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What do you  
think he/she  
missed most  
about home?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

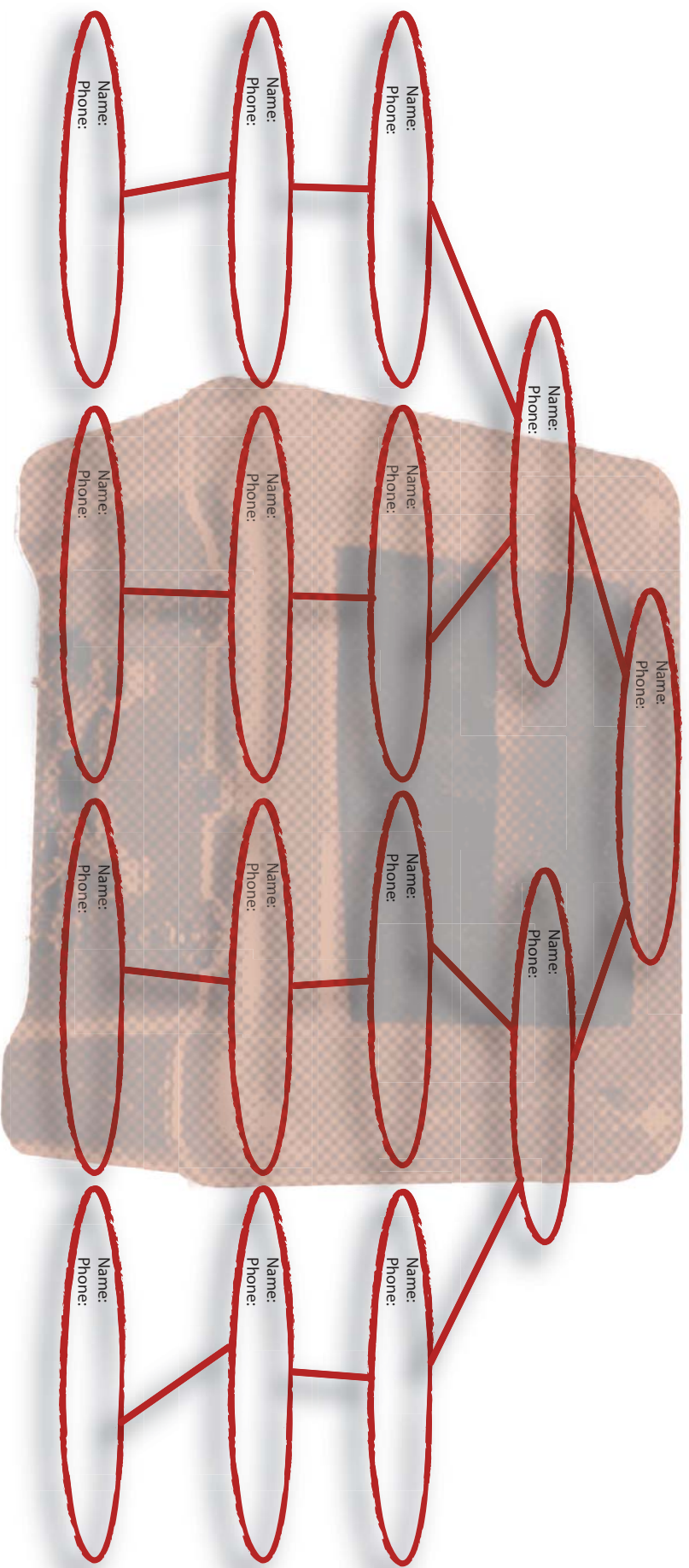
When did  
you miss  
him/her  
the most?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What should  
we have for  
our first  
dinner back?



# Arrival Phone Tree





# Bulk Email List:

Name	Email Address
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	
11)	
12)	
13)	
14)	
15)	

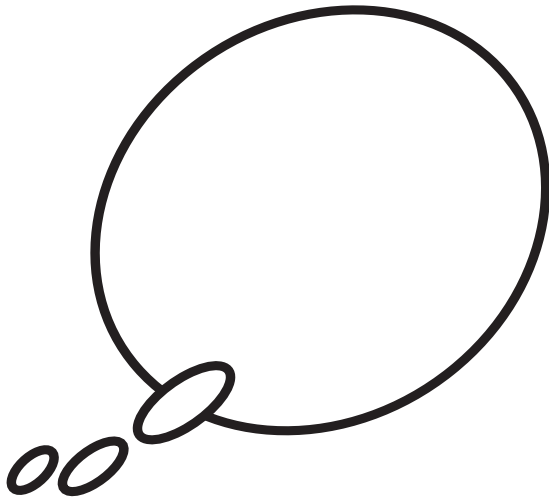
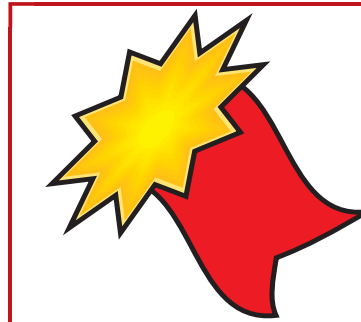
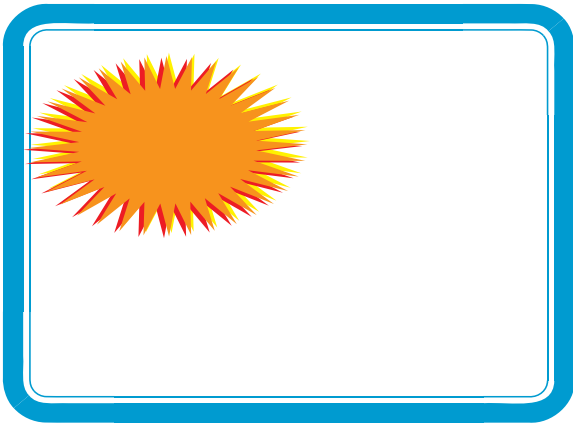
## Tips :

- Take a photo of your loved one arriving home and attach it to the email
- Write a quick email before going to greet your loved one so that all you have to do is attach the picture and hit send when you get home
- End the note with a comment about getting in touch with everyone when your family has had time to settle back into a routine
- Avoid committing to a definite time or date of when you will contact them again.

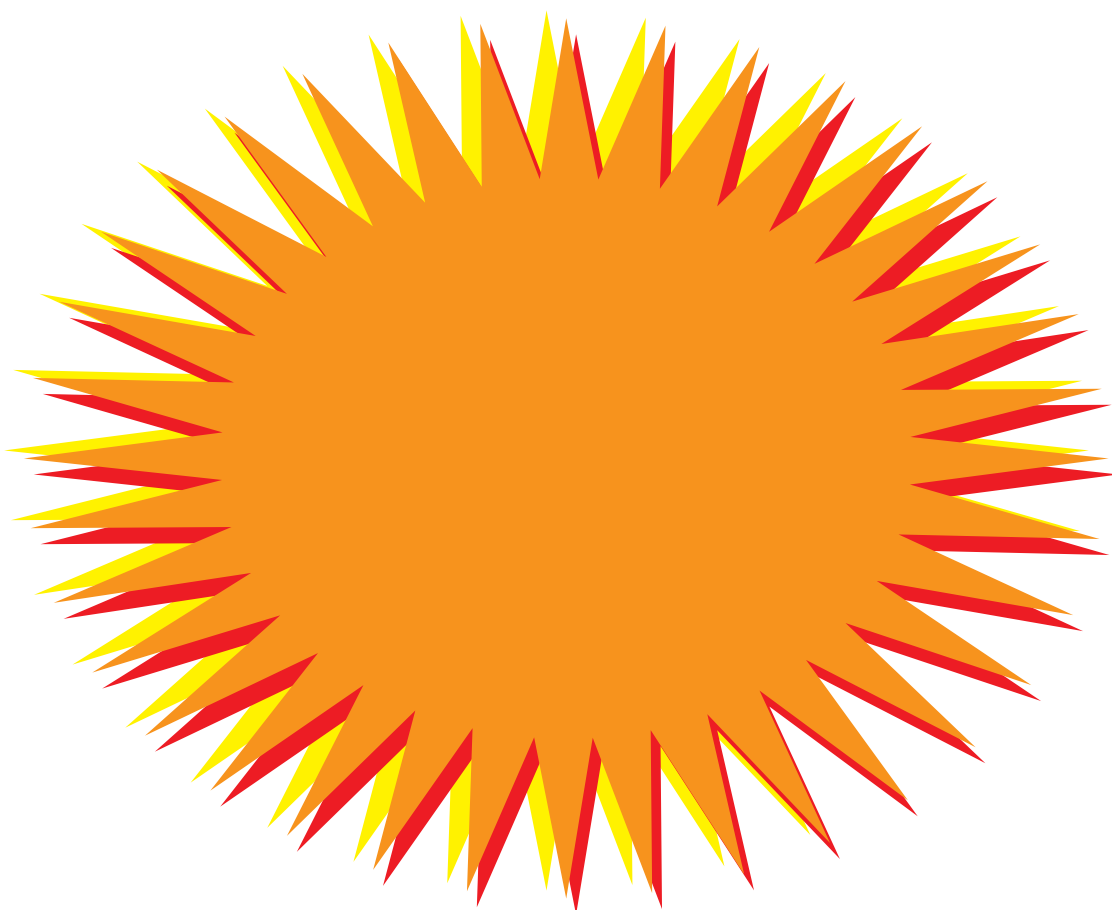
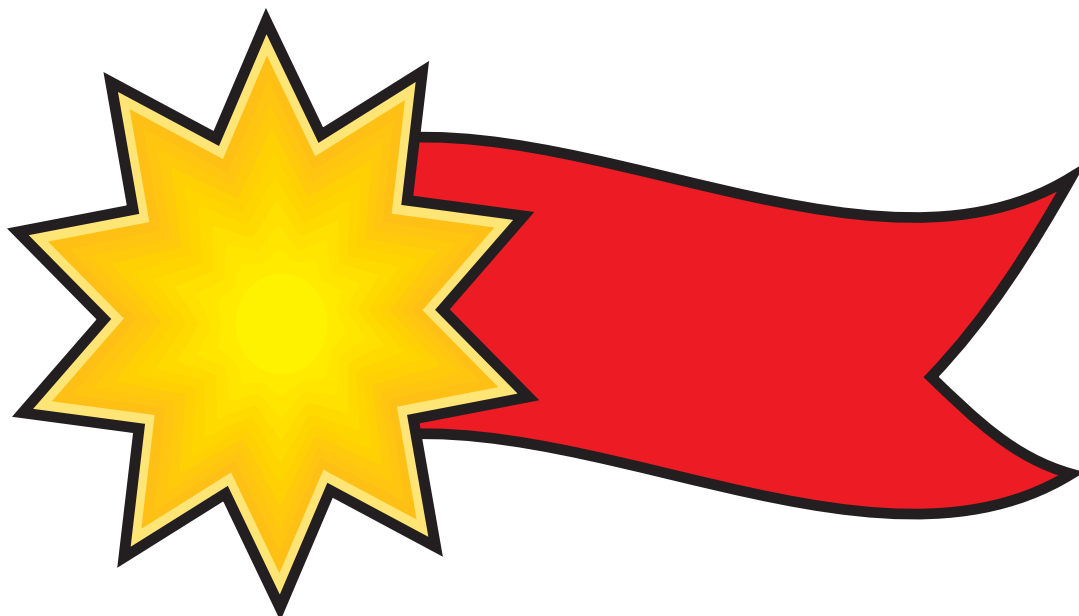


# Gentle Gestures

— Make the gesture of writing a few, two or three line, notes and leave them around the house to be found by your returning family member.










# Reintegration & Renegotiation



....

"Happiness is not a station  
to arrive at, but a manner of  
traveling"

- Margaret Lee Runbeck



# Tips

- Make time your 'friend' – don't rush into anything and try to limit the number of things with time limits upon them
- Share your thoughts and feelings openly and honestly at appropriate times and in appropriate places
- Recognize that new bonds and friendships have been developed. Don't underestimate their importance, value and significance
- Explain and openly discuss new relationships and what they bring to your life
- Accept and validate each other's perceptions and feelings by the things you say and do
- Maintain the same household rules and routines for several weeks after their return so that they are able to see what everyone is capable of and where they could 'pitch in'
- Keep to making only 1-2 long term goals and don't overwhelm each other with a multitude of short term goals that don't add to supporting the re-integration process
- Consult each other before spending large amounts of money
- Participate in post-deployment or reunion briefings
- Renegotiate responsibilities with everyone concerned
- Be prepared to feel awkwardness and learn to laugh and talk about it
- Find something to laugh about together each day
- Don't judge feelings of others
- When children test your limits – be firm, fair and consistent



# Tips

## When handing out discipline:

- Make sure that the punishment will not cause extra stress or excessive work on your part
- Check with each other to ensure there isn't a pattern of behaviour
- Look at when the behaviour is happening to attempt to look for the 'why'
- Express thoughts, feelings and opinion without blaming others
- Praise often, criticize rarely

"The last of one's freedom's is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance."

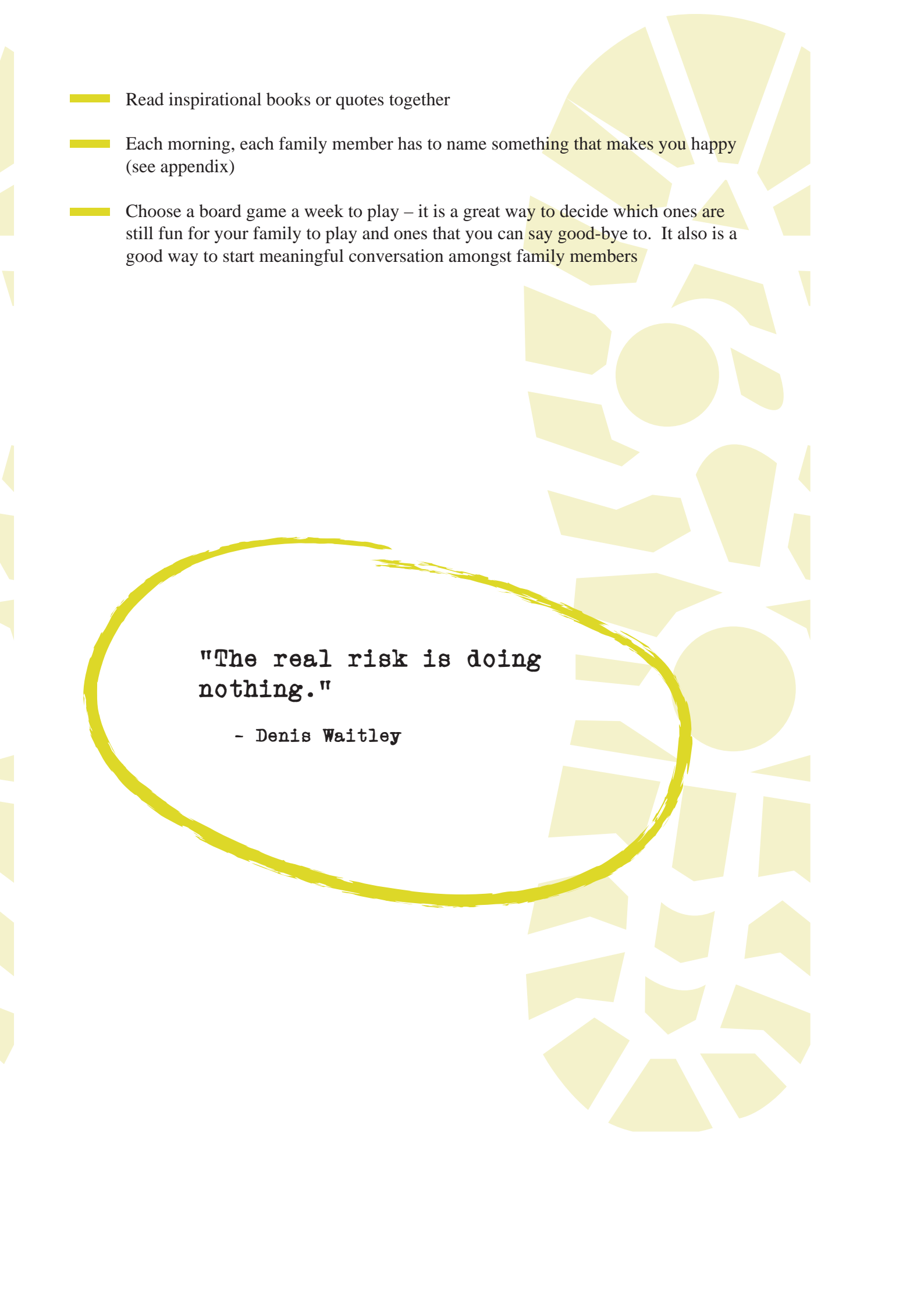
- Viktor Frankl



# Suggested Activities:

- Get a bunch of his/her favourite things and bring them out each day for a week (favourite movies, foods, drinks, blanket, etc.)
- Compile the photos you took while they were away and make them into a slide show
- When you eventually have a celebratory party – make it a potluck and take someone up on their offer to have it at their house (reducing your stress and workload)
- Compile in chronological order all of your letters back and forth, put into a book format, and give each other time to read it
- Do one thing a day that no one has done so that you can start creating new experiences together (try a new restaurant, go to a different park, watch a different TV show, see a newly released movie, create a new recipe for dinner, eat a crazy candy, etc.). You can make this a family challenge – each day a member of the family has to come up with an idea
- Use “Conversation Driver” cards to get different conversations started or bring up difficult or ‘unsaid’ feelings or thoughts in a fun and light way. (see end of section)
- Have the returning member section off some individual time with each family member once a week so that they can reconnect in their own way and on a much more personal level
- Each person should complete “When I say or do...” sheet to find out how they would ideally like you to respond to their behaviour. It is a good way of talking about behaviour and desired results, versus personal reactions
- Create a “How We Did It...” manual (see appendix)
- Get a calendar and plan ahead at least six months so that you can continue to be organized and there aren’t a lot of unexpected obligations, trips or parties that haven’t been planned on. (See section appendix)
- Give everyone a door knob sign for their bedroom door that they can use to get privacy or time away (see section appendix)

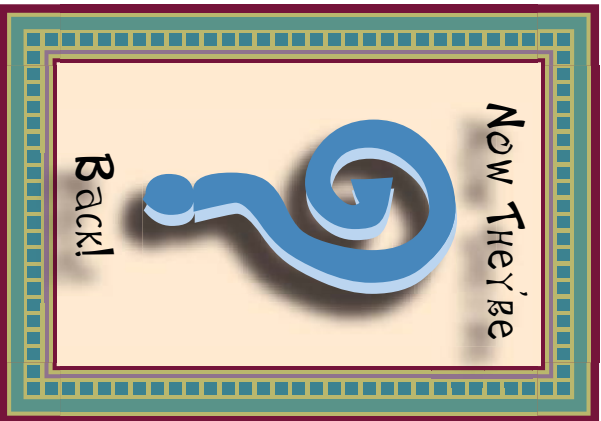
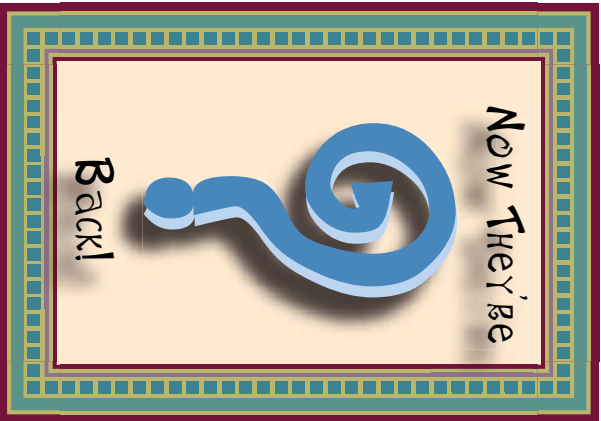
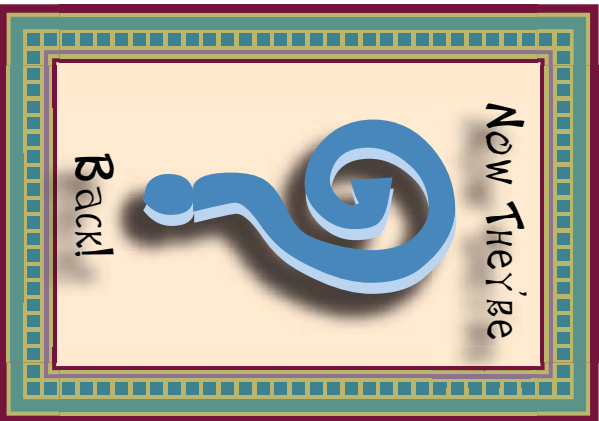
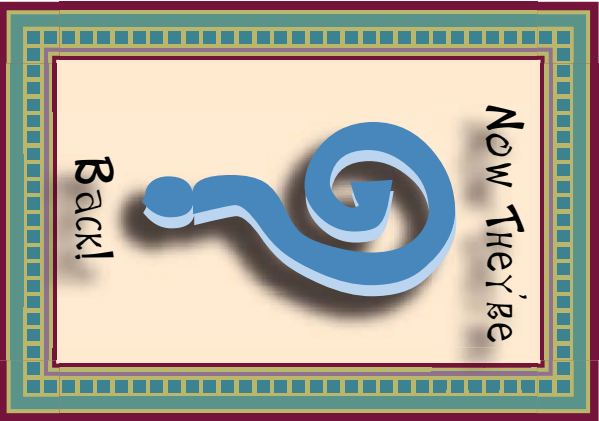
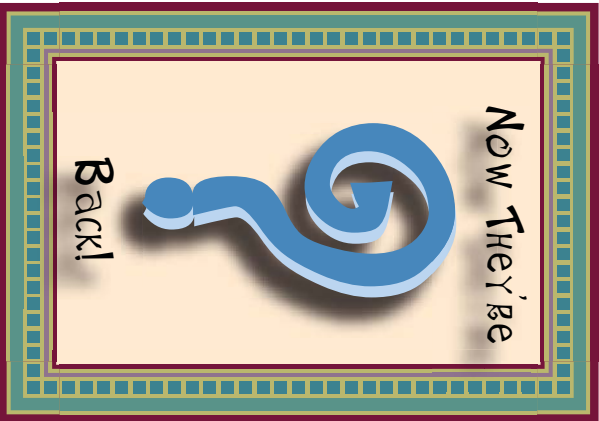


- 
- Read inspirational books or quotes together
  - Each morning, each family member has to name something that makes you happy (see appendix)
  - Choose a board game a week to play – it is a great way to decide which ones are still fun for your family to play and ones that you can say good-bye to. It also is a good way to start meaningful conversation amongst family members

"The real risk is doing  
nothing."

- Denis Waitley







CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Am I getting  
a bigger  
allowance?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

If you got to  
choose the food  
for a special  
dinner what  
would it be?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What kinds of  
things are we  
going to do  
this week?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What was the  
hardest thing  
that has  
happened to  
you while you  
were away?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Is there  
anything you  
aren't ready  
to talk about?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What did you  
like the most  
about being  
away?

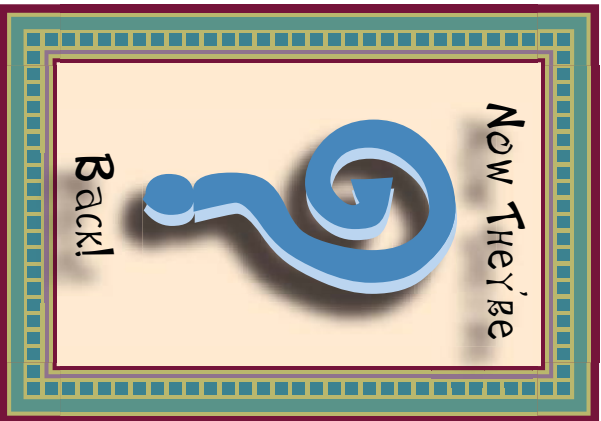
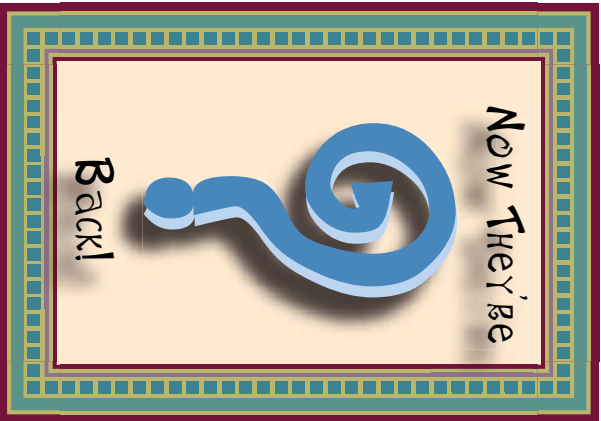
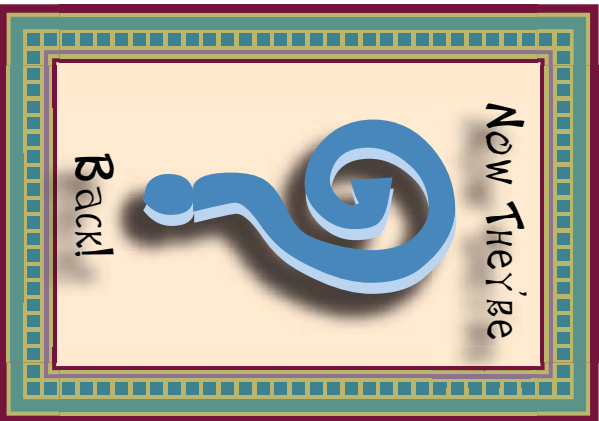
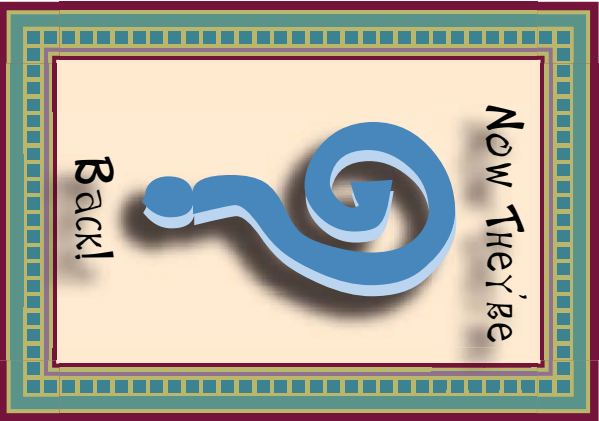
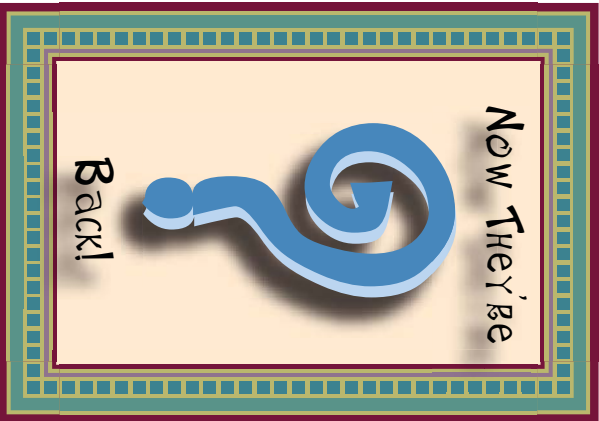
CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What did you  
miss most?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

When are  
we going on  
a holiday  
together?







CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

When you are stressed, what are you going to do?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Name your most embarrassing moment.

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Who is the person you talk to the least about things?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Tell a joke.

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Who is the person you talk to the most about things?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Name your biggest fear.

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER


If you could go on holiday somewhere, where would it be?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER


Is there anything that you are worried about?




Now They're  
Back!



Now They're  
Back!




Now They're  
Back!




Now They're  
Back!




Now They're  
Back!



Now They're  
Back!



Now They're  
Back!



Now They're  
Back!





CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What has  
made you a  
stronger  
person?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Who do you  
think should  
make the  
decisions?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What makes  
you laugh no  
matter how  
you are feeling?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What are you  
looking forward  
to the least?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What was  
your greatest  
achievement?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What are you  
most looking  
forward to?

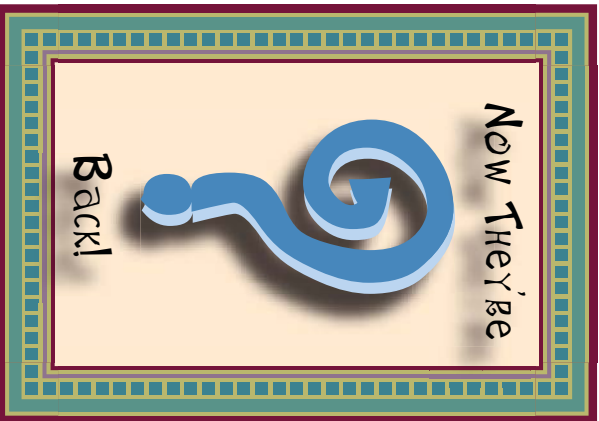
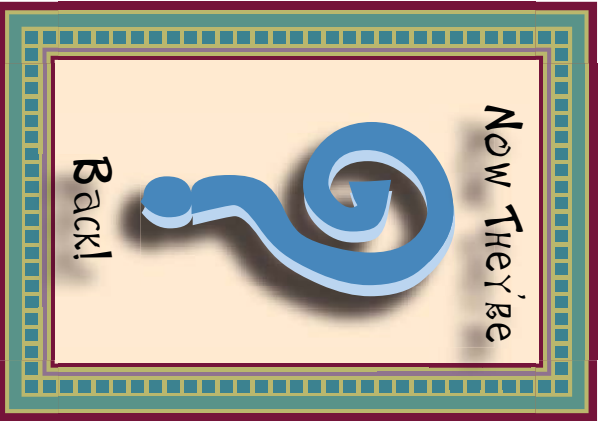
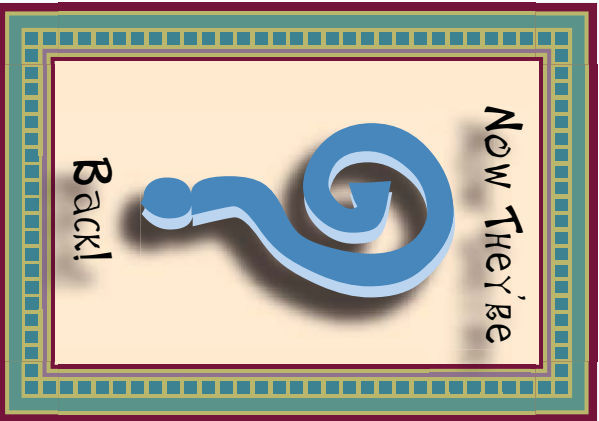
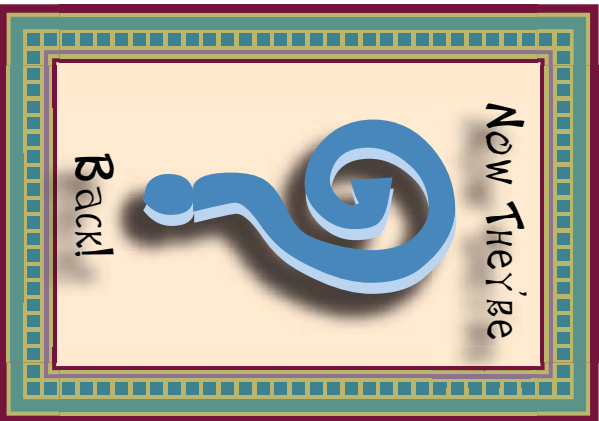
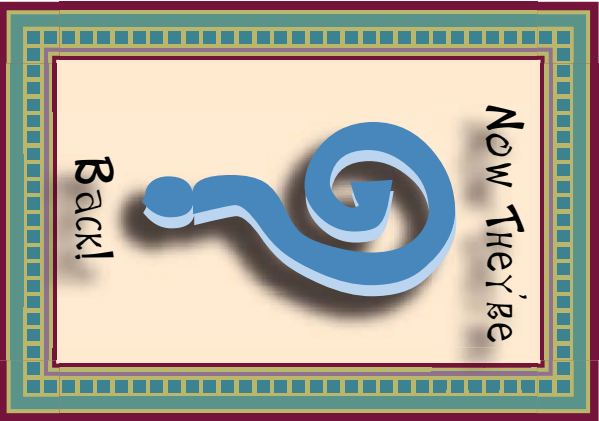
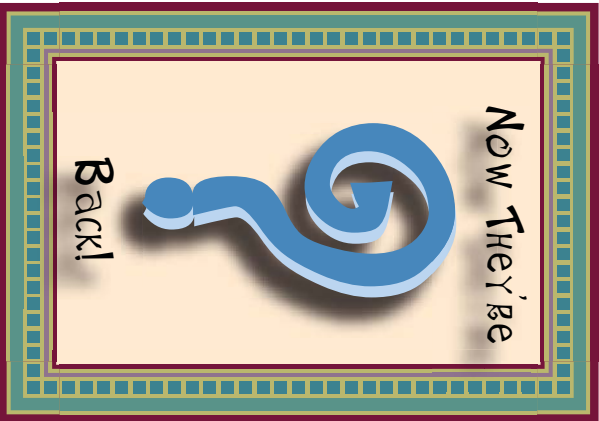
CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What was  
your biggest  
disappointment?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Do you think  
you are a lucky  
person?







CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What are  
you most  
proud of?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Will you go  
back soon?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What changes  
do you see in  
me?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What are  
you most  
proud of?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

Where do you go  
when you are  
feeling sad, mad  
or frustrated?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What was the  
grossest food  
you ever had  
to eat?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

What are you  
going to do  
when you need  
to be alone?

CONVERSATION  
DRIVER

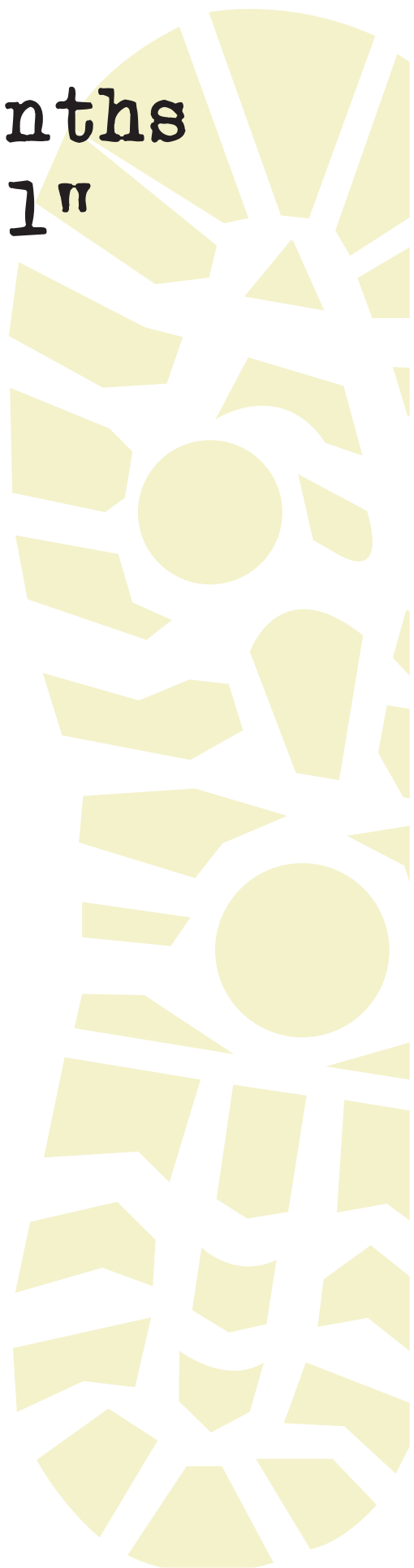
What do you  
think the  
biggest  
difference in  
us/me is?



# The Next 6 Months 'In A Nutshell'

Add to calendar:

- Family commitments
- Parties
- Holidays
- Regular extra-curricular activities
- Celebrations
- Work commitments/schedules
- Leave dates
- Weekend Get-a-Away(s)
- Concerts
- School events
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Other obligations or commitments
- Medical or dental appointments









Month:

[illegible]

Month:

[illegible]







## Don't forget to:

- Put it in place where everyone can see it or get to it
- Update it regularly
- Review it with your family weekly
- Prioritize things by highlighting or underlining the essential "Have Tos" so everyone in the family knows what is important

"It  
is something  
to be able to paint a  
particular picture, or to  
carve a statue, and so to make a  
few objects beautiful; but it is far  
more glorious to carve and paint the  
very atmosphere and medium through which  
we look. To affect the quality of the  
day - that is the highest of arts"

- Henry David Thoreau



## When I (say or do)...

I just want to be alone.

I want to go out and get together with:

I get mad or frustrated.

I am silent and don't want to talk

I say you don't understand what it was like.

I don't want to do something.

I Cry

I when I can't sleep

I am not listening

I think you aren't listening

I want to be intimate

I want to change rules or routines

I want to talk

I don't feel like eating

I have a headache

I want to go to a unit party

I talk to friends about my experiences

I just sit around and do nothing

I have a nightmare

I don't want to spend time with family

## You need to (say or do)...

Each member of the family should make a copy of this sheet to fill out privately- and then switch to discuss

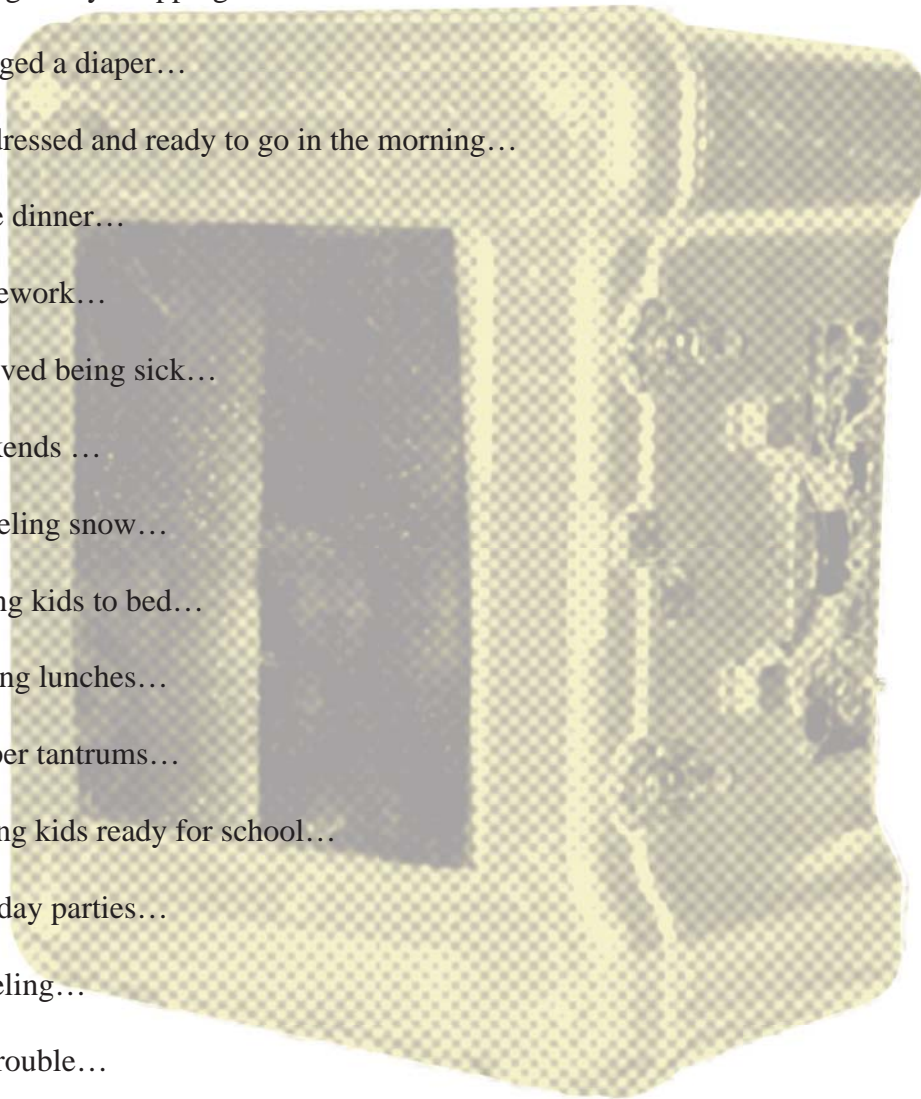


# Survival Stories

## – How we survived while you were away

### "How I..." Ideas:

- Cut the lawn ...
- Went grocery shopping...
- Changed a diaper...
- Got dressed and ready to go in the morning...
- Made dinner...
- Homework...
- Survived being sick...
- Weekends ...
- Shoveling snow...
- Putting kids to bed...
- Making lunches...
- Temper tantrums...
- Getting kids ready for school...
- Birthday parties...
- Traveling...
- Car trouble...
- Bath time...





## A vertical sheet of white paper with horizontal black lines. The background features a large, stylized yellow sunburst or starburst pattern. The pattern consists of numerous triangular and polygonal segments of varying sizes, all in a light yellow color, radiating from the center. The lines are evenly spaced and run horizontally across the page.



# Things That Make Me Happy

- |                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| ■ Pancakes                    | ■ Dimples           |
| ■ Chocolate                   | ■ Silly jokes       |
| ■ Being Married               | ■ Beaches           |
| ■ Being Tall                  | ■ Ice Cream         |
| ■ My job                      | ■ Finger painting   |
| ■ School                      | ■ Photographs       |
| ■ Watching my favourite movie | ■ Books             |
| ■ Feeding my fish             | ■ Posters           |
| ■ Candy                       | ■ Music             |
| ■ Friends                     | ■ Stickers          |
| ■ Mother                      | ■ Recess            |
| ■ Father                      | ■ Gym               |
| ■ Trampolines                 | ■ Notes in my lunch |
| ■ Swimming                    | ■ Lazy days         |
| ■ Tennis                      | ■ Tobogganing       |
| ■ Soccer                      | ■ Emails            |
| ■ Basketball                  | ■ Shopping          |
| ■ Dogs                        | ■ Shoes             |
| ■ Cats                        | ■ Clothes           |
| ■ Fish                        | ■ Jewelry           |
| ■ Balloons                    | ■ Time with family  |
| ■ Cakes                       | ■ Time with friends |

- The above is a list to get you started.
- Have fun with the cards and make up some of your own.

"Nothing ever comes to one,  
that is worth having, except  
as a result of hard work."

- Booker T. Washington



This note has  
been brought to  
you by...

---

Fold Here



Cut Here

This note has  
been brought to  
you by...

---

Fold Here





**This Makes me  
Happy...**

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Cut Here

**This Makes me  
Happy...**

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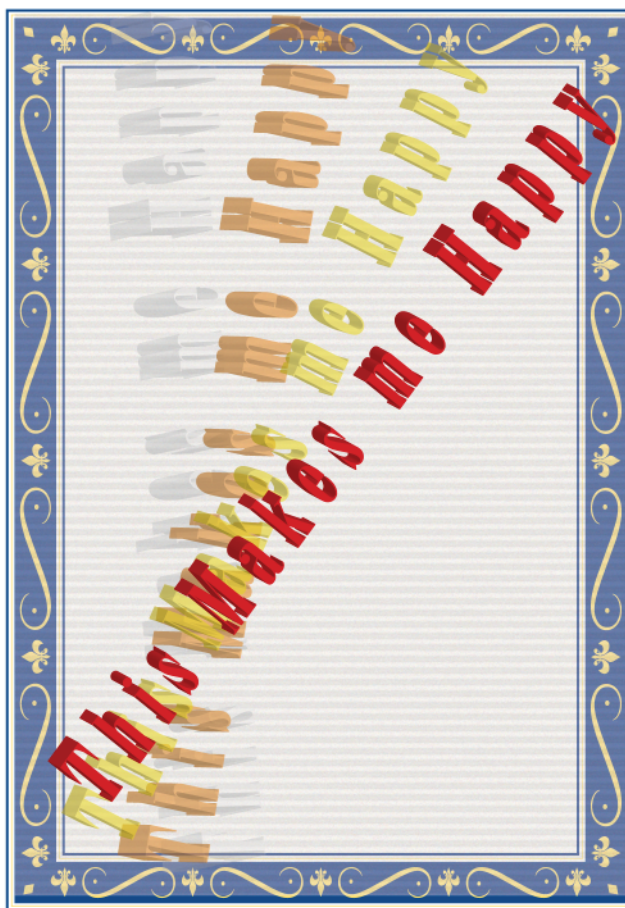
Fold Here



This note has  
been brought to  
you by...

---

Fold Here



Cut Here

This note has  
been brought to  
you by...

---

Fold Here





**This Makes me  
Happy...**

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Cut Here

**This Makes me  
Happy...**

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Fold Here



# Family Planning and Goal Setting

The only thing worse than an  
opportunity you don't deserve is  
blowing an opportunity.

- Michael J. Fox



# Tips :

- Make goals with your family in the areas of finance, exercise, purchases, holidays, accomplishments, education, etc. whenever possible (See section appendix for chart)
- Share your goals with others so that they are aware of what is important to you and might be able to support you in the process
- Plan out important or special activities in advance, so everyone can recognize what is a priority, not miss family events, and arrange their schedules accordingly
- Look back at successes and failures and what you learned from them when planning out celebrations, events or family time
- Do not plan a multitude of celebrations or commitments in the first 6 months of reunion
- Talk to each other when agreeing to attend or participate in something to ensure everyone affected is in support of it
- When responding to requests begin with – “Can I get back to you?” or “When do you need an answer?”
- All plans need to be put on the calendar so that there are no confusions, double bookings, or misunderstandings
- Create family goals and personal goals to strive towards that are realistic and attainable – exercise 5 days a week, spend one night a week doing something with family rather than watching TV, etc. (see section appendix)
- Create a goal that the whole family can strive towards – no swearing, say “I love you” to someone each day, weekly family games night, etc.
- Talk about your goals and let your family know ways in which they can support you or help you to achieve them



# Suggested Activities:

- Create a year calendar with only special events and things to look forward to and put it in a place where everyone can see it and know what to look forward to. If there is a month where nothing inspires your family make up an “Un-holiday” (have a special dinner to celebrate your un-holiday or all go out to a movie – whatever your family would consider special)
- Create a new chore list (see section appendix)
- Ask for everyone to complete their “wish list” of things to do over the next year and things they never want to do again! Have each family member go off on their own and complete their sheet then come back together, when everyone is finished and go over all of the ideas (see section appendix).
- Go around the table every couple of weeks and have each person finish the sentence “By this time next week/month/year I want to...”
- Have your children present their previous and/or most recent report cards from school. To make it a little more fun each time they present a section they have to do it like they are the teacher and they are presenting this to you at the parent/teacher interview. They then have to set goals for their next report card.

**"Most success springs from an obstacle or failure. I became a cartoonist largely because I failed in my goal of becoming a successful executive."**

**- Scott Adams (Dilbert Cartoonist)**



# Personal Goals

YEARLY

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MONTHLY

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WEEKLY

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DAILY

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# Family Goals

YEARLY


MONTHLY


WEEKLY


DAILY




# Household Chores Checklist

Chore:	✓ Name:	Chore:	✓ Name:
Clean bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pay bills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get gas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set the table	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wash car/van	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear dishes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacuum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean fridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Start Laundry	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean floors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fold and put away laundry	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean windows	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dust	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean bathrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dust	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean oven	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wash dishes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take out garbage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Load dishwasher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take out recycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empty Dishwasher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compost	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweep floors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walk/care for pet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grocery Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collect garbages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unpack Groceries	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean-up after pets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tidy-up toys	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cut grass	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weed garden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make lunches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water plants	<input type="checkbox"/>



# "Wish List"

5 things I want to do this month

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5 things I want to do in the next 6 months

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5 things I want to do in the next year

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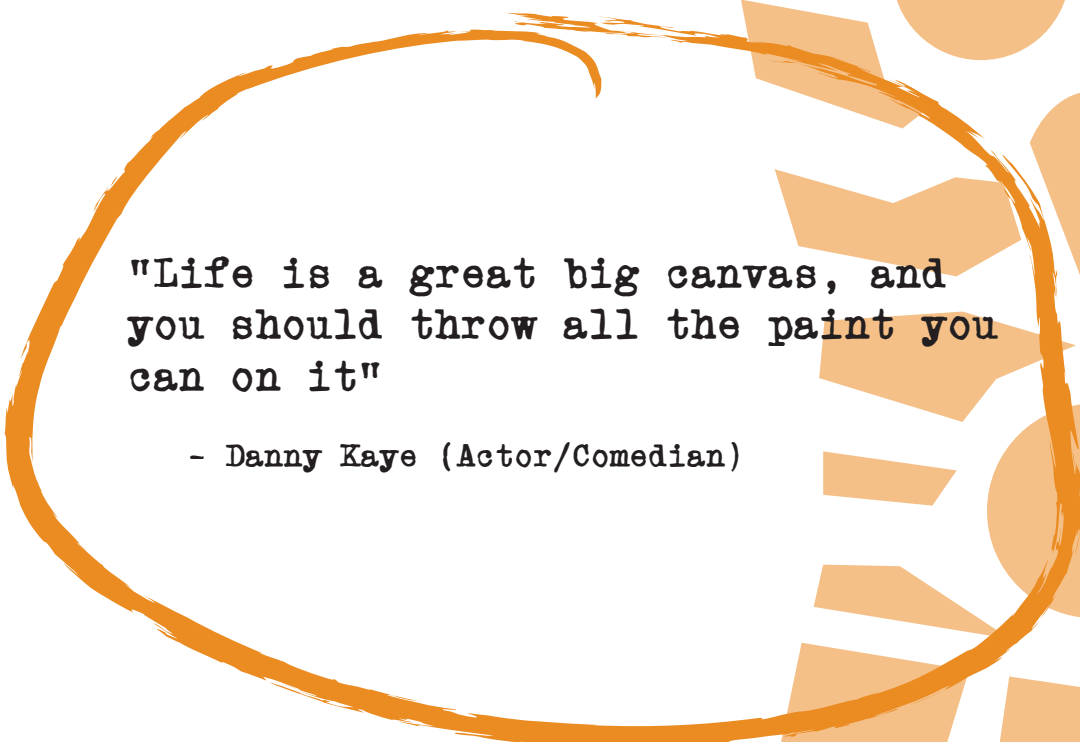


5 things I never want to do again

5 things that I would be willing to do around the house



# Identifying and Alleviating Stress

An abstract graphic on the right side of the page, composed of various orange geometric shapes like triangles, circles, and polygons arranged in a radial, sunburst-like pattern.A thick, hand-drawn orange oval that encircles the quote and the attribution text.

"Life is a great big canvas, and  
you should throw all the paint you  
can on it"

- Danny Kaye (Actor/Comedian)



# Stress

## Individual Factors

- Personal health
- Personal coping abilities
- Previous deployment experience
- Attitude toward the assignment
- Confidence in self
- Confidence in military unit and level of community resources and services available
- Family relationships
- Support of people around you

## Separation Factors

- Preparation time available
- Previous separation experiences
- Important family events during the deployment
- Age of family members and level of acceptance and understanding of separation
- Length of separation (including work up training and exercises)





## Deployment Factors

- Type/Nature of mission
- Length of mission
- Ability and frequency of communication
- Geographical location (weather, location of family, etc.)
- Living conditions
- Employment conditions/type/demands
- Amount of communication possible
- Member and family's communication skills/abilities during deployment

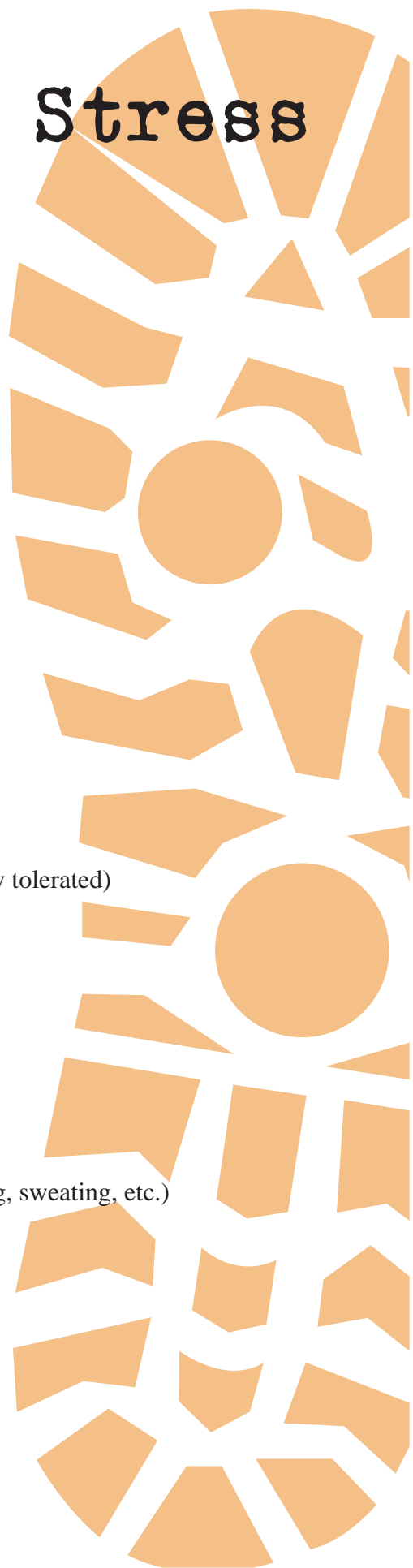
If we are together nothing  
is impossible. If we are  
divided all will fail.

- Winston Churchill



# Some Signs of Stress

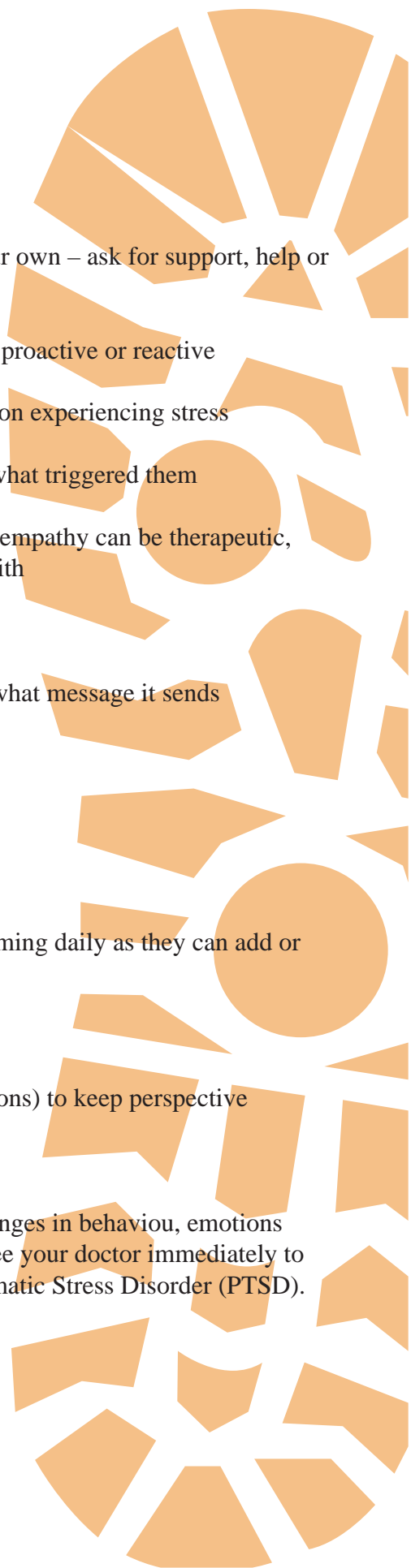
- Change in sleep patterns/behaviours
- Lack of focus/clumsy
- Forgetfulness (more than usual)
- Anxious/'edgy'
- Feelings of frustration
- Easily agitated
- Emotional outbursts
- Body tension
- Headaches
- Neck aches
- More apprehensive in certain situations
- Low tolerance (for what would have been previously tolerated)
- Nightmares/Bad dreams
- Avoiding discussing anything meaningful
- Inability to recall events
- Inability to express emotions
- Physical symptoms: racing heart, difficulty breathing, sweating, etc.)
- Loss of humour
- Difficulty creating long term goals
- Unable to complete simple tasks
- Irritable or angry





# Tips :

- Seek professional/medical advice and support
- Accept that there are things you can't solve on your own – ask for support, help or advice often and take it!
- Distinguish whether your thoughts and actions are proactive or reactive
- Be patient and gentle with yourself and/or the person experiencing stress
- Take the time you need to recognize feelings and what triggered them
- Talk to people that have had similar experiences – empathy can be therapeutic, both for yourself and the person you are sharing with
- Be as open and honest with people as you can
- Take time to think about your body language and what message it sends
- Spend time doing things you enjoy
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a balanced diet
- Reduce amount of sugar or caffeine you are consuming daily as they can add or heighten physical responses to stress
- Avoid consuming alcohol
- Set individual and family goals (see previous sections) to keep perspective
- Don't compare yourself with other people
- Should symptoms of stress or dramatic changes in behaviour, emotions or physical symptoms persist you should see your doctor immediately to ensure you are not experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

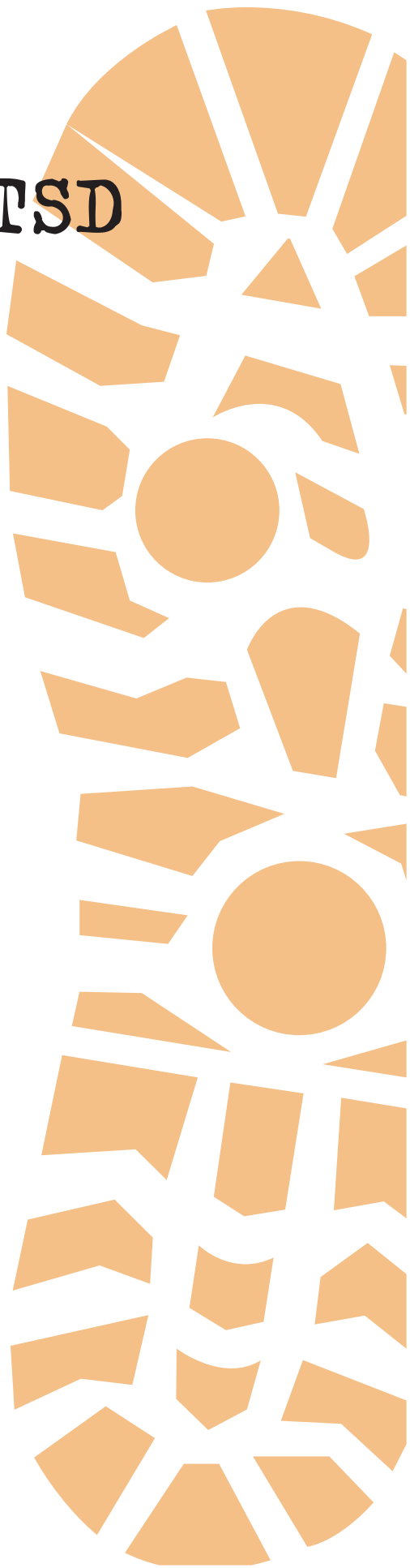




# Some Common Symptoms of PTSD

## Physical:

- Anxiety resulting in sweating
- Shaking
- Rapid Heartbeat
- Difficulty breathing
- Excessive sleeping
- Nightmares
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty waking up
- Loss of appetite
- Binge eating
- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Dizziness
- Substance abuse



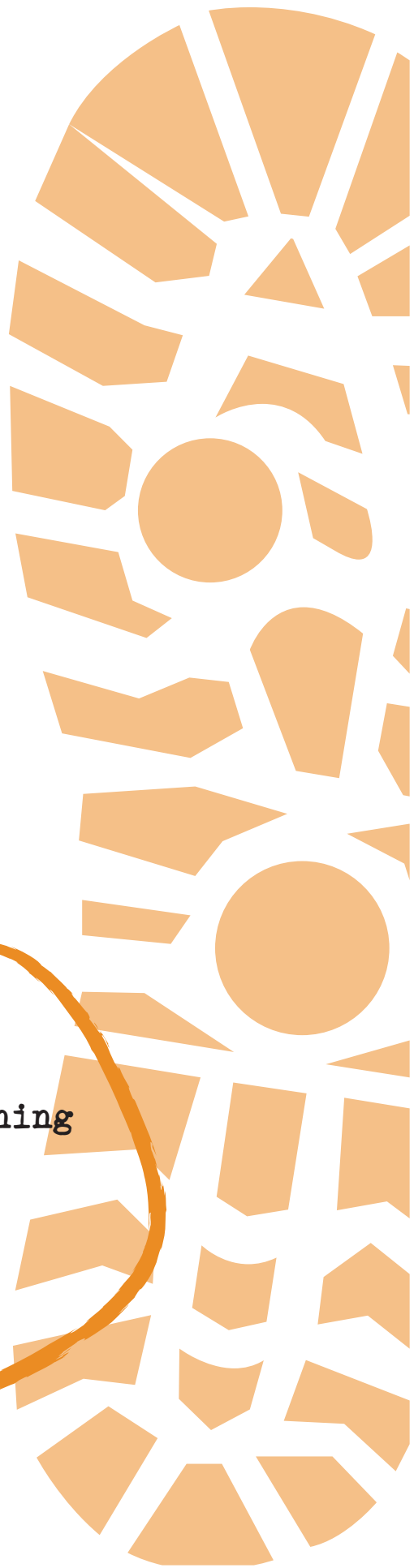


## Psychological:

- Nervousness
- Withdrawal
- Flashbacks
- Intimacy difficulties
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Easily Agitated
- Irritable or seemingly depressed
- Feelings of guilt
- Unexplained feelings of hostility or anger
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Difficulty with memory
- Lack of interest in everyday activities

"I'm not afraid of  
storms, for I'm learning  
how to sail my ship"

- Louisa May Alcott





# Activities:

- Journal thoughts and feelings and what some possible triggers are for these reactions
- Create your own 'Trigger Chart' to determine what, at this point in time, is causing you stress (see appendix)
- Create a bedroom door hanger that gives people the message you are stressed and need some personal time
- Put a positive spin on every day events (see appendix)
- Maintain a food diary – so that you can focus on eating and drinking things that will serve to combat stress not aggravate it
- Begin an exercise log. By taking the time to plan and record your daily activity you are focused on proactively combating your stress levels
- Spend time with people you love and trust
- Take a minimum of 30mins a day to yourself to unwind and reflect
- Read – getting into a character's life can make you forget the stresses of your own. Try to choose books that have a humourous edge to them.
- Subscribe to a "Joke a Day" so that the first thing you see when you turn on your computer is a joke
- Take a photo every day of something you like and often take for granted. Reminding yourself of all of the wonderful things in your world will help you to gain perspective. At the end of the month you could create a collage, slideshow or screen saver of all the pictures you took
- Have a family member pose using funny faces or wearing something ridiculous and put the picture in your car, home or office where you can see it regularly
- Start a new (or take up again) hobby or join a club



# My Trigger Chart

Things that cause me considerable stress...

Touch

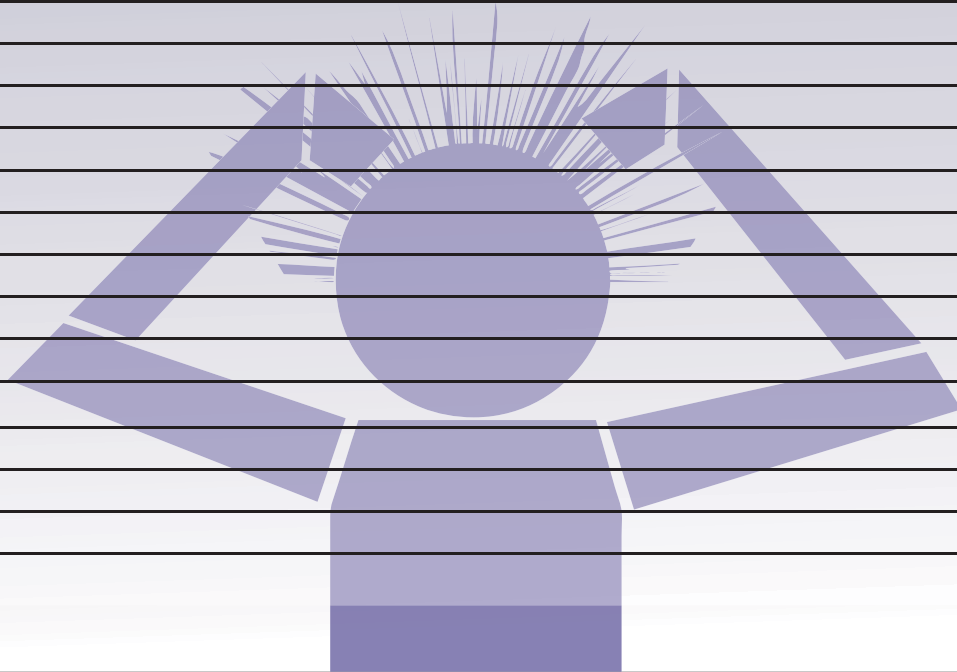
See

Smell

Things that relieve my stress...

Tast

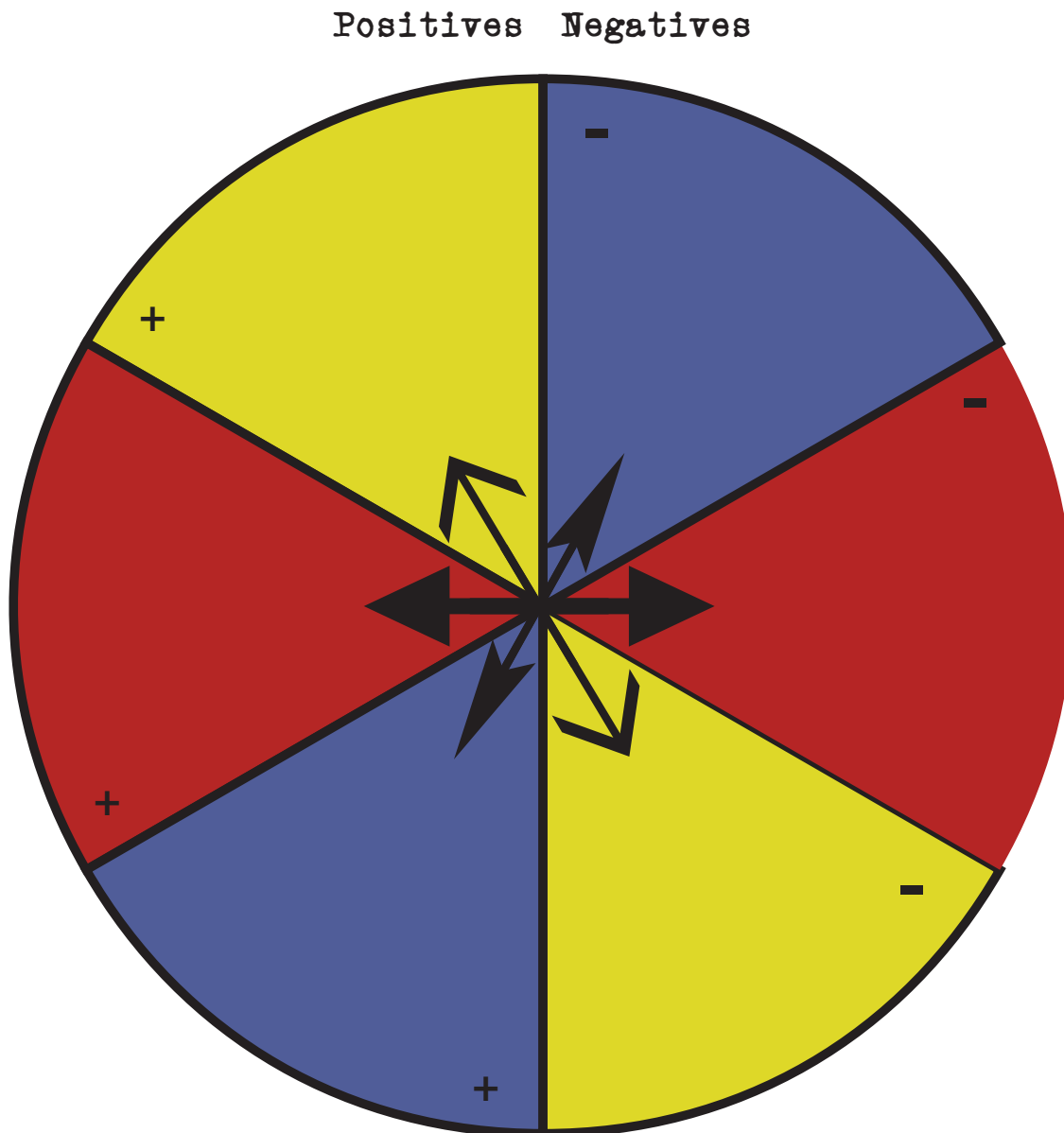
Hear





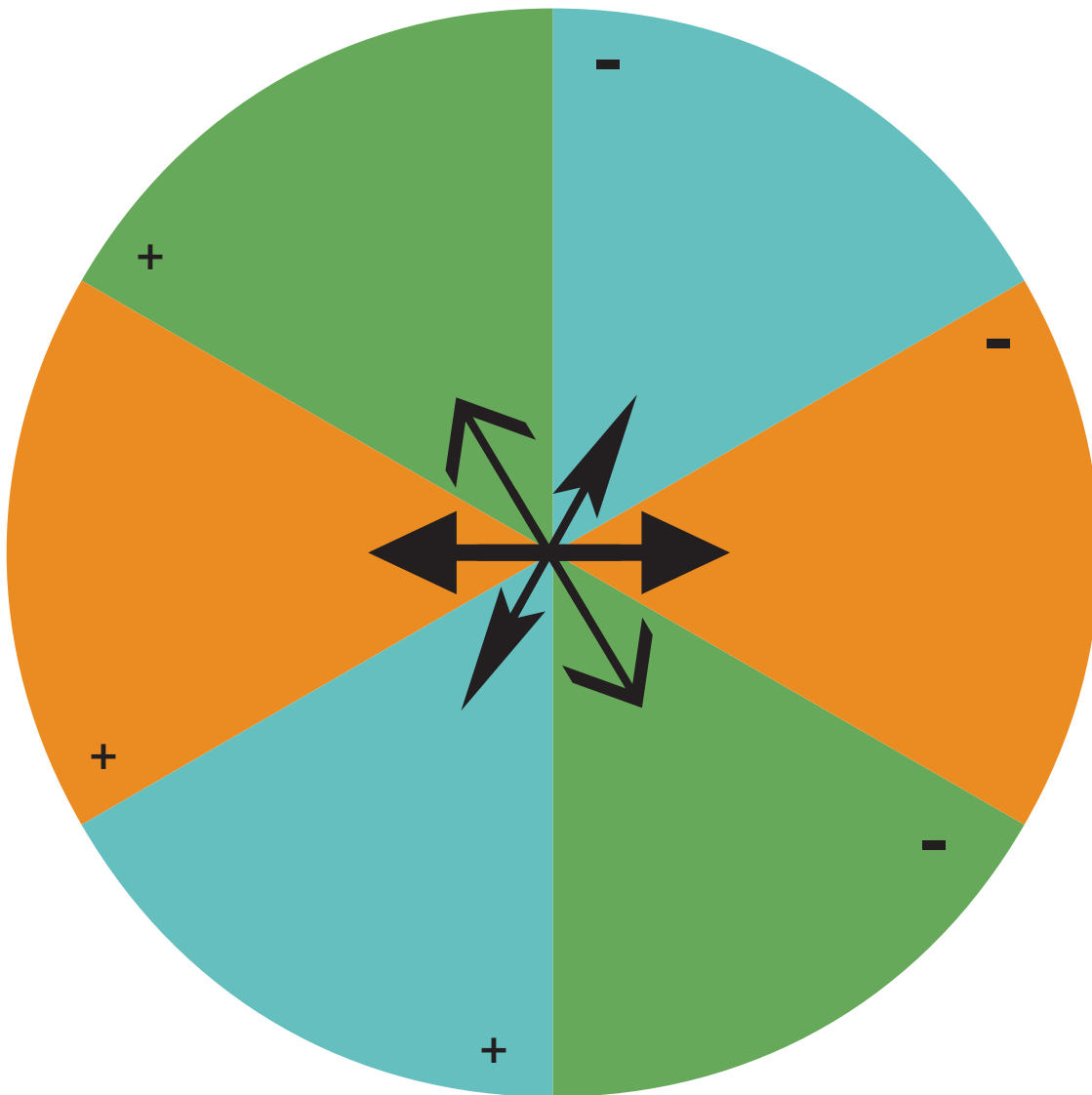
# Positive spinning

- Use the pie chart to put three negative situations that occur in your everyday life and find a corresponding positive result that comes out of that experience.
- Have anyone in your family do this activity to look on the brighter side.





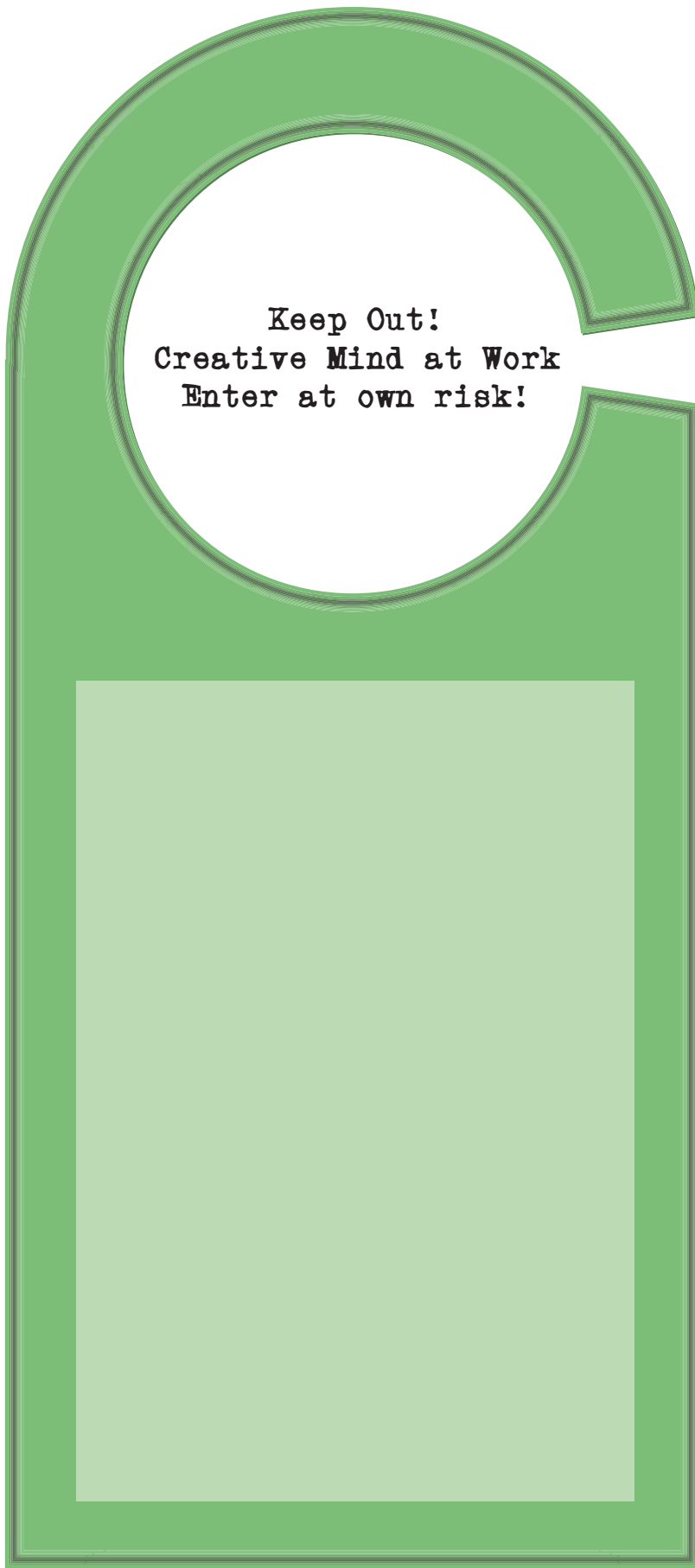
# Positives Negatives



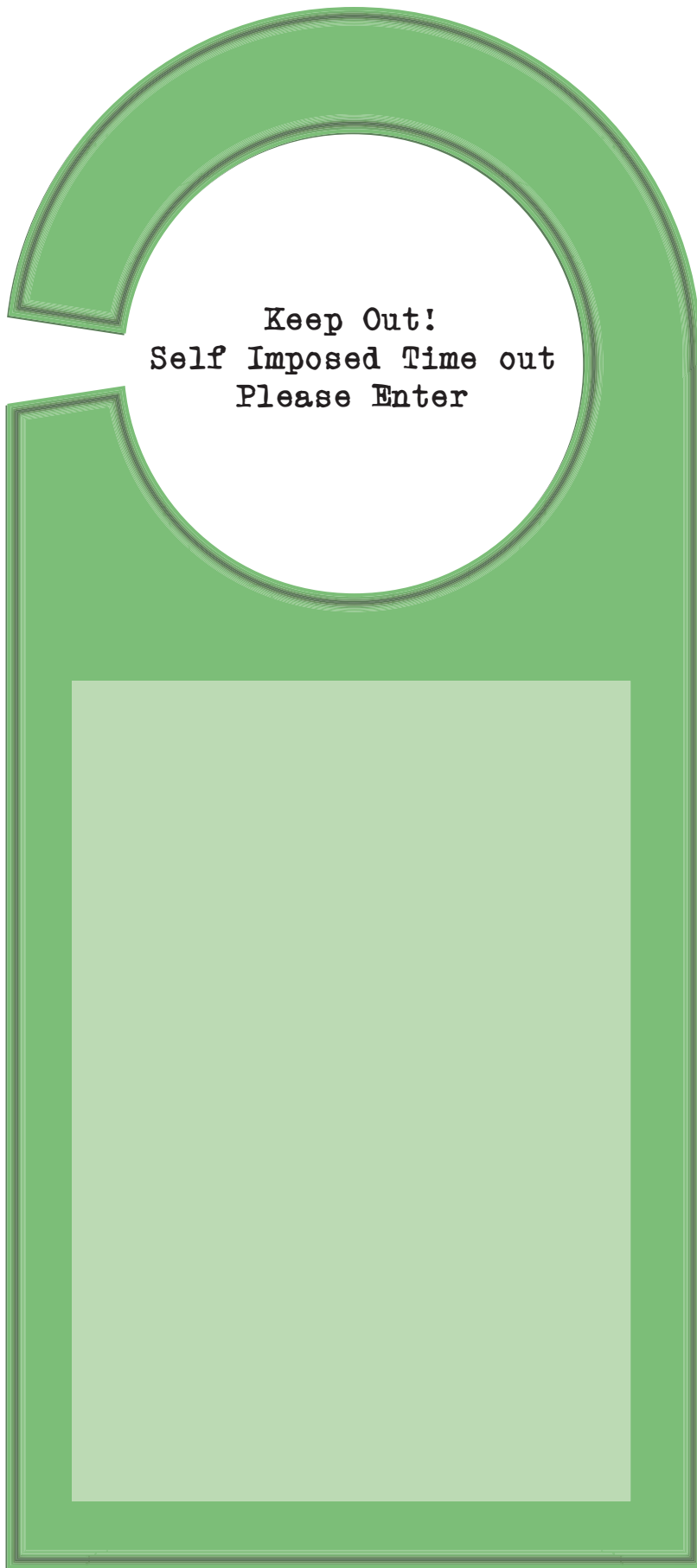
Late for work	Had breakfast with the kids
No milk in the fridge	Got to go to Tim Hortons
Car trouble	Got exercise
Argued with family member	Worked out our feelings
Forgot lunch	Got to have lunch out with friends
Computer crashed	More time to work on other projects



Write your own "do not disturb sign". Be creative!







Keep Out!  
Self Imposed Time out  
Please Enter



# Daily Food Log

**Tuesday**

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Monday**

**Wednesday**

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_



## Thursday

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

## Friday

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

## Saturday

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sunday

Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Snack: \_\_\_\_\_



# Exercise Log

Activity:

Date:

Duration:

Activity:

Date:

Duration:

Activity:

Date:

Duration:

Activity:

Date:

Duration:

Activity:

Date:

Duration:

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Date:

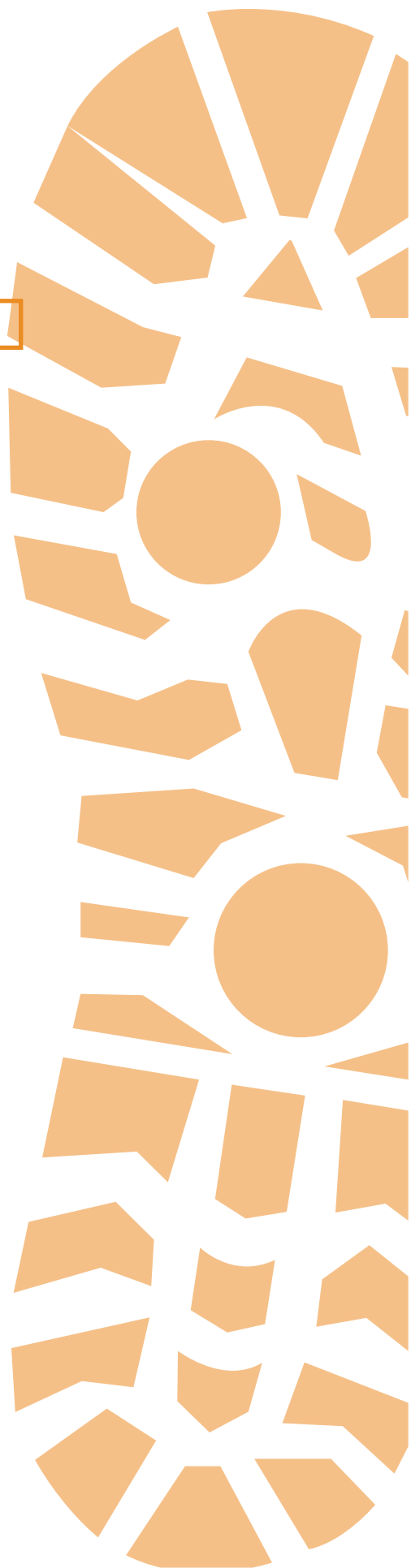
Duration:



# Children and Behaviour

## Some possible behaviour changes:

- Sudden outbursts
- Regression (wetting bed, thumb sucking, etc)
- Lack of focus
- Withdrawn (more than usual)
- Hyperactivity
- Over emotional or sensitive
- Inattentive
- Excessive sleeping or sleep disruptions
- Uncommunicative
- Always appearing tired
- Lack of interest or motivation
- Unable to recognize or identify own feelings
- Frequent and long periods of crying





# Tips :

- Talk regularly to your children about different feelings and/or emotions that all people experience
- Identify changes in behaviour and try to determine the when and why
- Look at when behaviour is different – what time of day, week or month
- Speak to care givers, teachers, or other people that play a significant role in your child's life to gain insight into their behaviour with different people and in different situations
- Create structure and rules together giving everyone a sense of ownership
- Establish predictable and consistent routines
- Only make promises you intend on following through with
- When they attempt to appropriately express emotions or feelings reward them with heaps of praise and time with you
- Give consequences that are meaningful to the child
- Consequences should be immediate and appropriate for the age and abilities of your child (ex. If your teen loves going on MSN nightly then remove it for a number of days so they can get their overdue homework complete)
- Make the consequence fit the crime, be consistent
- When administering a time out, use that time to think about what the consequences are (think about privileges are that your child enjoys and which ones you can take away without it also being a punishment for you as well!)
- Use the 3 strikes you're out rule with everything as it is easy for children and/or teens to understand and remember.
- Call your doctor/health care providers for appropriate next steps and/or referrals for support
- Contact your local C/MFRC to discover programs and support available
- Listen to your child and talk to them honestly and openly about your observations
- Encourage and facilitate activities that will 'spark' conversation/discussion



# Activities:

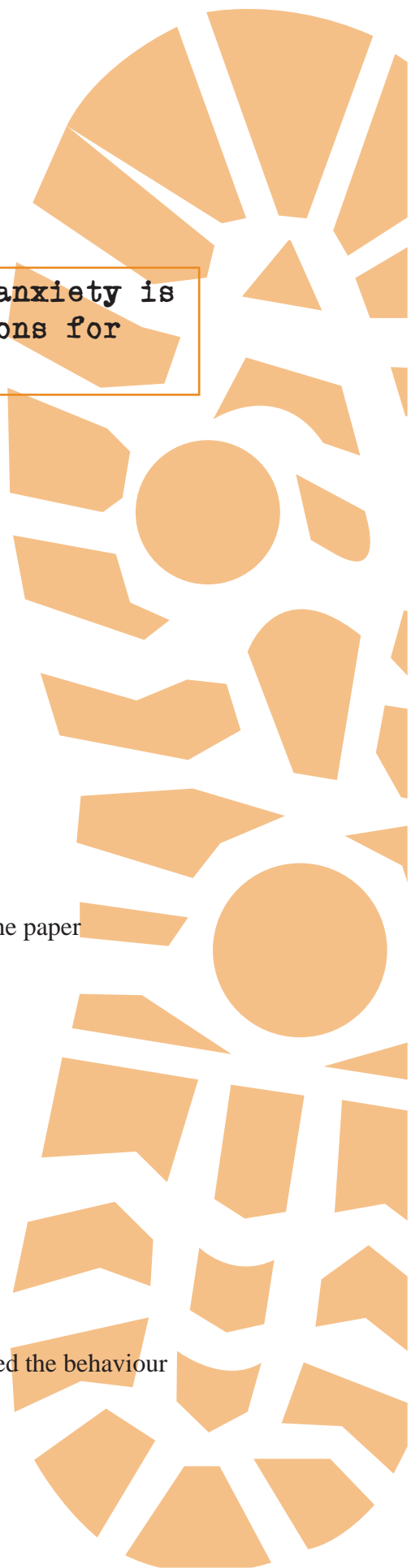
- Share personal stories about when you experienced similar emotions or feelings
- Read them fictional stories about different types of feelings, social situations and/or emotions and how they are resolved (see resource section)
- Read together every night as part of their bedtime routine to maintain routines and provide comfort
- Get out pictures of them and yourself; talk about different things you have done and how everyone was feeling
- Create a “Behaviour Expectations and Consequences” chart so that the results of the behaviour are clear and everyone in advance, knows what would happen if they engage in inappropriate behaviour (see section appendix)
- Complete parent behaviour checklist to narrow down when behaviours are occurring most often
- At meal time play “Conversation Drivers” with mood cards (see section appendix)
- Complete the page “When You Were Gone/Now You Are Back” chart
- Make time each week to talk to your children about how they are feeling and give them opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions through playing board games, walking the dog, taking out the garbage together, etc.
- Give your child a place in the house where they can sometimes have privacy or be alone  
\*\*Note: make sure you have a good balance between a healthy amount of alone time and time with others
- Teach child appropriate ways of expressing anger or frustration ( See section appendix)
- Should a drastic or significant change in behaviour persist, see your doctor asap for professional advice and support.



# Appropriately Letting It Go

Expressing anger, frustration or anxiety is healthy. Below are some suggestions for children of all ages.

- Rip cardboard
- Crush all the recycle cans
- Yell into a pillow
- Draw a picture
- Write a letter/email but don't send it
- Exercise
- Listen to music
- Call someone you trust
- Take a crayon and scribble (pressing hard) all over the paper
- Get a back rub
- Use a squeeze ball
- Shred paper
- Cry
- Deep breathing exercises
- Identify source of anger
- Label the feelings and the who and what that triggered the behaviour





# Parent's Behaviour Checklist

Type of Behaviour	Before School	After School	Evenings	Weekends
Fidgety				
Short Attention Span				
Argumentative				
Inattentive				
Impulsive				
Inappropriate comments				
Easy Frustrated				
Lack of Personal Space				
Will not follow direction				
Can not follow direction				
Aggressive				
Loud				
Aggressive inadvertently				
Self- depreciating				
Difficulty expressing need				
Dishonest				
Unreliable				
Angry				
Agitated				
Clumsy				
Repetitive				
Overly Sad				
Overly sensitive				
Forgetful				
Inflexible				
Stubborn				
Selfish				
Overly happy				

Put check marks in appropriate columns and, if possible, one or two words in the column to remember specific incidences. Fill out one page per day for a week.



# Dividing Our Time

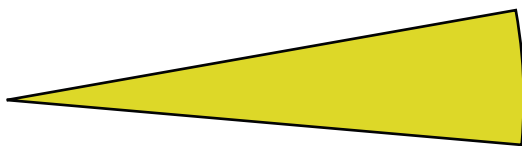
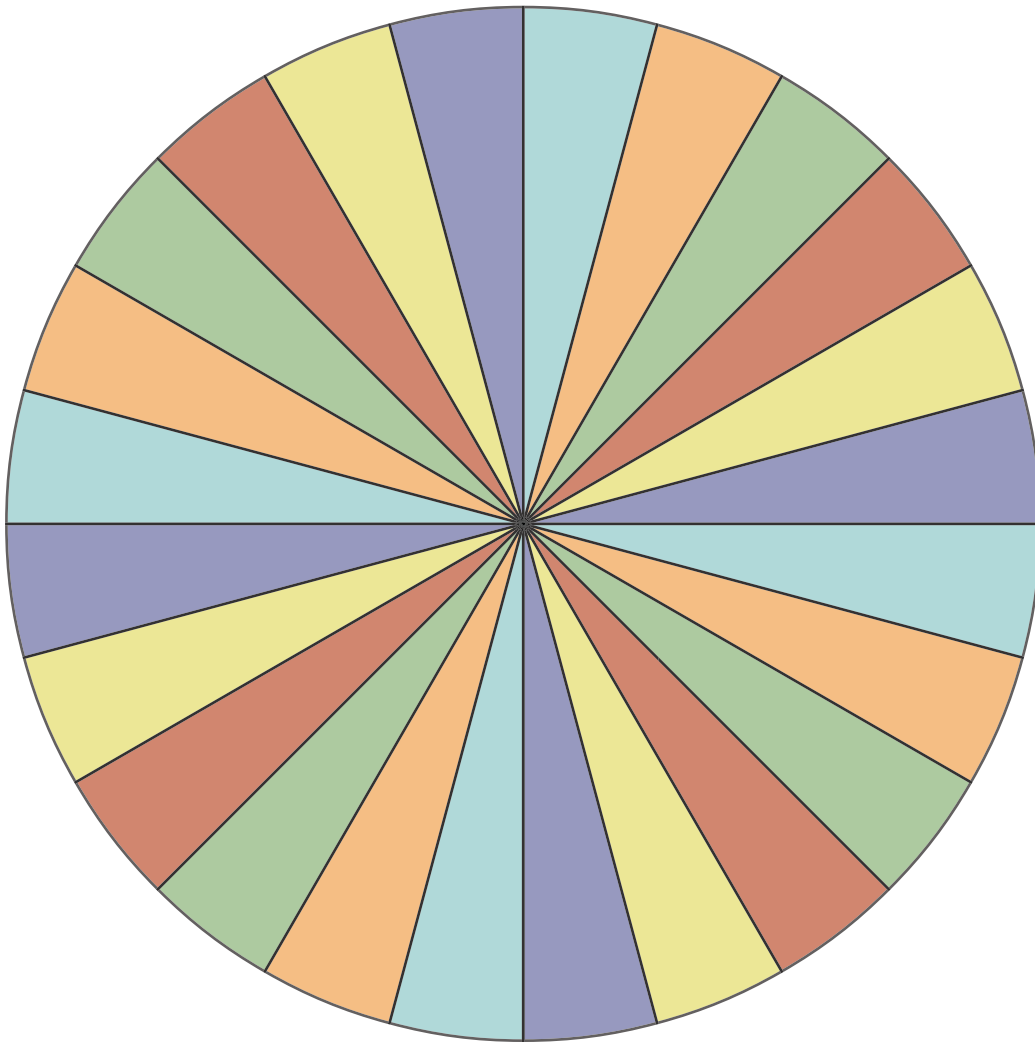
Each person can complete the pie chart to discover how they would like their time divided and what other members of their family value.

Things you spend your time on:

- ☐ Time with family
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Watching TV / movies / playing video games
- ☐ Time alone
- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Sleeping
- ☐ Work
- ☐ School
- ☐ Homework
- ☐ Volunteer work
- ☐ Time on computer
- ☐ Time on phone
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Each member of the family completes one the 24 hour pie charts and then trades with family members to get their perspectives.

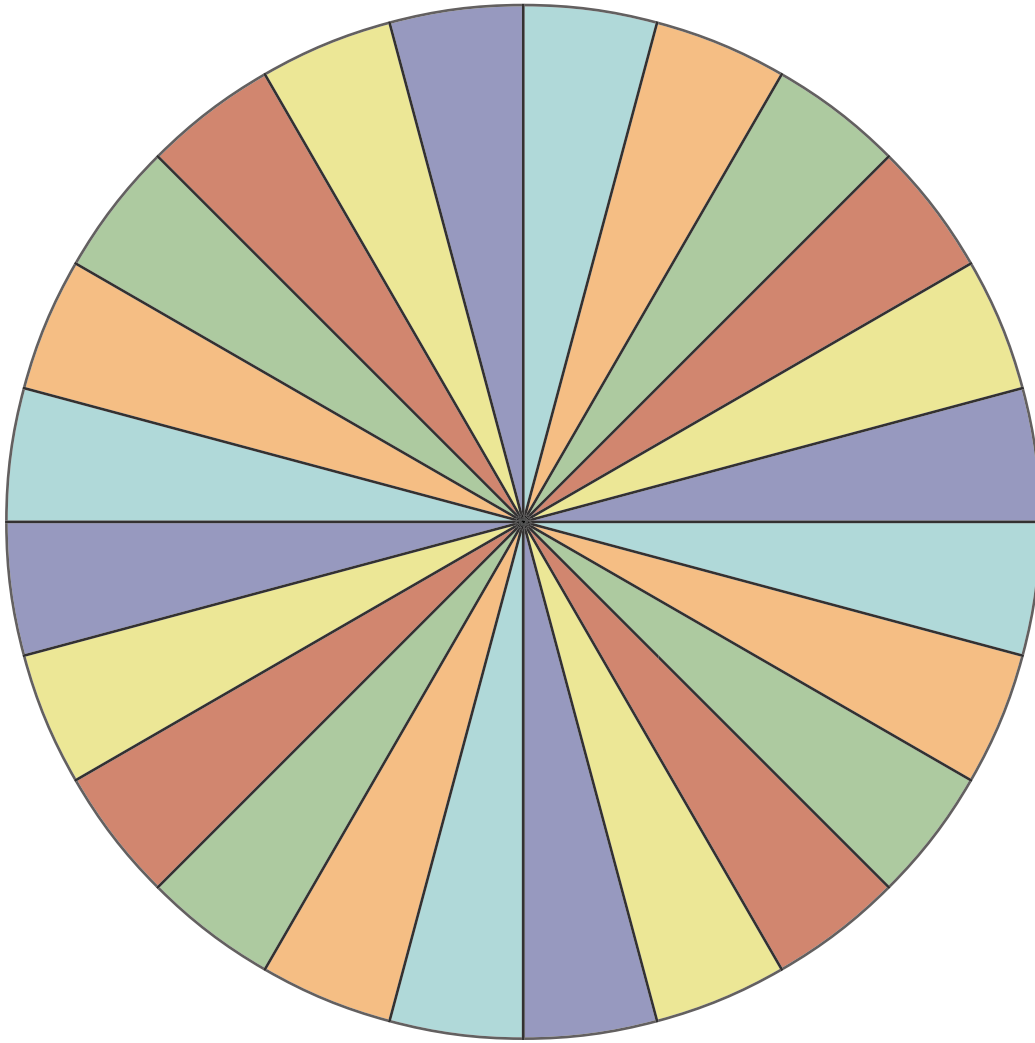


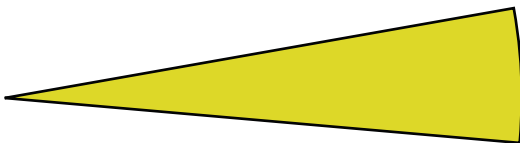


= One Hour

**Name :** \_\_\_\_\_

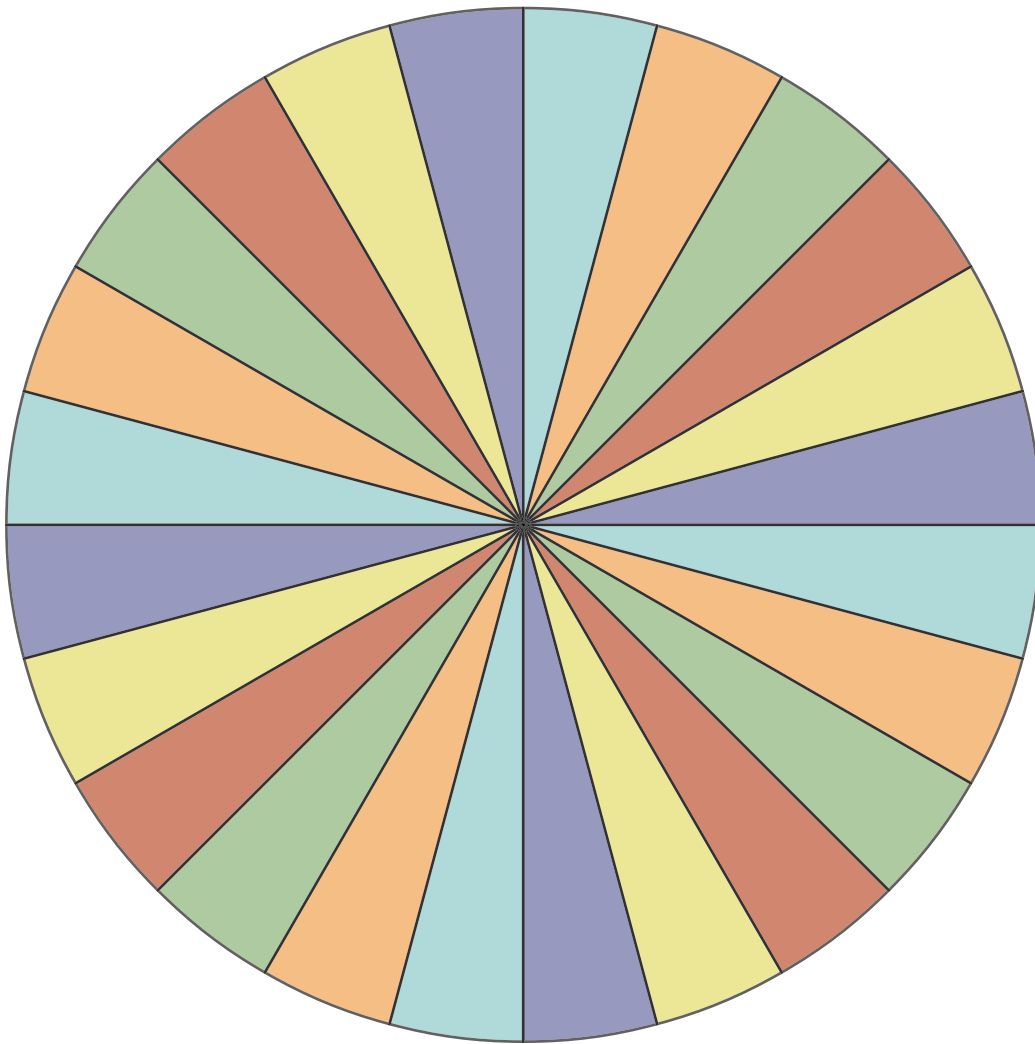


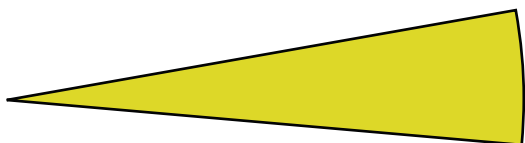


 = One Hour

Name : \_\_\_\_\_





 = One Hour

Name : \_\_\_\_\_



# Logical Consequences

## Behaviour

Not doing homework

Coming home past curfew

Not listening

Swearing/being rude

Answering back

Not eating dinner

Not doing chore

Toys not put away

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Doing homework

Making dinner

Taking out garbage

Making bed

Cleaning room

Cleaning up toys

Doing well in school

Studying

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## Consequence

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# Talking About Change

This exercise is intended to promote open and honest communication. When finishing the sentences you could talk about what you've experienced, what you don't want to give up, what you resented, what you liked, what you don't want to change, what you want to change. You could fill in one a day for a week or at your leisure.

When you were gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that you are back \_\_\_\_\_

While I was gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that I am back \_\_\_\_\_

When you were gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that you are back \_\_\_\_\_

While I was gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that I am back \_\_\_\_\_

When you were gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that you are back \_\_\_\_\_

While I was gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that I am back \_\_\_\_\_

When you were gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that you are back \_\_\_\_\_

While I was gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that I am back \_\_\_\_\_

When you were gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that you are back \_\_\_\_\_

While I was gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that I am back \_\_\_\_\_

When you were gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that you are back \_\_\_\_\_

While I was gone \_\_\_\_\_  
Now that I am back \_\_\_\_\_



# Grief and/or Loss

Grief is the way in which a person responds to loss. Everyone mourns differently and it is important to respect each person's responses and reactions to a loss.

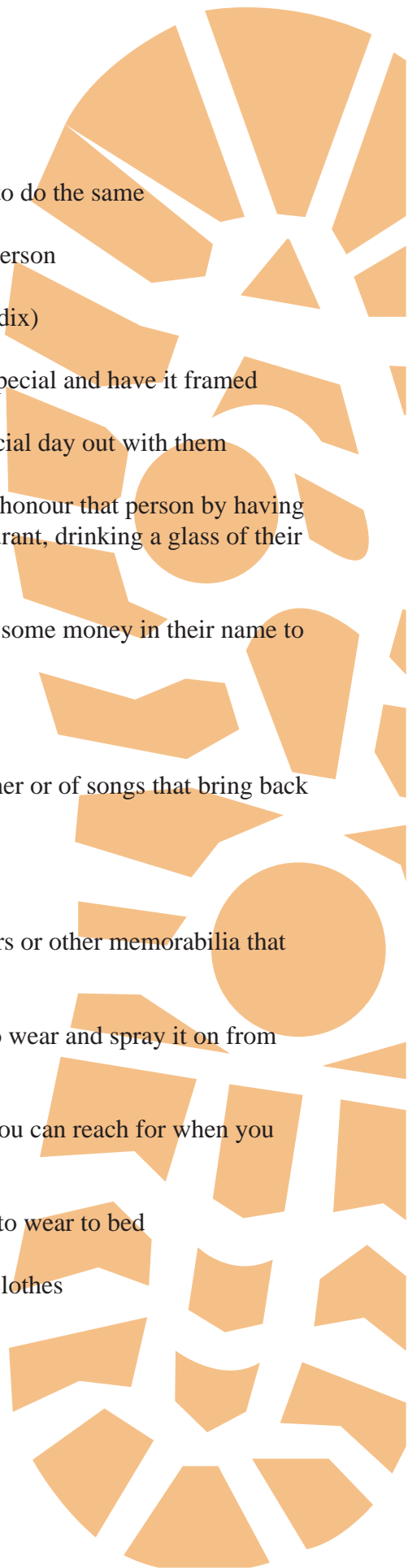
## Tips:

- Don't try to live up to your or anyone else's ideas about how you should mourn
- Understand that the grieving process is a journey and it will be filled with unexpected twists and turns
- Accept the pain of the loss
- Embrace your memories
- Pray
- You will need to look at how your identity will change now this person is gone
- Look to friends, colleagues and family for support – talk to someone who is both sympathetic and empathetic
- Be aware that grief can effect you mentally, emotionally and physically
- Identify and accept your feelings
- Be patient with yourself and give yourself time to heal
- Exercise, eat well and get into a good sleep routine
- A loss can make you feel as though you have no control, clean out a closet or drawer and re-organize yourself to bring some sense of order and control
- Take a day off and pamper yourself
- Seek professional advice for possible counseling or support
- Say no – don't be afraid to set boundaries and limits with people and let them know that you are putting yourself and this time to heal
- Find something to laugh about each day
- Listen to music



# Activities:

- Talk about the person and encourage other people to do the same
- Attend and/or contribute to any ceremony for the person
- Keep a journal (see sample sheets in section appendix)
- Choose out a photo with the person in it that was special and have it framed
- Spend time with people who love you – plan a special day out with them
- Create a day in calendar year where each year you honour that person by having a special family day, eating at their favourite restaurant, drinking a glass of their favourite wine/beer, etc.
- Plant a tree, build a bench, put up a plaque, donate some money in their name to commemorate their life
- Have a special dinner to celebrate their life
- Create a CD using songs that you listened to together or of songs that bring back memories or make you think of them
- Make a memory book or slide show to treasure
- Make a memory box of special items, photos, letters or other memorabilia that you can open and look at from time to time
- Buy the cologne or perfume that the person used to wear and spray it on from time to time
- Put something in your pocket that was theirs that you can reach for when you need or want to throughout the day
- Keep a shirt of theirs for yourself or your children to wear to bed
- Have a “comfort quilt” made out of some of their clothes
- Use their favourite mug as your own





# Grief Journal Topics

Today I wanted to call and tell you...

Yesterday was tough because I thought of you...

Life without you is...

I wish you were here because...

I have no idea who I am going to talk to now...

Today I saw a picture of you and thought of the time we...

I need you because...

I miss you because...

Every time I think about you I am going to...

I am going to miss you the most when...

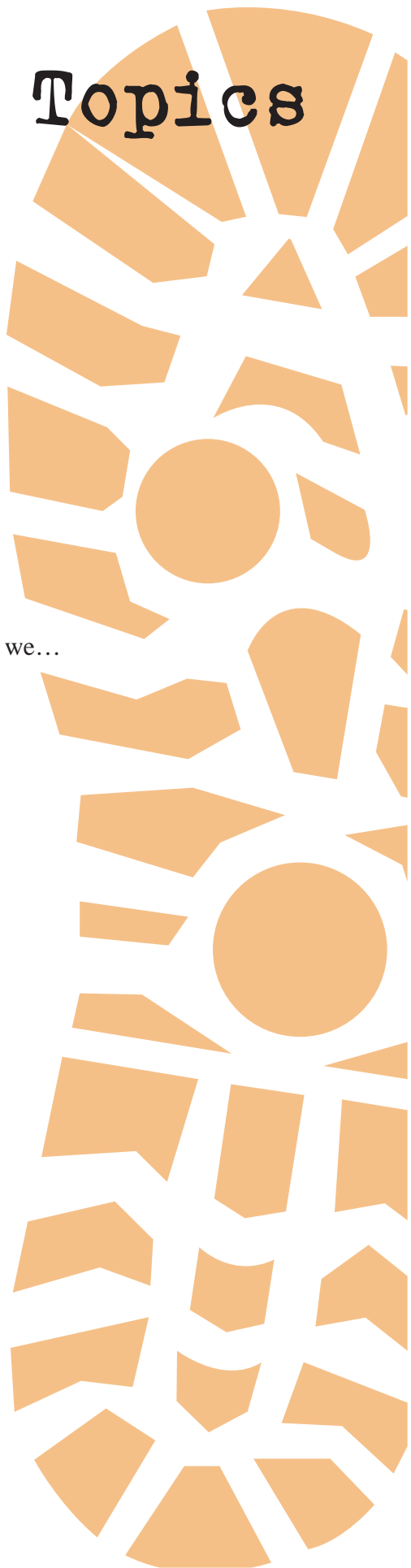
I cried today because...

On the day of your birthday I am going to...

On the anniversary of your passing I am going to...

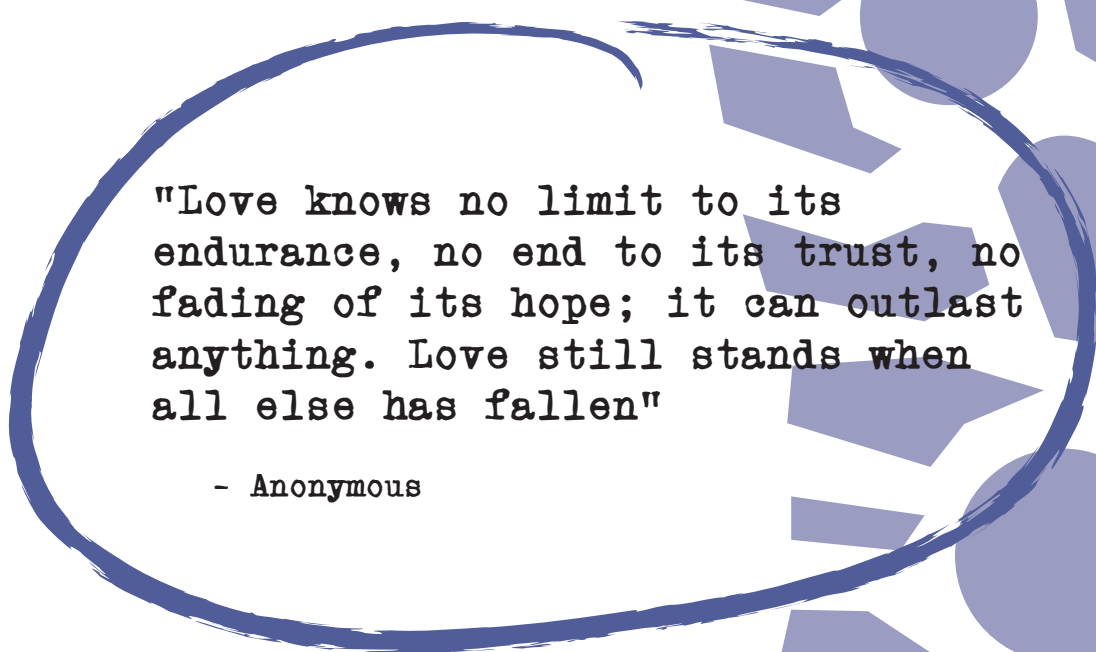
The picture of you I like the most is...

I think that the best way to honour you is to...





# Stabilization and Sustaining



"Love knows no limit to its  
endurance, no end to its trust, no  
fading of its hope; it can outlast  
anything. Love still stands when  
all else has fallen"

- Anonymous



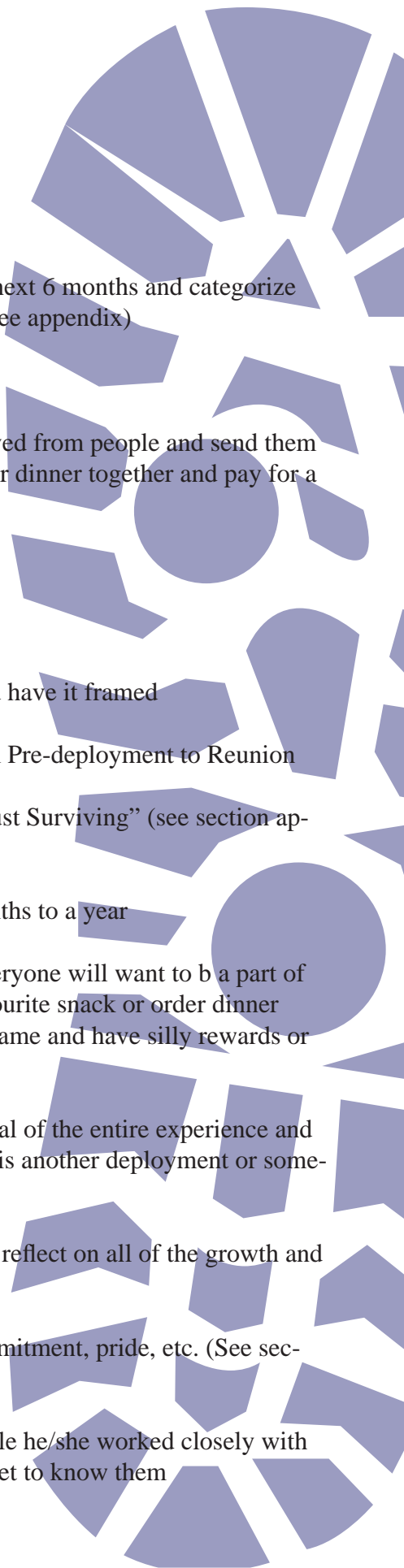
# Tips :

- Now that your family has been together for a few months it is time to reflect on what is working and where there is room for improvement
- Begin to make long term goals and/or plans for your family and include everyone, whenever possible
- Include extended family and friends into your planning now that you have somewhat adjusted back to life together again
- Continue to have meals together and use that time to communicate dreams, issues, concerns, goals, accomplishments, etc.
- Make plans to spend some quality adult time alone so that you can reconnect as adults
- Keep up a family calendar so that you continue to keep organized and informed
- Ask the member to input his work schedule onto the calendar to keep up to date on any possible exercises, training opportunities or courses that he/she may have to be absent for
- Say thank-you to someone in your family every day for something they have done, continue to do, etc.
- Talk regularly and openly about finances
- Seek community support or professional counseling if you or anyone in your family does not have a sense that things are stable and sustainable
- Make time for daily exercise
- Set aside time each week for a family game or movie night (whatever would get everyone in your family together for an extended period of time)
- Begin to find humour in some of the 'disasters' that happened during the absence
- Try not to feel threatened by new or different relationships. During the deployment your loved one may have made new connections and bonds with others. Attempt to include them in a dinner or party

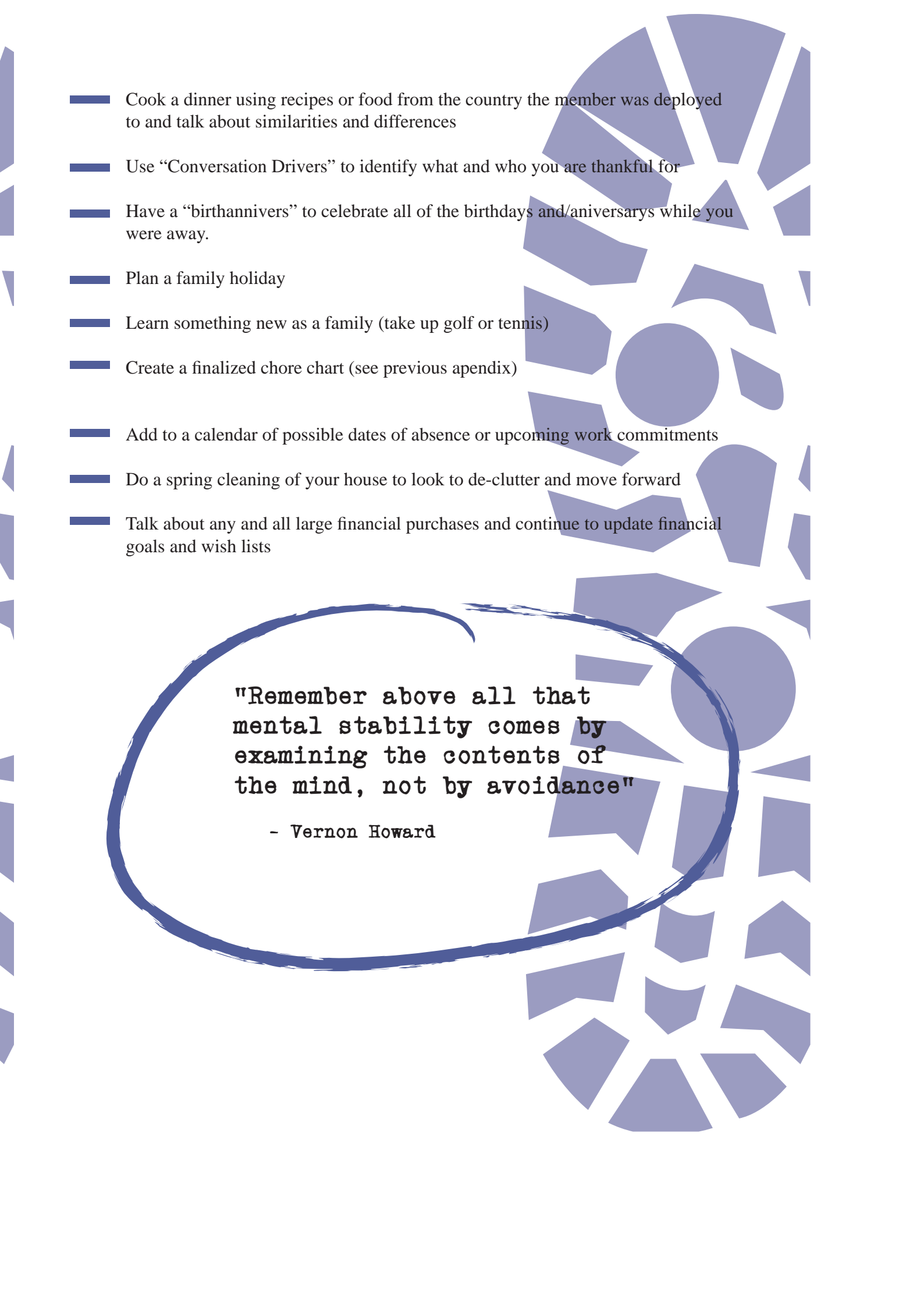


# Suggested Activities:

- Look at work schedules and commitments for the next 6 months and categorize them as must do, need to, want to, don't have to (See appendix)
- Have a weekly date night
- Take time to reflect on all of the support you received from people and send them a thank-you, have them over for a dinner, go out for dinner together and pay for a dessert or bottle of wine, return the favour, etc.
- Create a family motto
- Take new family photos
- Make a collage of photos from the deployment and have it framed
- Create a time capsule of the entire experience from Pre-deployment to Reunion
- Give out certificates or awards for "Thriving not Just Surviving" (see section appendix)
- Make a wish list for purchases over the next 6 months to a year
- Make family nights weekly and something that everyone will want to be a part of (For example: if it is a movie night make their favourite snack or order dinner in, if it is a board game night let them choose the game and have silly rewards or prizes, etc)
- Create a scrapbook or complete a web-log or journal of the entire experience and put somewhere where you can reference it if there is another deployment or someone has questions
- Each complete a "Before, Then and Now" sheet to reflect on all of the growth and change that has taken place (See section appendix)
- Put notes in lunch kits re-affirming your love, commitment, pride, etc. (See section appendix)
- Have a "The Deployment Is Over" dinner for people he/she worked closely with or became good friends with so that you can also get to know them





- 
- Cook a dinner using recipes or food from the country the member was deployed to and talk about similarities and differences
  - Use “Conversation Drivers” to identify what and who you are thankful for
  - Have a “birthannivers” to celebrate all of the birthdays and/aniversarys while you were away.
  - Plan a family holiday
  - Learn something new as a family (take up golf or tennis)
  - Create a finalized chore chart (see previous apendix)
  - Add to a calendar of possible dates of absence or upcoming work commitments
  - Do a spring cleaning of your house to look to de-clutter and move forward
  - Talk about any and all large financial purchases and continue to update financial goals and wish lists

**"Remember above all that  
mental stability comes by  
examining the contents of  
the mind, not by avoidance"**

**- Vernon Howard**



# Family Finances

## Setting Goals and Making Wish Lists

- One way to reduce post deployment stress is to sit down with your family and openly discuss how finances will be distributed.
- Making a chart of ‘wants’, ‘needs’ and ‘must haves’ would help everyone to understand what will be possible financially and set some realistic goals and limitations.

Family Member	Need	Want	Must Have!	Cost
				<b>Total</b>



Not Just Survived...

This Certificate is Awarded to

In recognition of

On this Day

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Signature

Thrived



Not Just Survived...

This Certificate is Awarded to

In recognition of

On this Day

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Signature

Survived



# Recommended Resources

A goal is not always meant to be reached, it often serves simply as something to aim at"

- Bruce Lee (Martial Arts Champion and Actor)



# Reading/Workbooks

“While You Were Away – 9years and up” – Megan Egerton-Graham

— A journal used for pre-deployment, deployment and post deployment

“While You Were Away – Kids” – Megan Egerton-Graham

— A journal used for pre-deployment, deployment and post deployment for kids 9years and under

“While You Were Away – For Families” – Megan Egerton-Graham

— A journal used for pre-deployment, deployment and post deployment to do together as a family

“101 Tips to Surviving Deployment” – Megan Egerton-Graham

— Activities and tips on how to survive deployment”

“Helping Students Overcome Depression and Anxiety” – Kenneth W. Merrell

— A practical guide with exercises for educators and support staff

“The PTSD Workbook” – Mary Beth Williams and Soili Poijula

— A workbook for anyone experiencing extreme stress

“Life After Deployment” – Karen M. Pavlicin

— Advice from people that have ‘been there and done that’

“Healing Your Grieving Heart” – Alan D. Wolfelt

— Practical tips and suggestions for helping navigate through the grieving process

“The Big Book of Us” – Nina Grunfeld

— A practical workbook for couples to assist with communication and strength their relationship

“14 000 Things To Be Happy About” – Barbara Ann Kipfer

— Exactly what the title says! Lists of things to be happy about

“100 Simple Secrets of Happy People” – David Niven

— Tips and words of ‘wisdom’ about happiness and how to achieve it

“Canadian Forces Deployment Handbook” – Megan Egerton-Graham

— Essential information, suggestions and practical ideas to support families with members deployed

“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families” – Stephen R. Covey

— Developing effective habits to support families and their relationships



# Recommended Reading for Kids

“The Kissing Hand” – Audrey Penn

— A book about how love doesn't have distance boundaries

“I Love You, Little One” – Nancy Tafuri

— The limitless love you have for your children

“No Dragons for Tea” – Jean Pendziwol

— Fire safety and planning

“A Father to be Proud of” – Sheila Johnston

— Military member going on deployment

“My Mom is a Soldier” – Shawn Belisle

— Different jobs parents do

“Night Catch” – Brenda Ehrmantraut

— Way of coping with absence

“The Quiltmakers Journey” – J. Brumbeau & G. deMarcken

— Discovering spirit of giving and happiness

“What Mommies/Daddies Do Best” – Laura Numeroff

— Looks at parenting roles

“The Berenstain Bears and The Truth” – Stan & Jan Berenstain

— Importance of being honest

“Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” – Judith Viorst

— The reality presented that everyone has a bad day

“My Daddy and Me” – Amy Sklansky

— Special time you have with your child

“The Tale of Sir Dragon” – Jean Pendziwol

— Coping with bullies

“Chicken Licken” – Vera Southgate

— Putting things into perspective





“Mr. Worry” – Roger Hargreaves

■ It is normal to worry

“Mr. Wrong” – Roger Hargreaves

■ It is okay to be wrong

“Little Miss Trouble” – Roger Hargreaves

■ Getting into trouble isn’t the end of the world

“Little Miss Naughty” – Roger Hargreaves

■ People will treat you the way you treat them

“Time To Relax!” – Nancy Carlson

■ Identifying what is relaxing

“Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” – Dr. Seuss

■ The endless possibilities each one of us has

“Something Good” – Robert Munsch

■ Behaviour expectations in public

“The Berenstain Bears get the Gimmies” – Stan & Jan Berenstain

■ Behaviour expectations

“The Berenstain Bears and the Trouble with Chores” – Stan & Jan Berenstain

■ Taking responsibility

“Franklin Fibs” – Paulette Bourgeois

■ Being truthful and acceptance

“The Berenstain Bears and the Bad Dream” – Stan & Jan Berenstain

■ Dealing with nightmares and their causes

“Franklin Goes to school” – Paulette Bourgeois

■ Preparing for first day of school

“Ribbon Rescue” – Robert Munsch

■ Helping others

“Arthur’s Teacher Trouble” – Marc Brown

■ Not liking everyone or seeing things their way

“Joey’s Mom is Going Away” – Nathalie Connolly

■ Understanding absence





“What is Heaven Like?” – Pamela Querin

Understanding loss

“Daddy, will you miss me?” – W. McCormick & J. Eachus

Understanding feelings of absence









