

TIMBI

talks about

ADDICTION

Helping Children Cope
with a Parent's Addiction

Trish Healy Luna & Janet Healy Hellier



MEET TIMBI

- *Timbi Talks about Addiction* is designed to help drug-endangered children cope with parental substance use disorder (SUD).
- I wrote the book 30 years ago for my kids to help them find language to talk about their father's addiction. In 2014, I re-wrote the book with my sister who holds a masters in mental health counseling.
- Together, we updated the concepts and added evidence-based, trauma-informed practices to directly address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

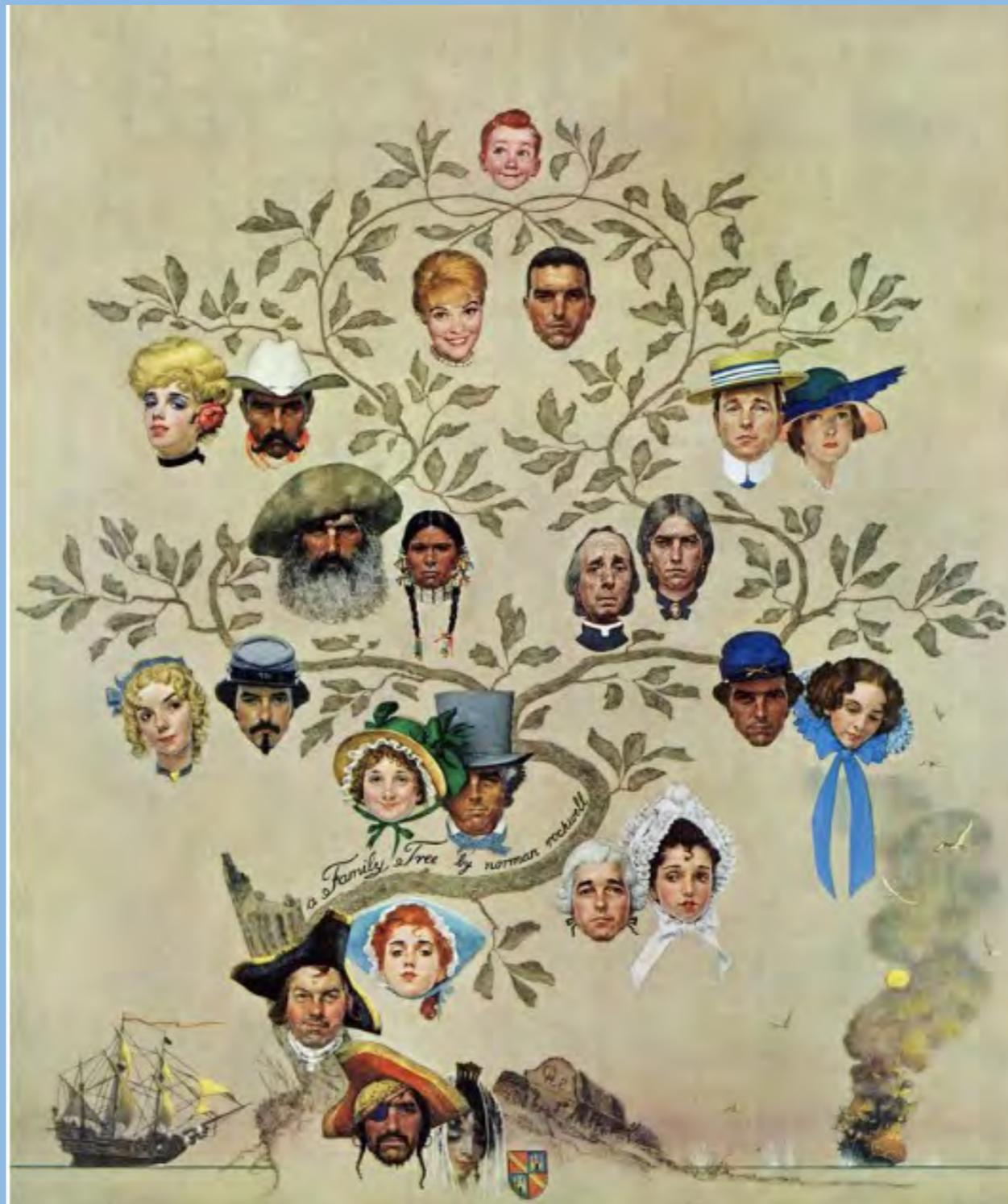
ADDICTION IS A FAMILY DISEASE

Affecting each and every member



BUT CHILDREN ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED
IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS

This is what the impact of multigenerational addiction looks like in a family.



BOTH OF MY
PARENTS ARE
ADULT CHILDREN
OF ALCOHOLICS



Because I was raised in a dysfunctional home and exposed to alcoholism, I was more likely to marry someone who has the disease of addiction.



Our lives started out great! Joe was both a police officer and a fireman. He was a helper.





He loved both of our
children with all his heart



But eventually, he lost his visitation rights because his addiction took over his life... and ours, too.



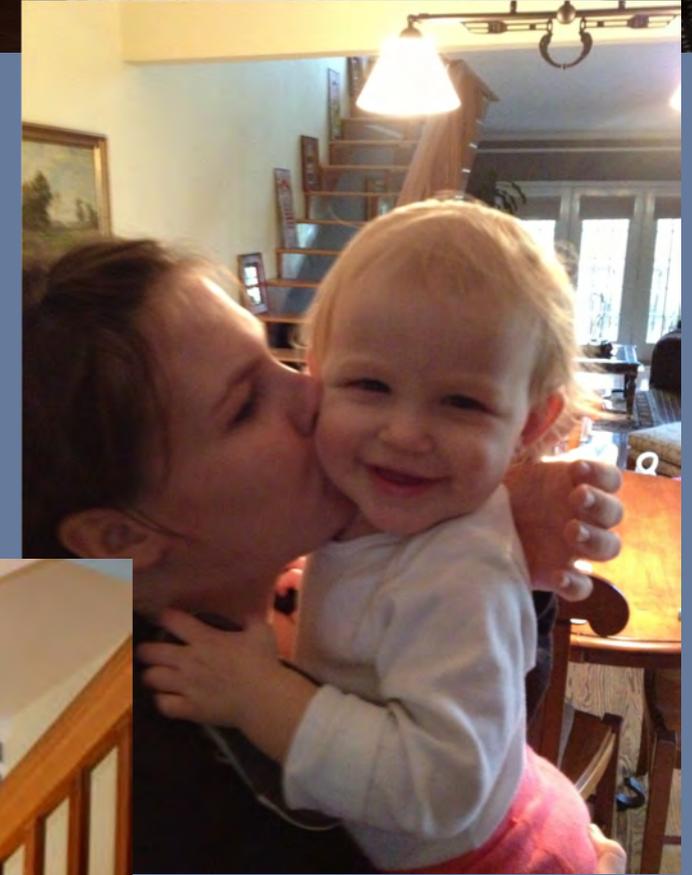
After many attempts with
rehab, we tried the
“geographical fix.”

We moved to Tennessee...
...but so did the addiction.





My daughter
loves her children
with all her heart.





But currently her visitation rights
are revoked.

An NIH study found children of substance abusing parents are more than **twice** as likely to have an alcohol and/or drug use disorder themselves.

Children of substance abusing parents are at risk for a wide variety of other negative outcomes: emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment problems.

Risk for poor outcomes among children living with a parent who has a substance abuse history is reported among those as young as 2 to 3 years of age.*

* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

What are ACEs





So this is where I've ended up.

ACEs

Traumatic experiences that occur before the age of 18 and are remembered throughout adulthood.

- Verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual and physical abuse
- Being raised in a household with domestic violence
- Alcohol and or substance abuse
- Parental separation

Evidence shows children who experience stressful childhoods are more likely to:

- develop health-harming and anti-social behaviors
- perform poorly in school
- be involved in crime
- less likely to be a productive member of society



I knew my kids were exposed to ACEs, and I knew I needed help to talk with them about their father's addiction.

I searched for help.

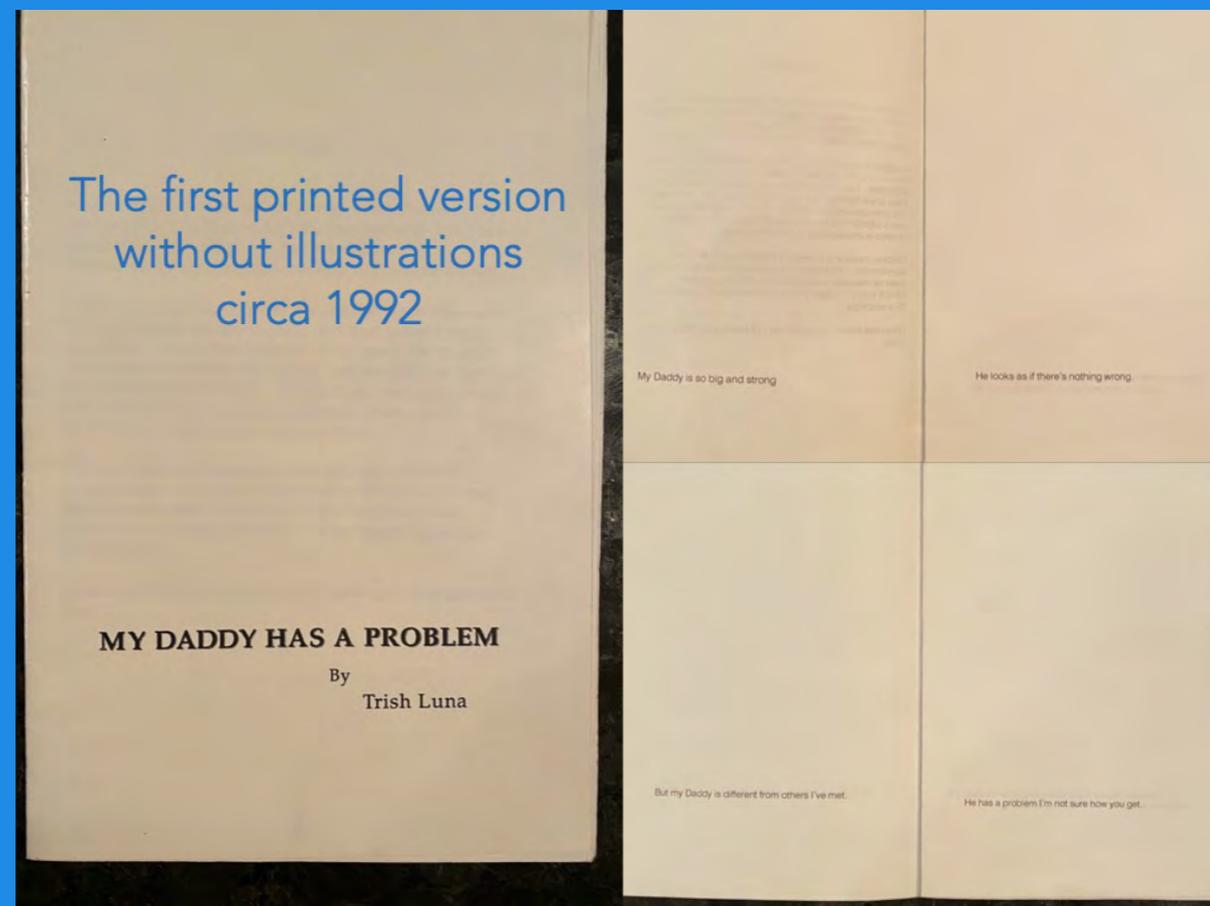
Instead of finding help, we found ourselves alone, ashamed and stigmatized.



No publisher wanted to print a book about addiction that was geared toward very young kids.

After years of trying, and with a heavy heart, I had to put the book away.

The disease did not go away in my family, nor did the effects of it.





This is the last picture of my kids with their
father

He died soon after this photo was taken
from an accidental overdose of OxyContin in
2009.

THE TRAGIC STATISTICS

- From 1999 through Jan 2021 over 1 million people have died from a drug overdose. *CDC
- In 2021, preliminary statistics showed drug overdose deaths rose to a record 100,360—an increase of almost 30%. *CDC
- 277 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose. *CDC
- 18.5 million children are impacted by at least one parent's substance abuse. *NaCOA
- Close to a half a million children were in the Foster Care System in 2017. *CDC
- The median age of children entering Foster Care is 7. *SAMHSA

As the opioid epidemic was making national news, I saw people suffering, and I knew this story would help struggling families.



This is all the fentanyl it takes to kill someone.

Ohio Police Post Photo of Adults Apparently Unconscious With 4-Year-Old in Backseat

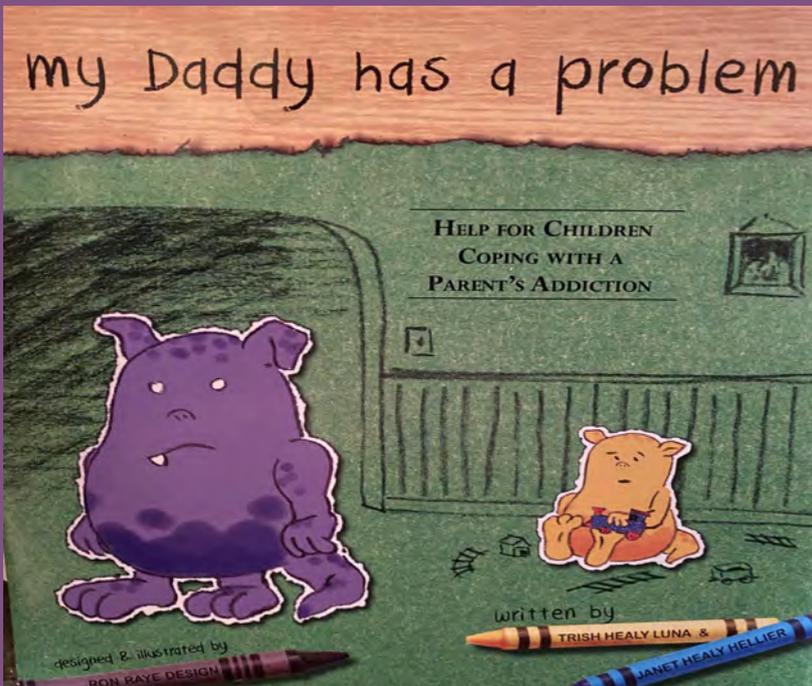
The woman was "completely unconscious," police said.

By **JULIA JACOBO**

September 9, 2016, 8:48 PM • 5 min read



 The East Liverpool Police Department in Ohio released a photo showing a child in the back seat of a car while the driver and other passenger allegedly overdosed on heroin.
City of East Liverpool Ohio Police Dept.



I joined forces with my sister and together we updated and enhanced

My Daddy Has a Problem by addressing ACEs with trauma informed, evidence-based,

dev

te

Timbi was born

FIRST SKETCH
OF
TIMBI



Let's listen to the story
now.



Timbi Talks about Adddiction

How *Timbi* helps...

Timbi “talks” in language that is accessible to young children

- Introduces concepts and practices that build resilience, and
- Promotes a sense of agency in their chaotic lives.



The Timbi “Bear”

What kids love most is getting a hug from Timbi...

- Children are captivated by the adorable features.
- Hugging has emotional and physiological benefits.
 - It fosters production of beneficial neurochemicals like oxytocin and endorphins.
- Timbi provides immediate relief, ongoing comfort and is as an ever-present companion.
 - Children reported wanting to take Timbi with them wherever they go!





Tiny Timbi
Goes everywhere the child goes!



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Here's what Timbi's Talking about...

Addiction is a disease....

- The parent did not choose the disease.
- The parent may act strangely or leave and not come home.
- The child is not alone:
 - Other children have a parent who struggles with addiction.
 - Safe adults are available to help.



It's not their fault...



- Young children are egocentric by nature; they can't see the world from another's perspective yet.
- They engage in 'magical thinking', believing that their wishes can affect their environment.
- They need to be taught that adults are responsible for their *own* behavior.

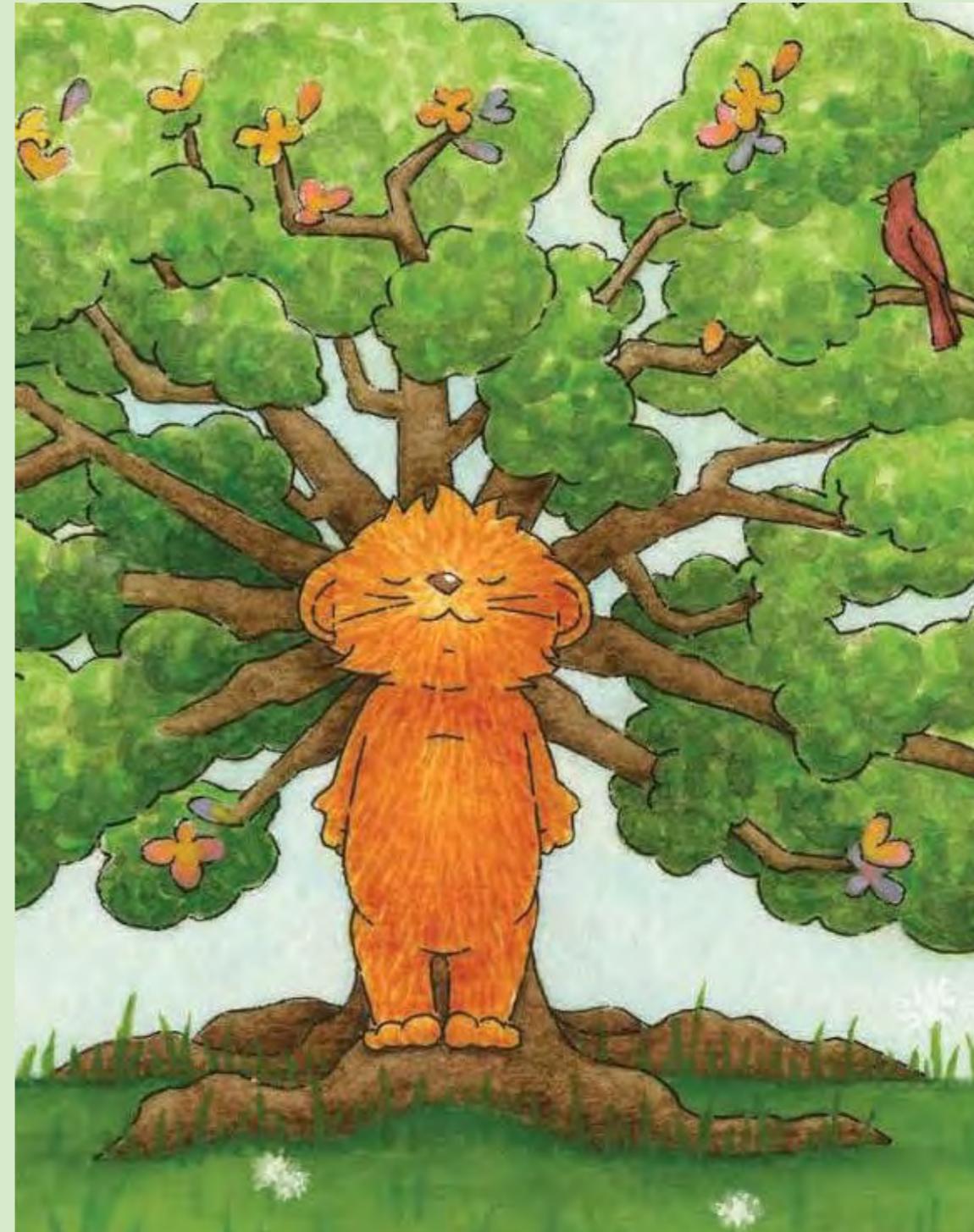
Learn to tune in...

- The stress and trauma can be felt in their body.
- They can learn to listen to their body.
- They can be more in control of their reactions.



Gain control...

- **Take some deep breaths**—the body automatically calms down.
- **Sit on the floor** or feel your feet on the floor is grounding.
- **Nature** is calming to the nervous system.
- **Play** is a way to activate neural circuitry of joy in children.
- **Singing or shouting** can have the effect of freeing the voice for other communication.

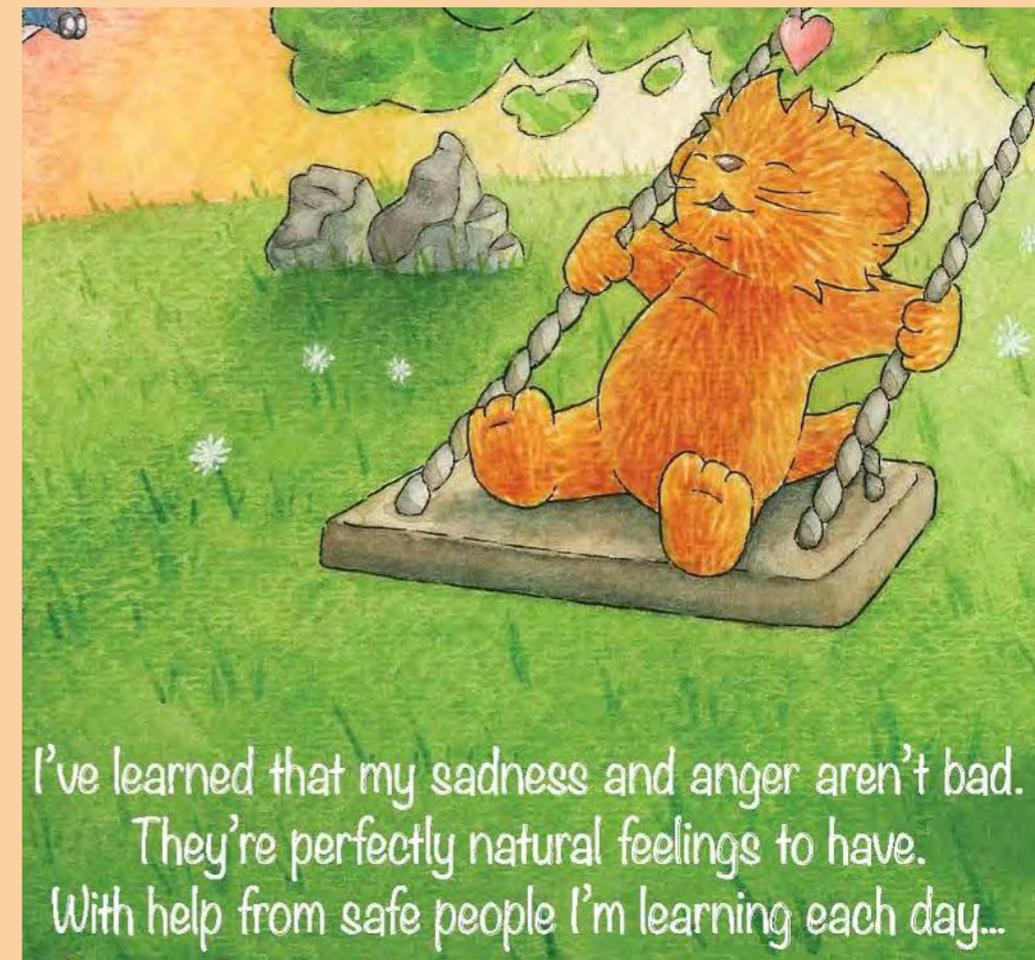


Emotions are perfectly natural...

- They are an automatic response to the situation.

Studies show labeling emotions reduces the physiological response.

- Awareness is the first step of gaining control
- Emotions are fleeting, but rumination allows them to persist.
- The goal is to disrupt the rumination.



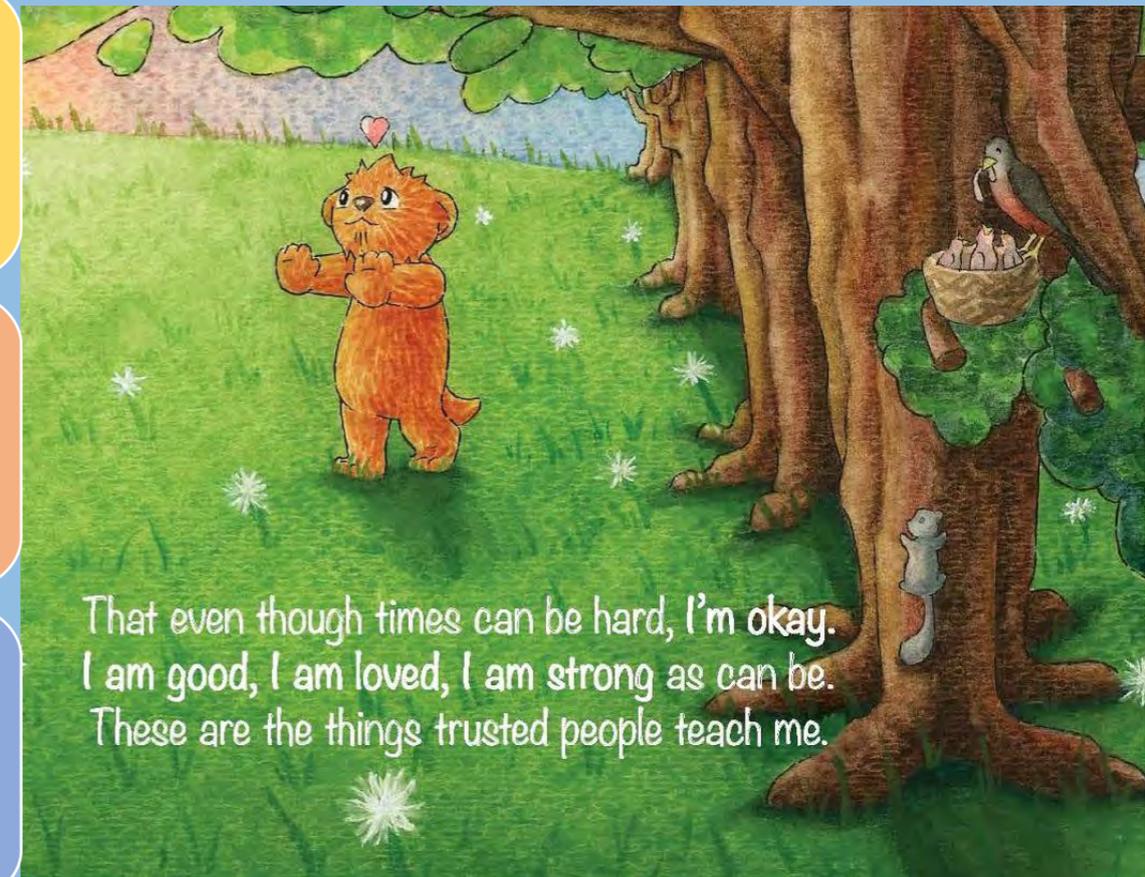
I've learned that my sadness and anger aren't bad.
They're perfectly natural feelings to have.
With help from safe people I'm learning each day...

Finally, Timbi helps the child know...

They are good

They are loved

They are strong
as can be



That even though times can be hard, I'm okay.
I am good, I am loved, I am strong as can be.
These are the things trusted people teach me.

Here is a list of skills and practices the child can be encouraged to develop.

Timbi loves sharing ways to calm down and let go of difficult feelings.

YOU CAN TRY THEM, TOO!

YOU CAN...

Talk to safe adults.

Take some deep breaths to feel calmer.

Remember addiction is a disease and not your fault.

Learn to listen when your body says, "Something is not right."

Play outside in nature.

Feel thankful for people, places and things in your life.

Remember to have fun and be silly sometimes.

Play with friends.

Read books.

Hug your Teddy, blanket or other lovey.

Always remember:

You are good. You are loved. You are strong as can be.



TIMBI
colors
~~talks~~ talks about
ADDICTION
A Coloring and Activity Book



A companion resource for *Timbi Talks About Addiction*, a book written for children coping with parental addiction.

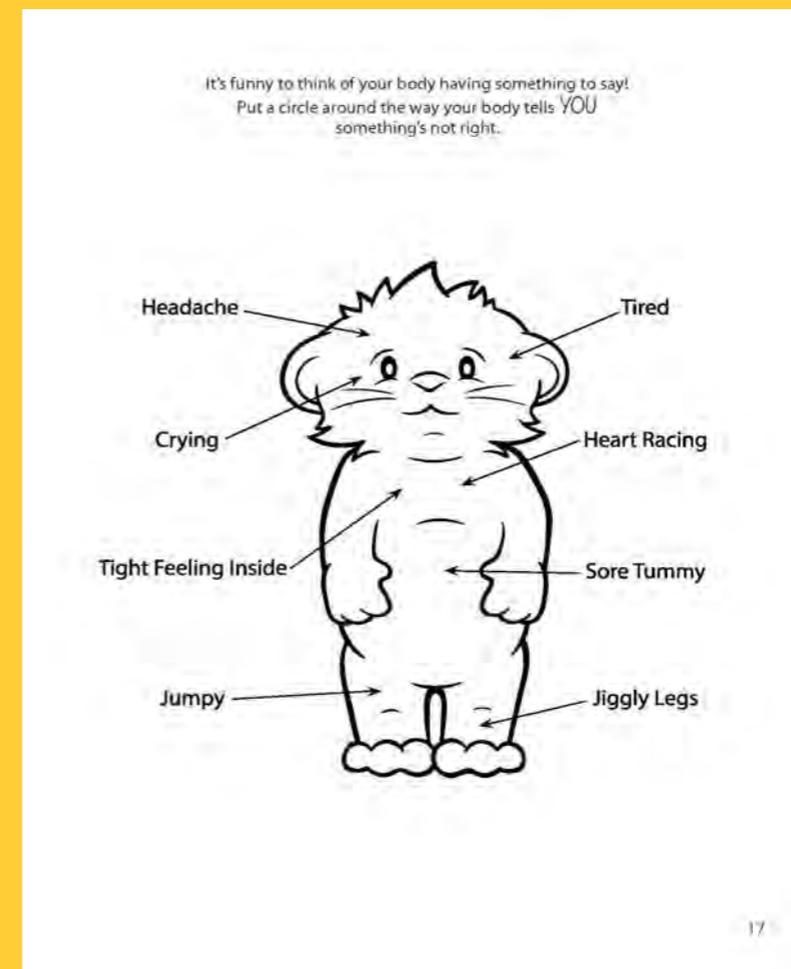
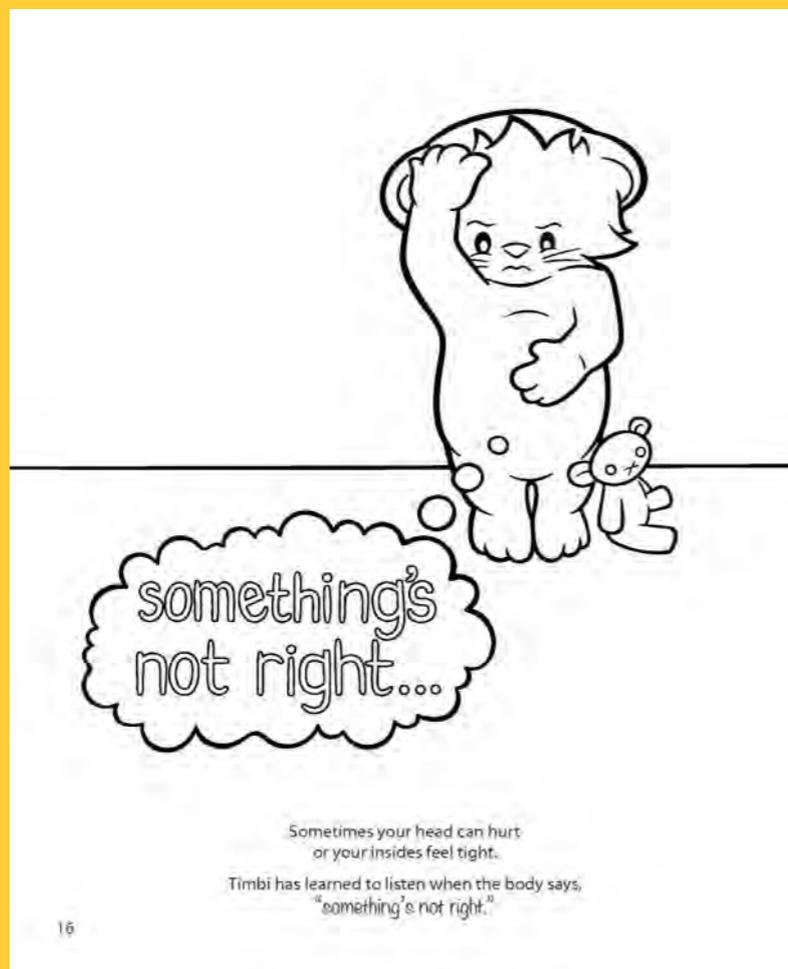
By Irish Healy Luna and Janet Healy Heller illustrated by Mackenzie Mitchell

To reinforce and broaden the message of *Timbi Talks*, we created an activity book.

Using multiple pathways of learning makes the message ‘stick’ better.

Through play, children have access to neural circuitry that enhances learning.

- Children are sensitive and pick up on signals of tension and stress.
- Their vocabulary is limited, and they can't express their feelings effectively.
- "Listening" to their body is crucial to allow the release of stress/trauma.
- Children can circle the symptoms that "speak" to how they are feeling.



Being out in nature has cognitive and physiological benefits.

Children describe a 'happy place' engaging multiple senses.

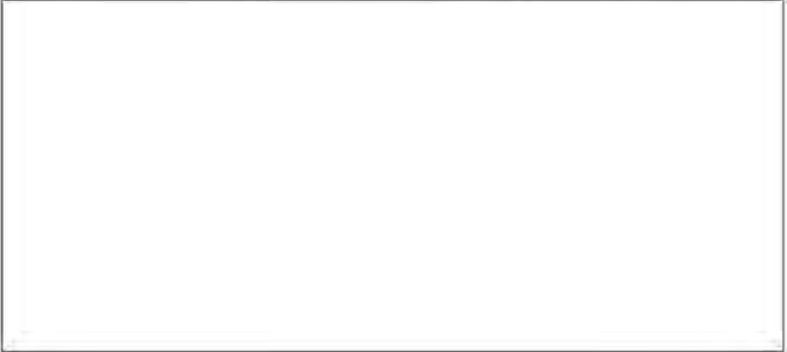
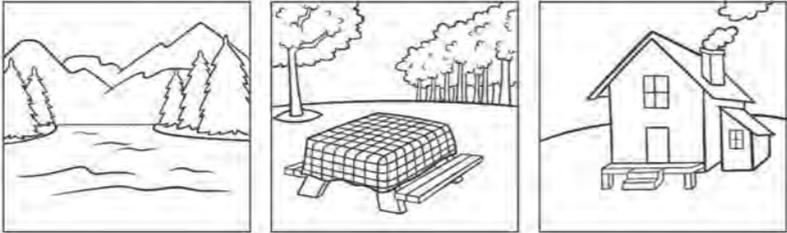
Studies show imagery is stress-relieving.

Circle a picture below or draw someplace where you feel happy and calm.

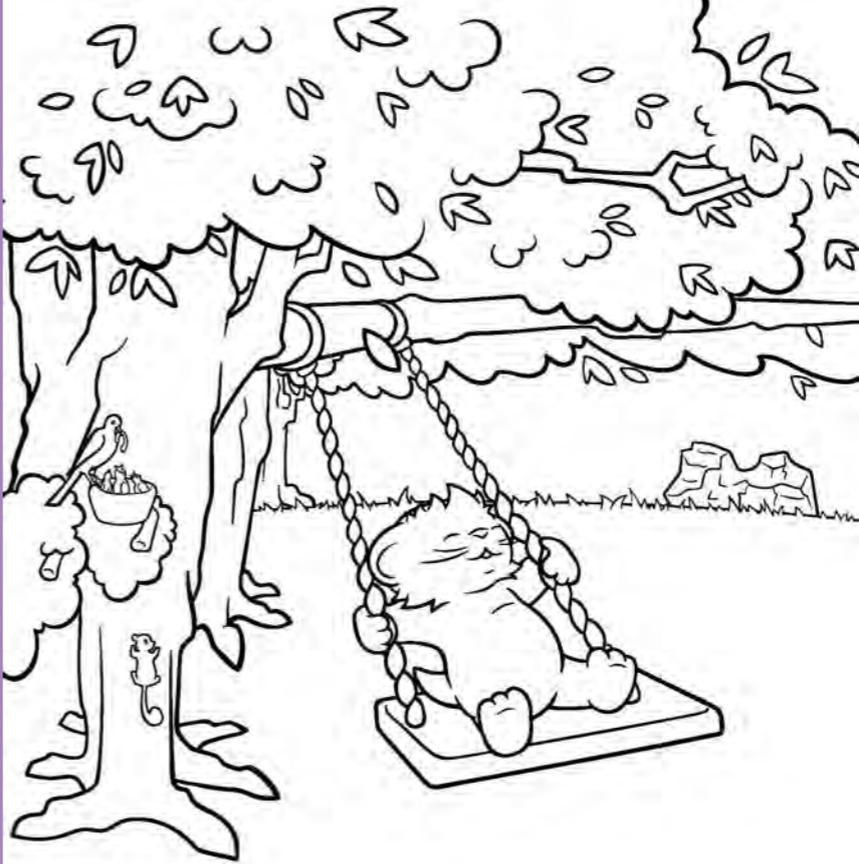
Think about what smells there are, like some yummy food, or sweet-smelling flowers.

Can you feel the warm sun on your face, or soft grass on your feet?

What sounds do you hear? Maybe birds singing, people laughing or water splashing?



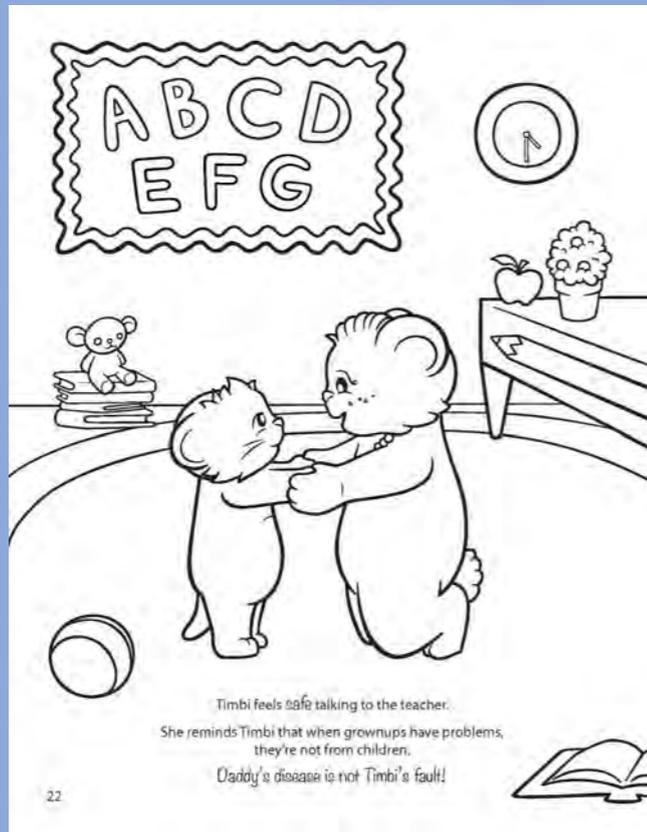
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Timbi loves to play outside on the swings.
Being in nature helps lift Timbi's spirits.
It can work for you, too!

20

Finding a trusted person is fundamental to the child's improved functioning.

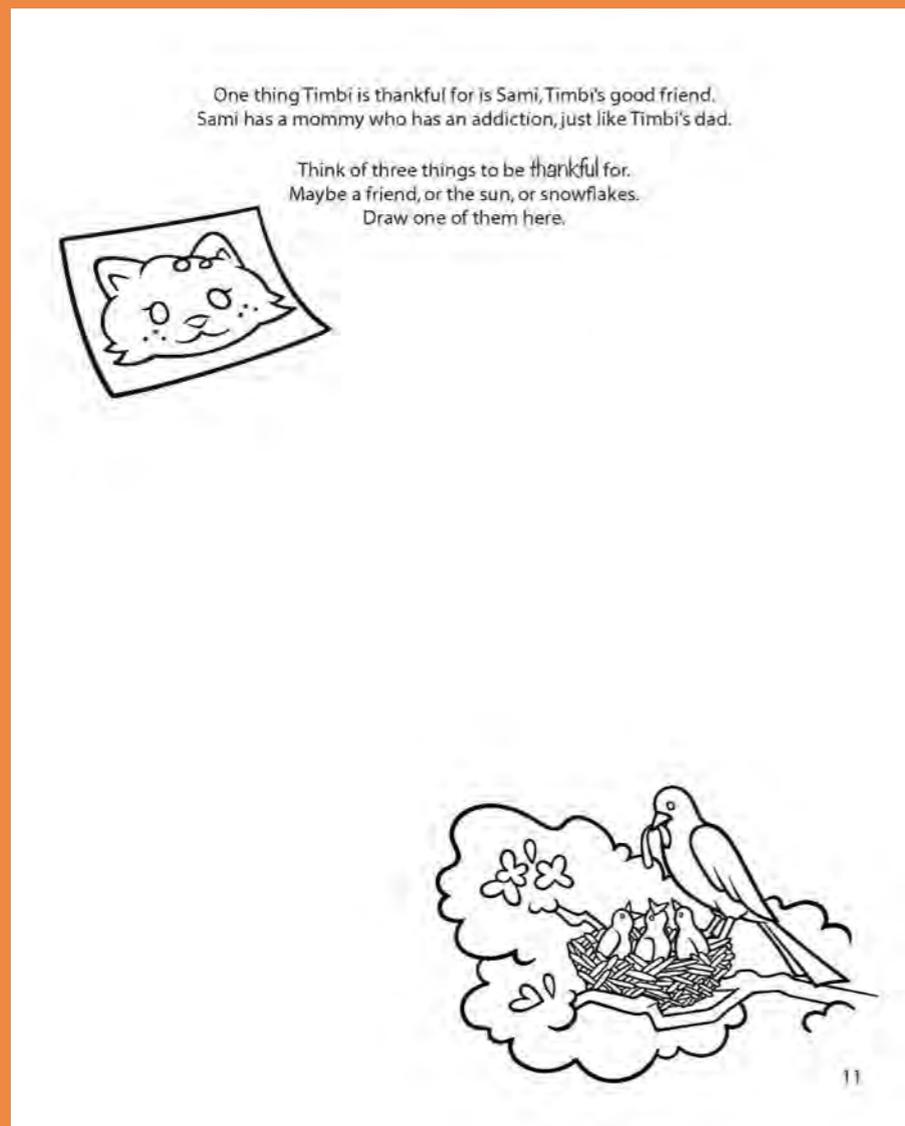


Noted trauma specialist, Bessel van der Kolk, writes that being able to feel safe with other people is the single most important aspect of mental health.

Studies show smiling makes people happier. The facial muscles send a signal to the brain.



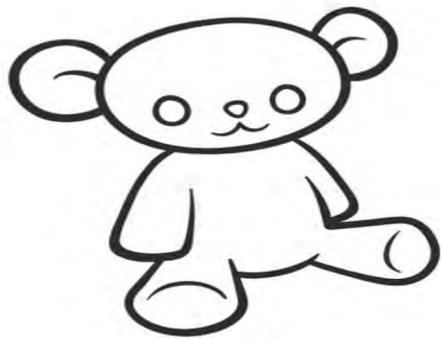
Timbi remembers to be thankful. Gratitude is another positive emotion that has been shown to improve well-being.



Timbi hugs his Teddy and feels better. Hugging activates beneficial neurochemicals.



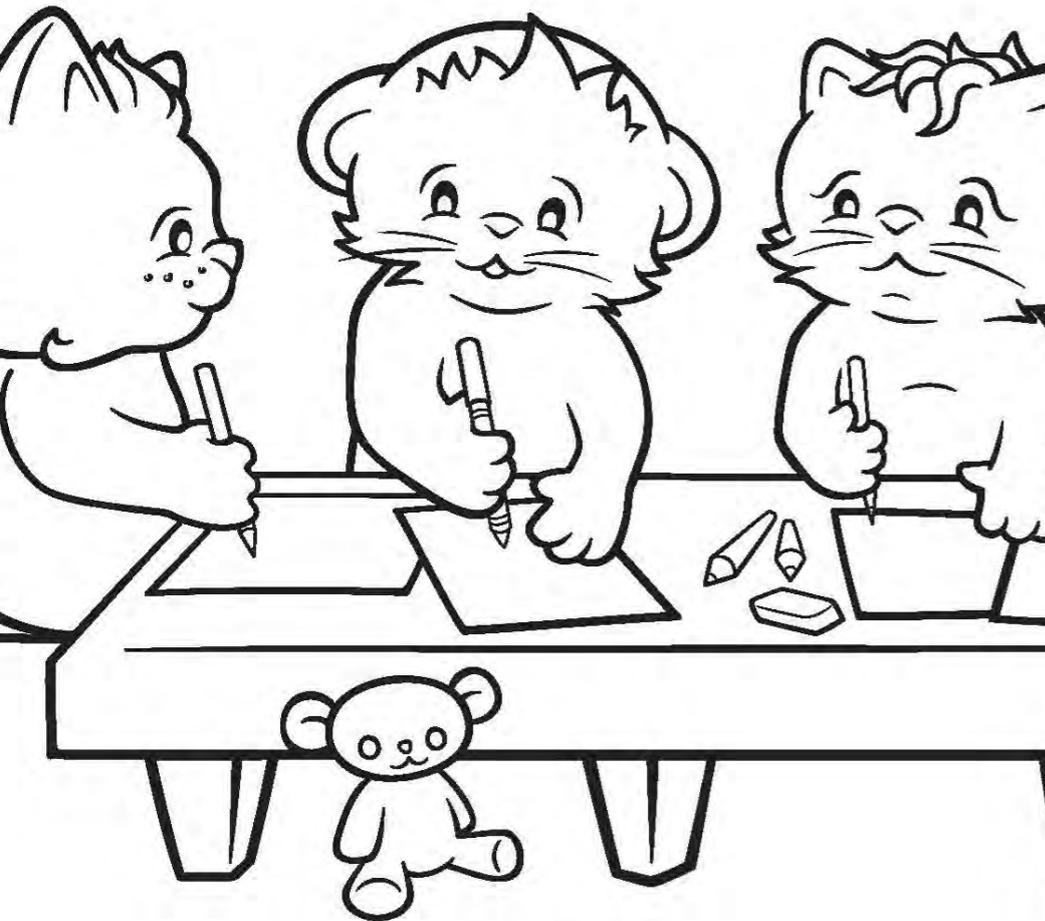
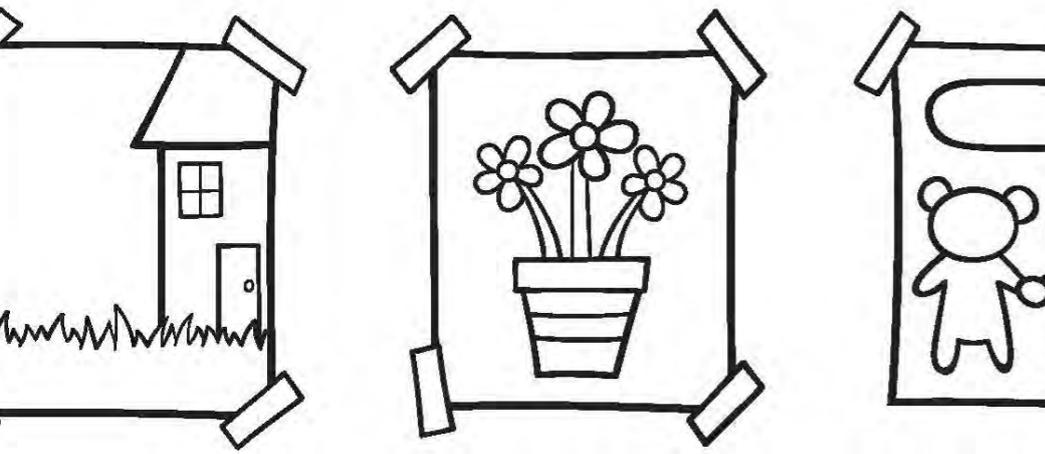
What helps you feel better?
A pet, a blanket, a stuffed animal, a friend
Draw a picture of it here:



Children think about and draw something that helps them feel better

- This facilitates formation and retention of positive thoughts.
- “What fires together, wires together.”

There are 10 differences between these two pictures.
Can you find them?



Answers:

- 6) the table has an extra leg
- 7) Timb's bear is on the floor
- 8) the picture of friends is missing tape
- 9) a piece of paper is missing from the right side of the drawing
- 10) Timb's friend on the left has curly fur

Some pages are just for fun.

- Offering a break from the learning to foster assimilation of ideas.
- To make the book more appealing--more like a 'funbook' than a 'workbook.'
- Because **KIDS NEED TO HAVE FUN!**



Timbi has been enthusiastically *embraced* as a resource in treating the family disease of addiction.

This is my family
today.

The disease has
left an indelible
mark.

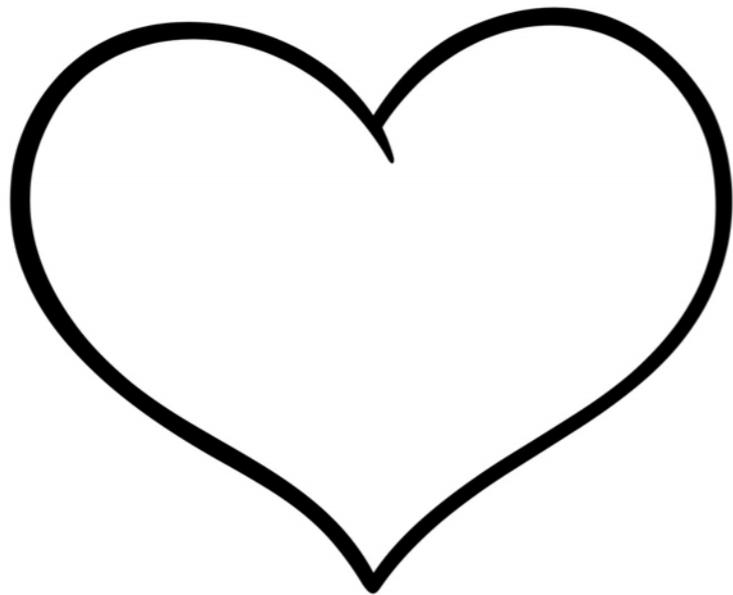
But, as Timbi
reminds us...

Even though
times can be hard,
we're okay.



THANK YOU TO EACH
AND EVERY ONE OF
YOU FOR BEING HERE

You are good,
you are loved,
you are strong!



“Anyone
who does anything to help
a child, is a hero to me.”

–FRED ROGERS

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