

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

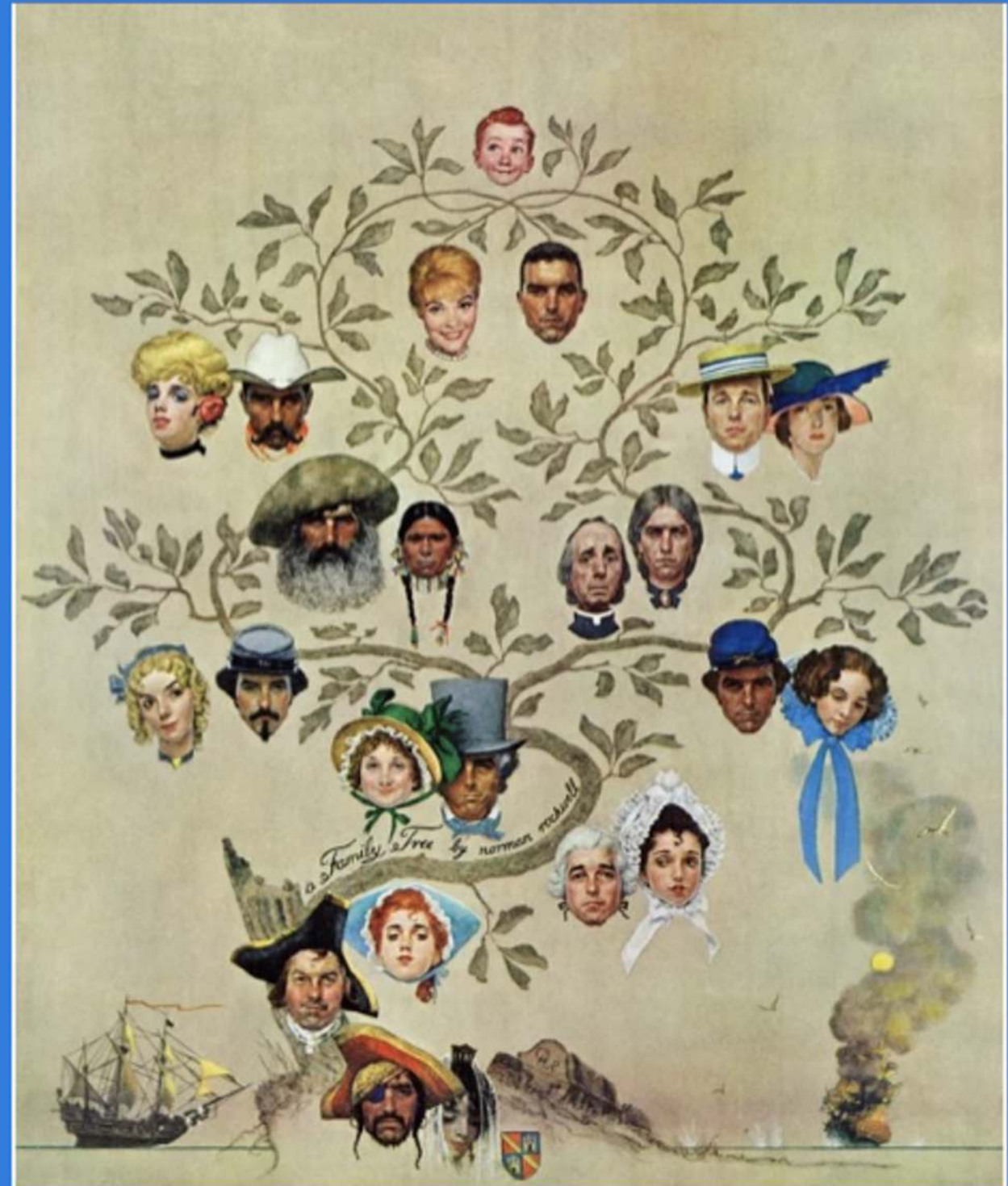
Affecting each and every member



BUT CHILDREN ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED
IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS



I AM IN THE
EYE OF THE
HURRICANE
IN THE
FAMILY
TREE



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 was an addict.

Even though he was not an active addict when we got married, it would eventually take over his life.





And currently my granddaughters have been removed from my daughter's custody due to her addiction.

Multi-generational Impact of ACES

- 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 by young adulthood as compared to their peers.
- 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 adverse childhood experiences, and I knew I needed help to cope with their father's addiction.

I searched for help.

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



There were books about sharing, nighttime fears, even pooping!! But I couldn't find anything for my young children to talk about their daddy's addiction.

Goals for 'My Daddy Has a Problem'

- Open communication
- Name the feelings
- Let kids know it's not their fault
- They have no control over their parent's behavior
- #endthestigma

I hope this book helps open communication on the varied and difficult subject of addiction.

I hope this book enables a child who is exposed to an addicted adult

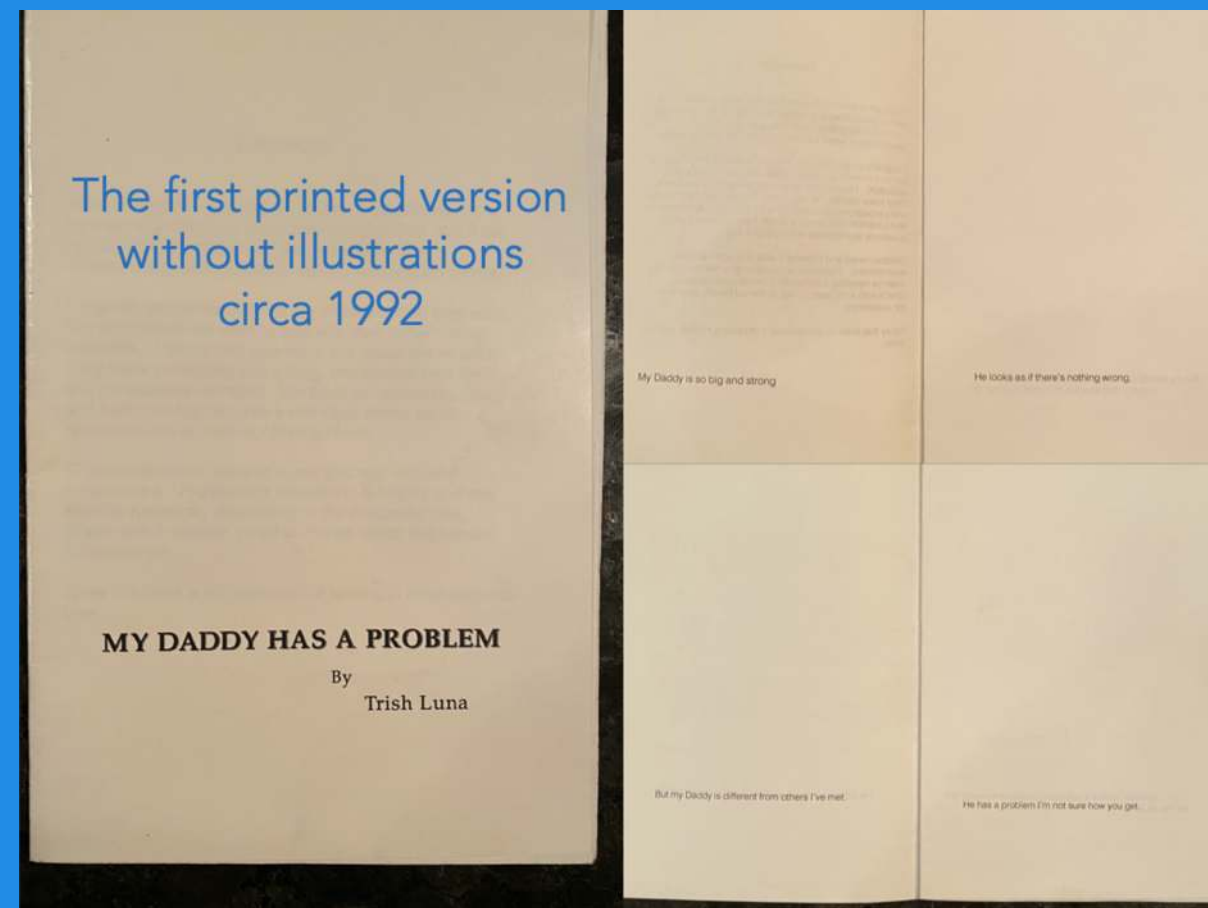
for children faced with dealing with ^{parents} ~~adult~~ addiction. Today we are learning addiction is ~~the~~ complex and varied. I hope the child learns that the addiction (whatever it is to) is not their fault, nor do they have any control over the parent doing or not doing the addiction behavior.

I wrote this book ~~so that~~ ~~to~~ ^{my} ~~and~~ to take the stigma and fear out of ~~addiction~~ ^{addiction}. ~~addiction~~ ^{addiction} is a difficult subject to address with very small children, but just because it's difficult ^{that} doesn't mean we don't need to... Children who →

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

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

But 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 to 2019 nearly 850,000 people have died from a drug overdose. *CDC
- In 2020, preliminary statistics showed drug overdose deaths rose to a record 93,000—an increase of almost 30%. *CDC
- 136 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



This is all the fentanyl it takes to kill someone.

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

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

The woman was "completely unconscious," police said.

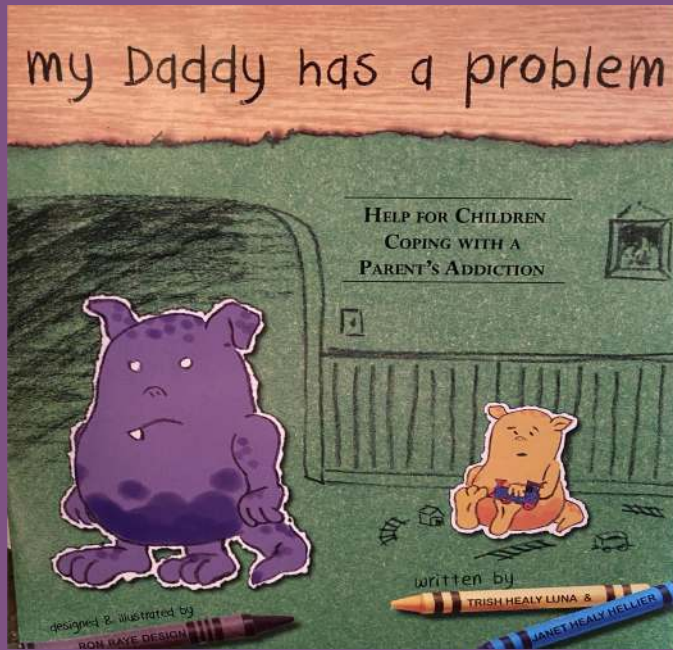
By JULIA JACOBO

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.



Together we updated and enhanced *My Daddy Has a Problem* by addressing ACEs with evidence-based, developmentally appropriate solutions.

Timbi was born

FIRST SKETCH
OF
TIMBI



Let's listen to the
story now.



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!



TIMBI

talks about

ADDICTION

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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.

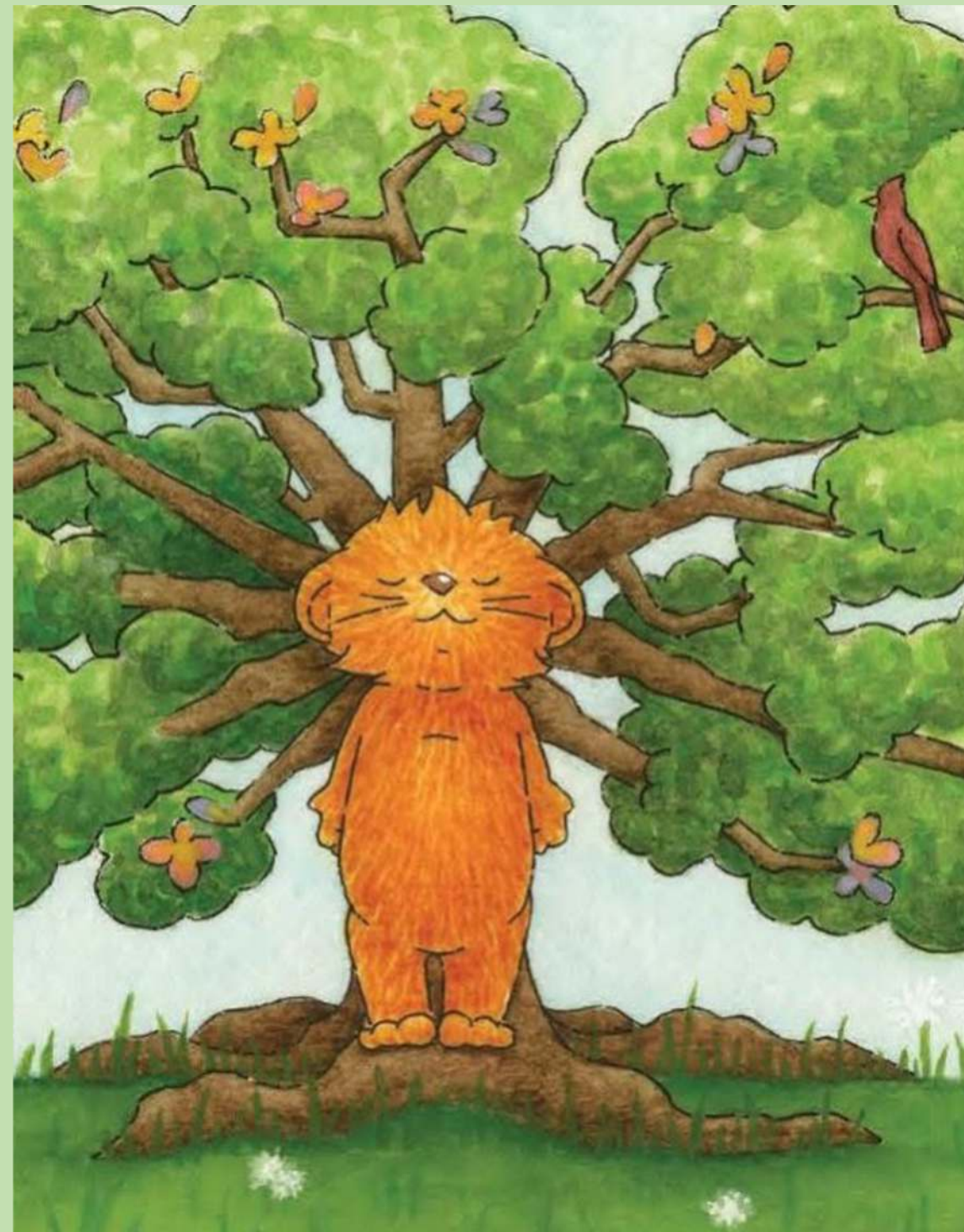
Learn to tune in...

- 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.



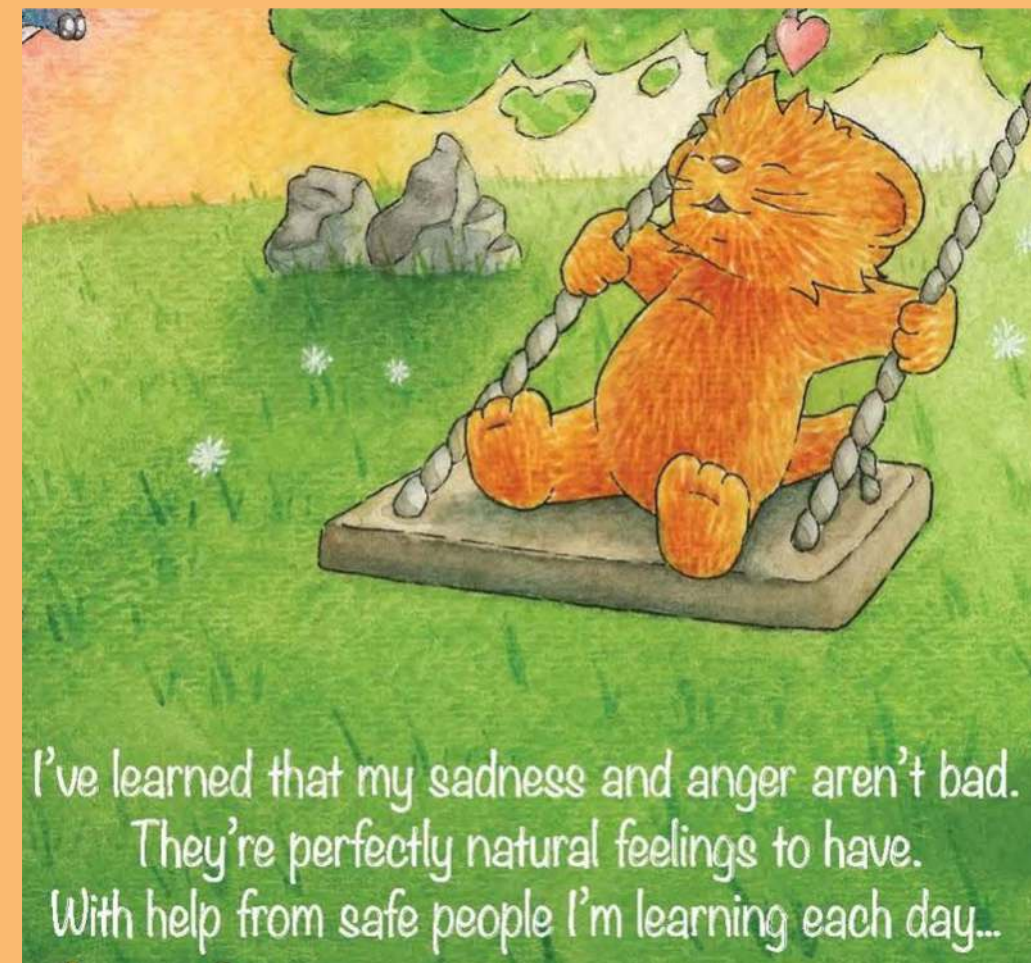
Gain control...

- **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.
- **Punching a pillow** or other soft object is another way of venting emotions like anger.



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.

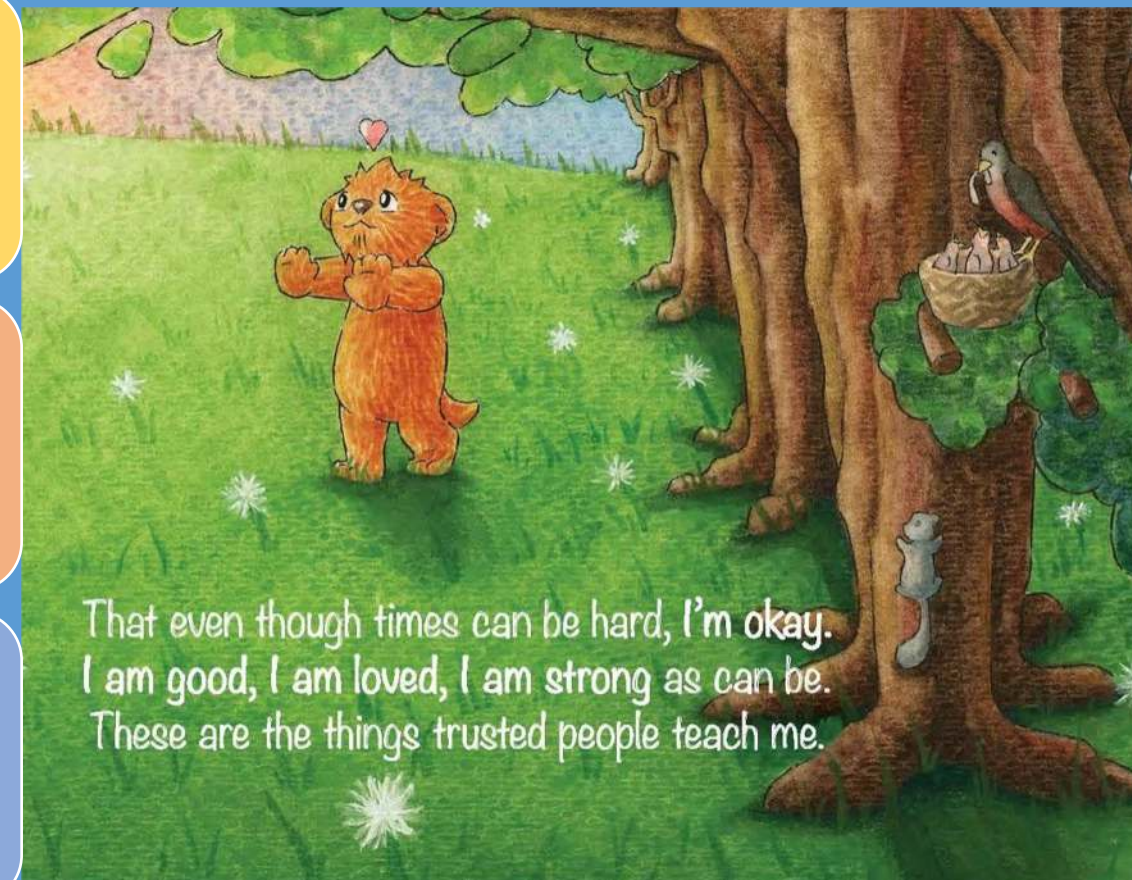


Finally, Timbi helps the child know...

THEY ARE GOOD

THEY ARE LOVED

THEY ARE STRONG AS CAN BE



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.

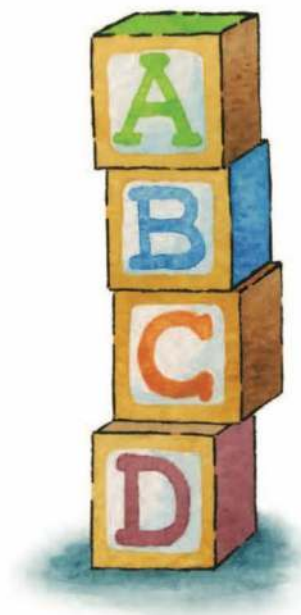
Play with friends.

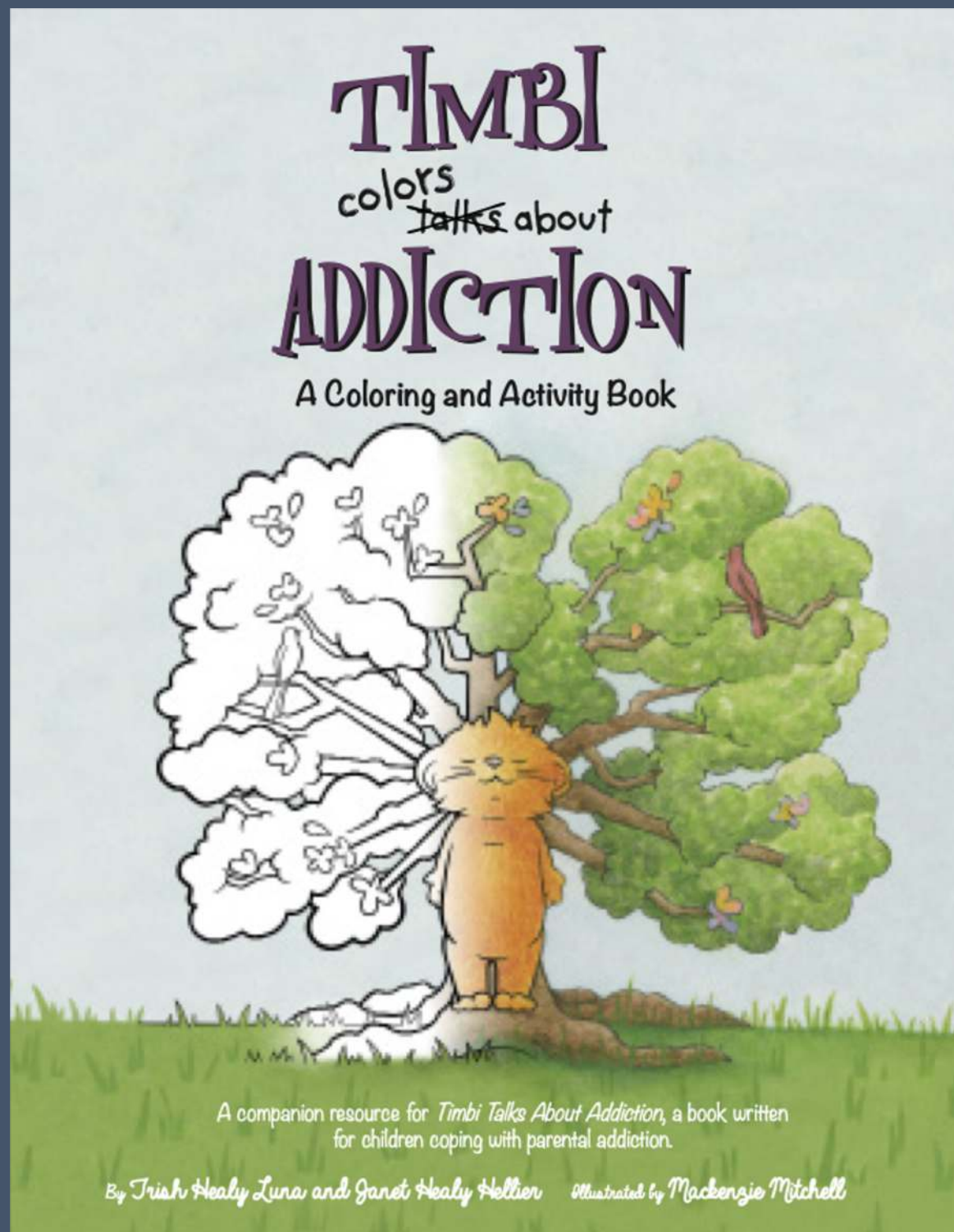
Read books.

Hug your Teddy, blanket or other lovey.

Always remember:

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



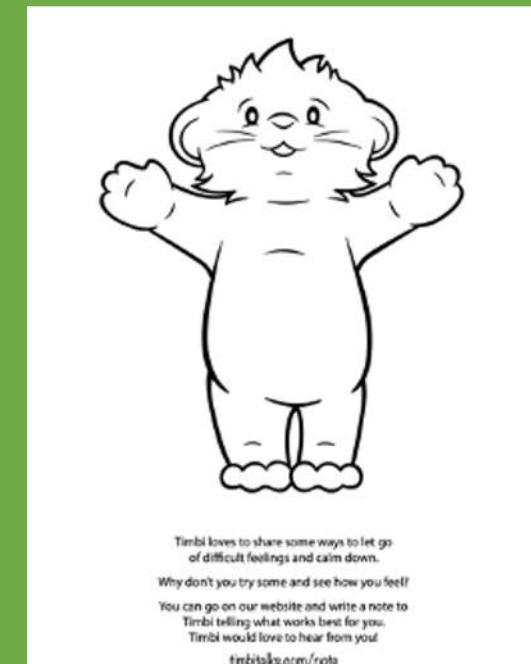
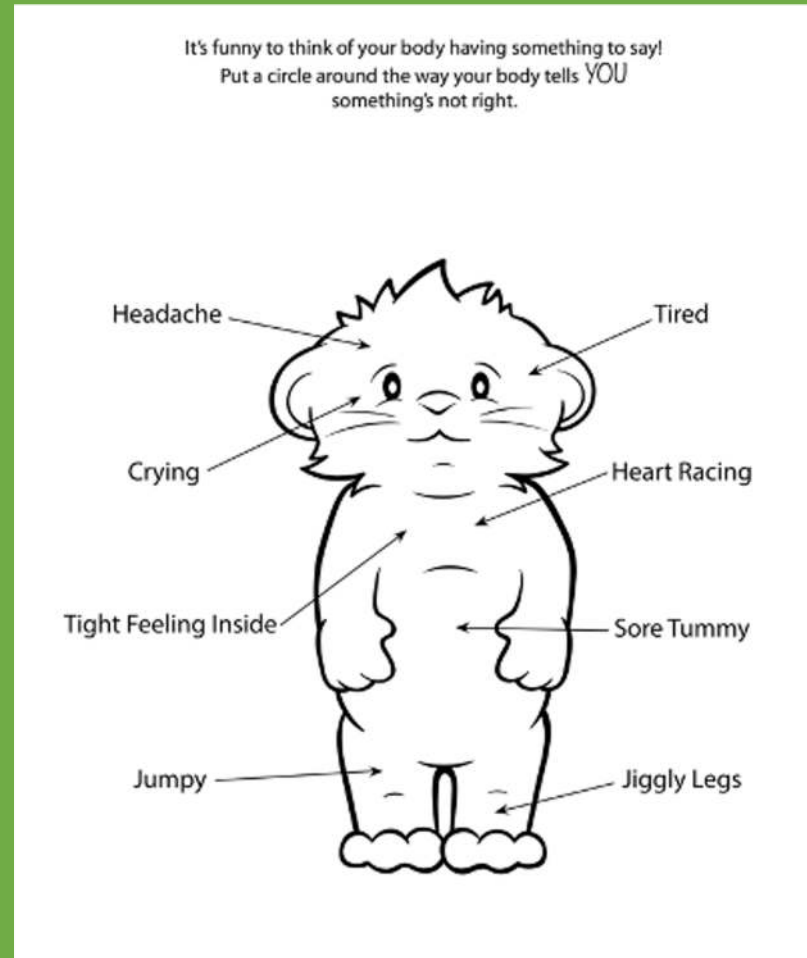


To reinforce and broaden the message of *Timbi Talks*, we created an activity book.

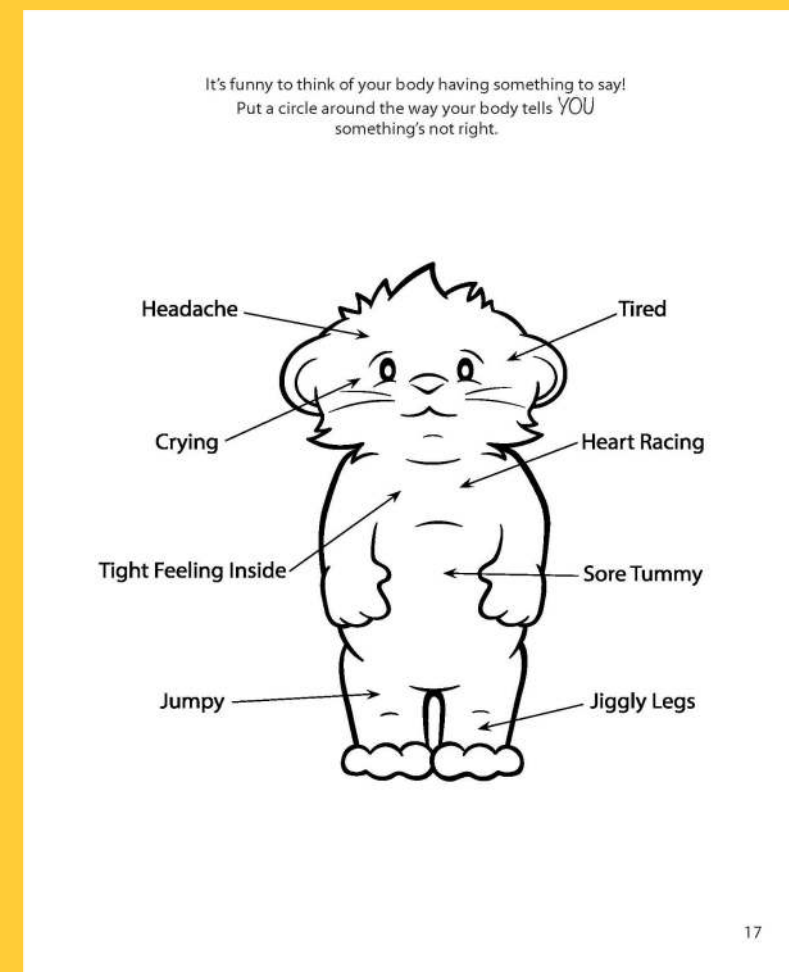
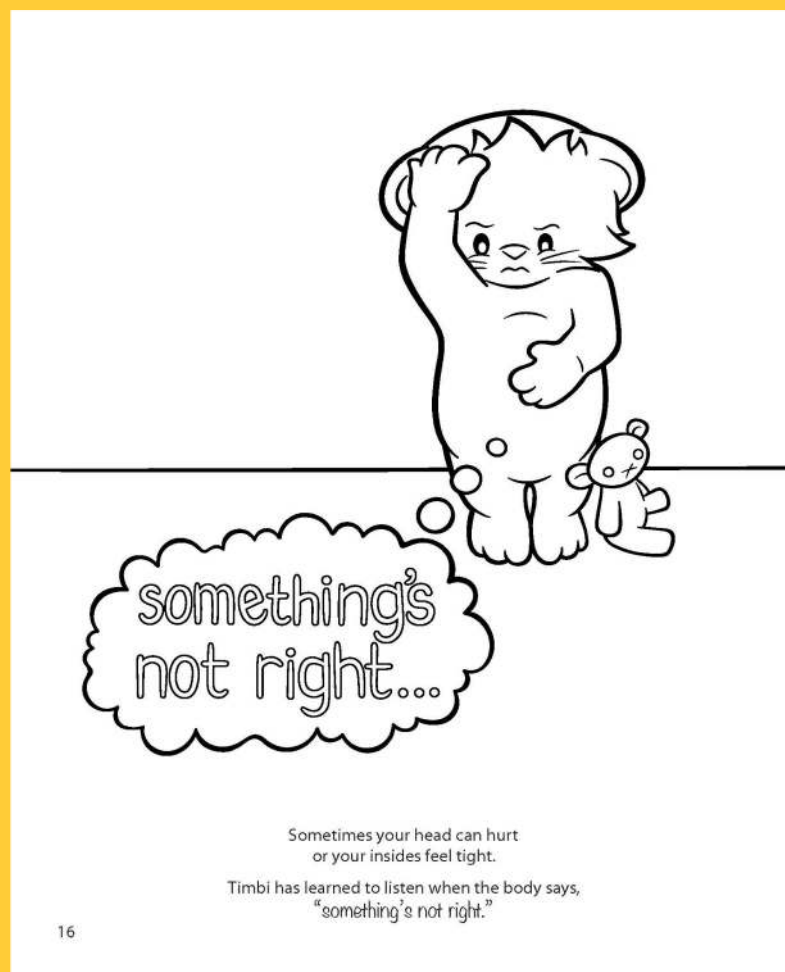
Using multiple pathways of learning makes the message 'stick' better.

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

A look inside the coloring book



- 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.

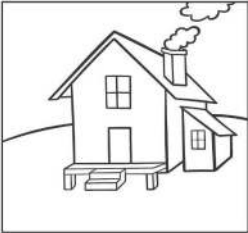
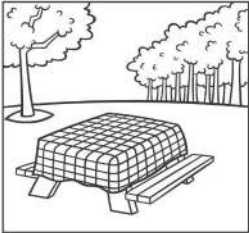
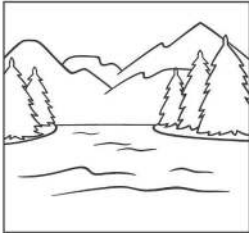
Studies show imagery is stress-relieving.

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

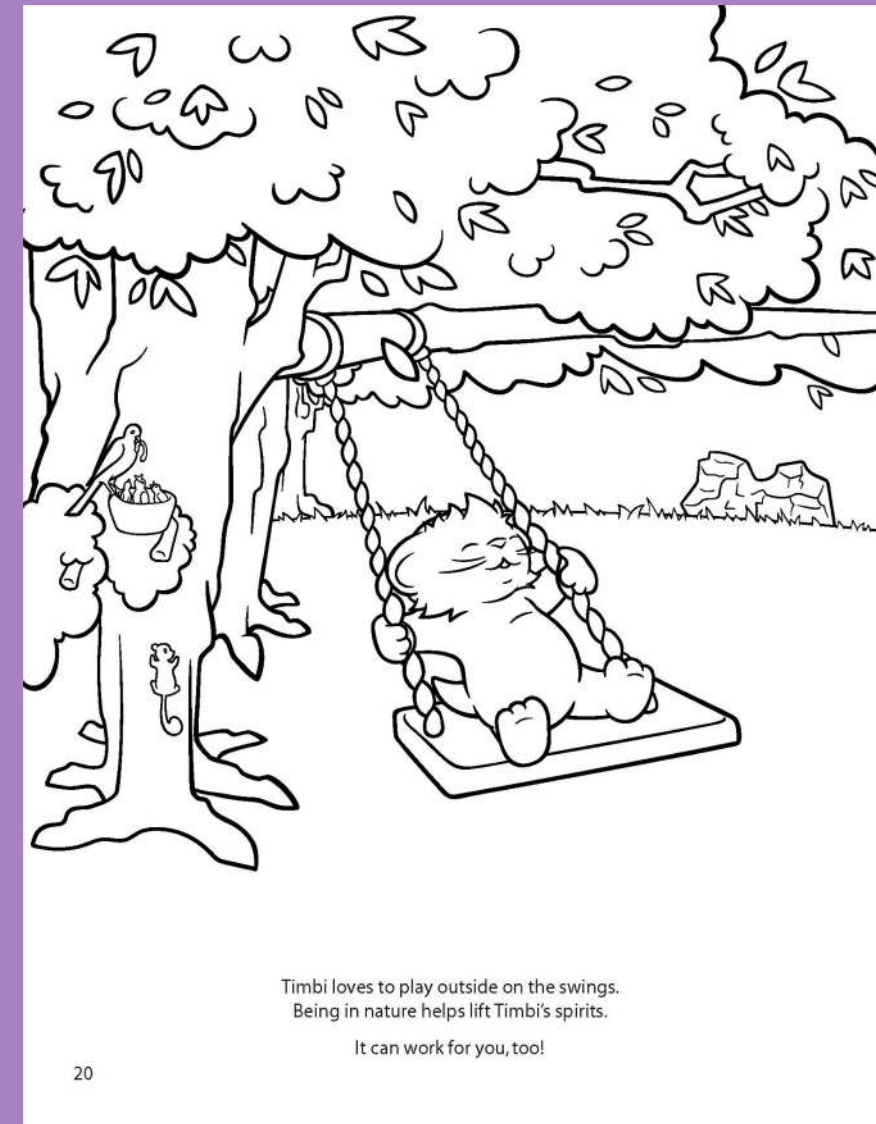
Think about what smells there are, like some yummy food, or sweet-smelling flowers.

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

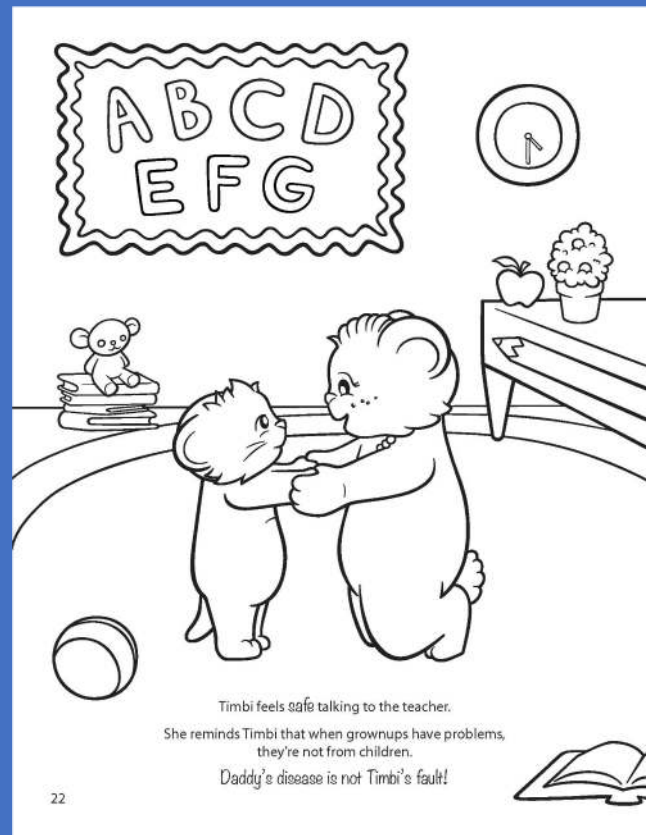
What sounds do you hear? Maybe birds singing, people laughing or water splashing?



9



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

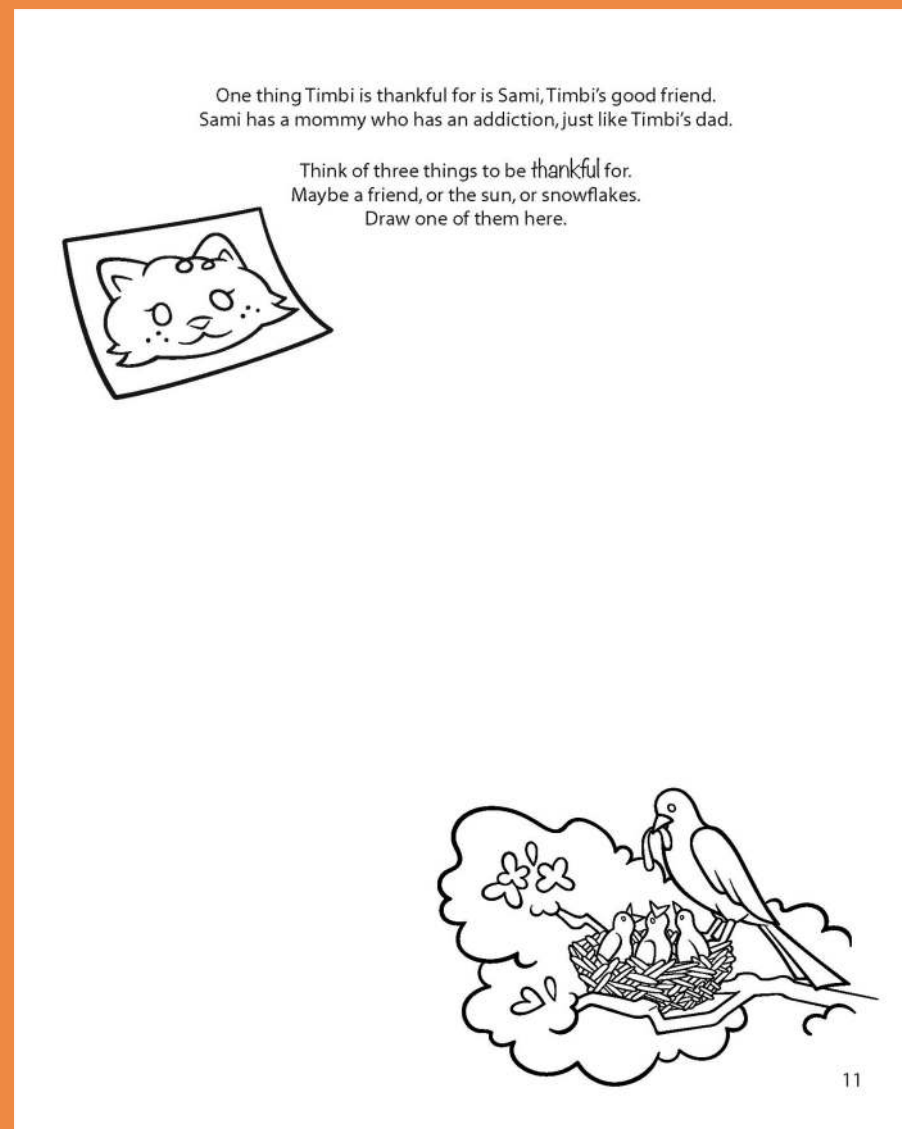


Noted trauma specialist, Bessel van der Kolk, writes that being able to feel safe with other people is the single most important aspect of mental health.

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 picture
- 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.

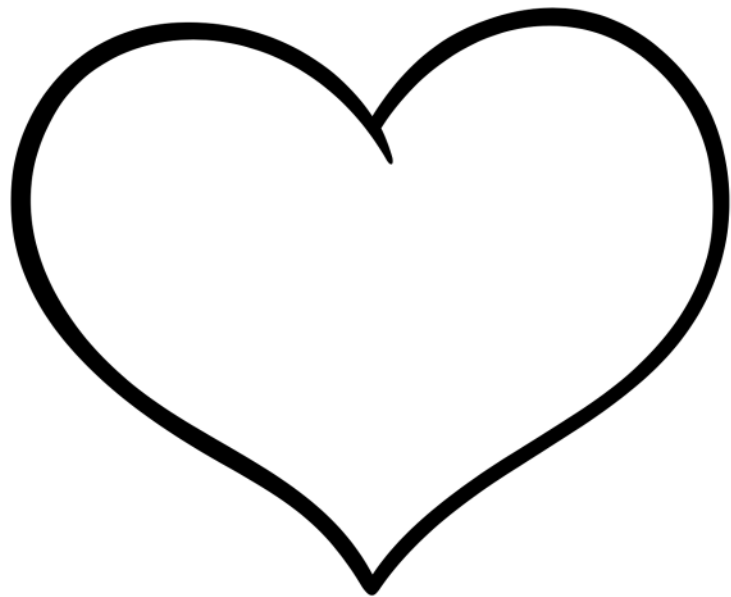
But, as Timbi
reminds us...

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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