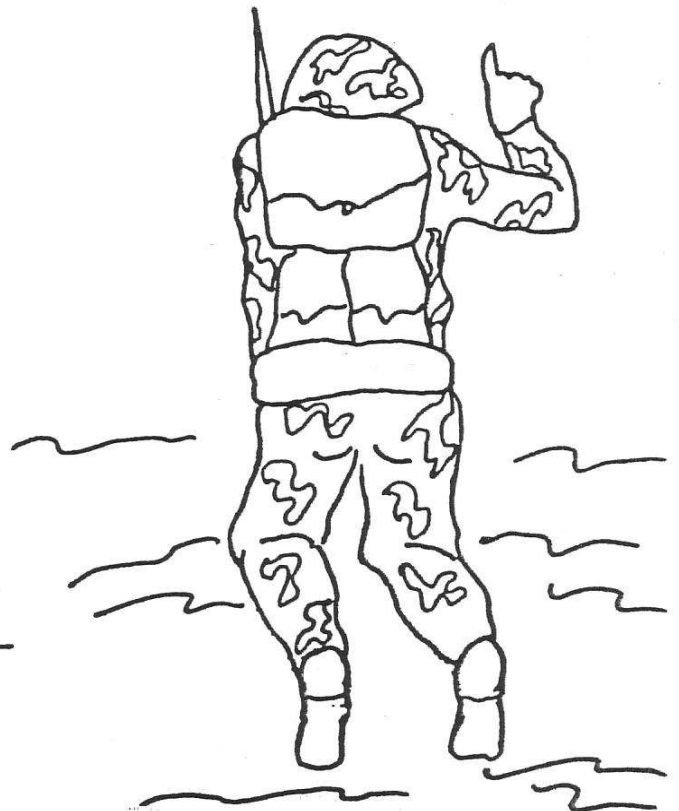


# **MY BOOK ABOUT WAR AND TERRORISM**

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**A Guided Activity Workbook  
for Children, Families and Teachers**



# MY BOOK ABOUT THE WAR AND TERRORISM

A GUIDED ACTIVITY WORKBOOK FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

A SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD GUIDE TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY  
EXPRESSION, LEARNING AND COPING.

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# GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

## INTRODUCTION

This workbook is here to help parents, families and teachers help their children and students. If you are a teenager or a very good younger reader, you can use much of it by yourself. It will help children and adults to talk together about terrorism, war and peace and has instructions for use with children from preschool through high school ages.

The book's goals are for children to gain strength and learn more. They can gain control of facts, ideas and feelings about terrorism, war and peace. We want to help children to cope with their worries or fears, and help them think about ways to go about solving safety problems. Using this book can help in a stressful situation, so there can be constructive learning and coping. We offer a guide and physical structure to organize and encourage children's thinking about war, terror and the resolution of conflicts between peoples, with the help of their own families, teachers and classmates. The authors have had many years of professional and personal experience with national disasters, and children's reactions, beginning with the senior author's research on children's reactions to the assassination of President Kennedy (Psychological Emergencies of Childhood, Kliman, 1968; Children and the Death of a President, Wolfenstein and Kliman, 1965).

The guided activity workbook format is a simple and straightforward approach which uses an existing psychological self-help method which has been well-studied and found measurably helpful in other situations (Kliman, 1995). The activity workbook encourages children to learn more about the facts of terrorism, war and peace, as well as their own feelings and values. Designed to be used with children of varying developmental levels, it includes a guide for parents and teachers and one for children. It has a journal to record ideas and feelings; a scrapbook for articles and pictures; illustrations to color and discuss; a quiz about war and peace; suggestions for activities; a list of resources; a bibliography, and a children's mental health checklist to help identify those children needing more assistance. It can be used by children of various ages individually, with their families, in the classroom with groups of children, and by mental health professionals as part of

therapy.

## GIVING CHILDREN PSYCHOLOGICAL “H.A.N.D.S” WITH WHICH TO WORK IN A CRISIS

The value of active coping is well known. During times of disaster or community upset like terrorism or war, children do better when they are given “H.A.N.D.S.”: The term “giving children Hands” is an abbreviated way of saying children must be helped to “Honestly communicate, Actively cope, Network with peers and adults, in a Developmentally Specific manner.” This workbook has been designed by parents and mental health professionals to promote a real sense for children of being in control of their own emotions and learning in the face of stress. The personal life history book approach (see [www.cphc-sf.org](http://www.cphc-sf.org)) is a form of mentalizing (Fonagy, 1992, Kliman and Hope 2003) and narrative-building therapy which has been very effective when used with traumatized children in family crises, and is here adapted for use in the current national crisis. It is a method that has been used by the authors previously in large scale disasters: after the October, 1989 earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area (My Earthquake Story); the Santa Barbara Fire of June 1990 and the East Bay Hills Fire of October 1991 (My Fire Story); the devastating tornadoes in the spring of 1990 in the Joliet, Illinois, area (My Tornado Story); the massive flooding in the Midwest in 1993 (My Flood Story); the recent Balkan War, 1999 (My Kosovo Story); and the World Trade Center and Pentagon disasters (My Book about the Attack on America, 2001).

Children do best in a network of helpers which this book tries to mobilize in a simple way, to give them strength to struggle with issues of terrorism, war and peace. The current acts of terrorism and war can serve as a developmental crisis for children, or as a catalyst stimulating learning and growth.

Terrorism and war occur when people and nations believe they can't solve their problems without violence. The survival of our world depends on all of us thinking about how people and countries can cooperate better and talk to each other instead of fighting. All of our futures may depend on whether we and our children struggle thoughtfully with these issues.

This workbook is carefully designed to give psychological first aid to both you and the children you know, love and teach. You are going through a great stress, just as your own children and students all through the nation are. Your idea in using this book is probably the same as ours. You want to try to help children change a possibly chaotic and traumatic situation into a structured learning and coping experience. Children's fears can be managed if you include shared adult and child activity, discussion, collecting, building and organizing of knowledge.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Read the whole book yourself before your child or student does, if he or she is less than ten or eleven years of age.
2. Be sure to read the "Guide for Children and Teenagers" to children who can't read it themselves, and answer any questions they may have.
3. Point out to your child or student that this terrorism and war are important moments in history. It is a time the child's family and the whole world will remember. He or she can be part of history. He or she can help make a record of it with this workbook. Perhaps years later people will discover this workbook, and it will help them understand more about what happened.
4. Be flexible in your work with your child. Working on this book may take several weeks. The entire book does not have to be completed in order for the book to help. Never force a child to face a section of the book against his or her will. Allow each child to select which parts of the book to work with first and to stop using the book whenever he or she wants, even though it may not have been completed. It is usually best not to work on the book right before bedtime.
5. A child who cannot or will not work with you should have his resistance respected. See the Mental Health Checklist at the end of the book.
6. To Therapists: Our view is that severe stressors are best healed by gaining new or increased skills and broadening one's perspective, going on with life, and putting the events in a context. There should never be an insistence on endless review of the most painful memories. See the Children's Psychological Trauma Center Scientific Bulletin of February 2000 on [www.cphc-sf.org](http://www.cphc-sf.org) for our senior author's Unifying New Theory of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Note how important it is to help stressed children see and remember their complex worlds broadly rather than narrowly, widely rather than only through the overly simple and stark perspective of repetitive traumatic memories.

## FOR THE YOUNGEST CHILDREN: A SHARED COLORING BOOK

Expect limited verbal participation in the use of this workbook with children younger than three. Two and three year olds can help you color the picture book sections. Let babies and toddlers be present while older children work with you.

A sense of family caring, thinking and working on mental and emotional tasks together is a help to babies and toddlers in stressful times.

Use the many illustrations with your youngest children, giving them a chance to talk about what they think happened and why they think these things happened. Give simple information.

## PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

If your child is between ages 3 and 6, let him or her do a lot of coloring of the many line drawings in this book. You can read much of the book to your child. Substitute simpler words he would understand. Let the child choose some of the topics by reading the captions and asking which part he or she wants to work on first. Stop at the quiz, which is too advanced intellectually.

You can help a preschool or kindergarten child do the drawings. Write down his answers to questions and lead-on sentences. Act as an interested reporter-secretary, drawing your child out while giving encouragement. Write exactly what he or she has to say without changing the grammar. Take your time. Don't insist on the child answering. It may be enough for him to know that you think the topic can be shared in words instead of his experiencing his fears and fantasies alone.

## MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

If your child is between the ages of 6 and 11, use most of the book. You may be surprised at how much of it your child can understand. Allow him to set the pace. Gently try to work through all of the sections over a period of several days or weeks, but let the child direct which sections to work on first. Don't insist on reading any sections a child of any age is reluctant to read. Encourage clipping pictures and articles from newspapers and magazines. Help him paste them in to make the workbook into a scrapbook. Use the backs of pages for extra clippings.



At the very least, ask the child to help color in the illustrations, while you participate. Some children may work on the book on and off as they get stronger. Children very close to the disaster may take weeks and sometimes even months, and will be able to complete a difficult section only at a later date.

## **ELEVEN YEARS AND OLDER**

Many children over age 11 will want to work on the book on their own, but it is part of a network approach for you to tactfully participate, pitch in with ideas and give your assistance at times. The older children can look up information and answers in the rear, find out about their own mental health by using the checklist, and might give you plenty of adult-sounding suggestions about how to help the community and them back to a normal life! Be available to serve as a sounding board and resource for your child or teenager, helping to find information and answering questions. Share your own reactions in words and with caring, protective actions. Try to avoid seeming incapable, numb, silent, unavailable or retreating emotionally. The whole network of caregivers can help children by being as energetic as possible in expressing thoughts, mentally processing rather than just taking actions or being frozen with anxiety.

## **IF YOU WERE BEREAVED, OR IF A FAMILY MEMBER WAS INJURED, OR IS MISSING**

Studies show adults' example of strength will lead the way to children's recovery. Your children may benefit from brief preventive consultation. Help is available through support groups and mental health services. Services are listed under "Mental Health" or "Social Services" or under "State or County Health Services" listings in your local Yellow Pages. Also helpful may be your local Psychiatric Society, Psychological Association or Psychoanalytic Institute. Military families may receive help through their base family support or community service centers. Bereavement is a high mental health risk for all children, and even more serious for preschool children. See [www.cphc-sf.org](http://www.cphc-sf.org) and [www.aacap.org/publications](http://www.aacap.org/publications) and see our resource list at the back of this book for more help and information. Use of a personal life history book method such as this book can help preserve the bereaved child's sense of continuity.

## FOR ADULTS AND OLDER TEENAGERS

Even adults may find that using this book can help them understand better and cope better with their experiences. You can add your own questions as well as answering the questions asked of the children. You may also find that drawing or coloring the scenes may help you become calmer or help you to mentalize, remember your experiences and master them. Along with answers to “learning about the war” questions, the end of the book has a reading list for children and adolescents and a list of helpful resources. Relief efforts might be able to use your volunteer help, and that of your teenage children.

Finally, a Mental Health Checklist tells you what kind of behavior to be concerned about in your children or students during terrorism, war or other public stressor. Older children and teenagers as well become more clingy, dependent or angry if they have been overstressed by traumatic events. Try to tolerate but not completely accept such behavior. Affectionately state your expectations of future growth.

## FOR USE AS A FAMILY

One very helpful way of using the book involves parents, brothers and sisters, and any other relatives frequently in the home– all working together. The sooner you begin to do this, the better.

Each child can individually work on the same questions (each from his own workbook or on separate blank paper). Add the pages all together in one family project “About the War in Iraq and Terrorism in the World.” When many children all work on one book, contributing their own reactions, each should sign his or her own name to his entries. Engaging in a “shared thinking and remembering” with adult leadership can help your children feel stronger and safer as they work on a joint project under your direction. This can also help bring your family closer together.

## USE BY TEACHERS

A social network (Moos 1992) has been shown to help children and adults cope with stressors and catastrophes. Teachers can use My Book About War and Terrorism in a classroom setting. Children can work individually or in small groups with teachers' assistance. This is a way to encourage learning more about war and peace and to support group togetherness. Don't avoid discussion. Children's school behavior deteriorates in a national crisis when discussion is avoided (Kliman, 1964). To help identify children who need additional assistance, use the Children's Mental Health Checklist at the end of the book. Many U.S. Schools have official mental health consultants. Consultations are often available to U.S. schools by calling a local County Community Mental Health Center, Mental Health Association, Psychiatric Society, Psychoanalytic Institute, or Psychological Association.

## USE BY MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Therapists can use this book during individual, family or group sessions as a supplement to treatment for children or adults with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, or Adjustment Disorders due to personal traumas experienced as a result of the war or terror attacks. Assistance for governmental agencies, mental health professionals and community agencies in the use of this book is available from The Children's Psychological Health Center, 415-474-0955. In one state (South Dakota) an earlier version concerning terror attacks has been distributed by the Department of Human Services in Emergency/ Disaster Kits.

Visit our website <http://www.cphc-sf.org> for more contact information and Scientific Bulletins on trauma. As explained in our February 1999 Scientific Bulletin, in Kliman's article on a "Unifying New Theory of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder" (available free online), we advise against exclusive use of debriefing approaches with constant review of traumatic memories. Our orientation is strongly on developing a supportive adult and child network, with active discussion, learning, narrative and art production. For more detail see [http://www.cphc-sf.org/resources\\_articles\\_bulletin0299.html#unifying\\_theory](http://www.cphc-sf.org/resources_articles_bulletin0299.html#unifying_theory).

A social and family network approach helps children to have cognitive restructuring and reframing, learning new coping strategies in response to stressors.

## USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The drawings throughout the book can be used by families, teachers, teenagers and children in a variety of ways to help strengthen normal coping.

Young children (ages 2-4), severely traumatized children, and learning-disabled or "learning specific" children (who may have a preference for visual as opposed to auditory communication) can color in the illustrations with an adult to aid in nonverbal mastery of their worries. The pictures can then be used as starting points for open-ended discussions about the events pictured.

Adults and children who are "overwhelmed" with sadness, flashbacks, memories, and anxiety, who startle easily, or have insomnia or nightmares may find the process of coloring in images of the experience helpful. We suggest they choose to start with the illustrations furthest from their own experience and gradually work up to those closest to their own experience.

Family members can sometimes all work on a drawing together, each coloring a portion. This may allow everyone to feel less distraught about the image before them and take control together, feel calmer and remember their feelings.

The illustrations can also be used as topics for early and middle childhood classroom discussion. This can be an aid in remembering and re-experiencing for those children who remain emotionally numb or have some trouble putting their fears into words. For example, a parent could ask about an illustration: "What is this child feeling?" or "What is happening?" Children often can respond by describing what someone else is feeling, when they can't talk about their own feelings. The illustrations can be used for mastery-promoting activity. Ask the child to draw a picture of what he and the family can do to make things better. Focus on benevolent aspects: what the scene will look like when there is peace again.

## GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

### WHY LEARN ABOUT WAR?

Acts of terror and war have occurred throughout history and all over the world. Knowing about them can help you understand more and be safer. In terror attacks, wars and other disasters people can be helped by more knowledge and talking to others about their worries. Knowledge and social support can help you stay in control of your feelings. Your ideas may help people live in peace in the future.

### ABOUT WARS

Even the youngest children should be taught that war is a terrible thing even when it is necessary. People get hurt and killed, and homes, schools and buildings destroyed. Pollution from wars, like oil spills, smoke from big fires or nuclear fallout can damage the Earth's future. Women and children can be harmed by crashes, explosions, bombs, missiles, bullets, poison gas, germs, radiation and other weapons. And many people can be frightened.

Sometimes the leaders of our country have to make a very hard choice. They may have to decide that our armed forces must fight a war, even though it is so terrible, because of some very important reasons. In March, 2003, President Bush had the job of deciding if those reasons were important enough to risk people's lives, and whether it would be even more dangerous not to have a war.

Many children and adults get frightened, sad or worried during a war. In the past 50 years, children in the countries of the United States, Afghanistan, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, Kuwait, Rwanda, Somalia, Iran, Iraq and Ireland, have been very close to fighting or actually in wars. Some have seen and heard airplanes, missiles, explosions and gunfire. Children have heard air raid sirens and had to stay in shelters and wear gas masks. Some have had their homes or schools destroyed, or seen collapsed buildings. Many have family or friends who were injured or even killed, and many children have been hurt themselves. They may have had to leave their city or country. Some have had to leave family and friends behind. Many children have died because of war injuries. All through the world hundreds of millions of children have seen a tremendous amount of war on television, sometimes over and over.

Until the attacks of September 11, 2001, most children in America were never very personally close to war. They don't remember the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which started our entry into World War II on December 7, 1941. But most children have seen pictures of the September 11, 2001 attacks, which were the beginnings of a major terrorist war. They saw and heard lots about it on TV, radio and read about it in the newspapers. They had their favorite TV shows interrupted with scary news bulletins and saw their parents get upset and worried. They saw and heard about tremendous buildings collapsing, saw the clouds of smoke and felt fear. They heard about ashes and people falling and fires continuing, of police and firemen killed. They know that thousands of office workers and airplane passengers died, were injured or are missing. It seemed close on TV even though the events were far away for children living outside of New York and Washington.

Many children know or even have a parent, family member or friend who may have died or been injured or is missing. These children may be very brave, but still worried and miss someone very much. Many children have trouble studying, sleeping, or have bad dreams during a disaster or war. They may be afraid to go to school, or have headaches or stomach aches because of their worries. They may have trouble paying attention at school and might not even know that their minds are thinking about the war instead of school work. They might feel sad and cry easily and want to be very close to their mom or dad. They might feel angry and get into trouble or fights because they are so worried. They may be scared that war would come over here even more, so they will feel very unsafe. They may miss someone they love and worry that something bad will happen to them. They may have been very sad about what did happen.

Some children might not even know that they are worried about terror attacks and wars. They may have trouble even thinking about what has happened. Other children may think about frightening things that they would rather not think about at all, especially when they are reminded by the news on the radio or TV or even when an airplane flies overhead.

But it is also normal for children not to get too upset. A lot of children do not get worried much at all and stay fairly happy.