

My Personal Story about Living in Gaza



2009

My Personal Story about Living in Gaza

Name: _____

I call My Book: _____

Date: _____

A Guided Activity Workbook for Children & Families

A simple guide to encourage resilience, learning and coping. Use it to help children, teenagers and families with chronic and acute stresses of life in Gaza, their fears, and difficult feelings.

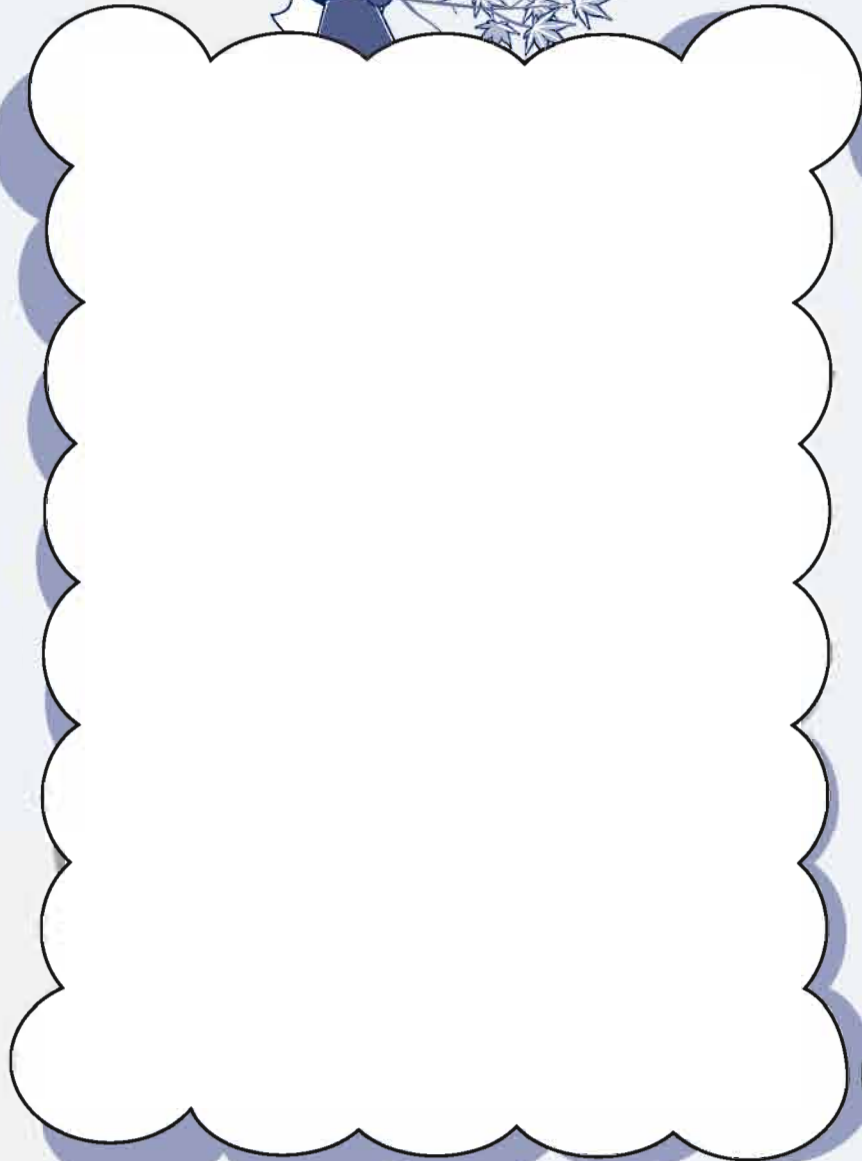
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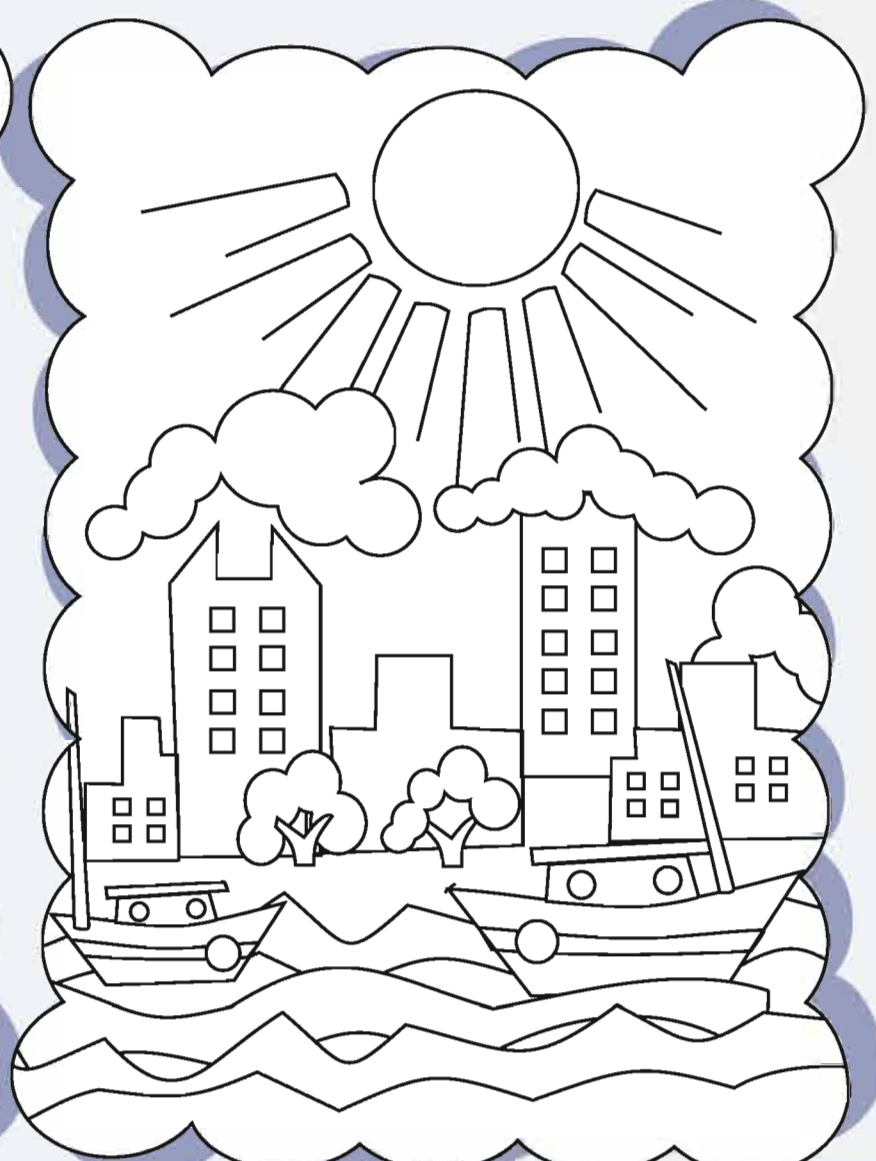
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COLORING IN PICTURES FOR LIVING IN GAZA



Draw here



Color here

I. INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS & ADULTS

The goal of this workbook is to help parents, teachers and other adults in Gaza help their children cope with the long parts of childhood and adolescence lived under chronic and recently increased severe dangers and stresses. If you are an adult looking at this book, your idea may be the same as ours. You want to enable children's highly stressful, possibly traumatic situations to include some a constructive learning and coping. The workbook will help children and adults talk together about their experiences of war, and their hopes for respect, human dignity, freedom from oppression, and to bring peace with justice.

This book gives children a chance to be authors who give witness to terrible historical events that occurred in Gaza. Palestinian society and its children have been dealing with very hard and stressful events for many years. Since the most recent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in December 2008 and January 2009, however, things have gotten even worse. Families have lived through, witnessed, and heard about air strikes and bombings that leave non-military people homeless, wounded, and dead. There have been many, many funerals, including of children and their loved ones. Many children have had direct personal experiences of the war and everyone knows someone who has died. Gazans all know that more attacks may come, but it is unknown where and when. Living under occupation and in the shadow of blockades, military aggression in the air and on the ground is a heavy psychological task.

To deal with these violent and complicated events, children need the help of adults who care about them. The goals of this workbook are to help children gain strength and learn more about their ideas

and emotions about living in a war zone. Perhaps it can even help them think about ways to create peace, in their own families and communities, and gain justice in the international world. Children need help from adults in changing what can be a traumatic situation into a constructive learning and coping experience. This book offers a format for children to organize and stimulate constructive thinking.

This guided activity workbook format is a simple approach which uses a well-studied method for helping children and adolescents cope with terrible experiences like large-scale disasters and violent conflict. The activity workbook encourages children and adolescents to learn more about their personal and cultural history, as well as their own feelings and values. Designed to be used with children of varying ages and abilities, it includes a guide for parents and teachers and one for children. It has a journal to record ideas and feelings, a scrapbook to be used for a few articles, and pictures.

This workbook emphasizes making colorful drawings that will help the children discuss topics. It provides suggestions for activities, a list of resources, a bibliography, and a children's mental health checklist to help identify children needing more assistance. These guided activities 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.

Under Section 2 titled 'Resources for Adults' are detailed instructions for how to use the workbook with children from preschool through high school ages, how to use illustrations, and more.

Key points for parents, teachers and other caring adults before using this Workbook:

- Before you start to use the workbook, read the whole book and the workbook, including instructions and sections with additional resources. Use your judgment about what might not be wise to use with your children.
- If you plan on using the workbook with children who can't read it themselves, read the section "Guide for Children and Teenagers" out loud to the children. That will help you answer questions the children may have.
- Plan to work up to 45 minutes at a time maximum. Working on this book may take several months because it is important for children to deal with difficult feelings at their own pace. Sometimes, the feelings can be overwhelming. Sometimes bad things will have just recently happened, and children may feel less grownup than usual. Be flexible in your work with your child or children and know what you do will be helpful.
- Let the children know that, while they are completing their workbook at the CBO center and you will help them to save it carefully between sessions, it is theirs to keep when they are done.
- The entire book does not have to be completed for the book to help.
- Some parts may not be relevant to every situation. Never force a child to listen to or work on a section of the book if the child lets you know it is too upsetting or hard. It can be very helpful to allow children to select which parts of the book to work with first and even to decide not to work on a section, or not to finish a section. Stop using the book whenever the child wants, even though it may not have been completed. It's okay if a child's writing or drawing is not his or her best. What matters is the talking and thinking that a child does with an adult who is accepting, not the product.
- It is okay to go out of order in the book; children may feel more comfortable doing different parts of the workbook at different times.
- It is very helpful to stop every 10 minutes or so, or if you notice the child becoming anxious, tearful, angry, or physically agitated or overly active. Ask the child if he or she would like to stop or take a break, and if there is anything the child would like to tell you about what he or she is feeling. This may be your signal that it is time to let the child stop before he or she becomes overwhelmed.
- Children, no matter how big, how smart, how obedient, and how well raised they are, cannot tolerate having painful feelings for as long as an adult. They also do not have the same amount of understanding that adults have, because they have not lived long enough and because their brains are still immature, even if they are very intelligent.
- Use the Mental Health Checklist at the end of the book for some guidance as to how serious the child's reactions are right now.

INTRODUCTION FOR TEENAGERS AND OLDER CHILDREN LIVING IN GAZA

What is psychological trauma? Trauma probably happens to almost everyone at one time or another in their life. Trauma is what happens to people's feelings and thoughts when terrible things happen to them and to the people and community they love. Trauma can be seeing other people get hurt or killed, even if you are not hurt yourself. It can also be realizing that things that mean a great deal to you are violated because of what other people do to you or to people you love (like the value of human life, or your religious beliefs, including the importance of helping other people or respecting your elders).

Some of the worst traumas that happen to children in Gaza come as a result of years of on-and-off war, violence, occupation, and worry. Many children in Gaza have lost people they love, as well as people they remember, as a result of the full-scale war with Israel and of the years of violence that preceded it. All children have been affected by the blockades that have stopped families from getting all the food, medicine, supplies, and electricity they need, as soon as they need it. Many children have become homeless as a result of the war and the violence that preceded it. Some children have family members who are directly involved in fighting the Israelis, and they may worry a lot about those loved ones.

Some young people have parents and older siblings with big worries related to the war, and those worries can lead to older people being impatient. That can happen sometimes, when feelings get too big to handle without help. These problems affect children too. Some Gazan children have family members who are

sick or who have been badly injured as a result of the violence, or the children have become ill or severely injured themselves. These events can also cause trauma.

Most children and adults in Gaza have experienced at least some of the big problems we just described. And most people have emotional reactions at least some of the time. That is very understandable, and even to be expected. It is especially understandable because the terrible events that cause trauma are slow to go away in Gaza. There is still violence. There are still sometimes bombings and shelling, and there is usually a blockade enforced by Israel. It's often not possible to get necessary food, medicine, electricity, and supplies. Because of that, these big problems are not going away quickly. But children, adolescents, and families can still do many things that can help them lead better lives, even when their communities need a lot of help to be safe and happy. That is what this workbook is about – helping young people to live stronger lives that are filled with love and the comfort of having family, friends, and whole communities of caring people. It is also about helping children and teenagers to cope with the difficult feelings they may have some of the time, or even a lot of the time, because of the bad things that have happened to them, to their families, and to their people. When we cope better, with help from trusted adults, we can make better choices, help other people more, and accept other people's support better. When children are helped to cope better with difficult events, they can help rebuild the physical safety and psychological strengths of their families and neighborhoods.

Different people can have different reactions to the same terrible events. Sometimes children and even adults get frightened, upset, worried or angry after a trauma. Some children get over bad events without feeling badly hurt by those events. Not very many children seem to do just fine when the events go on for years. Sometimes children have trouble sleeping or have bad dreams. They might be afraid to leave the house or go to school, or they may have headaches, stomach aches or other problems because they are so worried. They might not be able to stop thinking about a terrible event they saw in person, on TV, or that they heard someone describe. They might not even know that they are worried about something. They may have trouble remembering what happened, or sometimes remember bad things that they would rather not think about at all. They might be afraid. They might not even realize they have any feelings at all, as if they were numb. They might stop being able to pay attention to parents and teachers so they can learn. They might cry a lot, or act like they are younger than they really are, such as by losing control of their previous toilet training. They may get angry over things that would not usually bother them at all.

It helps children to know there are people who can help with these reactions: Adult relatives, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins can help. So can teachers, religious leaders, doctors, helpers from international organizations who work in Gaza, mental health practitioners, and older friends and others who work with children. This is another list that could go on forever. Talking to trusted helpers, friends and writing about

your feelings can help you feel better. It can also help you learn more about what to do to be safer.

About Using This Book

Talking to grownups and other kids about your feelings or worries and about what happened can help you feel better. You can also do things yourself to help other people in your family and in your neighborhood. This book can help you think more about some safe ways to help other people living in Gaza.

Using this book may help you to talk to others, and it may help you in other ways. Other children using similar workbooks to help them remember have found that it has made them stronger - by writing down, drawing pictures and doing other activities to remember and think about their thoughts and feelings. This workbook is intended to help you be stronger.

You Are a History Maker When Using This Book

Use this book to make your own personal history book - your record of what happened in Gaza. Include good and bad things that only you know about to give the true history of your own life in Gaza, for future Gaza people and future generations in the world who don't know what you went through.

If you can use this book by yourself, or with help of a parent or a teacher, maybe you can feel stronger and keep learning more. And maybe you could help others, too, if you choose to share what you know and what you learn.

HOW TO GET STARTED

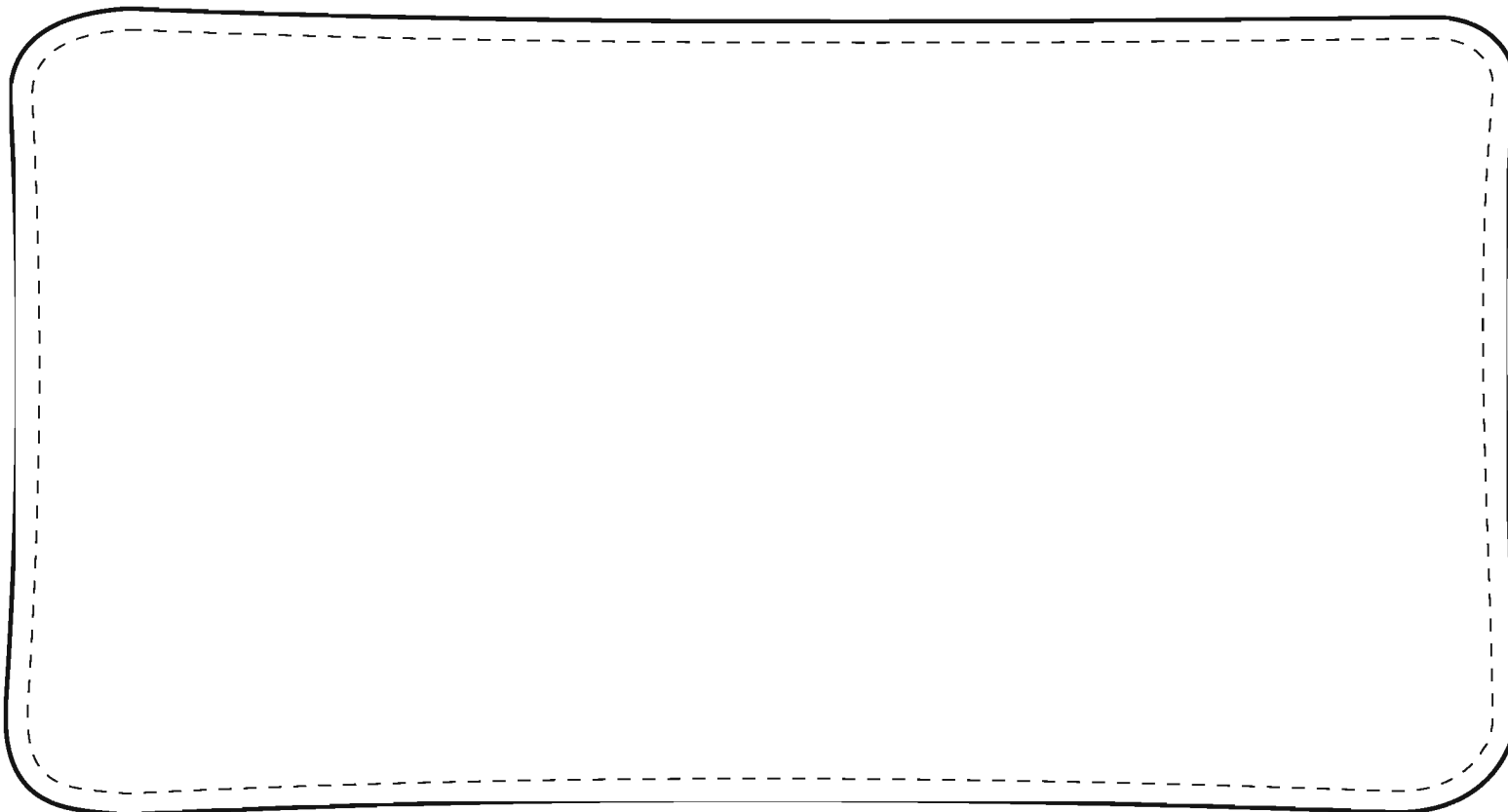
- *Look through this book and begin wherever you want.*
- *Fill in as many of the blank spaces as you can. You can add extra pages if you need extra room for photos or drawings or if you need more room to write.*
- *Ask for help if you need it to understand the questions or to write down the answers.*
- *Try drawing pictures or coloring the pictures that are already in this book.*
- *You can also make a scrapbook out of this book by stapling in extra pages. Use extra pages mainly to hold personal photos and essays; especially include good things that people did for you and others.*
- *Take your time. You can skip anything that makes you upset and come back to it another time. Or just leave it alone, if that feels right to you or any grownup who might be helping you.*
- *There may be parts that do not exactly apply to you. Feel free to skip or change anything you like.*
- *Don't just dwell on upsetting parts. Keep in mind that happy memories and good events are also very important.*
- *Remember, you should definitely talk to a grownup if you become upset or worried, and also share what you have learned.*
- *This book is your book. You are a personal witness and personal reporter about important things you lived through in Gaza.*



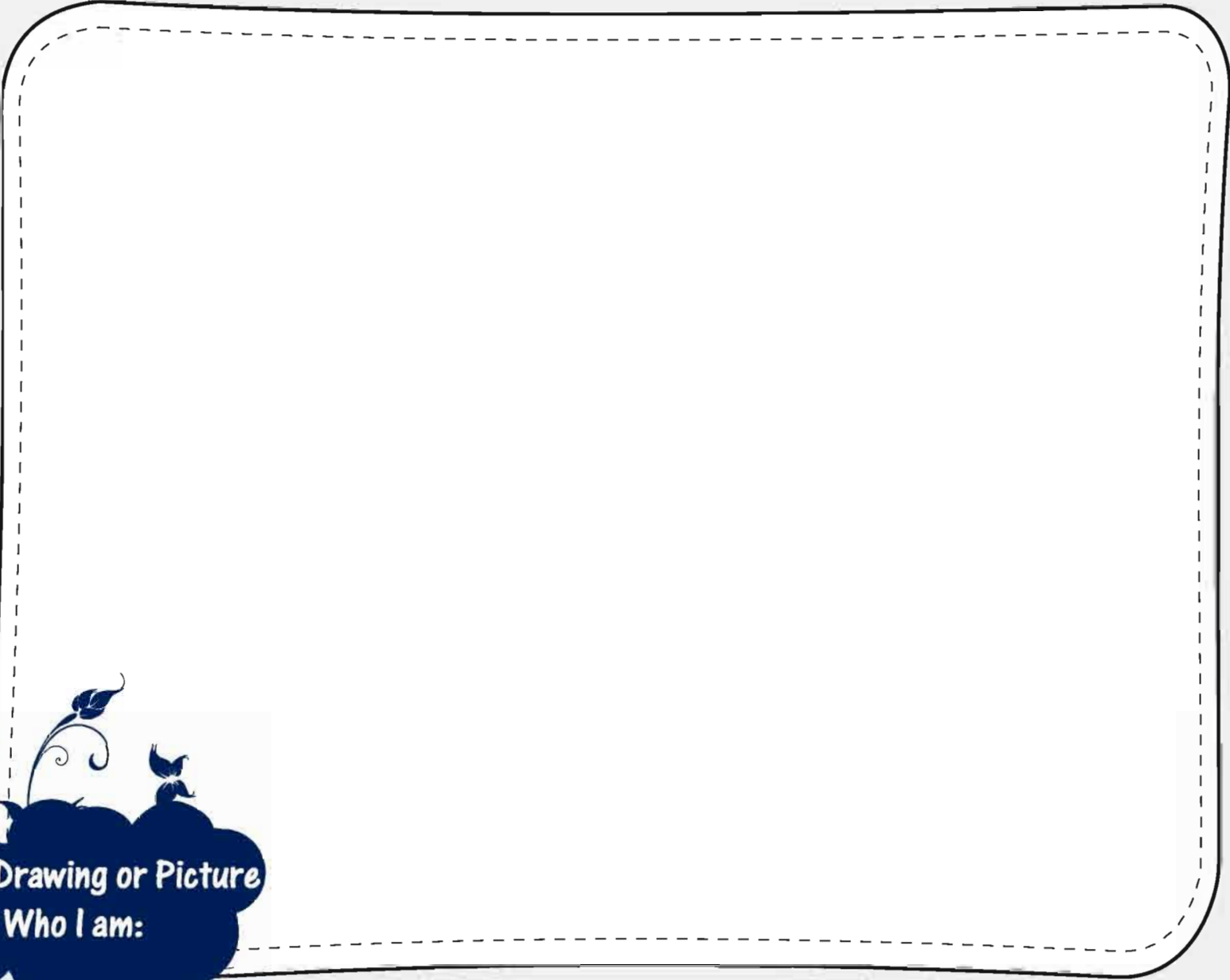
Here's a Photo
or Drawing of Me:

My Personal Story about Living in Gaza

Subtitle:



I started this book on



**A Drawing or Picture
of Who I am:**



Who I Am

I am a _____ with _____ sisters and _____ brothers.

Usually I live in (what kind of building) _____ in (name of town, camp or city) _____



Photo or Drawing of My Family doing something



Drawing of a Girl who is a friend

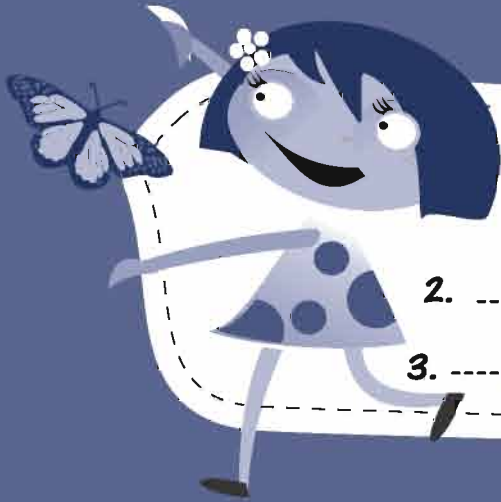
Drawing of a Boy who is a friend

Here
are Drawings
of My
Friends

My friends are:

Drawings of other good friends





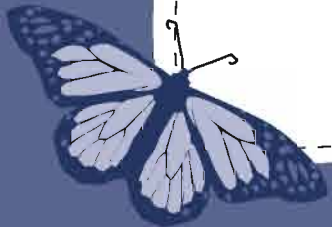
Some of the things I usually like to do with my friends are:

1.

2.

3.

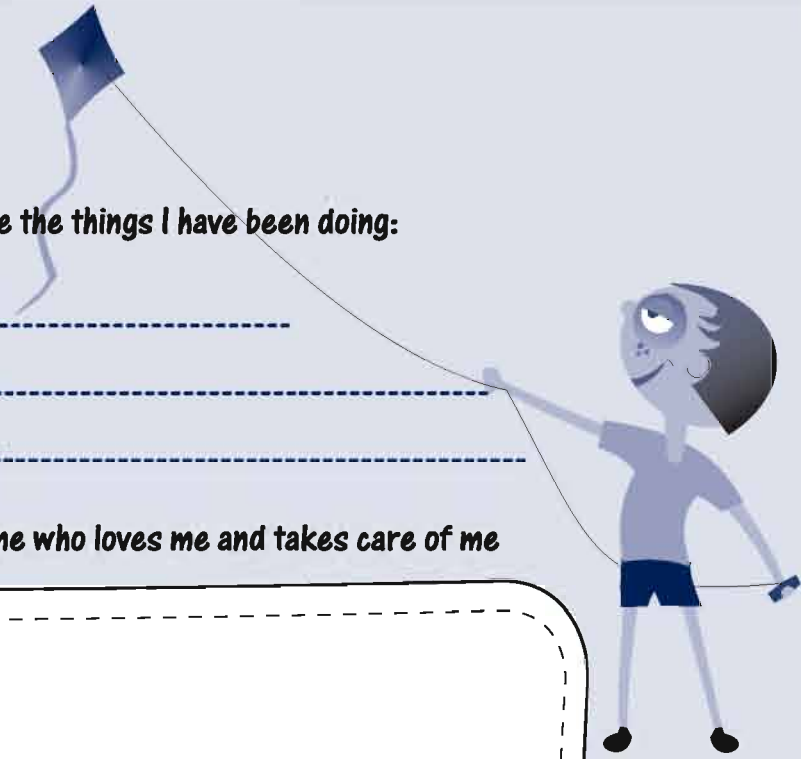
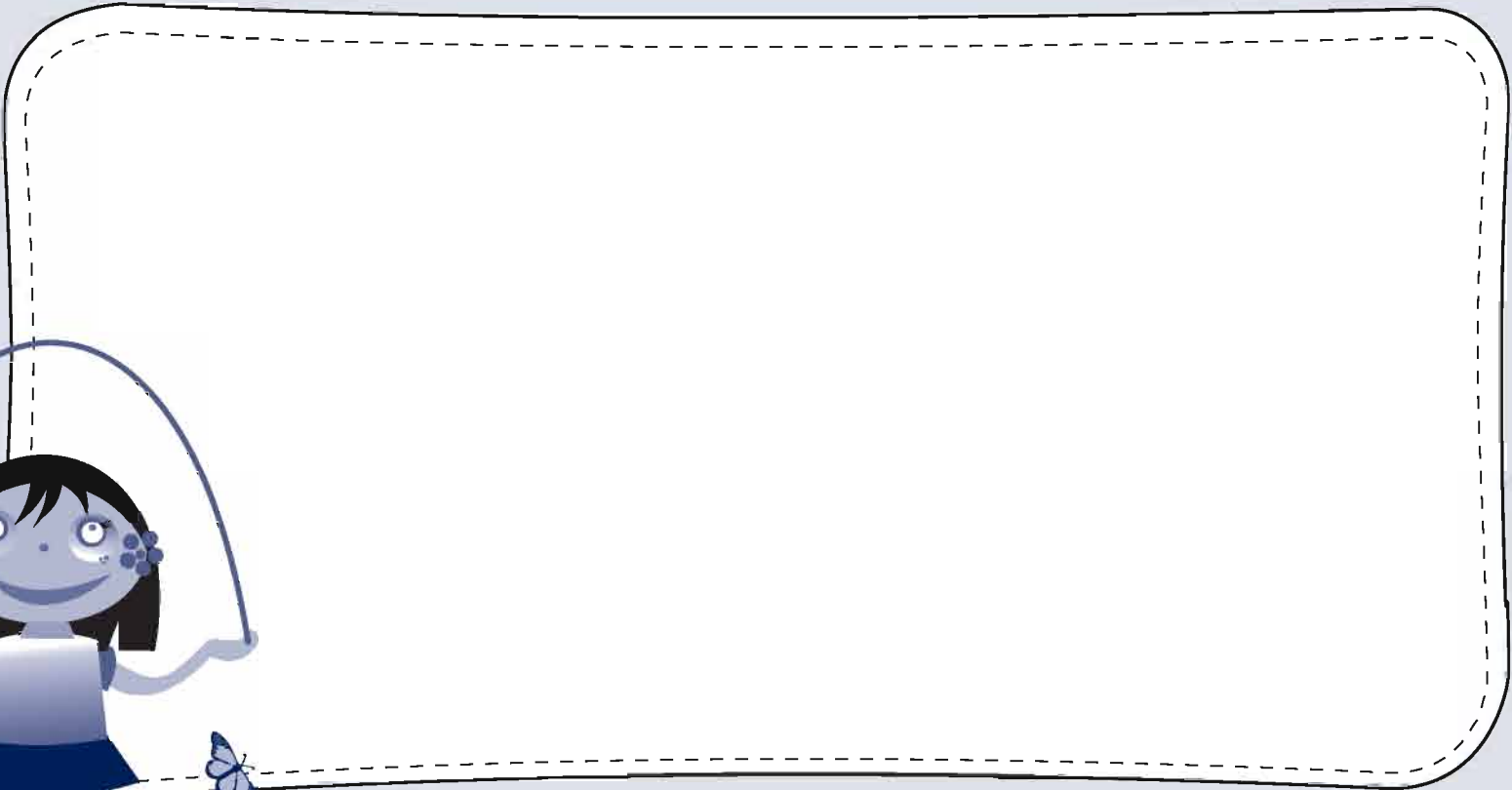
Drawings of some of the things I like to do with my friends

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for drawing. It is positioned below the text 'Drawings of some of the things I like to do with my friends'.

Since the attacks started to get worse in December 2008, here are the things I have been doing:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Here is a drawing or photo or group of photos of me with someone who loves me and takes care of me



Here is a picture or drawing of me with someone who loves me



A large, empty rectangular frame with rounded corners, defined by a solid black outer border and a dashed black inner border, intended for a drawing.



For many people the attacks have made big changes.

Some of my family or friends who were harmed or made homeless by the attacks:

Relationship and what happened to them:

I Remember

In October 2001 the Al-Aqsa Intifada started. Since 2001 we have been dealing with the escalation of violent Israeli attacks that hurt or killed many civilians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The most recent very serious violence started in December 2008, when a truce between Hamas and Israel ended. Since then, very bad things have been happening to people in Gaza. I personally know some things that happened.

When this recent increase of attacks started, I was years old.
So that I can remember exactly what I personally went through since the recent war began, I will write some of the things that I can remember about that time.

The weather was like

Things I remember that were happening in Gaza and in my school and family around December 2008 were:

-
-
-
-
-

**My Personal Story
about the War since
December 2008**

Here's more of my personal story and my family's story (I might be the only one to know about these things from one of the attacks). There have been many attacks on Gaza, but first, I will tell about the attack that influenced me the most:

I will never forget this particular attack because:

Here is my drawing of the attack



Where I Was

During that attack I was in

Who I Was With:

.....
.....



What I Was Doing



Here is a picture or drawing of where I was when at the time of this attack



**What I Have
Been Thinking
About**

When I first heard about this attack I felt

.....

During the attacks, I saw some bad things.

I saw:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

and I thought about:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





After the attack ended I saw:

.....

.....

.....

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.....

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.....

.....

and I thought about:

.....

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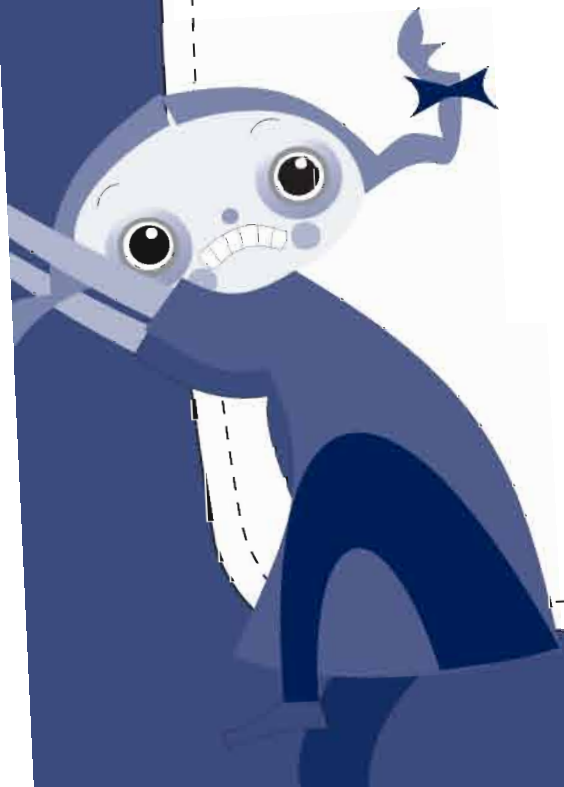
.....

.....

.....



Here is a drawing of what I was worried about



Some of the good and bad things that happened in my family because of this war are:

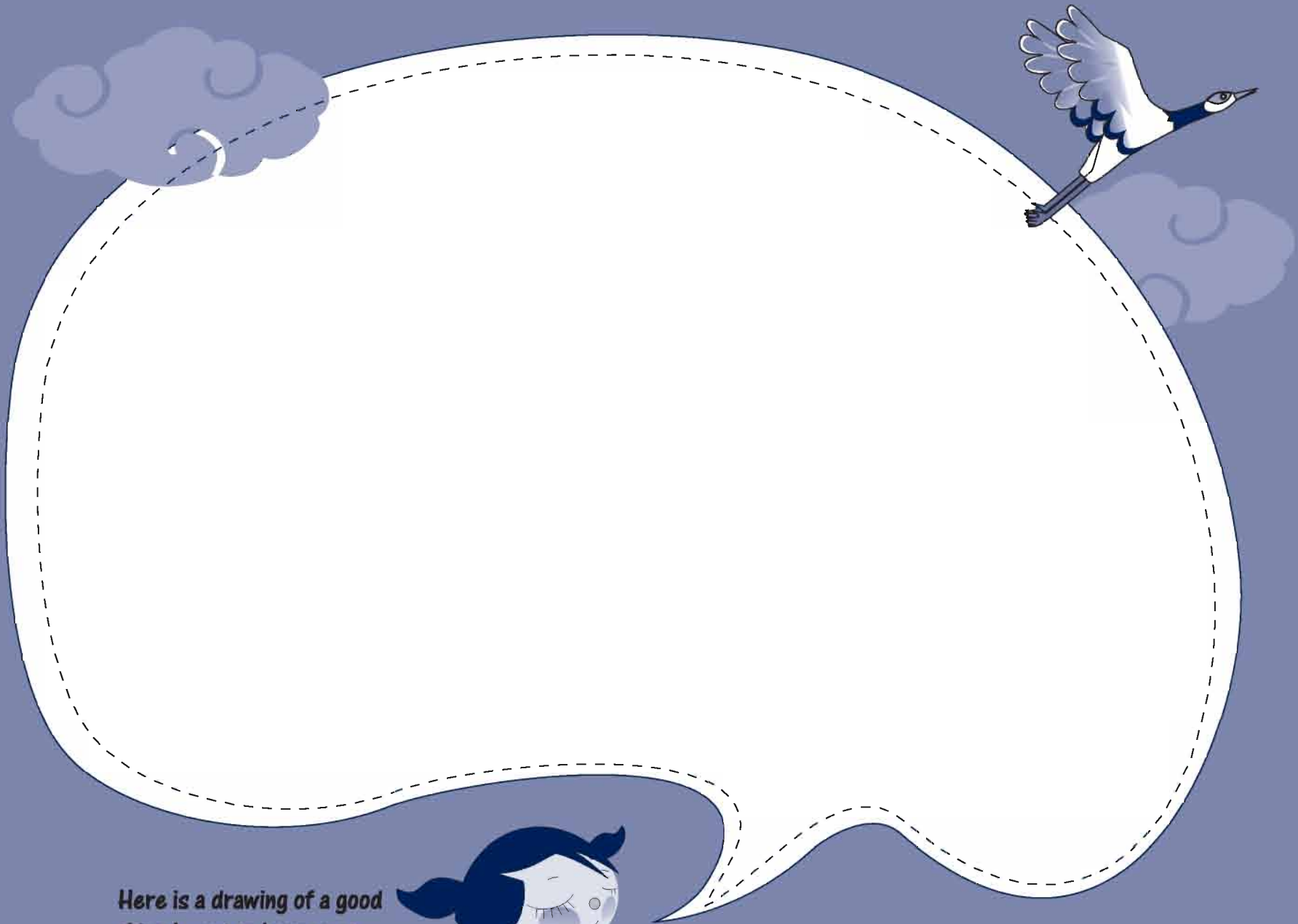
good things

bad things

good things

Some of the good and bad things that happened to other people I know because of this war are:

bad things



Here is a drawing of a good thing I want to happen at the end of this war!



*Some of the other
good and bad things that happened
that I heard about are:*

bad things

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

good things

.....

.....

.....

.....



*I have seen adults who are
(cross out what is not true) scared, worried, happy, or angry.*

How I feel about this is:

A large white cloud-shaped area with a dashed border, containing three horizontal dotted lines for writing.





Eager to help others



Angry at myself



Sorry for myself



Sick



Clear minded



Angry at



Sad



Confused

Nowadays I feel
 (Circle all that are true)



Lonely



Worried about my family



Happy



Angry at Israel



I want attacks on Gaza to end



Hopeless



Eager to go to work/ study



I don't know why Israelis want to hurt us



Wanting to fight Israelis



Watching out for danger



Alert



I want peace



I miss someone who died



I want to be safe



Worried about my friends



Afraid



My heart beats fast

The phrase “air strike”, “Israeli incursion”, or “bombing,” or “Israeli soldier” makes me feel:

The most alarming phrase for me is:

When I hear this phrase I feel:

The way the attacks since December changed my family and daily life the most is:

When I hear the “boom” or “gunfire” I:

This is the description of where I live now:

Here is a drawing of my family and me, where we live now



Here is a drawing of my friends and me where we usually do things together



During some of the worst times I was physically (circle what is true):
 hungry, thirsty, my body was sick, cold, without medicine.



without medicine



cold



my body was sick



hungry



thirsty

During some of the worst times (circle what is true), others in my family were:
 without medicine, thirsty, sick, cold, injured, dying, or died.



died



dying



injured



sick



thirsty



without medicine

During some of the worst times (circle what is true), I felt the Israelis were:
 cruel, not treating me as a human being, not obeying international law, unreasonable

Now I see or meet with my usual friends (circle the correct answer): seldom, never, every day, most days

Before December 2008, I saw or met with them (circle the correct answer): seldom, never, every day, most days



Here is something only I know about, my own dreams.

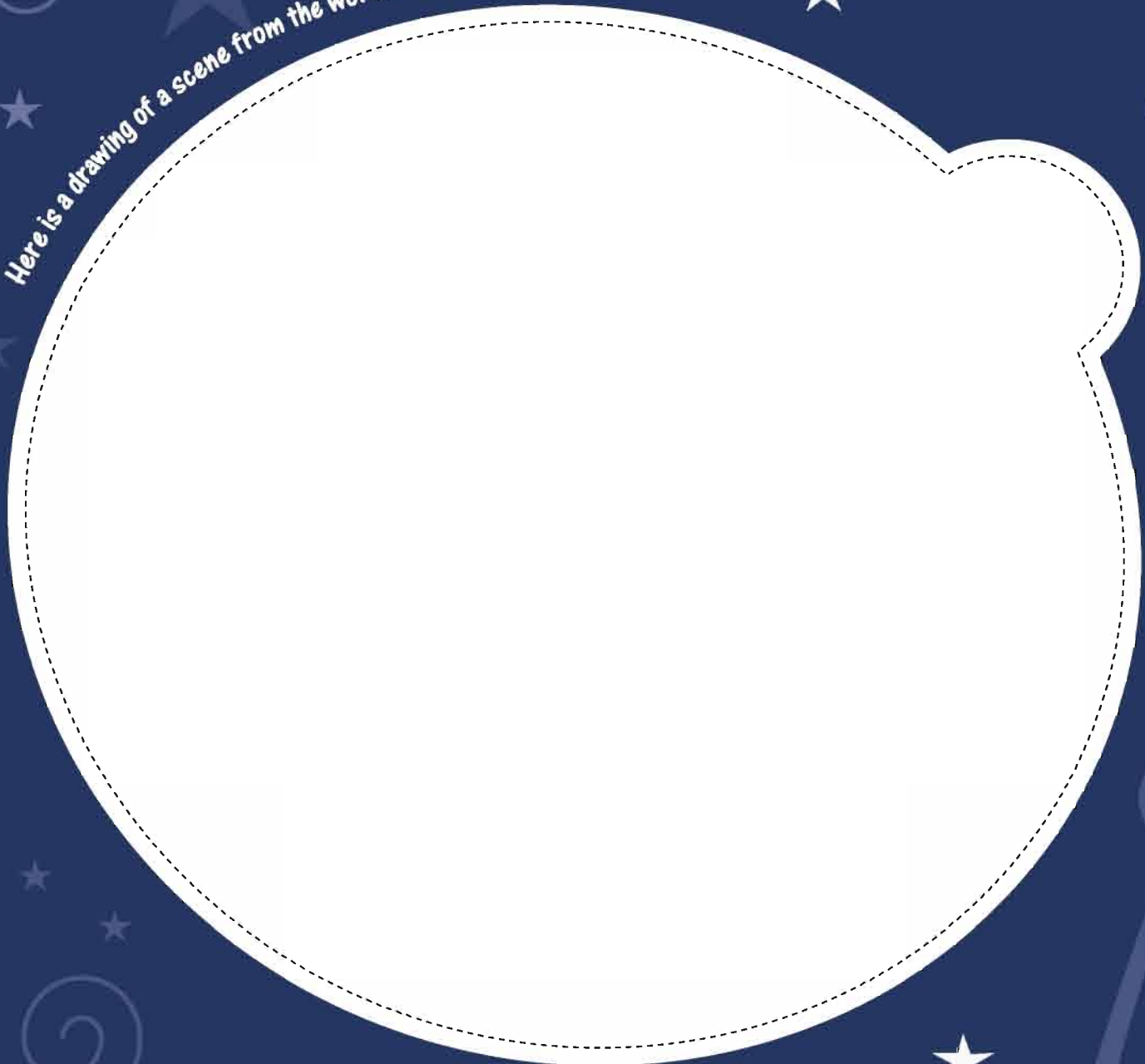
Before December 2008 my worst dream in my whole life was like this:

Today is -----20----- . Since December 2008 I have had ----- dreams.

Here is the story of the worst one: -----

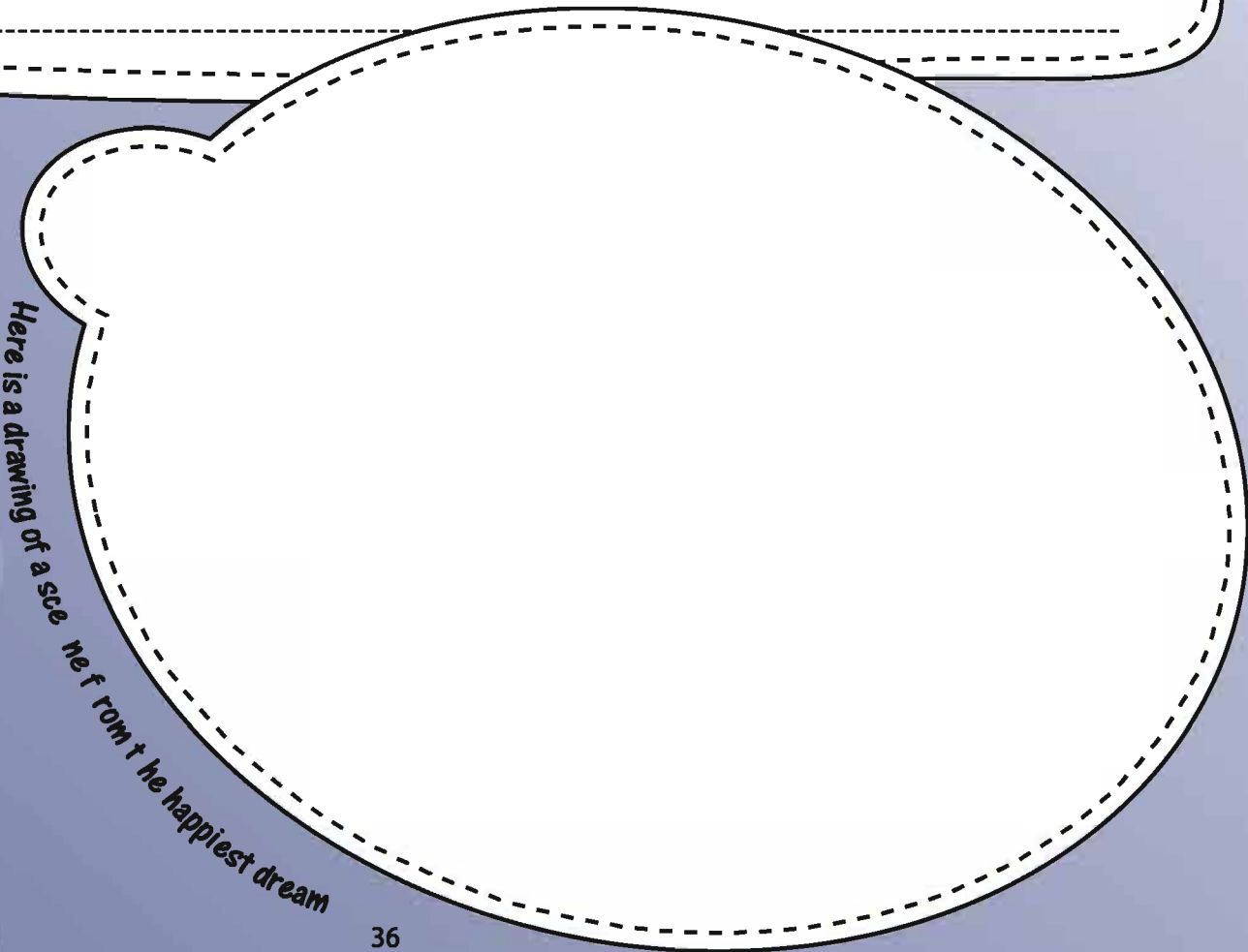
This is when I have this dream: -----

Here is a drawing of a scene from the worst dream





Here is the story of the happiest dream I've had since the beginning of the December 2008 attacks. (I had this dream about this long ago..... .)



Here is a drawing of a scene from the happiest dream

Here's a true story about some things I personally saw, that people did to help each other during the last few months:

Here's a true story about things I personally saw that people did to help each other during the attacks:



**I can help other children and grownups
my family, school and neighborhood.**



Kids can help by doing these things for people they love:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Kids can help by doing these things for people in their neighborhood:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Kids can help by doing these things for people in their school:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Kids can help by doing these things for people in their place of worship:

- _____
- _____
- _____



Older kids can help by doing these things for the Rescue Fighters:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Older kids can help by doing these things for people in the hospital:

- _____
- _____
- _____



If I see the pictures of war and violence on TV or in my own neighborhood, my feelings are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



**For older children and teenagers, take a break
by reading this section on the history of Gaza.
After you read it, please continue with your
own personal story.**

History Topics Section for Teenagers and Children Who Read Independently

TOPIC: Where is the Gaza Strip?

Located along the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, the Gaza Strip is a rectangular territory covering 363 square kilometers of land between the West Bank, Israel and Egypt. The strip is about 40 kilometers long and 6 to 8 kilometers wide.

TOPIC: Who have been some of the recent occupiers of the Gaza Strip?

Formerly a part of a British area or mandate called Palestine, the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian rule from 1949 to 1956 and again from 1957 to 1967. It was occupied by Israeli troops in 1967.

TOPIC: How many people now live in The Gaza Strip?

1,444,000 as of three years ago (2006 United Nations census). It is one of the most densely populated areas on the planet.

TOPIC: When did Gaza become a Muslim center?

In 635 Gaza became a Muslim city. Gaza has long been an important centre of Islamic tradition and is considered to contain the burial place of Hashim ibn Abd Manaf. Adding to the importance of Gaza, Hashim ibn Abd Manaf was the great

TOPIC: How far back does the history of Gaza go?

Records exist indicating people have lived in Gaza for more than three thousand years; Gaza has been inhabited since at least the 15th century B.C. grandfather of the Prophet, Mohammed, founder of Islam.

TOPIC: When was Gaza first occupied by Israeli Troops?

1956. During the Sinai campaign of November 1956, Gaza and surrounding regions were taken by Israeli troops. International pressure soon forced Israel to withdraw.

TOPIC: When was Gaza next occupied by Israel?

1967. Gaza was occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War (June 1967).

TOPIC: When did Israel next leave Gaza?

2005. In 2005 completed its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, handing over control of the region to the Palestinians.

TOPIC: What are some industries in Gaza?

Citrus growing, farms, olive groves, pottery manufacture, finished textiles, transportation by road and sea.

TOPIC: When did the intifada start?

The Israeli government had accelerated Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, against Arab protests. In 1987 protests erupted among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and quickly spread to the West Bank, beginning a period of Palestinian resistance to the occupying Israeli military. This uprising became known as the intifada which means "uprising".

TOPIC: When did the 1987 intifada end?

1993. The Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel signed interim peace accords in 1993 that called for the gradual establishment of Palestinian self-rule in most of the occupied territories. However, the parties failed to agree on a final settlement.

TOPIC: When did the Al-Aqsa intifada begin?

The second Palestinian uprising, known as the Al-Aqsa intifada, began in late 2000.

TOPIC: When did Israeli settlements start in Gaza and the West Bank?

In the late 1970s.

TOPIC: What was the effect of those settlements on feelings of lots of Arab people?

In 1987, the growth of these settlements caused many Gaza Strip and West Bank Palestinians to protest. Demonstrations and protests continued for years. Despite efforts to establish peace in the region, protests have continued off and on into the 21st century since no settlement has been reached.

TOPIC: What are the boundaries of Palestine?

Palestine is a region at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. It extends east to the Jordan River, north to Lebanon, west to the Mediterranean, and south to the Gulf of Aqaba.

TOPIC: What is the religious importance of Palestine?

Part of the region is also known as the Holy Land and is held sacred among people of three religions: Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

TOPIC: What is the origin of the name, "Palestine"?

The Arabic word Palestine has been used at least since the early Islamic era. It comes from a name given by Greek writers to the land of the Philistines, who in the 12th century occupied a small pocket of land on the southern coast. That pocket was between Jaffa/ Yaffa and Gaza. The name was revived by the Romans in the 2nd century A.D. in "Syria Palaestina," for the southern province of Syria.

TOPIC: Did Great Britain make a claim to own Palestine?

After World War I and the end of rule by the Ottoman Empire, "Palestine" was the name of one of the regions occupied by Great Britain by The League of Nations. In addition to Palestine, the mandate included the territory east of the Jordan River now constituting the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, which Britain placed under an administration separate from that of Palestine immediately after receiving the mandate for the territory.

TOPIC: How important is fresh water to the people of Gaza?

Water is extremely important to Gaza's people. It is a matter of life or death and whether food crops will grow. Water is almost never abundant in Gaza. Rain that arrives most in the cool half of the year decreases in amount in general from north to south and from the coast inland.

TOPIC: What are some reasons is water so scarce in Gaza?

Around Gaza, rivers are few, rain is not frequent. The shortage of water is made worse because limestone rocks over much of the country let the water run right through the small pores in the rocks. Israel has been blocking water supplies through its border control actions and via using Gaza's underground cistern water making water even more extremely scarce.

TOPIC: How common are deaths and casualties?

Thousands of Gazans have died and many thousands more have been injured since December 2008, mostly due to Israeli air and ground attacks.

Sources:

Gaza. (2009). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved March 13, 2009, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online:
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/227443/Gaza>
Gaza (2008) Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs.
www.passia.org

The background is a dark blue gradient. At the top, a large hand silhouette holds a sword. Below it, a tank silhouette is positioned on the right. In the lower half, there are two bright, starburst-like explosion effects. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

THE MEANINGS OF WARS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

For some people some wars are holy, very important to fight for good reasons, and can bring glory and rewards in heaven. For other people there is sadness because many people are killed and others get injured and frightened and they lose people they love and care about. For other people, war can mean all the above mentioned.

Coming back to my personal story about life in Gaza:

I heard of an attack in a place called:

.....

One thing I heard about that place was:

.....

.....

.....

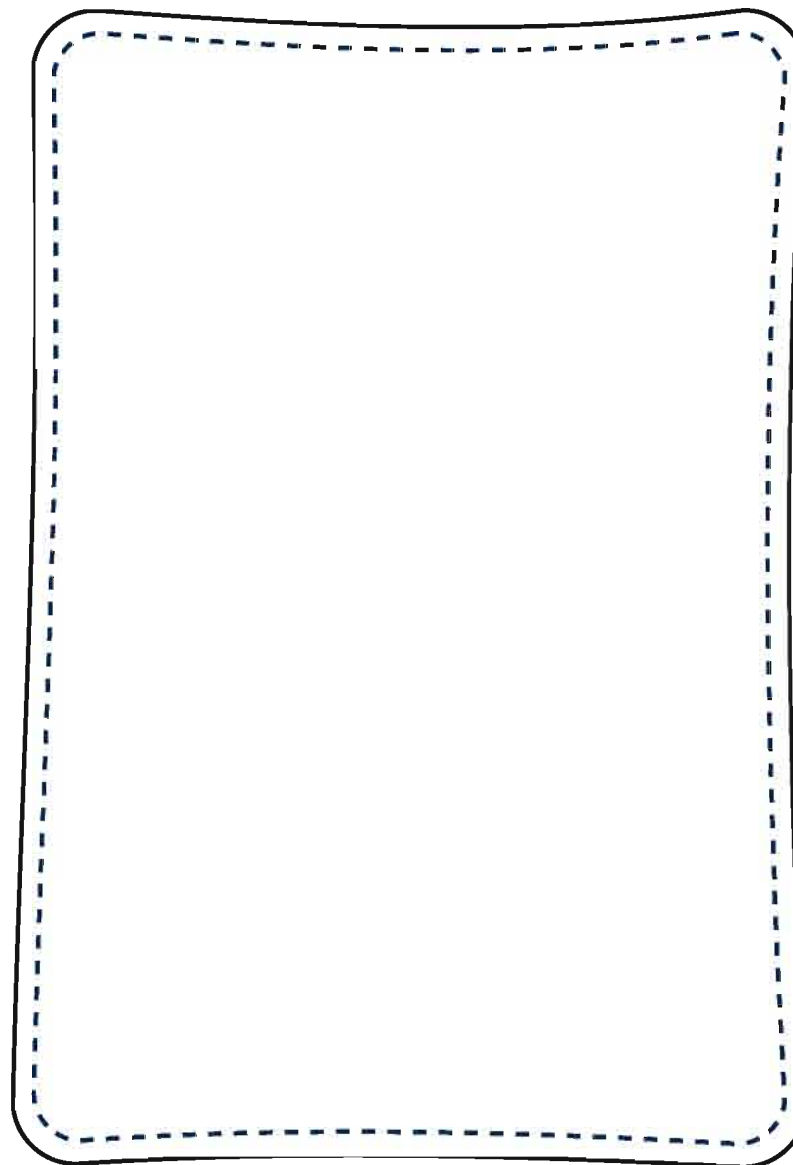
.....

.....

.....

.....

I saw, heard or read about violence or a war that happened in another part of the world, called



Here's a picture about it

The Awful Part for Me



For me the worst thing about violence or war in Gaza since December 2008 attacks began is

For me, one good thing about violence or war is

Here's a real story about someone I personally know who was hurt or killed:

I have had a great personal loss because



If you have had a parent, brother, sister or other close relative die because of the attacks please tell the true story of that person's life and what you miss most about that person. Get other relatives to help you write this section. Use photos if you have them, and extra pages.

The best part of my life with that person I miss the most was -----

Here's a true story I heard about ground troops in my neighborhood, or maybe saw a bombed building fall down, or someone get injured, or something different, or all of the above: -----

The worst feeling I had when Israeli troops were inside Gaza after December 2008 was

.....

This is what has been worst about it for some other people I know personally:

.....

More About Achievements, Problems and Worries

My biggest achievements now are:

-
-
-

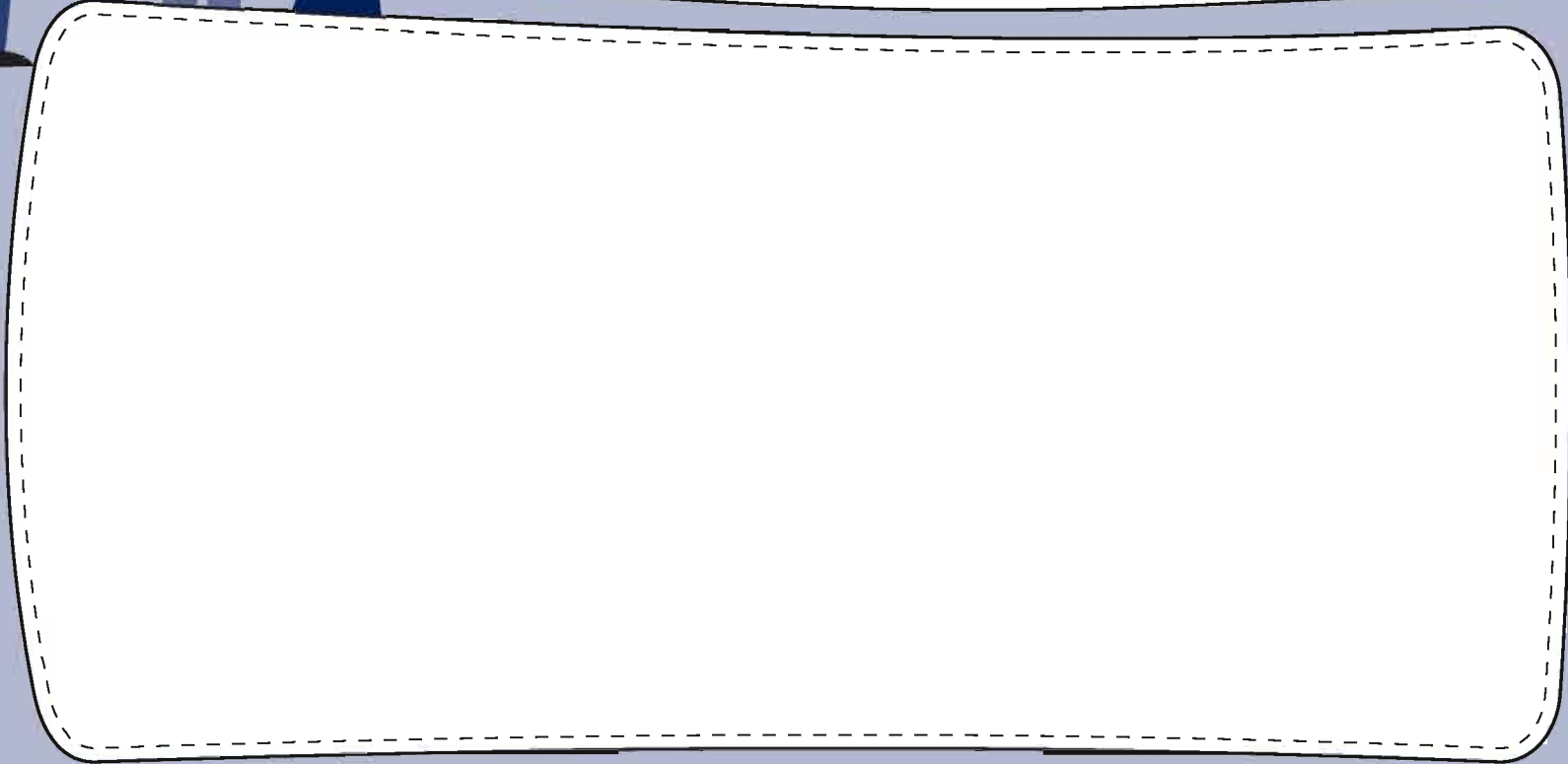


My biggest problems or worries now are:

-
-
-



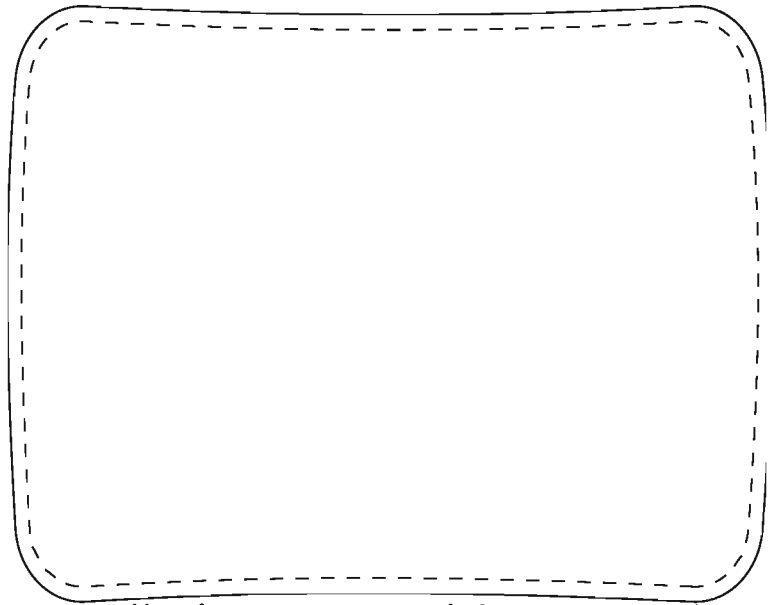
Some children, when they need to talk to someone about difficult feelings, talk to parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, grownup friends, teachers, doctors, religious leaders, relief workers, or a therapist. If I need to talk to someone about this I can talk to



Here is my drawing of myself talking to a trusted person

This is what I'd most like someone to help me with:

- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----



Here's a drawing of me helping someone else

I can help others with:

- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----



Newspaper Clippings

In this part, you may cut and collect newspaper clippings that you like and paste them here. If you can't access newspapers, ask the facilitator to give you some to choose from.

DEALING WITH MEMORIES

This section is for children and teenagers

Some children and teenagers find themselves thinking about or remembering things about the violence, even when they don't want to remember. If you write down and draw your memories, especially if you tell a grownup about those memories, that is a good way to help stop the memories from bothering you as much any more. Combine writing and drawing about the upsetting memories with writing and drawing about happier and better memories.

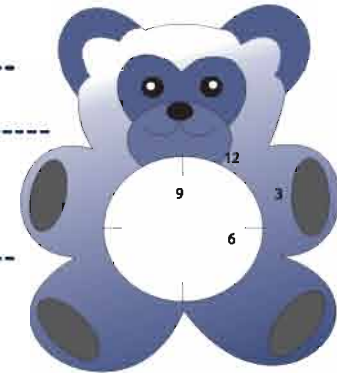
This section can also help children and teenagers who avoid or stop themselves from thinking about attacks at all. Sometimes children and teenagers can't remember much at all about what went on. Sometimes what happened was so upsetting and confusing that it is hard to know what actually happened and when. Drawing and writing about it, and talking about it with a grownup, can help you think more clearly and understand better what happened, so it doesn't bother you as much. Be sure to include your GOOD memories.

Today's date is

The part I most hate to think about is

The time of day this thing I hate to think about usually comes to my mind is

.....
.....
.....
.....



Things that make me think about this are:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Things that I can do to help stop remembering for a while are:

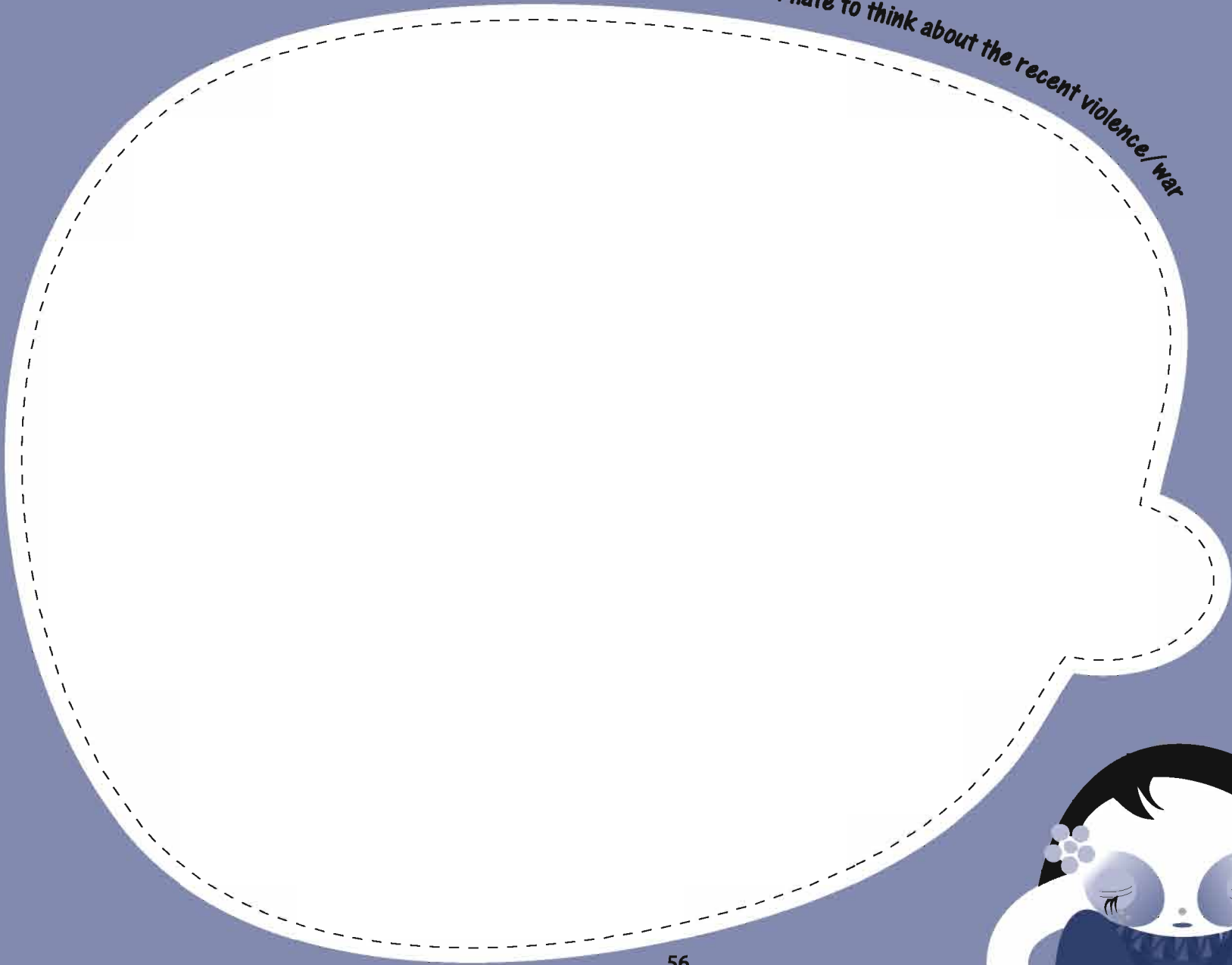
1. Think of very good things that happened in my life.
2. Exercise hard, even indoors such as doing push-ups or running in place.
3. Make myself think of very good things that I expect to happen in my life.
4. Draw pictures of things I am hoping will happen.
5. Teach good things to younger children.

Additional things I can do are:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The part I can't remember too well is

Here is a drawing of what I most hate to think about the recent violence/war



People Who Were Heroes

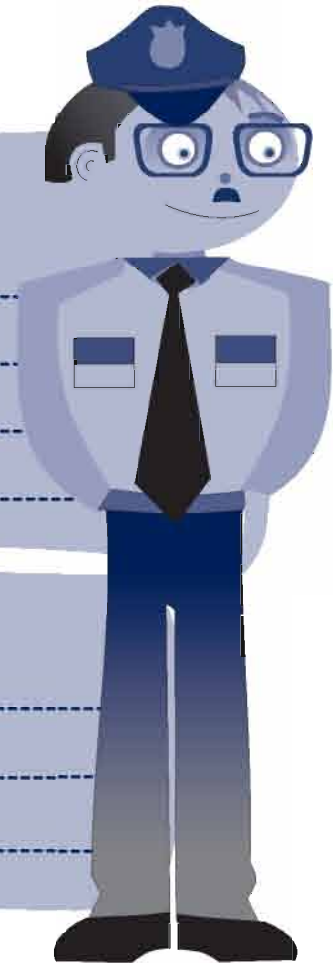
A hero is a special person who's celebrated by people for his/her distinguished quality: exceptional courage, nobility, strength, and willingness to help others. Heroes, however, aren't always the legendary figures of sports, politics, or movie stars. The simplest of people can be a hero by his/her big heart and ability to make a difference, no matter how minor the difference.

In the past.... Draw a time when you were like a hero or really were a hero.

I Might Be a Hero

Why? Explain why you were like a hero or really were a hero

I was a hero because



I wish to be a hero because

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 12 horizontal dashed lines for writing.



Here's a drawing of a situation where I wish to be a hero, and why.

In the future....

A Letter to My Hero

Instructions: Write a letter to your hero on this page. Cut out the finished letter and insert it in the envelope attached on the next page.

Here is a letter to my hero:

A series of 15 horizontal dashed lines for writing a letter.

Cut the letter you have written to your hero on the previous page, and insert it in the envelope attached on this page.

Violence, War And The Future

Here are my ideas about why violence and war happen in other places around the world:

-
-
-

Here are some things people can do to keep from getting hurt in an attack or war:

-
-
-

Here are some ideas about how to keep Gaza safe from attack:

-
-
-

Here is what I think we should do now:

-
-
-



Inside the box I found:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Here are some of my own questions for certain people:

I'd like to ask about

I'd like to ask about

I'd like to ask about

Helping People with Especially Big Troubles

Here is what we can do right now to help people who are very sad about a family member or friend who died or was injured or who are worried about more attacks on Gaza coming:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Helping People Deal with Especially Big Anger

Sometimes violence happens right inside a family, not because it makes things better, but only because someone is very angry. Here are some ideas about what to do when you are very angry at someone in your family or among your friends but you don't want to hurt people you love or care about:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Here are some ideas about what to do when a bigger child or adult is very angry with you and wants to beat you up:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Here are some ideas about what countries can do when they are angry with each other and want to fight:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Things We Can Do

Here is a list of things we can do at school about violence or war:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

My ideas for other things to do:

- -----
- -----
- -----
- -----

More Things to Do

Besides working on this book, there are other things you can do about your memories, thoughts and feelings about violence and war. Here are a few:

- 1. You, your family and friends could write letters to families of the victims of the war, and people such as firemen, ambulance officers, clergymen, doctors and nurses from local hospitals who worked non-stop to help people who are hurt by the war and by attacks.**
- 2. If your family permits you, and there is no war for a while, you could do community service projects with your friends to help rebuild communities and lives. By helping others we can feel better.**
- 3. You could have a gathering to honor those heroes who worked to keep people safe and those who were injured or died. One example is an art show. Your friends could show your drawings about the recent events or about a hope of better life for Gaza.**
- 4. Besides completing this book, you could keep a daily journal describing your feelings about life in Gaza and about what happened. You will be an author, writing about history first hand for future readers.**



Empathy

Empathy is your ability to imagine yourself living through what someone else is living through and having their feelings. What do you suppose a child of your same age in another part of the world is thinking about the violence in Gaza? Take a few moments and write your guesses below.

West Bank Palestinian child	
American child	
European child	
Egyptian child	
Syrian child	
Israeli child	
Another child in Gaza	

Here are important things I didn't say so far in this book:

A series of 12 horizontal dashed lines for writing.

I finished this book on

I was helped by

I hope other people will read about things I personally lived through in Gaza.

My Name is

III. Resources for Adults Working with Children

Giving Children Psychological "Hands" to work within a Crisis

The value of active coping is well known. During times of severe stress, disaster or major hardships besetting a community, 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, and Network with peers and adults, in a Developmentally Specific manner."

This workbook has been designed by parents who are mental health professionals to help children develop control of their own emotions and continue learning in the face of crisis. Some of the authors have worked on other workbooks that have helped American children after a terrible hurricane called Katrina, and children in Sri Lanka after many thousands of people died in a huge Tsunami a few years ago, and children in China who lived through a terrible earthquake that killed many children in their school buildings. This workbook is a little different, though, because one of us is a Palestinian art therapist who knows what it is like to live under occupation and to worry about violence and hatred all the time. In this context, this book was developed with substantial input by Mercy Corps Psychosocial Team who lived the horrible experience of the war on Gaza.

The events in Gaza are a long lasting psychological crisis for children, which can cause great stress, harming the psychological growth of many. But it can also stimulate important healing, learning, and growth in other children. Children need a community of parents, relatives, teachers, and other helpers to give them strength to struggle with issues of conflict, violence, and war.

This workbook is carefully designed to give psychological support to both you and the children you know, love and care for or teach. You are going through a great stress, just as your own children and families are all throughout Palestine. But if you can help your children to feel a little clearer minded, a little less frightened, angry, or confused, that will reduce your stress, even if violent circumstances continue.

The Youngest Children

You cannot expect children younger than three to say much while using this workbook. But even two and three year-olds can still color in picture sections with some help. Try to let babies and toddlers be present while older children work with you, unless you think the conversation is getting too frightening and confusing for toddlers.

A sense of family caring, thinking and working together on mental and emotional tasks is a help to babies and toddlers in stressful times. Please see the section on use of illustrations with young children for further guidance.

Preschool and Kindergarten Children

If your child or student is between ages 3 and 6, let him or her do a lot of coloring. You may want to read much of the book to your child. But you can substitute simpler words he or she 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 for older children with more understanding of the world.

You can help a preschool or kindergarten child do the drawings. Write down his or her answers to questions and sentences that end with a blank for the child to fill in. Try to draw your child's ideas and feelings 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 or her to know that you think the topic can be shared in words. That may make the child feel less afraid and less alone.

Middle Childhood

If your child is between the ages of 6 and 11, try using most of the book. You may be surprised at how much of it your child can understand. Allow him or her 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 choose which sections to work on first. Even when obedience is very important, topics as emotionally difficult as war should be taken slowly when a child gets upset or says, "I don't know" or tries to avoid answering. That is normal, and to be expected at least some of the time. Don't insist on reading any sections a child of any age does not want to read. Encourage him or her to use only a few clipping from newspapers and magazines (pictures and articles - help him or her choose). Help him or her paste them in to make the workbook into a scrapbook, if you have the materials at hand to do that.

At the very least, ask the child to color in the illustrations while you offer support.

Some children may work on the book on and off over time as they feel more comfortable. Some of the children who are very close to a disaster or tragedy may take weeks and sometimes even months before they feel able to complete a difficult section only at a later date. That is fine and can be accepted. Your children will appreciate your sensitivity to their feelings and respect you for it.

Older children and even teenagers as well may cling to you more or even get angry or sullen if they have been over-stressed by traumatic events. Try to understand such behavior as reflecting great emotional pain in a person not yet mature enough to talk about it clearly. A few older children are quiet but not disrespectful, because they are thoughtful.

Most children over age 11 will want to work on the book on their own, but we recommend you participate and give your assistance at times. Find out about their well being by using the checklist. Some children might give adult-sounding suggestions about how to help the community. Be available to serve as a barrier against overwhelming fear, a sounding board and resource for your child or teenager, answering questions as best you can, and suggesting other people who might have more information.

If You Were Bereaved, or If a Family Member was Injured

Your children may benefit from brief preventive consultation with an expert. Help is available through support groups and mental health services and practitioners.

For You, the 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 remember your experiences and master them. To do more, local and international relief efforts might be able to use your volunteer help, and that of your teenage children.

For Use as a Family

One very helpful way of using the book involves parents, brothers and sisters 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 a separate piece of blank paper). Add the pages all together in one family project "Our Book about Life in Gaza". When many children all work on one book, contributing their own reactions, each child should sign his or her own name to the entries. Engaging in a "shared remembering" with adult leadership can help your children feel safer as they work on a joint project under your direction. This can also help bring your family closer together.

Mental Health Checklist

The Mental Health Checklist, starting on page 77, helps you know what kind of behavior to be concerned about in trauma-affected children, when a child will benefit from a consultation, and which children most need to be seen by a mental health practitioner.

Use by Teachers

Teachers who receive training in the method and have professional consultation support from a mental health worker can use *My Book about Living in Gaza* in a classroom setting. They can have children working on the project individually or in small groups with the assistance of a parent, specially trained or supervised teacher, or religious leader. This could be a very effective way to encourage learning and to support group togetherness, something that has been shown to help children and adults cope with catastrophes. If you plan to use the book in order to help identify children who need additional assistance, use the Kliman Children's Mental Health Checklist at the end of the book.

Use by Mental Health Professionals

Severe stressors are best healed by gaining skills and perspective, by going forward with life, even in the face of great loss and pain, and by putting the events in a context. Adults should never require children to engage in debriefings with endless review of their most painful memories. It is helpful for stressed children to see and remember their worlds broadly, including good and benevolent experiences. There is potential harm from constant dwelling only on traumatic memories.

Whether through local services or NGO relief workers, therapists can include much of *My Book about Living in Gaza* in individual, family or group sessions. It is useful 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 experiences in Gaza. Training for mental health professionals and agencies in the distribution and use of this book is being planned by Mercy Corps.

Use of Illustrations

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

Young children (ages 2-4), severely traumatized children and children with different kinds of learning difficulties (who may have a preference, for instance, for visual communication) can color in the illustrations with an adult to aid in nonverbally mastering their worries. The pictures can then be used as starting points for open-ended discussions about the events pictured. If they find talking easier, they can do that instead. Some children may prefer to use toys or other objects to "play" out their stories instead of writing, drawing, or talking about them.

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 images of the experience helpful. We suggest they start with the illustrations furthest from their own experience and gradually work up to those closest to their own experience.

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

The illustrations can also be used as topics for 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 themselves. The illustrations can also be used as a mastery-promoting activity by asking the child to draw a picture showing what the child or family can do, or what the scene would look like when there is peace again.

Being Strong in the Face of Violence, Conflict or War

(See the HERO section of this book.)

We already talked about some heroes who were very strong in the recent war. To be strong in the face of violence and fear of certain things can help. Usually, it helps children to think about the feelings and ideas they have about the news, war and peace. Violence happens when people can't solve their problems without conflict. It is helpful for children to deal with their fears and also to think about how people can cooperate better and talk instead of trying to frighten each other or resorting to violence instead of peaceful resolution. It is also important to think about how to live according to your religious and other values even if people around you are not following those values (for instance, if you believe in caring about people, but other people are killing).

There are a lot of questions to think about, but conquering fears and posttraumatic reactions are not quick or easy. Grownups and children must think hard about it and work hard for strength and hopefully for peace. That's the only way that our world will be a safer and happier place.

For adults to help decide if a child is in need of mental health services.

Use this checklist the first week the child starts the workbook. For each 'yes' answer circle the score; you don't need to ask the question if you know the answer. Write all circled numbers in the pre- column. Add the values from all the questions. NOTE: YOU CAN ALSO USE THIS AFTER THE CHILD HAS FINISHED THE WORKBOOK TO SEE WHETHER HE OR SHE IS DOING ANY BETTER OR NEEDS MORE HELP. If you use the checklist again after the child has finished the workbook, record the numbers in the Follow-up ("Post-") column and give the date for that column.

Kliman's Children's Mental Health Checklist

PART ONE: GENERAL QUESTIONS	PART ONE: GENERAL QUESTIONS	A. SCORE NOW IS	B. FOLLOW UP SCORE ON DATE:
Was the child living in Gaza before December 2008?	5		
Has the child had more than one major stress within a year before December 2008, such as a death in the family, a divorce, or did s/he have a major physical injury or illness?	10		
Does the child have a network of supportive, caring persons who have continued to relate to him/her daily since December 2008 until he or she started using this book?	-10		
Did the child have a family which has witnessed bombings, rocketfire, shootings, and other forms of violence close up before December 2008?	5		
Was the child him/herself at or near scenes of violence before December 2008?	10		
Was the child showing increasingly severe disobedience, delinquency or in your opinion a developmental delay, psychological disturbance or mental illness before December 2008?	10		
TOTAL SCORE BEFORE DECEMBER 2008			

Persistent rituals (not ones required by religion) or compulsions, that is behaviors the child believes he or she must do repeatedly, to avoid some kind of danger, when no one else thinks it is necessary?	If the Item Is Present, Write the Score in the next column	SCORE NOW	FOLLOW UP SCORE ON DATE:
<i>Having states of terror (frightened when nothing dangerous is really happening in the moment)?</i>	5		
<i>Waking from dreams confused, frightened, or in a sweat?</i>	5		
<i>Having difficulty concentrating?</i>	5		
<i>Showing extreme irritability or being easily startled by noises?</i>	5		
<i>Acting younger than before in his or her toilet training or speech?</i>	5		
<i>Stuttering or lisping when his speech was previously developing normally?</i>	5		
<i>Persistent severe anxiety or phobias (extreme fear of safe things)?</i>	5		
<i>Obstinacy or frequent disobedience?</i>	5		
<i>Constant thinking only about the dangers in Gaza?</i>	5		
<i>Persistent rituals (not ones required by religion) or compulsions (behaviors the child believes he or she must do repeatedly to avoid some kind of danger when no one else thinks it is necessary)?</i>	5		
<i>Severe and unusual clinging to adults for comfort?</i>	5		
<i>Persistent inability to fall asleep or stay asleep?</i>	5		
<i>Being startled at any reminder of the war and violence?</i>	5		
<i>Persistent loss of ambition or hope for the future?</i>	5		

Persistent rituals (not ones required by religion) or compulsions, that is behaviors the child believes he or she must do repeatedly, to avoid some kind of danger, when no one else thinks it is necessary?	If the Item Is Present, Write the Score in the next column	SCORE NOW	FOLLOW UP SCORE ON DATE:
Persistent loss of pleasure in usual activities?	5		
Persistent loss of curiosity	5		
Persistent sadness or crying?	5		
Persistent headaches or stomach aches?	5		
Believing he or she is sick when nothing is physically wrong?	5		
Has anyone in the child's immediate family been killed, injured or is missing since December 2008?	5		
Since December 2008, has the child been severely scarred or injured or had to have major surgery like amputation after being injured?	10		
Since December 2008, has the child's immediate or extended family lost their home or had it become unlivable because of the attacks on Gaza?	10		
Has the child withdrawn from other people since December 2008?	5		
TOTALS	N/A		

How to Score and Use the Klivan's Children's Mental Health Checklist

Add the pluses and minuses for all Part One and Part Two questions that apply to the child. If the child scores more than 75 we suggest consultation from one of the mental health counselors available through one of the resources listed in the back of the book. Take this book with you to the consultation. If you are dealing as an administrator with a large number of Gazan children, we recommend consultation for the top 10% scoring children.

Important Child Safety Note: A child who becomes preoccupied about the possible future death of himself or herself or of a family member, or who is unusually accident prone, physically aggressive, or who makes self-harming or suicidal threats or threatens to hurt other people, should be taken for immediate consultation.

Prevention of Later Effects: We recommend that any child who has recently lost a parent, sibling or caregiver by death or has been severely maimed or has severe scarring from war related injuries be referred to a mental health expert for preventive consultation even though s/he does not appear in emotional distress.

Resources, Relief and Mental Health Services

Emergency Numbers

Police Department	100
Ambulances	101
Fire Department	102
Gaza Community Mental Health Programme	18002223

Optional Quiz

1. What can I expect to feel when I am in a situation of war or frequent violence?

1. What can I expect to feel when I am in a situation of war or frequent violence?
 - a. Fear for my life and other people's lives.
 - b. Remembering fearful scenes when I don't want to.
 - c. Trouble sleeping.
 - d. Grouchiness.
 - e. Loss of confidence in the future.
 - f. Worry about it happening again.
 - g. Bad dreams.
 - h. Trouble concentrating.
 - i. Temporary babyishness.
 - j. A strong desire to be helpful to other people.
 - k. A strong curiosity about how to reduce the damage, or a belief that it's impossible to reduce it.
 - l. Anger, desire for revenge.
 - m. Any, all, or none of the above.

2. Some ways to feel a little stronger and able to cope with ongoing violence include:

- a. Talking about your feelings to someone who you can count on to listen.
- b. Helping others.
- c. Thinking of ways to make your home and community safer and write them down.
- d. Trying to remember what happened and write it down or draw pictures.
- e. Thinking about how you would like to make things better in your society when you grow up.
- f. Writing letters to people outside of Gaza to tell them what is going on in your community, so they know and care about you and about the people of Gaza.
- g. All of the above.

Who Wrote This Book?

The authors are parents as well as unusually experienced in disaster response. Some of the authors have experienced traumatic personal losses of loved persons.

The Children's Psychological Health Center, Inc. is based in San Francisco, California. For more information see www.cphc-sf.org. Our other guided activity publications include My Fire Story, My Tornado Story, My Earthquake Story, My Flood Story, My Book about the War, My Book about the Tsunami, My Personal Story about Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, My Sichuan Earthquake Experience, a series of trauma-related, guided-activity workbooks for children, families and teachers coping with severe stress.

Gilbert Kliman, M.D. is Medical Director of The Children's Psychological Health Center. He is a Board Certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist who has done extensive service and research with profoundly traumatized children. See some of his work on www.childrenspsychological.org

Edward Oklan, M.D., M.P.H., is Director of FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS of San Anselmo, CA. A board-certified child and family psychiatrist and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, he founded the PREGNANCY TO PARENTHOOD FAMILY CENTER.

Harriet Wolfe, M.D., worked on the original disaster workbook, called MY EARTHQUAKE STORY, and advised on the current workbook. Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, she is a psychoanalyst in private practice, and formerly President of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute and Society.

Yousef AlAjarma, MA is a Palestinian psychotherapist who is currently doing his Ph.D. at Lesley University, Cambridge, MA, USA in Expressive Arts Therapies. He has his masters from the European Graduate School in Switzerland in Expressive Arts Therapies. Yousef has got his undergraduate in Social Work and Psychology from Bethlehem University. Currently Yousef is an adjunct faculty at Lesley University.

Jodie Kliman, Ph.D., is on the core faculty of the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology in Boston, USA, where she teaches family therapy, narrative therapy, supervision, and helping refugees with emotional difficulties from war and oppression. She is a co-author of *My Story about Hurricanes Katrina and Rita* and is the editor of *Working in War Zones, Near and Far: Oscillations of Despair and Hope*.

Jasem Humeid, BSN, MSc. – CHHM, Jasem is the Psychosocial Support Programmes manager at Mercy Corps/ Gaza. Jasem has his Masters degree in Community Health and Health Management from the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and got his undergraduate degree in Nursing from the Baptist Nursing School in Gaza and the Islamic University of Gaza. Recently, Jasem has joined a doctoral programme in the University of Health and Life Sciences in Tirol/ Austria. Jasem has been involved in developing materials and tools relevant to Mercy Corps' psychosocial support programming, monitoring, and evaluation.

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Humanitarian Aid

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