



## Healing Activity: Here and There Journal

Adjusting to new living arrangements after a separation/divorce takes time. Some children adjust more quickly than others, and it's important to honor each child's pace and experience.

In the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), Ivan is in this adjustment period, learning to be himself in the "Here" and "There" of his parents' apartments. As children acclimate to the "new normal," it can be helpful for children to explore the similarities and differences of their own "Here" and "There." Journaling is one way to explore this.



A Here and There Journal with suggested writing prompts can encourage children to think about and explore their own "Here" and "There" experience. Prompts are questions that your child can answer, as well as incomplete sentences the child can finish. These prompts encourage thoughts and reflection about what their new living arrangements entail— i.e., how their homes are similar and how they are different, what they look forward to at each place and what they don't look forward to, and what the house rules are at one place compared to the other, etc.

Talk with your child and co-parent about the journal traveling between "Here" and "There."

### Making a Simple Journal

If the backpack does not contain a blank notebook or if you simply want to make a journal with your child, use the Journal Supplies in this kit to:

- Cut five 8.5 x 11" sheets of paper in half to create the ten pages that will go inside your journal. Which way should you cut? Hold the paper vertically, and cut along the horizontal center line.

- Fold the piece of card stock in half. Which way should you fold? Hold the paper vertically, and fold along the center horizontal line
- If you would like, cut out the Here and There Journal Label and glue it to the front.
- Staple your ten pages inside the cover.
- A journal can be so much more than just writing! Feel free to embellish it, add borders, or follow other creative ideas your child may have.

## Pasting in the Prompts

On the next page you will see the journal prompts. Each journal prompt is printed twice to allow a prompt for “Here” and an identical prompt for “There.” The child can choose which prompts to include in their journals. The child cuts out the desired prompts and then glues them into the journal. If they choose, they can put the same prompt on facing pages of their journal so they can easily compare the responses at a glance. Or, they can choose to glue the prompts in another way.

## Journaling

Journaling should not be something you “assign” to your child. Your child should feel comfortable to add to that journal with you beside them or in their own private time. Consider making yourself a journal as well. You two can set aside some quiet time to write together. You might even share certain things you have written or drawn. Encourage your child to go beyond the writing prompts and use the journal to “think” on the page.

Shared Journals are a great tool to communicate with a parent whom the child does not see frequently. See the “When/If One Parent is Moving Far Away” in the Parent Guide.

## Drawing

Keep in mind that drawing can be a helpful way for children to express themselves when they might be uncomfortable or may be too young to use only words to express themselves.

## Privacy

Talk to your child ahead of time about their journal and privacy. Do they want their Here and There Journal to be private, or will they want to share it with a parent, counselor, or other person? If they ask for their journal to be private, respect their privacy. The Here and There Journal is meant to be a neutral place for children to explore their lives after a separation/divorce. If the journal travels between “Here” and “There,” make sure that your co-parent is also aware of the privacy decision.



# THE HEALING LIBRARY

Children's Books · Conversation · Community · Caring

This activity is an extract from a family healing tool called **The Healing Library**. The Healing Library assists families in their healing journey with kits available for check-out at participating libraries. Each kit features picture books, art + play therapy activities, conversation starters, and more to help a family through times of trauma or change. The kits are produced by the combined efforts of a Licensed Social Worker, a Librarian, and a Children's Book Engagement Consultant.

Explore more at [www.thehealinglibraryus.com](http://www.thehealinglibraryus.com).

*"Each kit is acknowledgement and commitment to the fact that books heal and that the guided use of books can heal in a deeper manner." —Founder & Librarian, Megan Emery*

The Healing Library provides PDF packs free to librarians so they can build their own suitcase or backpack of healing or full Healing Library kits for purchase. Current kits include Family Separation and Divorce, Death of a Loved One, Death of a Pet, and Alzheimers and Your Family. Ask your local library about circulating The Healing Library.

Our thanks to Barefoot Books for sponsoring the development of this Book Discussion Guide and the full Healing Library Family Separation and Divorce kit.



## Barefoot Books

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