

HIGHMARK CARING PLACE

Resources for Grieving Students

CORI DOERRFELD

THE RABBIT LISTENED

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The Rabbit Listened is a children's book written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld. The story's main character is Taylor, who experiences something unexpected and sad in the beginning.

The book follows various animals coming to Taylor and offering exactly what to do. None of their suggestions appear to be helpful and Taylor is left alone. That is until a rabbit comes alongside, not saying a word or giving advice. As the rabbit is quietly sitting there Taylor begins to recount all the suggestions of the other animals and ultimately decides what to do. The rabbit did the one simple thing that none of the other animals did... *The Rabbit Listened*.

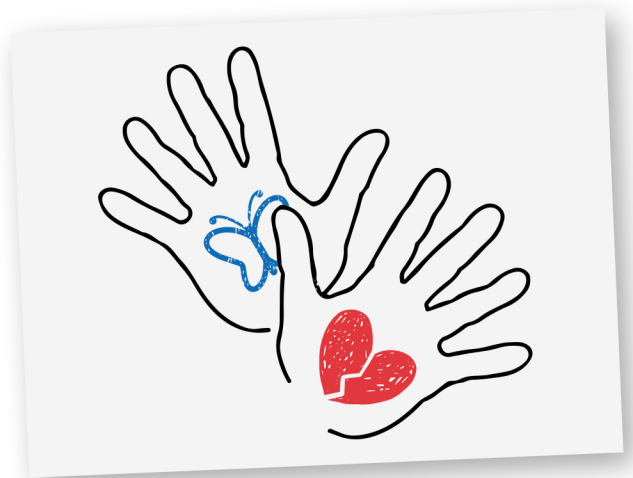
HELPING HANDS ACTIVITY

The purpose of this activity is to allow children an opportunity to identify the people in their lives who provide them support and to identify the positive coping skills and activities that can help them when dealing with difficult times or feelings. Children will be given an opportunity to share (*if willing*) the people or things that have been helpful with one another.

The activity can be used as a classroom lesson, in a peer support group setting or individually with students discuss ways to support each other. Identifying supports and positive coping skills are important to all children, especially those that have experienced a death in their lives as many children that are grieving struggle with a variety of feelings that they may need to talk with someone about.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *The Rabbit Listened* Book
- Paper (Blank or Hands Already Drawn)
- Pen, Pencil, Crayons, Markers, Colored Pencils





DISCUSSION:

Think about the last time you had a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. Were you able to talk to anyone? How did they help you? What are the benefits of having someone to talk to?

Are there friends, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbors, or others that you can talk to?

What are the specific things that have been said or done that you have found helpful? What are the things you can do to help someone else during a difficult time? And to help yourself?

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Read *The Rabbit Listened*.
- Talk with the children about the different ways all the other animals tried to help Taylor in comparison with the rabbit.
- Discuss what happens with Taylor when he processes all of the earlier ideas.
- Discuss why what the rabbit did was helpful and ask the students to share when someone listened to them.

HAND ONE

Have each child identify five people that he or she can go to for help. Children may need help brainstorming ideas (*options could be listed on the board*).

- Their names or relationships can be written on the fingers on one of the hands.
- The child can write additional names on the hand if they come up with more than five
- If the children can't come up with 5 talk with them individually to help (*see Important Considerations*).
- Children can color or decorate the hand throughout the activity as they are working.

HAND TWO

Have each child identify things that others have done for help them when they are struggling with something. It can be things others have done for/with them or things they do themselves that help.

- Children can also identify things they know how to do themselves that help them to effectively cope at a difficult moment.
- Allowing another brainstorming session will allow for group sharing and new ideas.
- Children can color or decorate the hand throughout the activity as they are working.

At the conclusion of the activity, give students the opportunity to share their Helping Hands with one another.





IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Students may share that they do not have important people in their lives that they can turn to when they need support. Take time to sit with these children individually to brainstorm possible various supports options as mentioned above.
- Be sure to use the term “Positive” coping skills when you are discussing the activity with students. Children may instead list negative or poor copings skills if not clearly stated and the goal is to encourage the sharing of helpful skills that are both safe and healthy.
- If using as an activity in a peer support group setting, Helping Hands fits nicely towards the end of the group’s time together. Identifying supports and positive coping skills is often an important concluding topic in many themed peer groups, especially grief groups.



