



Art Heals

Understanding Your Feelings About Leaving Your Home



Home is Where the Heart is

Carole Gesme, M.A., CFLE Michelle Silverman, M.A., Scott Harr, J. D., Larry Peterson

Art Heals

As families lose their homes due to the economic crisis in America, about two million children will feel the impact of that loss. The loss of their home, a place of safety, comfort, and normalcy, affects these children in ways that are not easily apparent. In moving to a rental home, a shelter, a relatives' or friends' home, these children may have to change schools and thereby lose friends. They may have to move in with people they are not comfortable with.

When children lose the very things that ground them, educational, behavioral and health issues may follow. During this time of change, it is imperative that children have a way to express what is going on inside them, what feelings, fears and concerns they have about what losing their home means to them. We believe that art heals. By creating artwork prompted by the suggestions on the following pages, we believe the children will begin to heal because they are not keeping their feelings to themselves. Children will be able to say goodbye to the old house and discover what is good about their new home. They will know they are not to blame, and that they and their family will survive this change.

This is dedicated to Scott Harr who passed away just one week after finishing co-authoring this book. Scott was the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Department at Concordia University in St. Paul. He was an attorney, private investigator, police chief, social worker, firefighter and professor during his too short life; and he knew the value of putting family and children first. He knew how this economic crisis would affect children, and wanted the resulting book to be available at no cost to the public in hopes that through art, children would weather the change and understand that home is where the heart is.

We invite you to copy *Leaving Your Home* and share it with others.

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Easing the Tensions of Families on the Move

Whether the reason for moving is happy or traumatic, it is always stressful. Any sort of change causes stress, and moving usually involves lots of different changes which can lead to incredibly high stress for both adults and children.

Moving disrupts routine, familiarity and security. To ease the transition, the following are ways to make it easier:

- Involve the children from the beginning. Tell them as soon as possible about the move. This will give children time to adjust.
- Be honest about the reasons for the move.
- Give them something concrete to look forward to.
- Help ease your child's fears about leaving old friends.
- Try to keep schedules the same.
- Expect children to need time to adjust.
- Give children many chances to express their feelings.
- Remember that children deserve parents whose needs are met; take care of yourself while you are moving.

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How do you feel about moving? Find faces or words on this paper to help you. Circle the faces. Circle the words, draw your own pictures or write about you you're feeling. Do as many of these as you want to. Your feelings may change daily, so return to this page as often as you wish. (Start a feeling journal.) Each time you return to mark on this page us a different color marker, if you can.

	Mixed-up	Rejected		Sick	Free	Disgusted		Mad	Unwanted	
	Glad	Trusted		Scared	Alone	Happy		Lucky	Dirty	
	Joyful	Worried		Needed	Frightened	Let down		Jealous	Alive	
	Surprised	Excited		Special	Capable	Lovable		Stupid	Ashamed	
	Brave	Embarrassed		Helpless	Carefree	Horrorified		Smart		
	Guilty			Depressed						

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Good-bye House

Draw a picture or use words to say good bye
to your old house.

Draw a picture or use words to say hello
to your new house.

Hello House

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Art Heals

The Place You Live Now

Draw a picture of where you live.
Put your address on the page.

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The Place You Live Now

Draw a picture of the people who you live with, what you like about each person, and write their names.

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Art Heals

The Place You Live Now

Draw a picture of your pet, what they like to do,
and their name(s).

*If you don't have a pet draw a picture of animals or bugs
you might see outside your bedroom window.*

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Art Heals

The Place You Live Now

Draw a picture of your favorite room and what you like to do while you are there.

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Art Heals

The Place You Live Now

Draw a picture that you would like to hang
on the wall of your new home.

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Art Heals

The Place You Live Now

Draw a picture of the people you would like to visit you and places you would like to show them.

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Art Heals Your New Home

Webster's Dictionary defines "house" as a structure for humans to live in, and it defines "home" as the lasting place of affections.

The actual walls of your house do not make it a home; it is the people inside and their feelings for one another that make a house a home.

Your family can start making a house a home by:

- ◉ Laughter. Laugh with your family and friends — laughing is not only fun, but it's good for you, too.
- ◉ Affection. Tell your other family members how you feel about them.
(For example: "I enjoy spending time with you.")
- ◉ Mutual Respect. Treat the members of your family with the respect and love that you would like them to treat you.
- ◉ Be Helpful. Think of ways that you can help other family members.
- ◉ Music. Play or sing your favorite songs.
- ◉ Bake. Bake cookies or brownies. Sit down and eat them together.
- ◉ Play games together.
- ◉ Talking.

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Pick one feeling face below and tell about a time you felt that way and what you did. Then read the "I can..." section below and think of two other things you could do next time.

- When I feel **happy**.....
"I can tell someone I feel happy. I can celebrate by myself or with others."
- When I feel **angry**...
I can tell someone I feel angry. I can ask for help to solve problems. I can ask questions, gather information, and get help."
- When I get **scared**...
"I can tell someone I feel scared. I can find safety and comfort. I can ask for information."
- When I feel **ashamed or embarrassed**...
"I can tell someone how I feel and what is bothering me. I can apologize. I can ask for help. I can know I'm okay — it is my behavior that may need to change."
- When I feel **mixed-up**...
"I can tell someone I feel mixed-up. I can use the Feeling Faces to show all of the ways I can feeling. I can ask for help."

Mixed-up										Free
Sick										Disgusted
Mad										Unwanted
Sad										Trusted
Glad										Alone
Scared										Happy
Hurt										Dirty
Lucky										Worried
Joyful										Frightened
Needed										Let Down
Jealous										Alive
Surprised										Angry
Special										Excited
Stupid										Capable
Brave										Loveable
Helpless										Ashamed
Smart										Embarrassed
Guilty										Carefree
Depressed										Horrified
Confident										Stressed
Rejected										

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Art Heals Interviews

For Kids Ages Six and Older

This is what some kids have said about moving....

Michele age 13
Dad lost his job
Thought: We've lost everything. We don't have anything left.
Feeling: Scared.
Result: Dad said we would be okay. We moved in with my grandparents and we had a wonderful time.

Shelley age 11
We ran from an abusive situation
Thought: It happened fast.
Feeling: I was worried and scared about starting a new school.
Result: I had many grown ups that helped me adjust.

Jennifer age 10
We moved from home to a shelter.
Thought: What's is going to happen to me and my family.
Feeling: Angry, scared and sad.
Result: When we got the shelter there were lots of kids like me and I made lots of friends.

Find someone you know who has moved and do your own interview...

Name _____
Age _____
Situation _____
Thought: _____
Feeling: _____
Result: _____

Write your own thoughts and feelings...

Age _____
Situation _____
My thought _____
My feelings _____
What I want to happen: _____

Write your story, include pictures if you wish, and email to

Michelle@freeartsminnesota.org

or mail to: Free Arts Minnesota 400 N. 1st Avenue Suite 518, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

They may pick your story and put it on their website www.freeartsminnesota.org

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