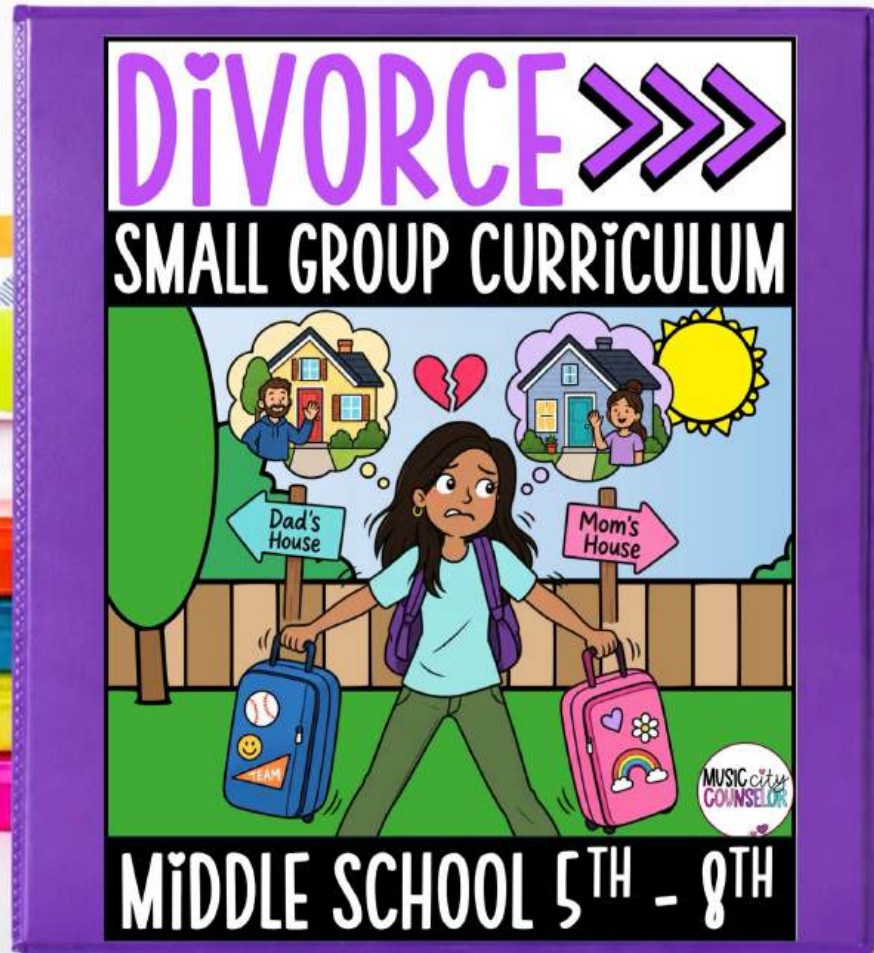




DIVORCE SMALL GROUP FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

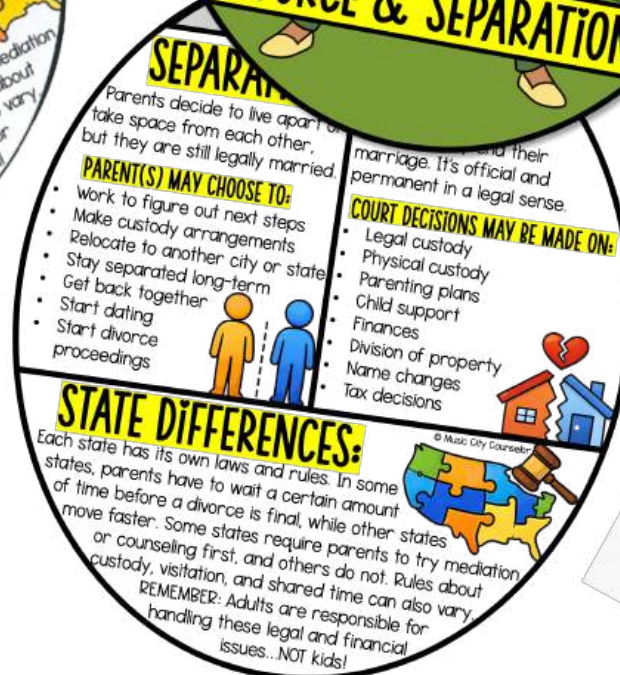
IMPORTANT NOTES: THIS 10-SESSION CURRICULUM:

- teaches students to cope with family changes: divorce and separation
- was designed for 5th – 8th graders
- can be used with small groups and individuals
- is aligned to ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors
- is data-driven with a provided pretest/posttest

IMPORTANT NOTES:

THIS 10-SESSION CURRICULUM:

- is super-low prep and ready to go
- can be customized to fit the needs of your students and the amount of time you have
- is flexible! Implement all 10 sessions in the order presented. Or change the order, pick and choose certain sessions, or add in materials of your choice!

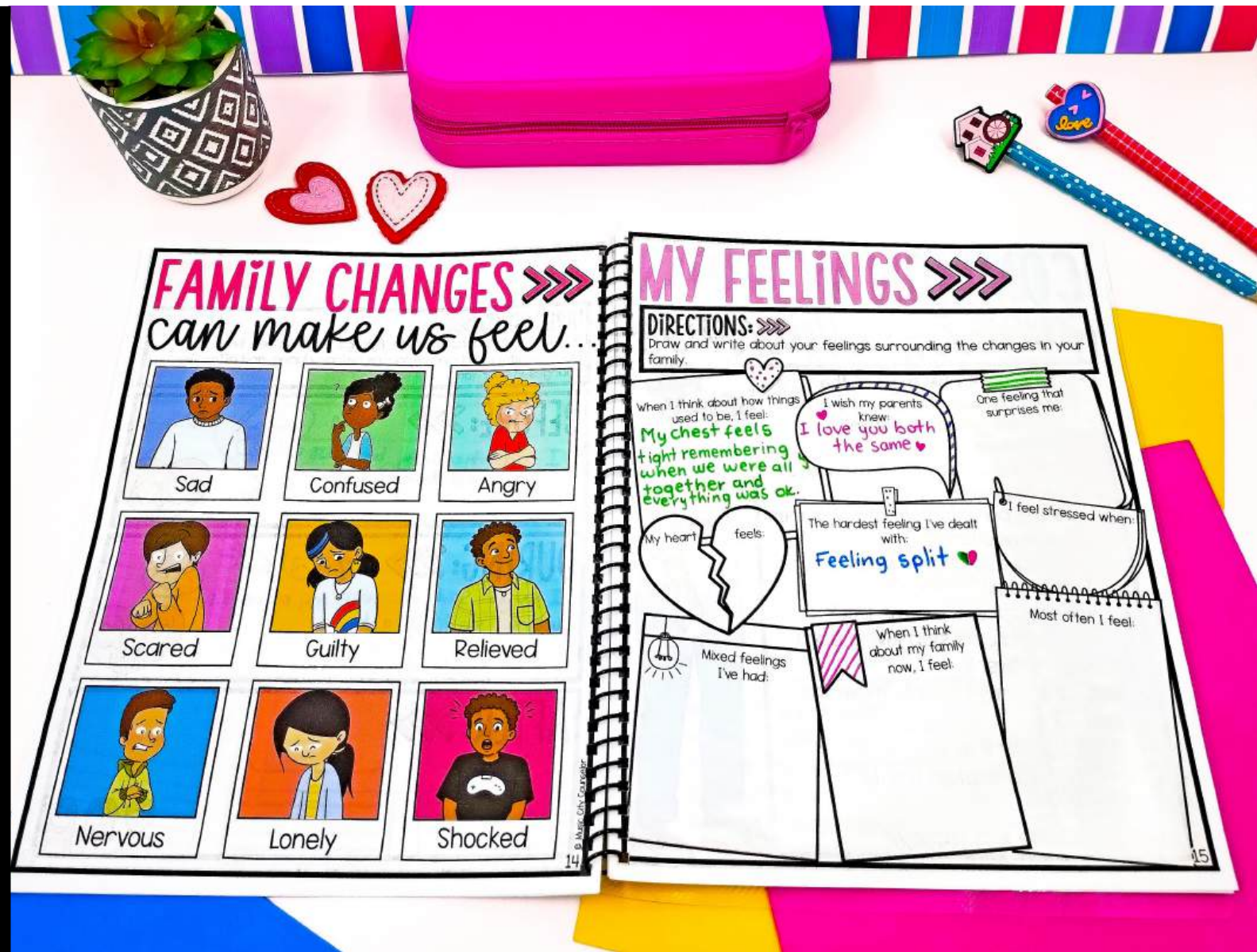
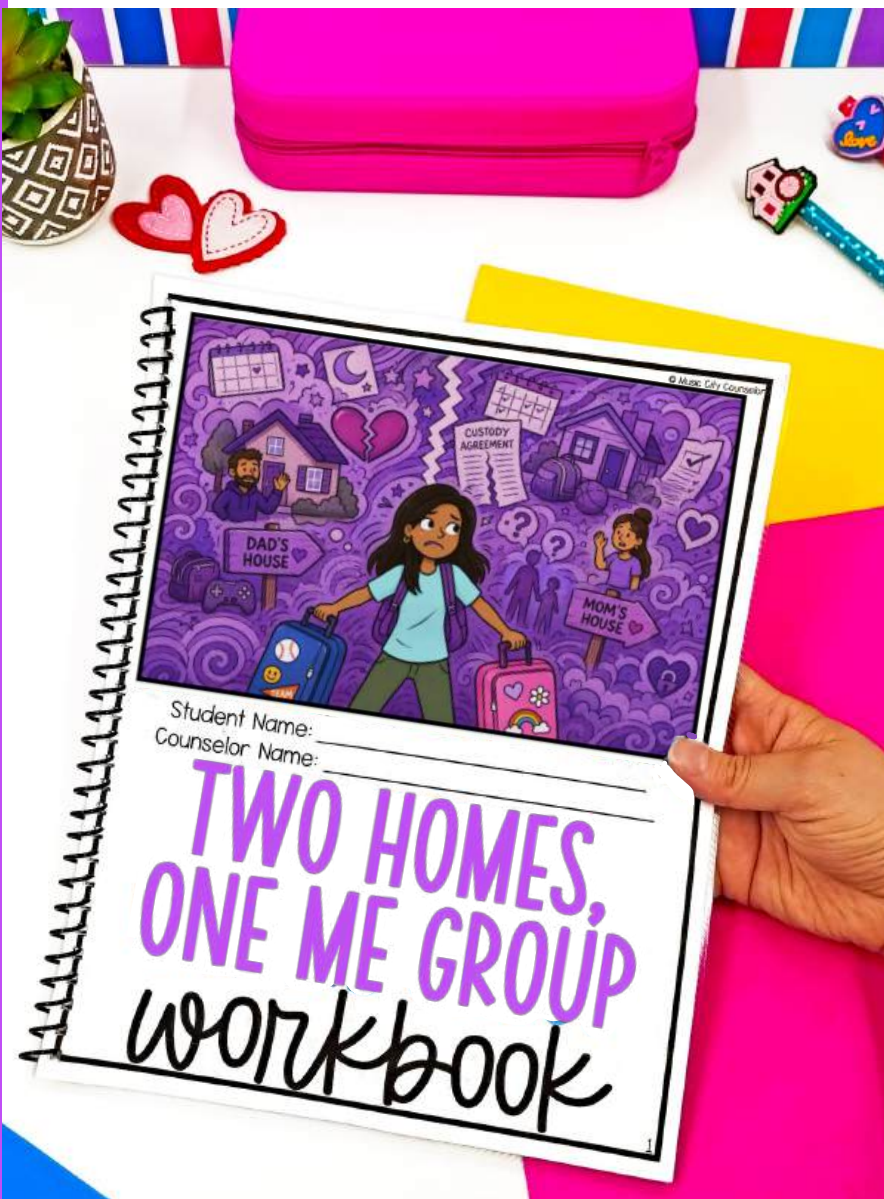


"TWO HOMES, ONE ME" GROUP OUTLINE:

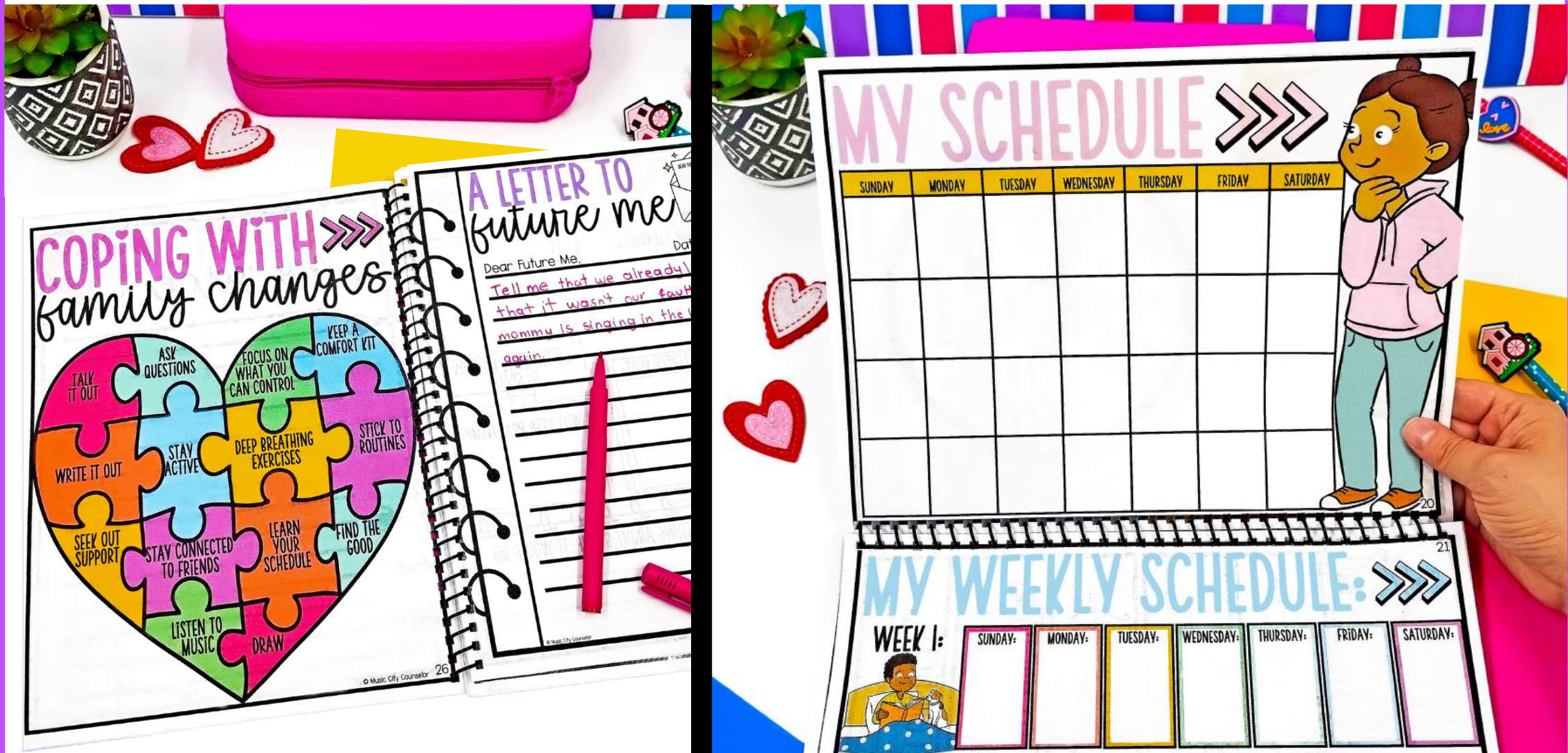
- Session 1: Introductions & Icebreakers
- Session 2: Divorce Dictionary
- Session 3: My Family Story
- Session 4: Exploring My Feelings
- Session 5: Exploring My Worries
- Session 6: My Circle of Control
- Session 7: Tips for Living in Two Homes
- Session 8: Kids' Rights
- Session 9: Coping with Family Changes
- Session 10: Group Closure & Reflection



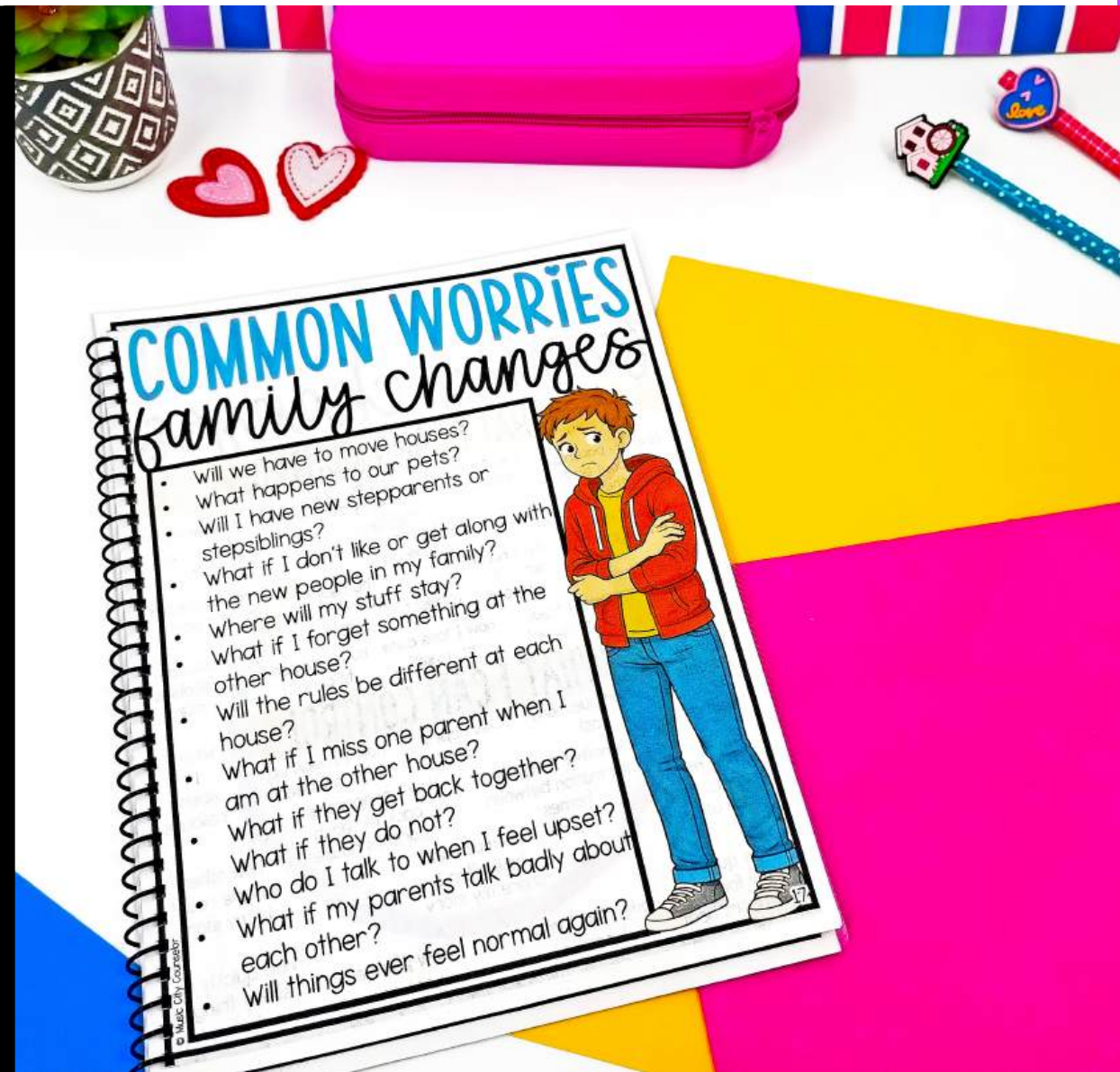
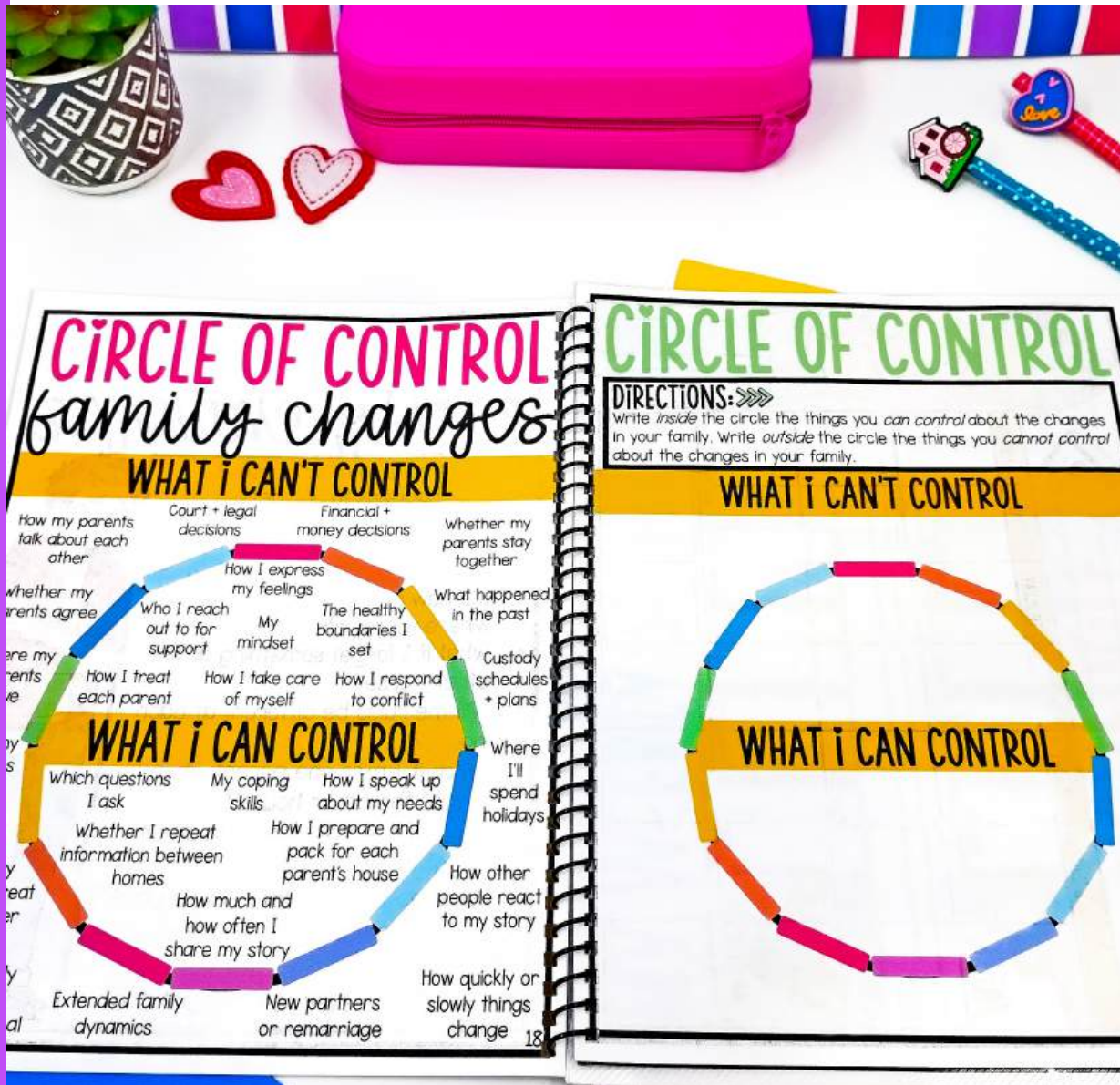
STUDENTS WORK THROUGH A 29-PAGE WORKBOOK.



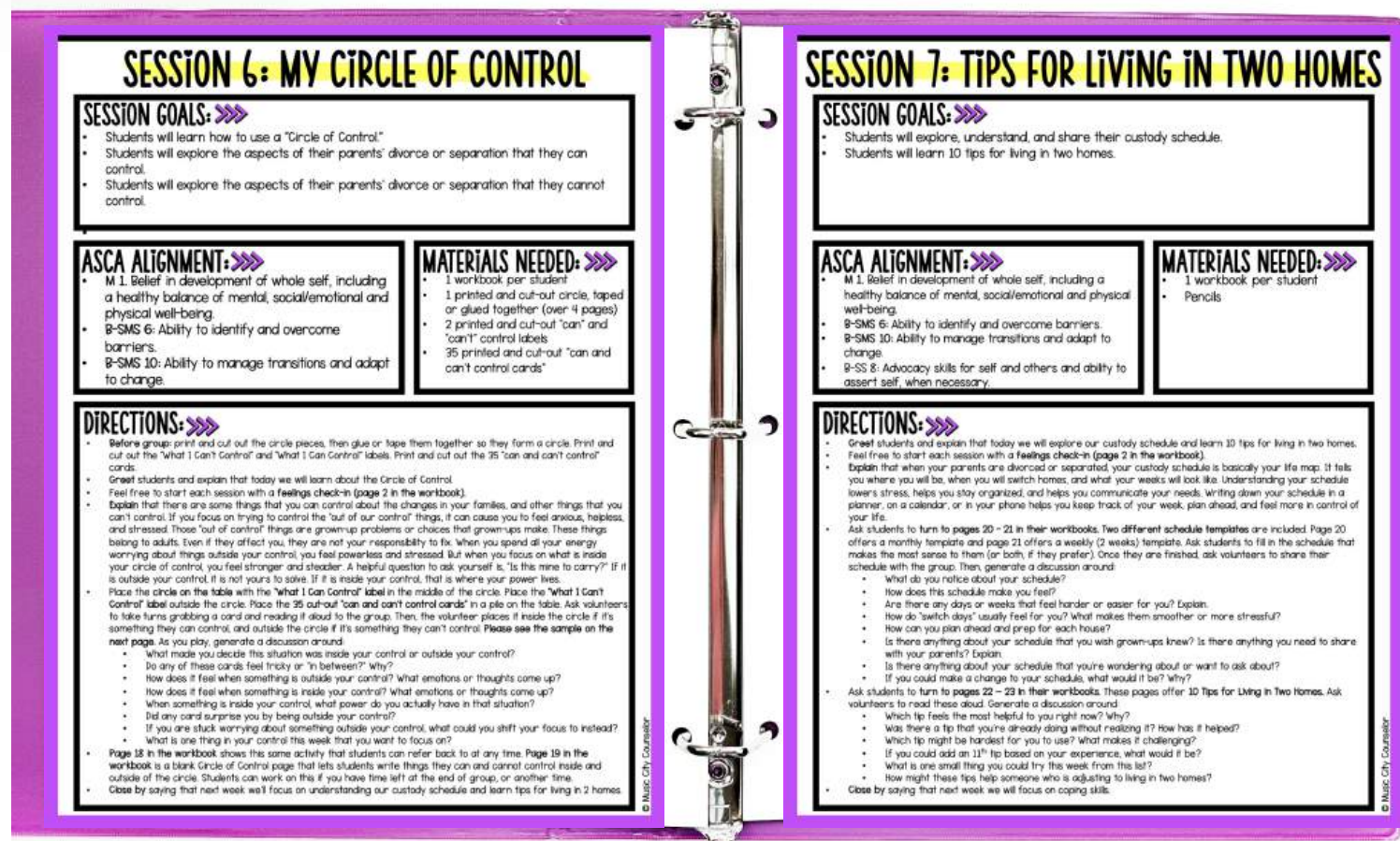
STUDENTS WORK THROUGH A 29-PAGE WORKBOOK.



STUDENTS WORK THROUGH A 29-PAGE WORKBOOK.

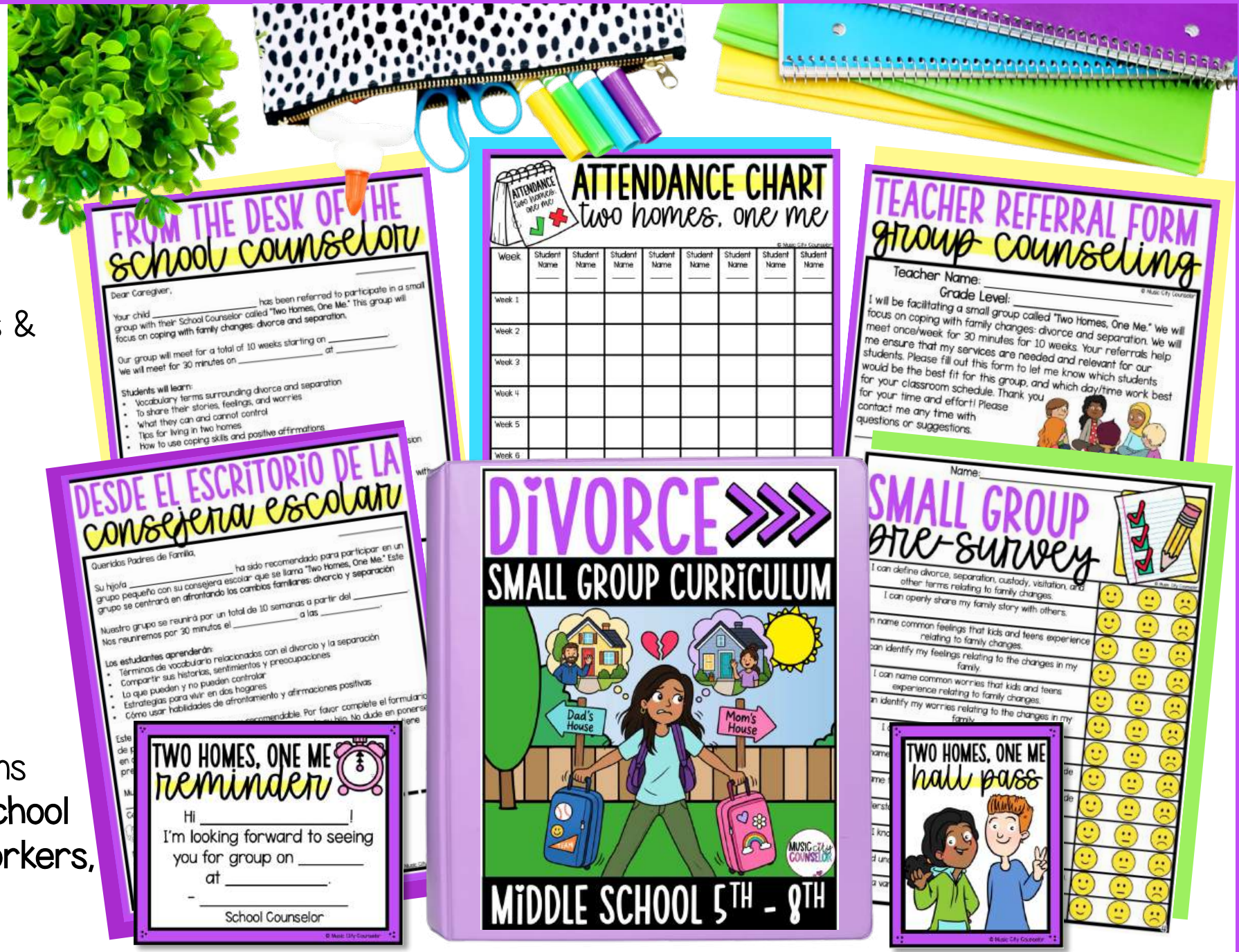


A DETAILED PLAN is INCLUDED FOR EACH SESSION:



GROUP FORMS:

- Teacher Referral Form
- Bilingual Parent Letters
- Pretest
- Posttest
- Alignment to ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors
- Binder cover
- Hall passes
- Student reminder cards
- Attendance chart
- Group rules
- Confidentiality agreement
- Feelings check-in
- Completion certificate
- EDITABLE versions of all forms
- Versions for all forms for school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists





SMALL GROUP: the deets

GROUP PURPOSE >>> This is a safe, supportive place where you can share about the changes in your family. One of the hardest parts of divorce and separation is feeling like you're the only one struggling. Here in group, you'll see others have similar worries, feelings, and experiences as you do! You are not alone! Here in group, you'll learn to understand your feelings, build healthy coping skills, and adjust to your new family structure.

CONFIDENTIALITY >>> What you say in here, stays in here! UNLESS:
 • Someone is hurting you.
 • You are hurting someone else.
 • You are hurting yourself.
 • You give me permission to share.

GROUP GOALS >>>
 1. To understand family changes like divorce and separation.
 2. To share your story.
 3. To learn and practice coping skills.
 4. To build self-confidence and self-awareness.

GROUP RULES >>>
 1. What's shared here, stays here. We respect privacy. Personal stories shared in group are not repeated outside this room.
 2. Respect others. Be kind, accepting, and supportive. Do not judge.
 3. One person talks at a time. Listen when someone is speaking. Do not interrupt.
 4. Everyone belongs. Different feelings, identities, thoughts, and experiences are welcome here.

IN GROUP, YOU'LL FEEL >>>
 This group will make you feel:
 • Understood
 • Supported
 • Equipped
 • Confident
 • Capable

SMALL GROUP pre-survey

Name: _____

I can define divorce, separation, custody, visitation, and other terms relating to family changes.	😊
I can openly share my family story with others.	😊
I can name common feelings that kids and teens experience relating to family changes.	😊
I can identify my feelings relating to the changes in my family.	😊
I can name common worries that kids and teens experience relating to family changes.	😊
I can identify my worries relating to the changes in my family.	😊
I can define and use the Circle of Control.	😊
I can name things, situations, and problems that are inside my Circle of Control.	😊
I can name things, situations, and problems that are outside my Circle of Control.	😊
I understand and can describe my custody schedule.	😊
I know helpful tips for living in two homes.	😊
I know and understand my rights in a divorce or separation.	😊
I can use a variety of coping skills to help me deal with the changes in my family.	😊

ALL ABOUT me

My name is _____

Favorite school subject _____

Favorite ice cream _____

When I grow up... _____

Favorite sport _____

Favorite book _____

Favorite season _____

Pets _____

My family _____

Favorite snack _____

Favorite hobby _____

Places I'd like to travel _____

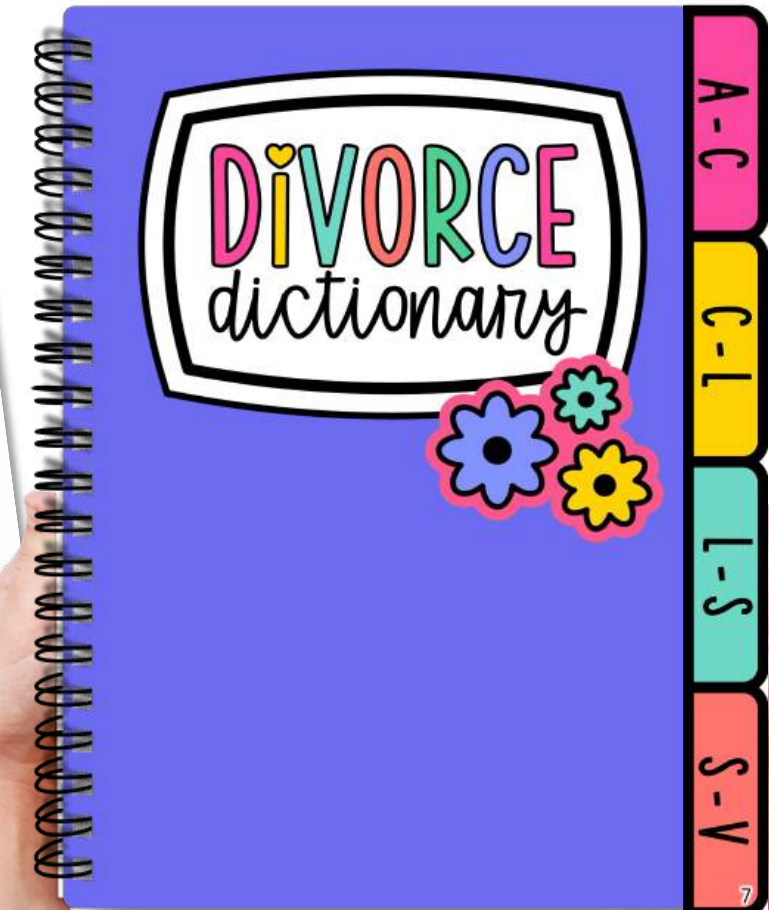
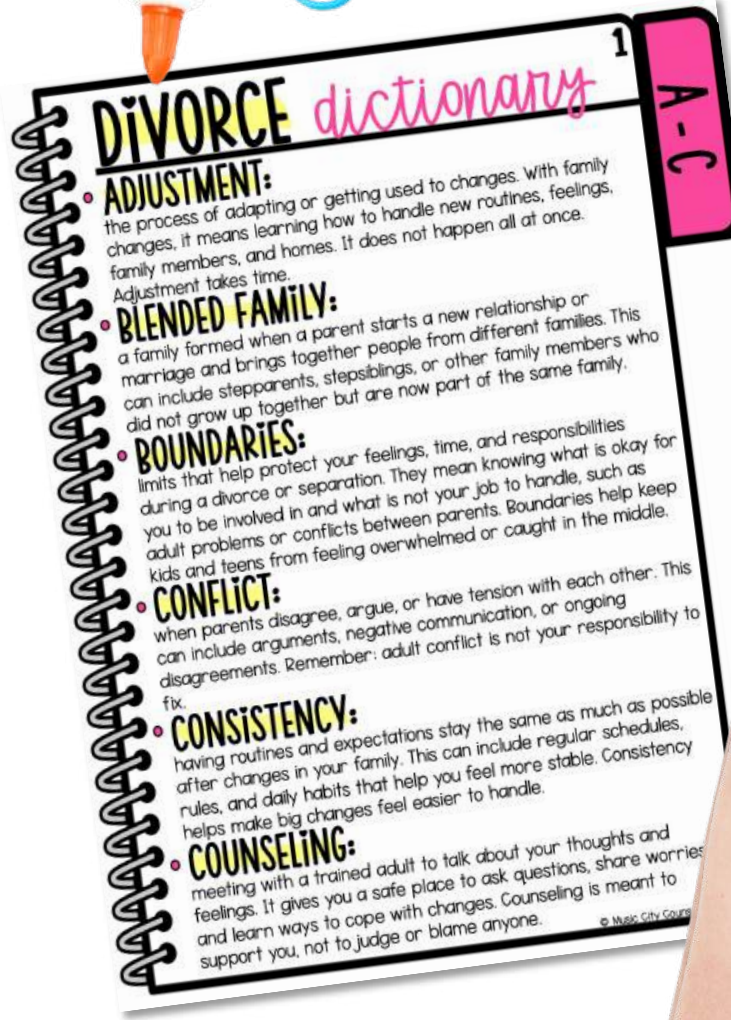
FEELINGS check-in

Happy	Sad	Angry	Calm
Tired	Anxious	Hurt	Excited
Stressed	Annoyed	Content	Bored

SESSION 1: Introductions & Icebreakers

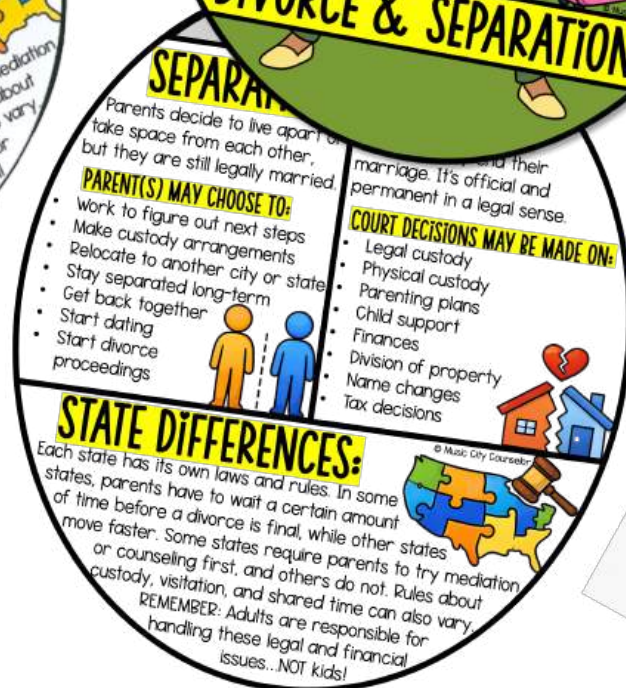
SESSION 2:

Divorce Dictionary



SESSION 2:

Divorce Dictionary





DIVORCE VS. SEPARATION

WHAT IS SEPARATION? >>>

Separation is when parents decide to live apart or take space from each other, but they are still legally married. Some parents separate to figure things out, and others stay separated long-term. During a separation, routines like where kids and teens stay, schedules, and rules may start to change.

WHAT IS DIVORCE? >>>

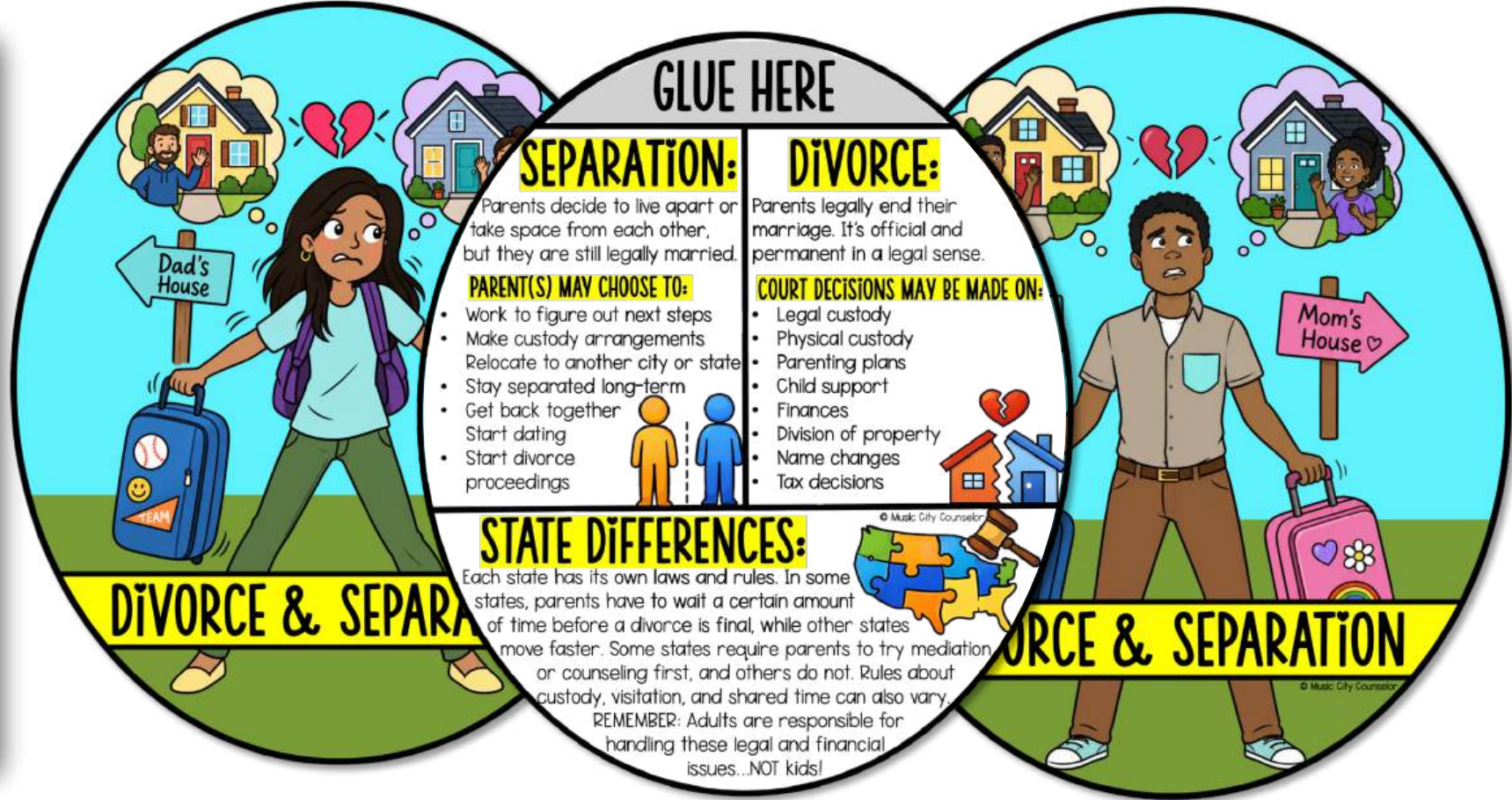
Divorce is when parents legally end their marriage. This usually involves court decisions about things like custody, schedules, and responsibilities. Divorce makes the separation official and permanent in a legal sense.

STATE-BY-STATE DIFFERENCES: >>>

Divorce and separation can look different depending on the state someone lives in because each state has its own laws and rules. In some states, parents have to wait a certain amount of time before a divorce is final, while other states move faster. Some states require parents to try mediation or counseling first, and others do not. Rules about custody, visitation, and shared time can also vary, including how schedules are decided. Because of these differences, parents often work with lawyers or the court system in their state to figure out what applies to their family. What matters most for kids and teens is knowing that adults are responsible for handling the legal parts, and kids and teens are not expected to understand or manage the laws themselves.



© Music City Counselor



SESSION 2: Divorce Dictionary

SESSION 3: My Family Story



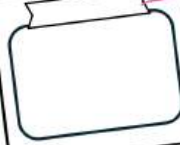
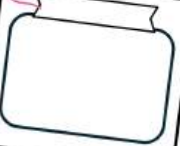
SESSION 3:

My Family Story



FAMILY CHANGES timeline

DIRECTIONS: >>>
Create a timeline that describes your life *before, during, and after* your family changes. Include events, milestones, feelings, routines, family living arrangements, etc. Write the title of the event in the banner, draw a picture in the box, and write about it on the lines.

12 © Music City Counselor

BEFORE, DURING, & AFTER

DIRECTIONS: >>>
Draw and write about your life, feelings, experiences, living arrangements, and circumstances before, during, and after the changes in your family.

BEFORE: >>>



DURING: >>>



AFTER: >>>



13 © Music City Counselor



SESSION 4:

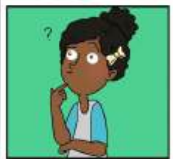
Exploring My Feelings

SESSION 4:

Exploring My Feelings



FAMILY CHANGES >>>
can make us feel...

 Sad	 Confused	 Angry
 Scared	 Guilty	 Relieved
 Nervous	 Lonely	 Shocked

MY FEELINGS >>>
DIRECTIONS: >>>
Draw and write about your feelings surrounding the changes in your family.

When I think about how things used to be, I feel:

I wish my parents knew:

One feeling that surprises me:

My heart feels:

The hardest feeling I've dealt with:

I feel stressed when:

Mixed feelings I've had:

When I think about my family now, I feel:

Most often I feel:

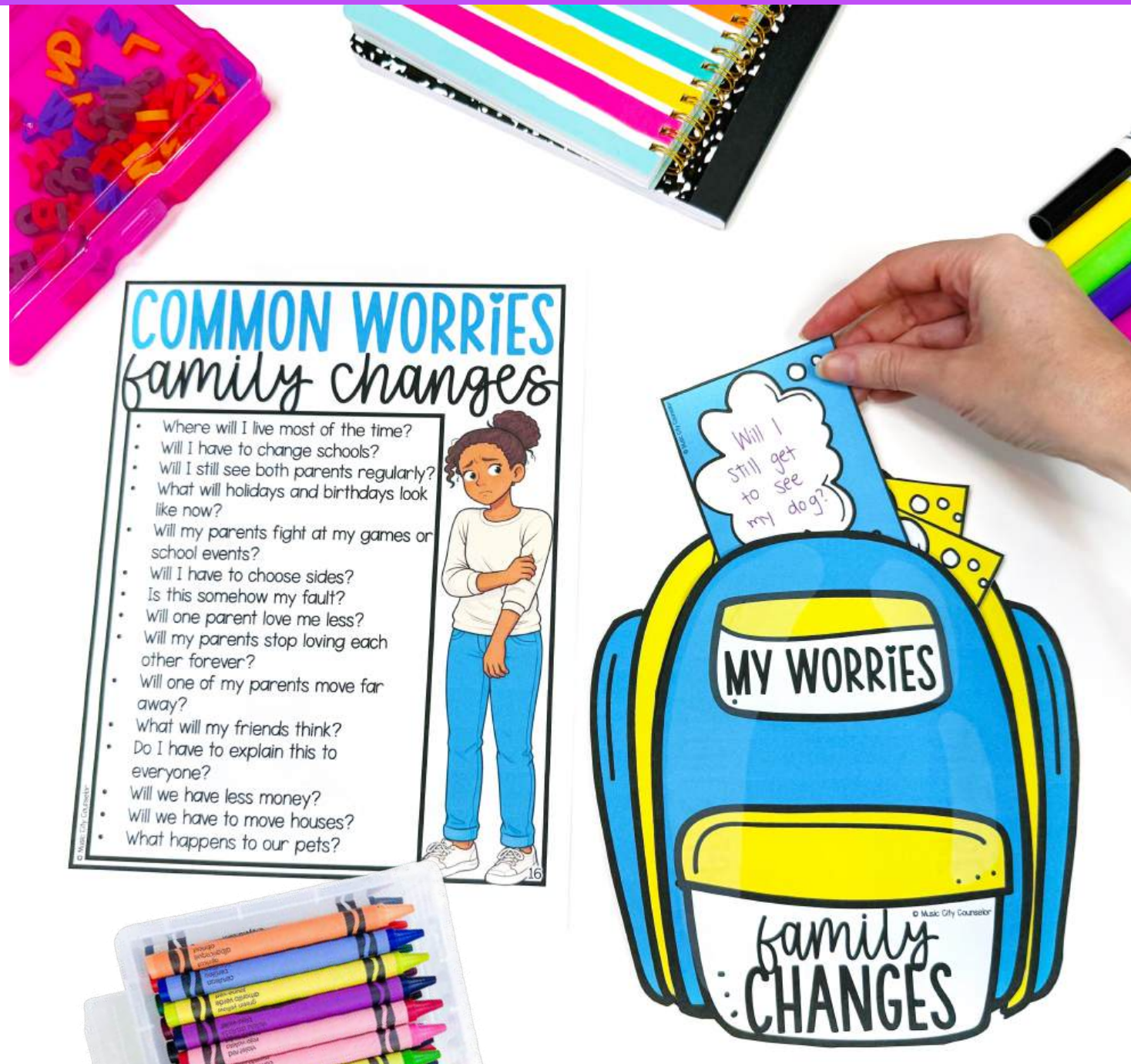
© 2015 City Counselor

14

15

SESSION 5:

Exploring My Worries



SESSION 5:

Exploring My Worries



COMMON WORRIES

family changes

- Will we have to move houses?
- What happens to our pets?
- Will I have new stepparents or stepsiblings?
- What if I don't like or get along with the new people in my family?
- Where will my stuff stay?
- What if I forget something at the other house?
- Will the rules be different at each house?
- What if I miss one parent when I am at the other house?
- What if they get back together? What if they do not?
- Who do I talk to when I feel upset?
- What if my parents talk badly about each other?
- Will things ever feel normal again?



© Mosaic City Counselor

17

COMMON WORRIES

family changes

- Where will I live most of the time?
- Will I have to change schools?
- Will I still see both parents regularly?
- What will holidays and birthdays look like now?
- Will my parents fight at my games or school events?
- Will I have to choose sides?
- Is this somehow my fault?
- Will one parent love me less?
- Will my parents stop loving each other forever?
- Will one of my parents move far away?
- What will my friends think?
- Do I have to explain this to everyone?
- Will we have less money?



© Mosaic City Counselor

16

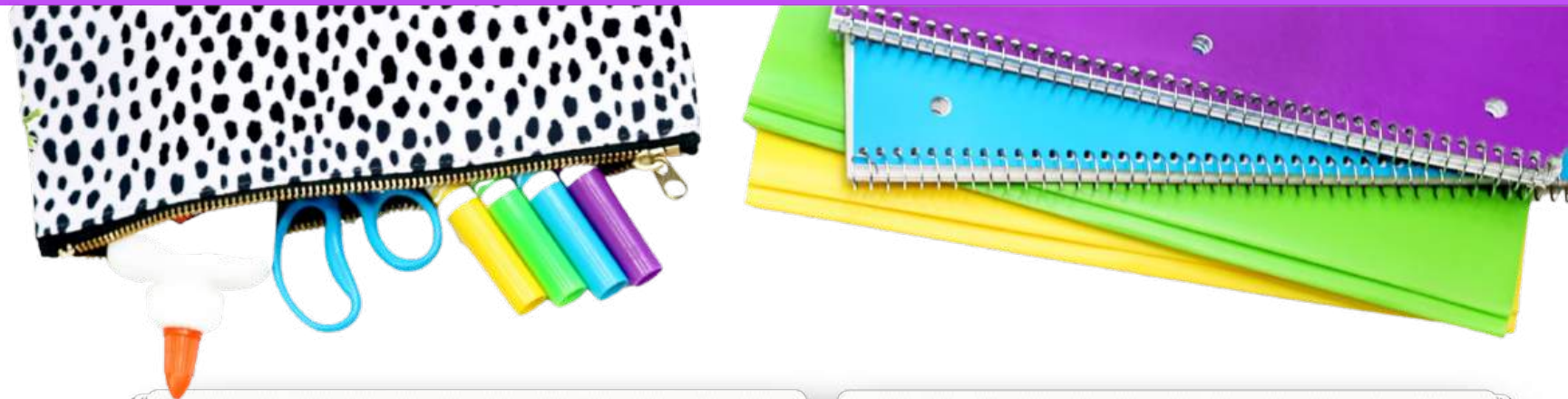
SESSION 6:

My Circle of Control



SESSION 6:

My Circle of Control



CIRCLE OF CONTROL
family changes

WHAT I CAN'T CONTROL

How my parents talk about each other
Whether my parents agree
Where my parents live
How my parents are feeling
How my parents treat each other
How quickly my family members heal

Court + legal decisions
Financial + money decisions
Whether my parents stay together
What happened in the past
Custody schedules + plans
Where I'll spend holidays
How other people react to my story
How quickly or slowly things change

How I express my feelings
Who I reach out to for support
How I treat each parent
Which questions I ask
Whether I repeat information between homes
How much and how often I share my story
My mindset
The healthy boundaries I set
How I take care of myself
My coping skills
How I speak up about my needs
How I prepare and pack for each parent's house
Extended family dynamics
New partners or remarriage

WHAT I CAN CONTROL

CIRCLE OF CONTROL

DIRECTIONS: >>>
Write *inside* the circle the things you *can control* about the changes in your family. Write *outside* the circle the things you *cannot control* about the changes in your family.

WHAT I CAN'T CONTROL

WHAT I CAN CONTROL

SESSION 7:

Tips for Living in Two Homes



LIVING IN two homes



1. USE A SHARED CALENDAR

Keep track of where you will be each day, practices, assignments, and events. Knowing the plan helps you feel more prepared and less stressed.

2. CREATE A PACKING SYSTEM

Make a checklist for switching homes. Include schoolwork, chargers, sports gear, medications, and comfort items. A routine makes transitions smoother.

3. KEEP ESSENTIALS IN BOTH HOMES

If possible, keep basic clothes, toiletries, and school supplies at each house. This reduces the feeling of constantly moving your whole life back and forth.

4. MAKE BOTH SPACES FEEL LIKE YOURS

Bring personal items, photos, books, and decorations so both homes feel comfortable, familiar, and cozy. This makes both places feel like home and like they're your own.

5. STAY OUT OF ADULT CONFLICTS

Remember the Circle of Control. You are not responsible for solving problems between your parents or carrying messages. If you feel stuck in the middle, talk to a trusted adult.

© Mary Givens 2022

LIVING IN two homes



6. EXPECT MIXED EMOTIONS

You might feel happy at one home and sad at the other. And the next week, next day, or next moment that can change! You might miss one parent while being with the other. All of this back-and-forth is normal.

7. SPEAK UP RESPECTFULLY

If something about your schedule, space, or communication is not working, calmly share your needs. Your voice matters. Use a respectful but strong tone.

8. BUILD SMALL TRANSITION ROUTINES

Listen to a certain playlist, pack your bag the same way, or text a friend before switching homes. Predictable habits make change feel steadier and less stressful.

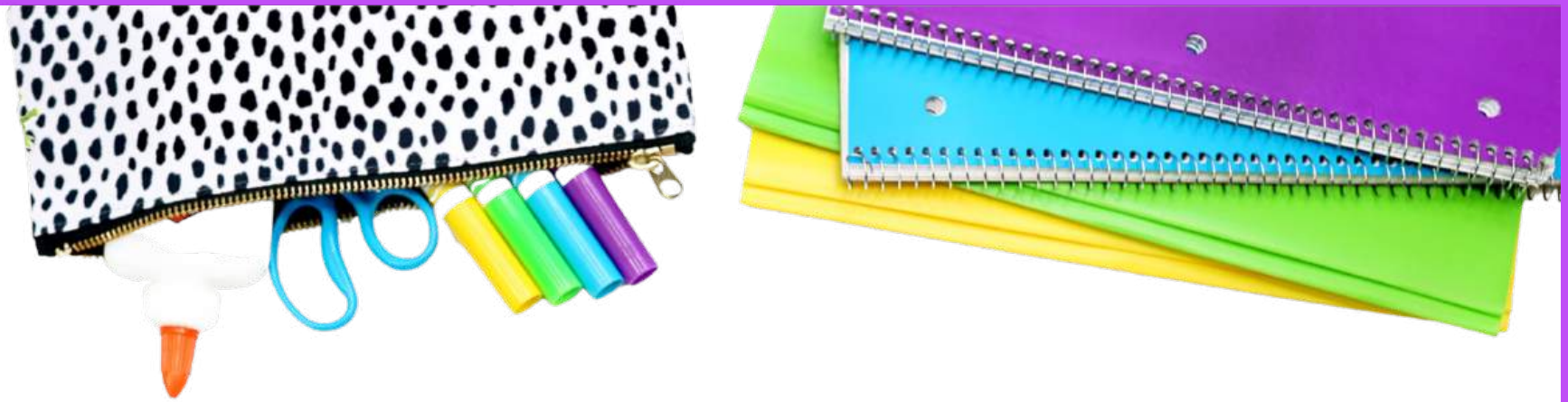
9. STAY CONNECTED TO OTHERS

Keep friendships, activities, and trusted adults in your life. Stability outside your homes can help you feel grounded. Reach out for support when you need it.

10. ASK FOR HELP

If living in two homes starts affecting your sleep, grades, mood, or friendships, talk to a counselor, teacher, coach, or another trusted adult. Getting support is a strong and healthy choice.

© Mary Givens 2022



SESSION 7:

Tips for Living in Two Homes

21

MY WEEKLY SCHEDULE: >>>

WEEK 1:

SUNDAY:	MONDAY:	TUESDAY:	WEDNESDAY:	THURSDAY:	FRIDAY:	SATURDAY:
						

NOTES: _____

WEEK 2:

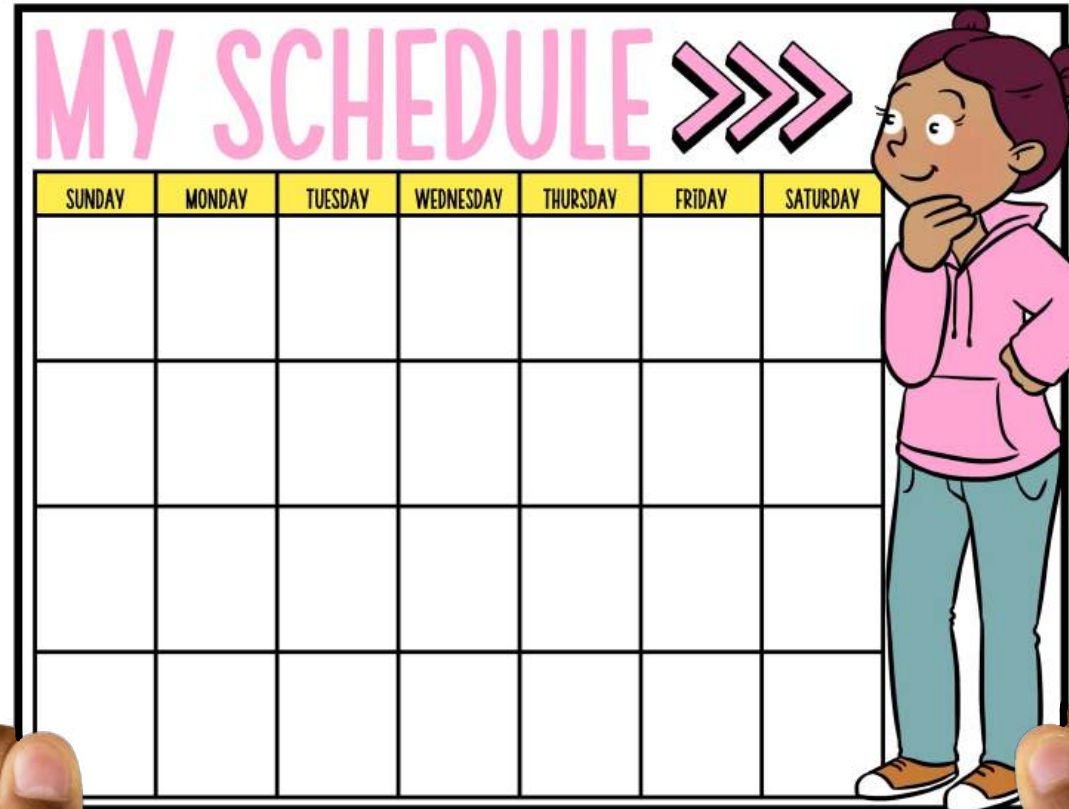
SUNDAY:	MONDAY:	TUESDAY:	WEDNESDAY:	THURSDAY:	FRIDAY:	SATURDAY:
						

NOTES: _____

© Music City Counselor

SESSION 7:

Tips for Living in Two Homes



SESSION 8:

Kids' Rights



KIDS' RIGHTS >>>

KIDS' RIGHTS EXPLAINED >>>

Kids and teens do not make the legal decisions in a divorce, but they do have rights. These rights are about safety, stability, and being cared for.



1. To be loved by both parents.
2. To show love for both parents.
3. To be a kid/teen and not worry about grown-up problems.
4. To remain part of both parents' lives (when possible/healthy).
5. To be heard and listened to.
6. To ask questions about what is happening and how it affects you.
7. To stay out of adult conflict.
8. To stay neutral. You do not have to take sides.
9. To communicate as you please. You are not a "message carrier" or "spy" between parents.
10. To express your needs, desires, and preferences.
11. To not be blamed. This is NOT your fault. You did not cause it, and you cannot fix it.
12. To support from a counselor, trusted adult, teacher, coach, or friend.

MY RIGHTS, my voice

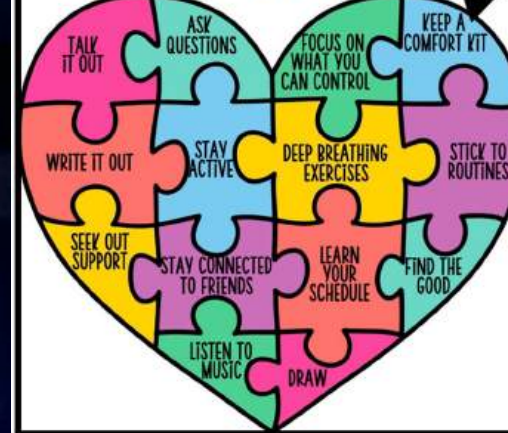


PUTTING TOGETHER THE PUZZLE



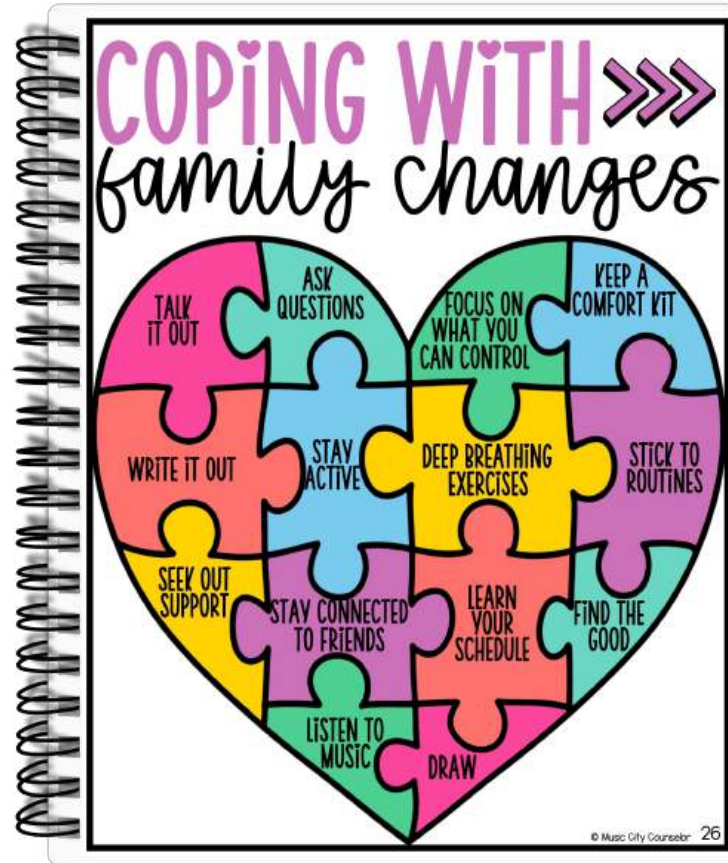
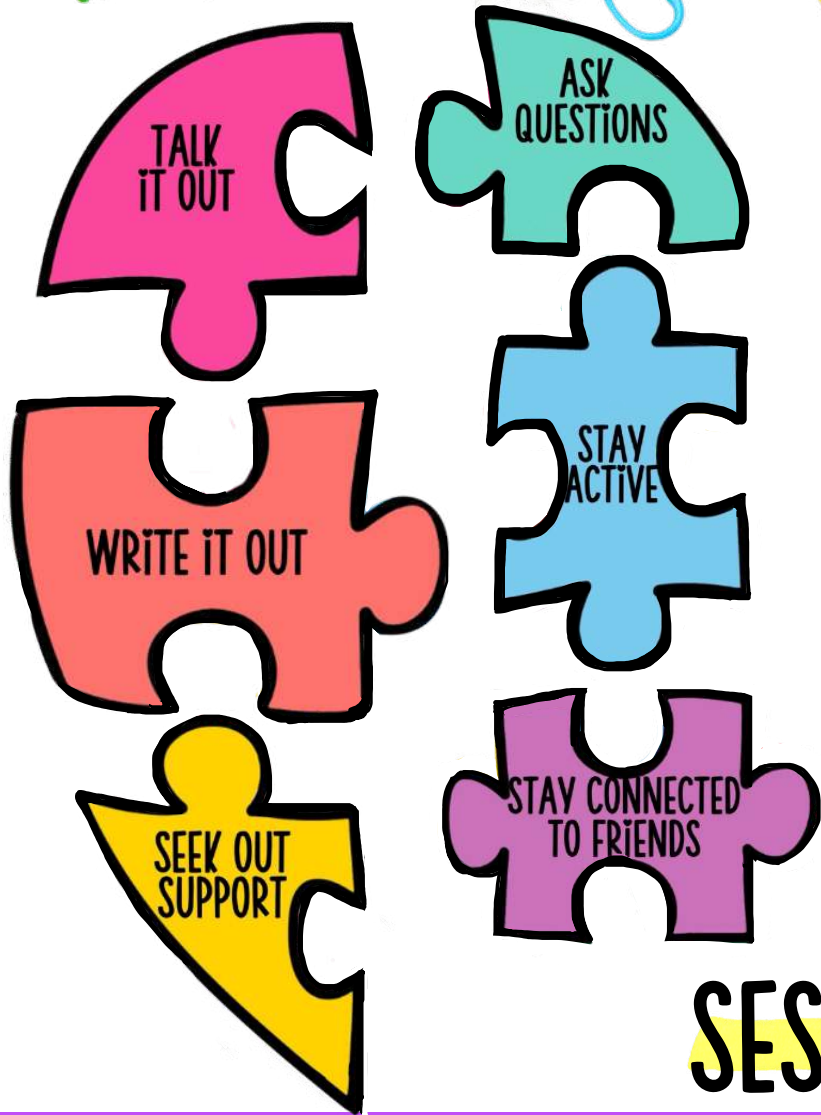
Imagine your life after divorce or separation like a puzzle that needs to be put back together. **Coping skills are the puzzle pieces that help you rebuild.** Each coping skill does not fix everything by itself. But together, with time and healing, they start to rebuild the picture.

COMFORT KIT



A **comfort kit** is a small collection of items like a favorite photo, a stuffed animal, a special blanket, a journal, headphones for music, a favorite book, or an encouraging note. These items help you feel calm, safe, and grounded. It gives you something steady when everything else feels like it is changing. Having these items at both homes can make transitions easier and remind you that parts of your life stay the same no matter where you're sleeping.

SESSION 9: Coping with Family Changes



SESSION 9: Coping Skills



SESSION 10: Group Closure & Reflection