Trip Ticket

About Deployment

A Discovery Guide for Pre-Teens
ages 11 to 12 whose families are in the National Guard
National Guard Bureau-Family Program Office

WELCOME

This activities booklet is special. That's because it was written and designed especially for you and your family. It was written for youth with parents in the National Guard. The military is a part of your life—at times it may be exciting and at other times it may be challenging. The topics covered are aimed at helping you travel through the separation period from your parents because of their military duties.

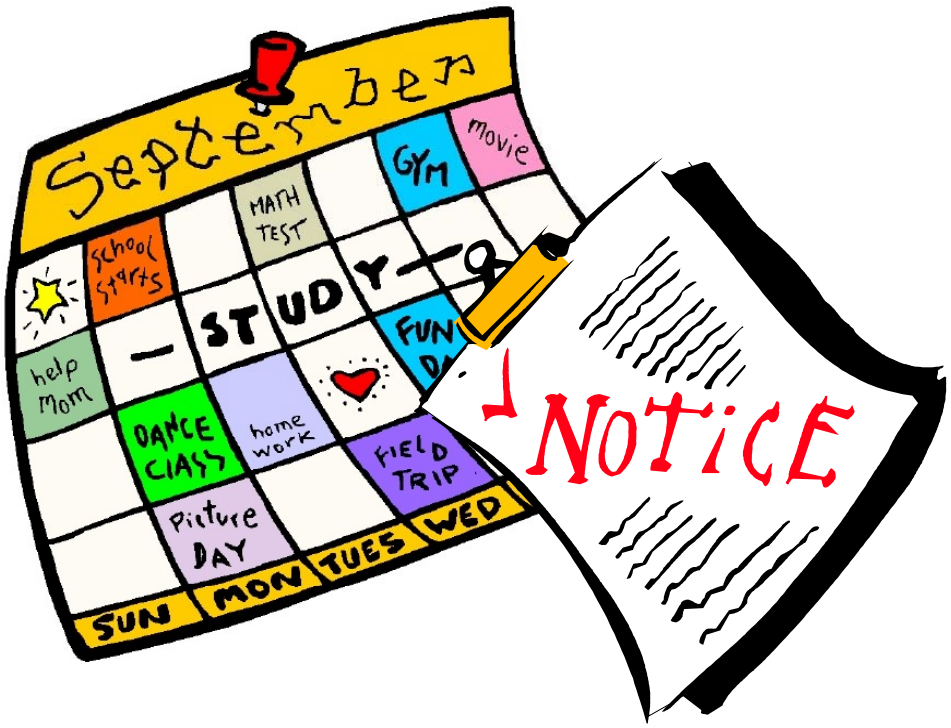
The information contained in this activities guide gives you ideas, activities and suggestions on the ways that military separations affect youth (mentally, emotionally and physically) in your age group. Included are suggestions for:

- dealing with a separation from your military parent
- coping daily with the separation
- staying connected with your parent(s) while separated
- preparing for your parent(s) return home

It's time to pick up your pencils, magic markers and scissors. Share your activities with your parents, brothers and sisters, cousins or other youth that may have parents serving in the military. Be creative, thoughtful and enthusiastic.

GET YOUR TICKET

The first step of your journey begins when your parent(s) receives notice that he or she is leaving. There may be times that your parent knows several months before he or she has to leave. Then there may be other times when he or she only knows days in advance. The separation may be short term when he or she has to participate in (special) training activities or it may be long term when he or she has to go serve with their unit during a military crisis or natural disaster.



BEFORE I BOARD

It's time to talk with your parent(s) or another family member to find out as much information as you can concerning the emotional journey you and your family are about to take.

- Why does my parent have to leave?
- When will they leave?
- Where are they going?
- What will they do while they are gone?
- Who will watch my little brother/sister while my parent is at work?

Make Reservations

Reserve some special time with your parent and ask questions that will only affect you during the separation.

How will you keep in touch with me?

Will I be able to talk to you any while you are away?

What do you expect me to do while you're away?

What about the weekend camping trip that we planned?

Will you call me on my birthday?

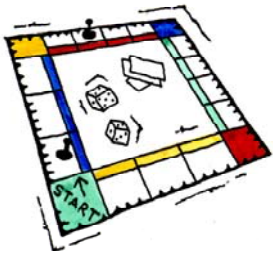
Will I still get an allowance while you're gone?

Revised as of 28 January 03

Making Plans

FAMILY FUN IN PROGRESS!

As you and your parent prepare for the day of departure, plan and schedule a special activity to do with your family. Together decide on something that everyone enjoys doing.



Have a family game night.
Find fun board games everyone likes to play.

Go on a picnic.

Watch a movie and make popcorn.

Go camping where you and your family can go hiking, biking or skiing.

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Packing Your Bags

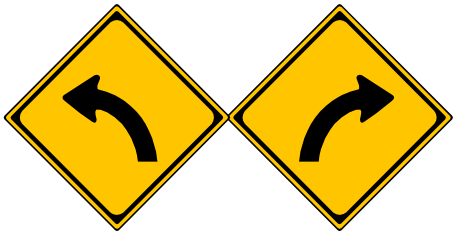
Before your parent leaves you may want to ask some general questions to see what would be useful to them while they are away.

Think about what you may put in your parent's luggage to remind them that they are special and that someone special is always thinking of them.

Bon Voyage

The time has arrived to say "Good-bye" and the road conditions may start to get challenging. Following the road signs will help guide you through the ups and downs along this highway. Let's explore the first of many road signs. Understand that this is NOT easy for anyone—try to focus on what a wonderful service your parent is doing by helping people face a crisis. It is okay to show and share with them how you are feeling.

Feelings are confusing—do I laugh or cry?



I cry when I'm really feeling sad.

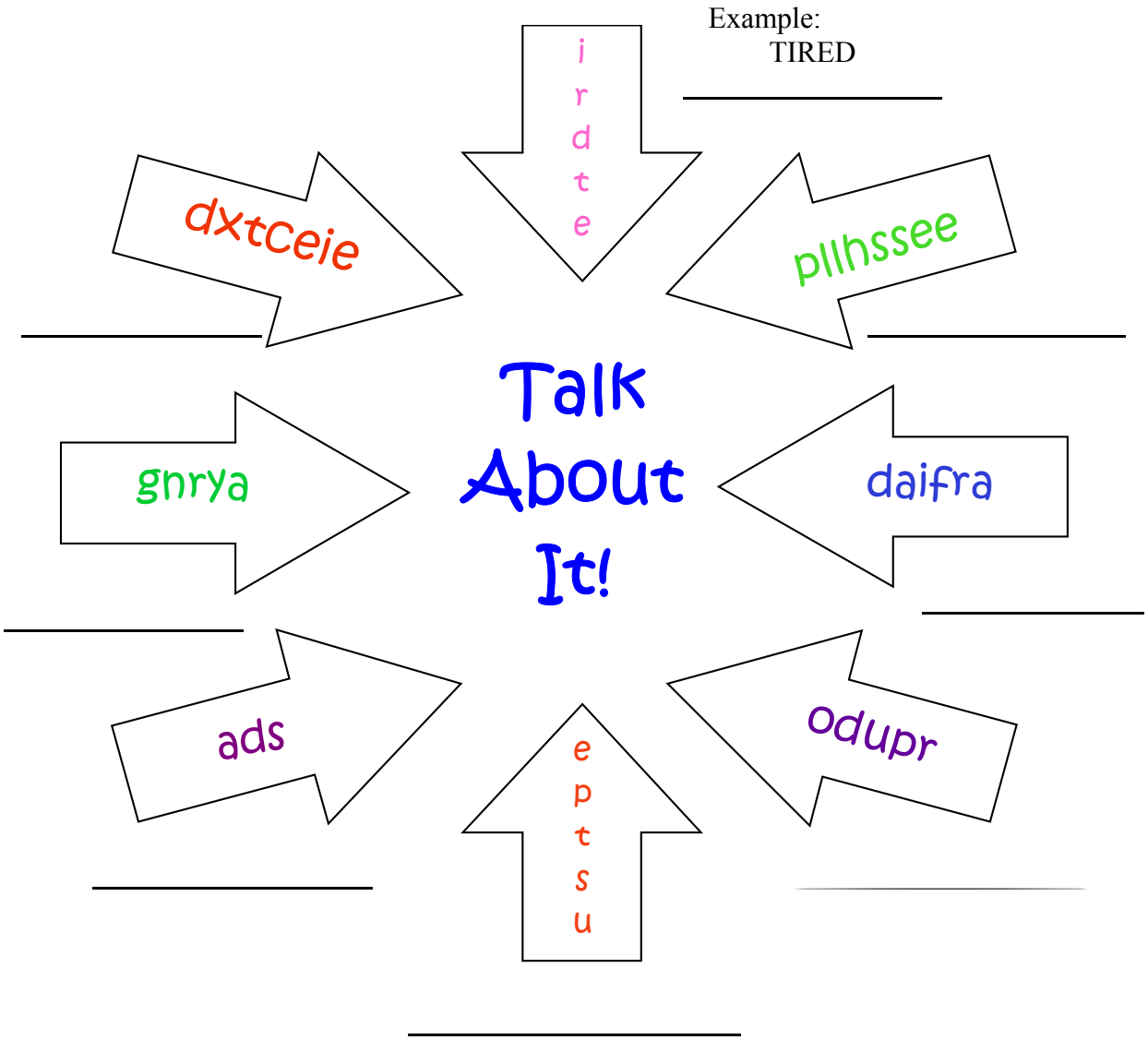
I know I will cry when my parent leaves.

I'm proud of my parent.

Sea Sick

It is important to be aware of your feelings and be willing to share your feelings while your parent is away. If you don't talk about the thoughts and feelings that you are experiencing, you may feel like things are scrambled on the inside.

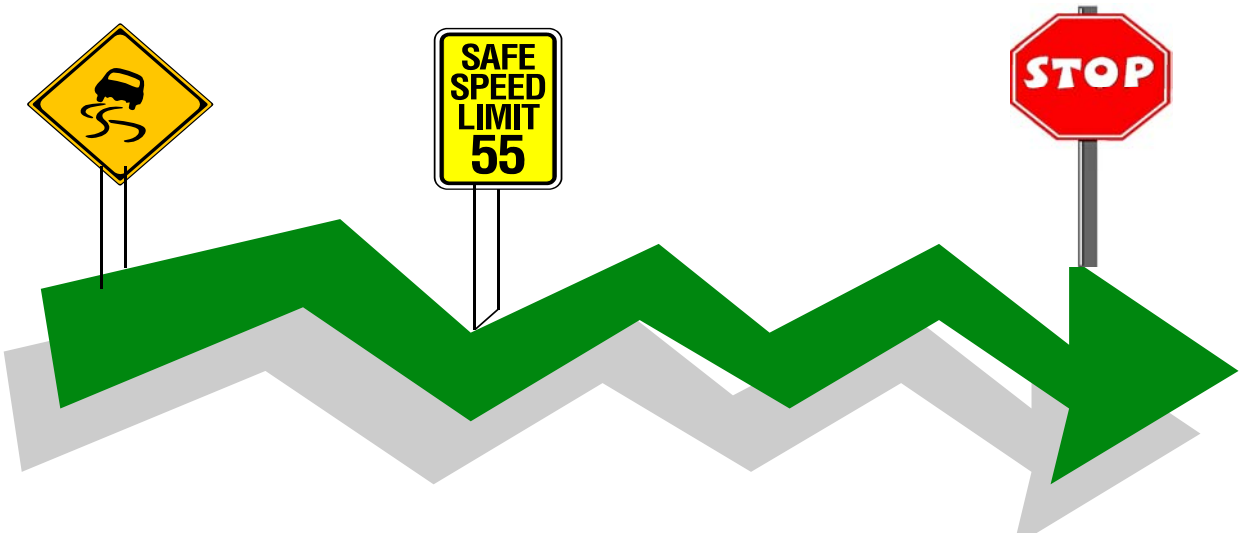
Directions: UNSCRAMBLE the examples of the different types of emotions you may have when your parent(s) have military duties and write your answer on the line by the arrow.



CAUTION

Travel Advisory

The flashing ALERT signs go off when you're having good feelings or positive thoughts. The ALERT signs go on when the NEGATIVE thoughts and feelings start. And the DOUBLE ALERT signs flash when you don't share your thoughts and feelings with someone. When you ignore the "warning signs" of negative thoughts, you may end up hurting very deeply someone you care about with unpleasant words and actions. This is where you need to let your emotional maturity play a role in helping you down the road of self-control and managing your feelings.



We can easily travel down a road that is crowded with "negative thoughts"—especially when we are faced with being separated as a family and each family member faces different challenges. Be ALERT as the journey continues.

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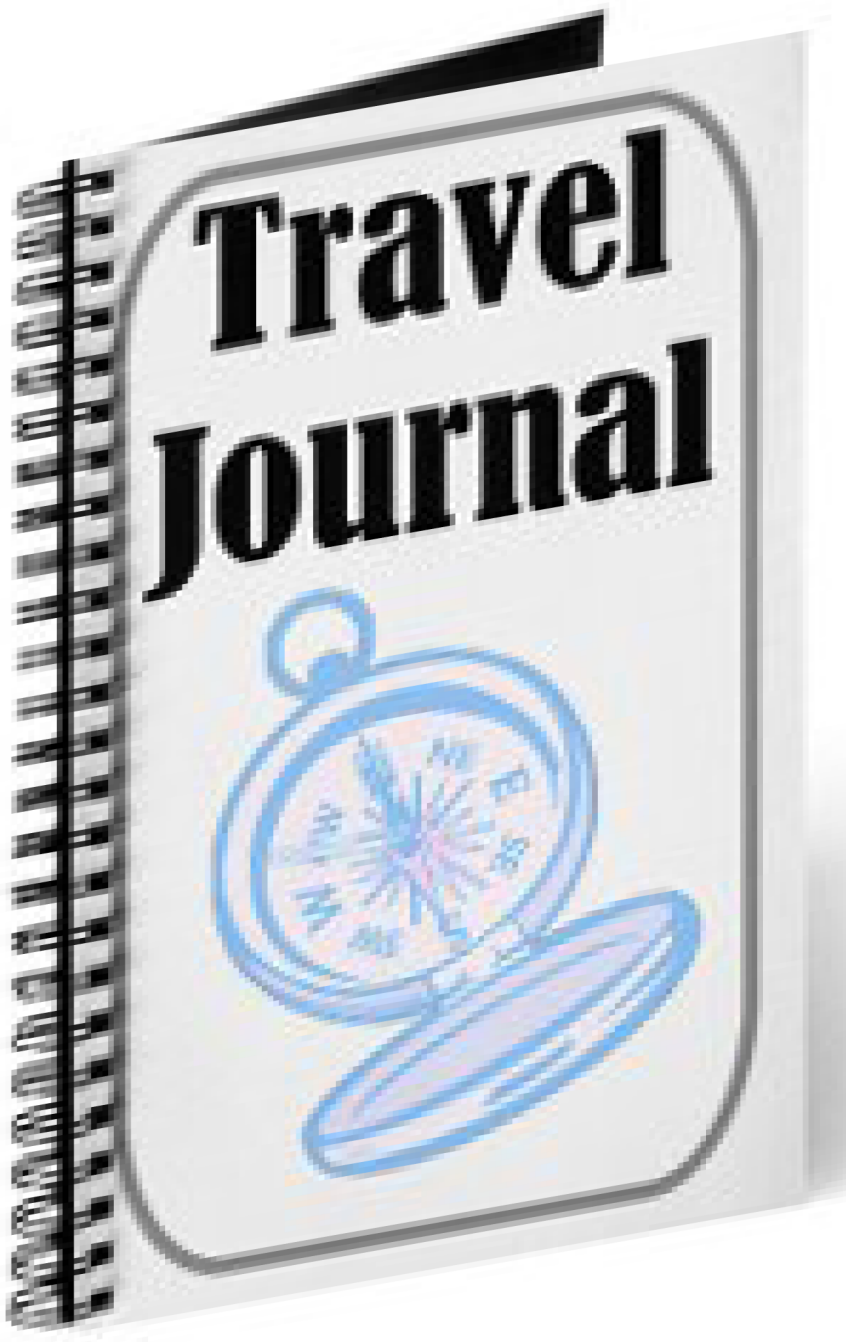
Travel Journal

Travel to a favorite place in your thoughts and write down some of the feelings you think you may have while your parent is away. You may want to write a poem or short story to send to your parent.



On Your Way

You must remember when you start to feel down to find ways to pick yourself up. Reserve time for yourself and plan activities that make you feel good and that are FUN!

Take some time to do a fitness activity:

Bowling

Biking

Swimming

Skateboarding

Basketball

Golf

Dancing

Other things you can do …

Watch a movie with a best friend.

Write a nice note to your parent.

Color or paint a picture.

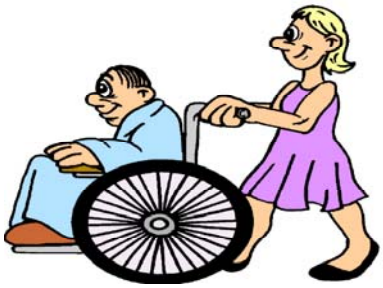
Take some pictures of special events to send to your parent who is away.

Read something fun.

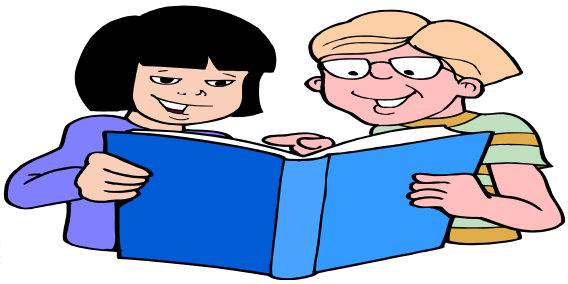
Prepare a snack for your family.

Window or Aisle Seat?

Do you want to make a difference in this world just like your parent is doing right now?



Volunteer



Read to Someone

Clean your Room

What can you do to make a difference in your home, school, and community?

Go Exploring

You can make lots of copies of this page and start a journal or diary.

Today…

One thing I learned was

_____

I did a good job finishing

_____

I helped my

_____

I did not get angry with

_____

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Security Checkpoint

Turn Negative Thoughts Into Positive Thoughts

Negative Thoughts	Positive Thoughts
• I'm so stupid.	• I learned something useful today.
• I will fail school because there is no one to help me with my homework.	• I can finish my science project with ease.
• I can't survive while my parent is gone.	• I will be okay while my parent is deployed.
• I never do anything right.	• It's okay to make mistakes as long as I learn from them.

Document the thoughts or actions that you took to turn a negative situation into a positive one:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Take a Tour

Research the area or country where your parent may be going.

What time zone are they in?

How will your parent get there?

How long will it take to travel there?

What is the population?

What type of money is used?

What language is spoken?

What is the temperature?

Does it snow where they are going?

What types of food do they serve?

What colors make up their flag?

Draw a map of where your parent is going.

Send Postcards

It's time to let your imagination and creativity take over. While your parent is away, they will miss you just as much as you will miss them. You and your family at home can help your deployed parent stay in touch while they are away.

Comedy Zone

Create an audio or videotape of you and your family telling jokes or funny stories. When you are finished you can send the tapes to your parent. Make sure your parent has the equipment needed to listen to or watch the tapes you send them.

Family Website

Using your computer software you can create a family website. On the website you can put pictures of your family and interesting information about your life. Your parent can access the website to keep updated on their family while they are gone.

Newsletter

A creative way to keep in touch with your parent who is away is to create a newsletter. In your newsletter you can include pictures and write articles about what is going on in your neighborhood or community. You can also cut out and paste articles from your local newspaper to put in your newsletter that you think might be of interest to your parent while they are away.

Souvenirs

Finally, the day has arrived to start preparing for the return of your parent. Think about all the things you want to share with your parent and create a thought card so you can write a special message to your parent. Design one card to use every day. Share how you feel about your parent returning home. Let them know how much you have missed them. Tell them how much you appreciate them.

Example:

I thought of you today …

Date:_____

Thought:_____

_____

I love you because:_____

_____

You can design and paint a t-shirt with a special message.

You can hand-paint or glue a family photo on a magnet.

Build a birdhouse with special colors or sports team logo.

Now Arriving

Your parent may return as quickly as they left. Be aware of how the reunion may affect your life and your family's new routine.

This may be a time when you will have many feelings. Some of those feelings may be happy while others may be upsetting. This is normal - it just takes time to adjust.

This may be a stressful time because everyone has changed and it takes times to get reacquainted.

This may be a time that you have to learn to share your parent with others. Everyone has missed your parent and each family member wants his or her own personal time with your parent.

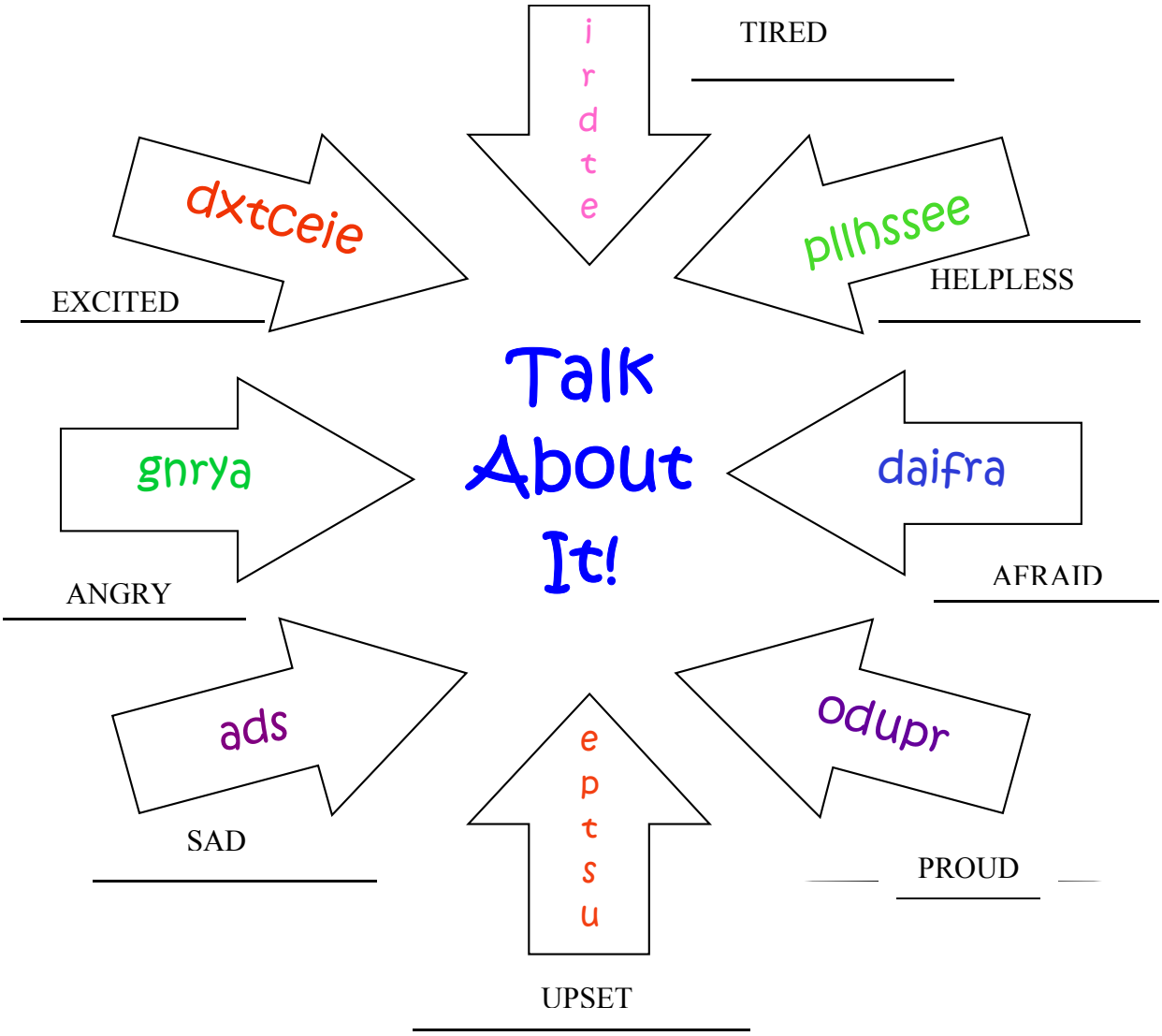
This may be a time when your parent needs to schedule time "just for them." Be understanding and supportive.

Looking Back

The journey is coming to an end; you have survived and have been successful. Let's think about all the things that you have dealt with, learned, changed and discovered.

What did I do differently while my parent was away?

What did my parents have to do differently?

The changes I made in my life are:

Answers to Sea Sick word scramble: