We tell kids: “When something really scary happens, our brains try to protect us in two ways. The first is the flight, fight, freeze response. The second is by recording as much of the situation as you can because your brain figures anything associated with this scary time could be part of the danger. So every little piece of memory- smells, sounds, tastes, the position of your body, things someone said, time of day- can develop the power to make your body react as if you are in danger again. That’s your symptoms! You put all those tiny memories together and you have a big trauma memory bully. Part of our job in TFCBT is to shrink that bully by taking away his power! We’re going to imagine that this stack of index cards represents all the micro-memory power-packs that the trauma memory bully has. Every time you tell me anything at all about your (name scary experience) I am going to write it down because when you say it, you claim it! You take it back from the trauma memory bully and he can’t use that one against you anymore! We’ll end up with a big stack of those cards and the trauma memory bully will get smaller and smaller and have less and less power to make you feel like the scary thing is happening again.” Save the cards in your office/duffel bag/whatever from session to session and then you can reinforce the idea that they are making progress and then you can sort them with the kid as you begin the trauma narration and processing.