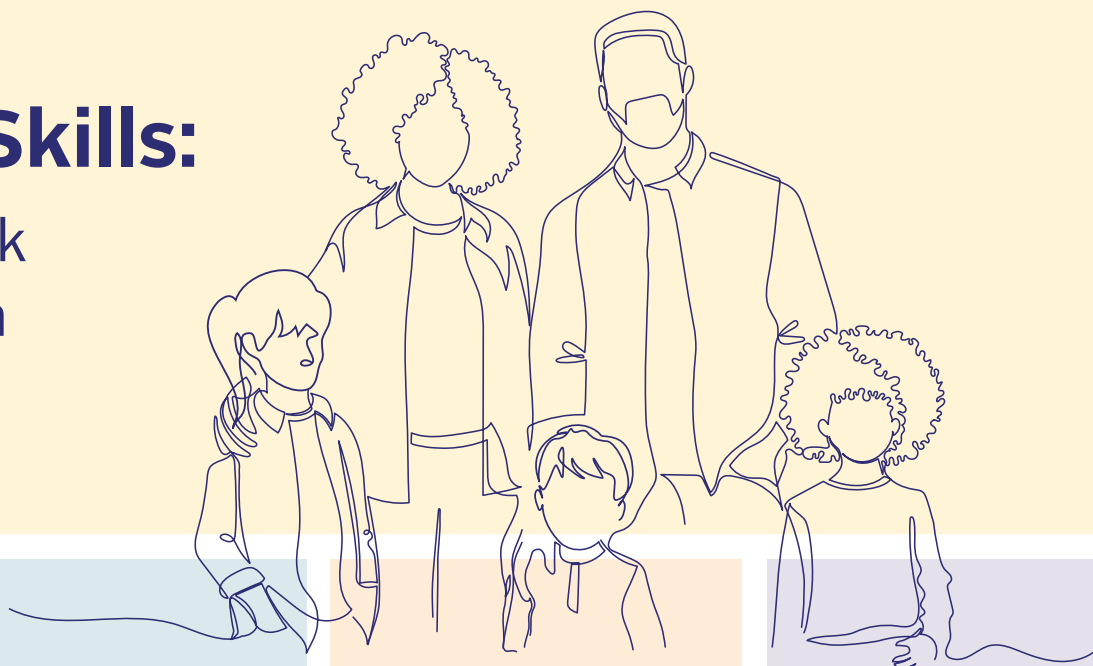


# Building Coping Skills:

A Workbook  
for Children



Common  
Thread

by  Wolfson Children's

# Children's Mental Health Workbook

Thanks for checking out our Children's Mental Health Workbook! We created this workbook to help you learn more about your mental health and why it's just as important as your physical health!

## What is mental health?

Mental health is how your brain and feelings work together. It affects how you think, how you feel and how you act.

It also includes:

- How you handle big feelings
- How you get along with others
- How you cope when things are hard

Just like your body needs care to stay healthy, your mind and feelings do too. Check-in with your mind and feelings below. What are you noticing?

**Draw a picture or use words to show how you are feeling right now.**



# Physical health vs. mental health

Learning the difference between physical and mental health can help you notice and explain what you are thinking and feeling. Knowing this difference can make it easier to understand what you need and how to take care of yourself.

**Physical health** = How your **body** feels and works

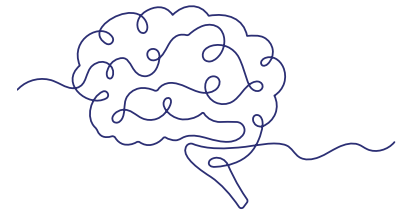
**Mental health** = How your **mind** and feelings feel and work

*Both are important and both need care!*

## Why does it matter?

### 1. You can understand what your body is telling you.

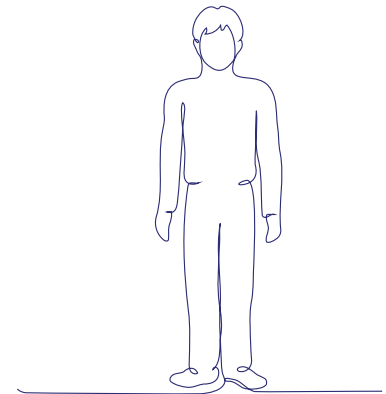
- If your stomach hurts, you might need food or rest (that's your body).
- If your stomach hurts because you're nervous, you might need to talk to someone or take deep breaths (that's your mind).



### 2. You can choose the right kind of help.

*Different problems need different solutions.*

- **Body problem** ⇨ Rest, water, doctor
- **Mind/feeling problem** ⇨ Talk, calm-down tools, support



### 3. You can explain how you feel.

- Knowing the difference helps you say things like:  
    *"My head hurts"* or *"I feel worried"*
- This makes it easier for others to help you.

**My brain helps me:**

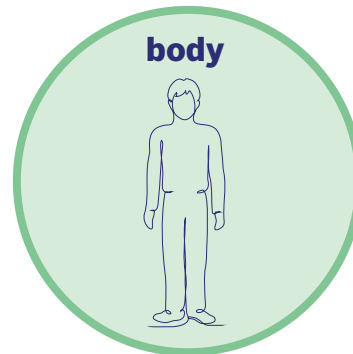
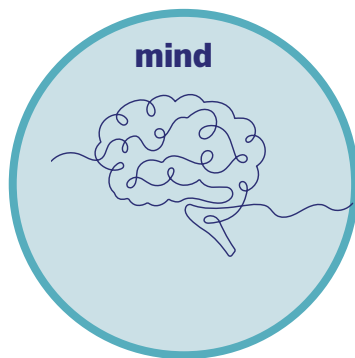
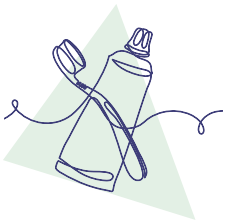
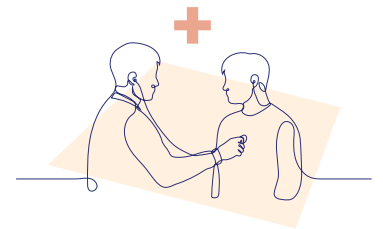
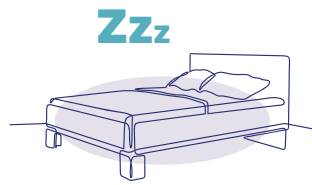
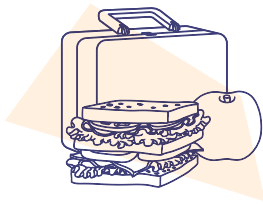
**My body helps me:**

# Physical health vs. mental health

Your body and mind work together like a team. When you take care of both, you feel better, learn more and have more fun. Let's take a look at what actions can help our physical and mental health.

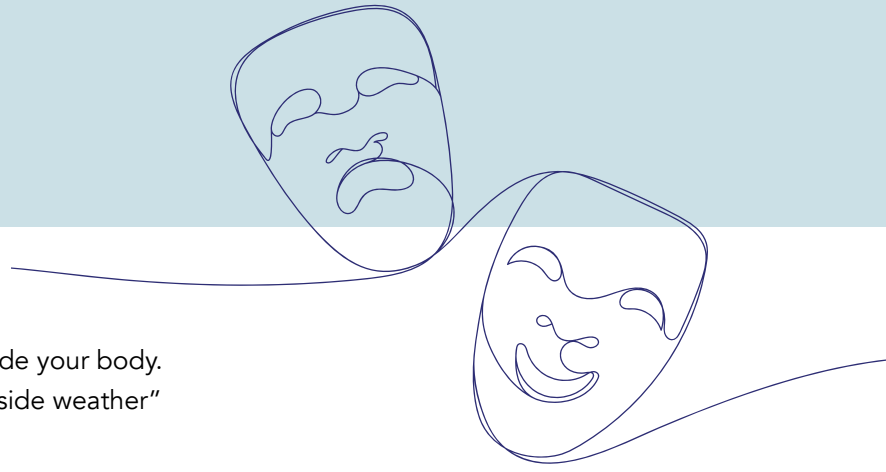
Think about each action and decide if it helps your **body**, your **brain** or **both**.  
Draw a line to show where it belongs.

**Extra credit:** Talk about each action with a friend or family member and share how it helps your mental or physical health.



Which actions help **both** your brain and your body?

# What are emotions anyway?



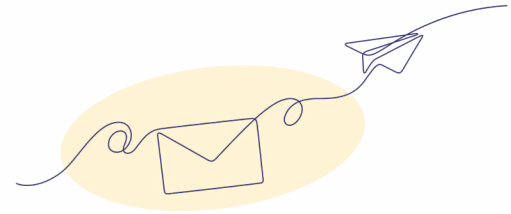
Think of your feelings or emotions like the weather inside your body. Just like the sky can be sunny, rainy or stormy, your "inside weather" changes all the time!

Here is a simple way to understand what's happening when you feel something:

## 1. Emotions are "inside messages"

Every emotion is like a little mail carrier delivering a message to your brain.

- Happy is a message saying "I like this! Let's do more of it."
- Scared is a message saying "Pay attention! Something might be unsafe."



Write down another emotion. What message might it be sending to your brain?

Emotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Message: \_\_\_\_\_

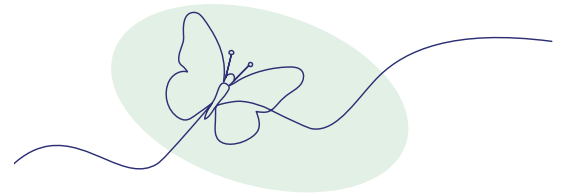
Emotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Message: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Message: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Emotions live in your body

Even though we think about emotions in our heads, we usually feel them in our bodies first.

- Nervous might feel like tiny butterflies fluttering in your tummy.
- Excited might feel like "bouncy" legs that can't stay still.



Write down another emotion. What do you feel in your body?

Emotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling in your body: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling in your body: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotion: \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling in your body: \_\_\_\_\_

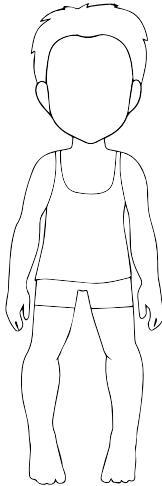
## What are emotions anyway?

Our bodies are really good at sending us clues about how we feel! Sometimes when we're nervous, our tummy might feel fluttery. When we're angry, our face might feel hot or our fists might squeeze tight. And when we're happy, we might feel light, bouncy or full of energy.

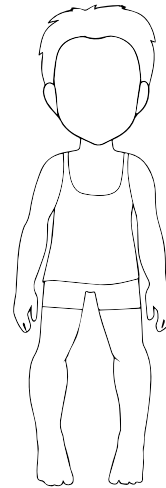
This worksheet will help you become a "body detective" and notice where you feel different emotions in your body. The more we understand our body's clues, the easier it is to take care of our feelings!

**Think of an emotion and draw what you notice in your body when you feel it.**

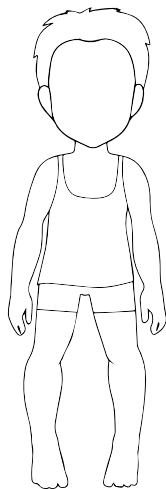
Emotion: **Happy**



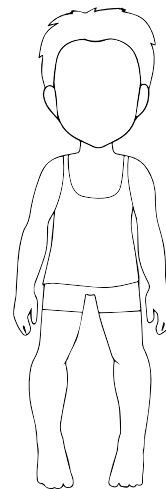
Emotion: **Sad**



Emotion: **Nervous**

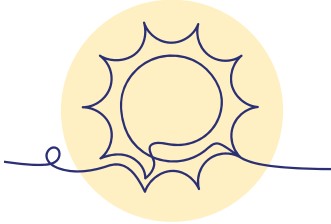


Emotion: **Angry**

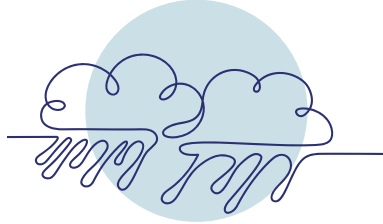


# What are emotions anyway?

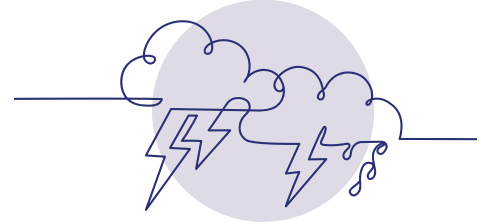
Our emotions are like the weather. Every day they can be a little different, and that's okay! Noticing and naming what you are feeling can help you ask for what you need and feel better. Use the weather report below to help you notice what you are feeling and how strong those feelings are.



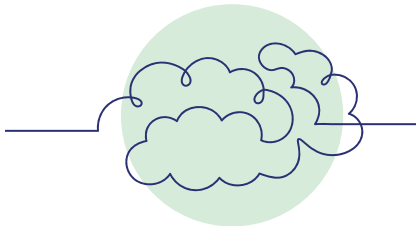
**Sunny**  
happy, calm



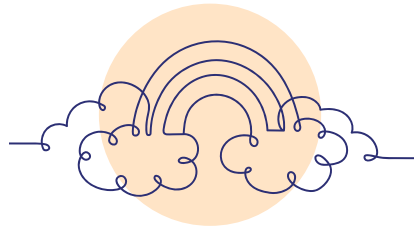
**Rainy**  
sad



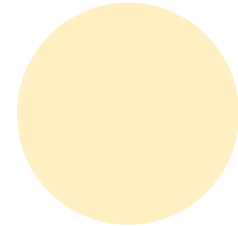
**Thunderstorm**  
angry, overwhelmed



**Foggy**  
confused



**Rainbow**  
mixed feelings



**Create your own**

## 1. Today's weather (What emotion can you feel now?)

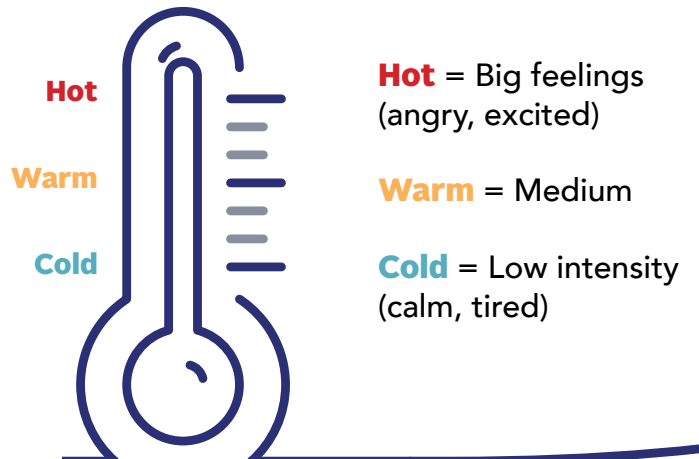
Today, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

You can draw your own weather report below.

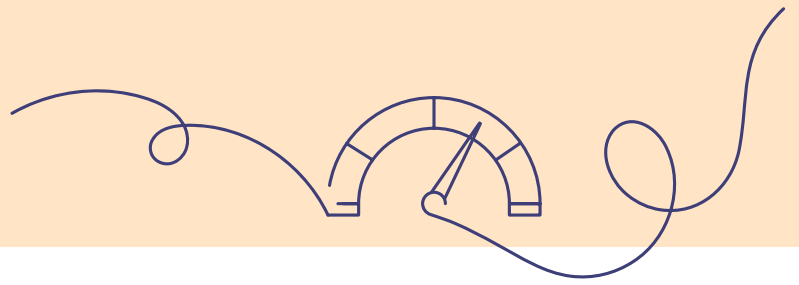
**My weather report:**

## 2. Feeling intensity (temperature scale)

How big is your feeling? Pick a color that shows how strong it feels. Color in the thermometer, where big feelings fill up more and small feelings fill up less!



# There are no “bad” emotions



Sometimes people think being sad or mad is “bad,” but all emotions are okay to have. Just like we need rain to help flowers grow, sometimes we need to feel sad to help us understand what we care about.

**The golden rule of emotions:** It is okay to feel **whatever** you are feeling. What matters is what you do with the feeling (like taking a deep breath or asking for a hug).

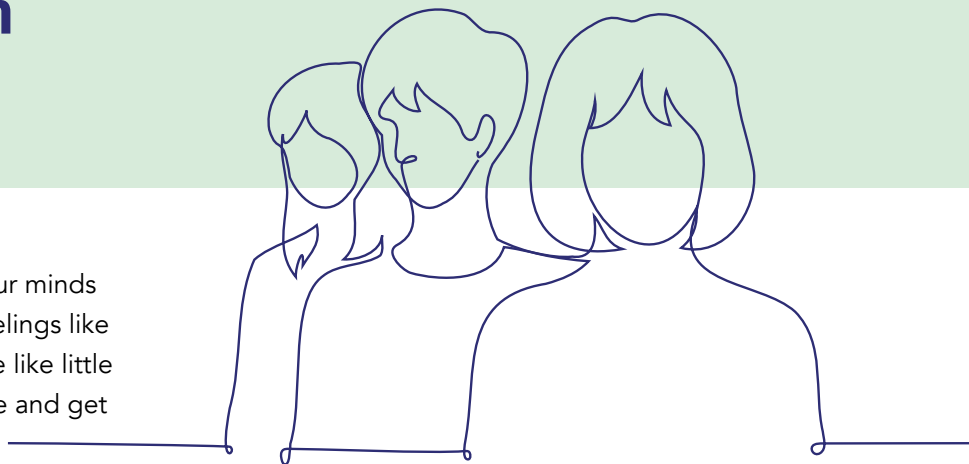
Think about each of the emotions in the color wheel below. Pick a color that best matches that feeling and color in that part of the wheel. Remember that all feelings are equally important and that there is no such thing as a “bad” feeling.



Can you think of any emotions missing from the wheel?  
List them below:

# What can I do with big feelings?

Coping skills are things we can do to help our minds and bodies feel better when we have big feelings like sadness, anger, worry or frustration. They are like little tools that we can use to calm down, feel safe and get back in control.



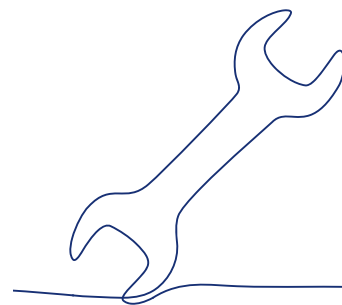
For example, coping skills can be taking deep breaths, talking to someone we trust, drawing a picture or taking a break. These skills help us slow down, think more clearly and make better choices.

Just like we use tools to fix things, coping skills help us take care of our feelings. The more we practice them, the easier it gets to handle tough moments!

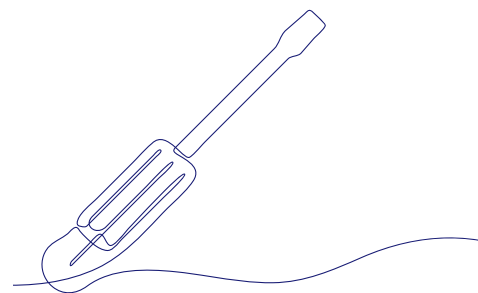
## Think about it

What coping skills, or tools, have you used in the past to help you handle big feelings? Write or draw two coping skills you've tried below. Don't forget to color in the tools and draw your own.

### 1. A coping skill I already know is:



### 2. A coping skill I already know is:

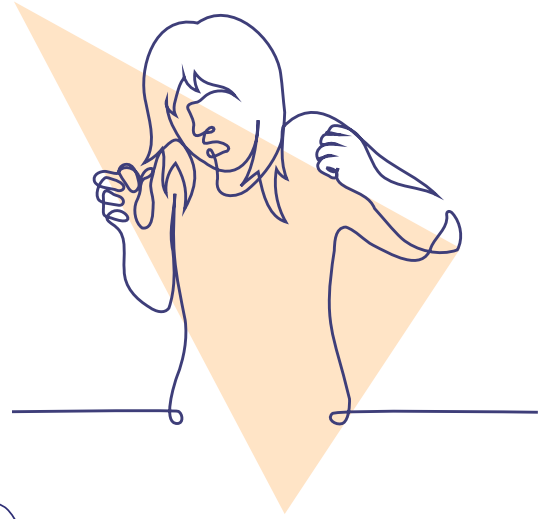


# What can I do with big feelings?

When you have big emotions, what you do with your big emotions matters. Some choices help you feel better and some can make things harder. Below is a list of both helpful and unhelpful ways to deal with big emotions. Check off the choices that you feel are more helpful.

## Helpful vs. unhelpful choices:

- Take deep breaths
- Blaming others for how I feel
- Talk to a trusted adult
- Yelling at others
- Hitting or hurting someone
- Take a break
- Draw or write your feelings
- Breaking things
- Keeping everything inside
- Move your body (walk, stretch, play)
- Use calming tools (counting, grounding)
- Ask for help
- Go to a quiet space
- Saying mean things to yourself
- Running away without telling someone
- Giving up right away
- Listen to music
- Use kind words



Use the spaces below to add some helpful and unhelpful choices that you can think of.

Helpful choices:

Unhelpful choices:

# Coping skills practice



Using coping skills takes practice. It's difficult to remember to use coping skills when emotions are really big. That's why it's helpful to practice these skills when you are calm and in control. Practicing coping skills is like growing muscles. The more you practice, the stronger and better at using the skill you will become. We've provided you with some coping skills to practice and a monthly tracker to help you keep track of the days you practice.

Here are five things to remember when you are practicing your coping skills:

1

## It's okay to have big feelings

All feelings are allowed, even the big, uncomfortable ones. Coping skills help you handle them, not make them "go away."

4

## Notice what helps

Pay attention to what makes your body feel calmer or your mind feel clearer. Those are the skills that work best for you!

2

## Take it slow

Coping skills work best when you slow your body down. You don't have to rush. Give yourself time.

5

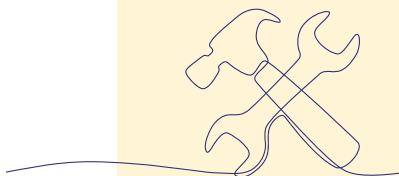
## Ask for help when you need it

You don't have to do it alone. Talking to a trusted adult or friend can be a really helpful coping skill too.

3

## Keep trying

Sometimes a coping skill doesn't work right away and that's okay. Try it again or try a different one.



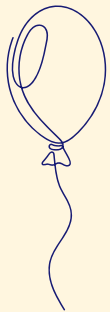
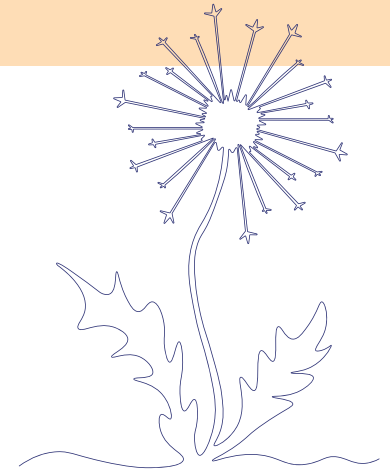
You can think of coping skills like tools in a toolbox. The more you practice using them, the easier it gets to pick the right one when you need it.

## Coping skills practice: Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises: Breathing exercises can help your body and brain feel calm, kind of like hitting a “reset” button when your feelings get really big.

Slow, deep breathing sends a message to your brain that says “I’m safe.” When your brain gets that message, it helps your body relax. Your heart slows down, your muscles loosen and your thoughts can feel clearer.

Below are four different breathing skills. Try each one to see which feels best.



### Balloon breathing

Pretend your belly is a balloon. Breathe in slowly through your nose and “fill up” the balloon. Then breathe out slowly through your mouth and let the balloon shrink.



### Five-finger breathing

Trace up one finger as you breathe in, and down the finger as you breathe out. Keep going until you’ve traced all five fingers.



### Ocean breathing

Breathe in slowly through your nose, then out through your mouth while making a soft “whoosh” sound like the ocean.



### Dragon breathing

Take a deep breath in, then breathe out strongly through your mouth like a dragon breathing fire (you can even stick out your tongue!)

## Check in:

Which skill felt the best?

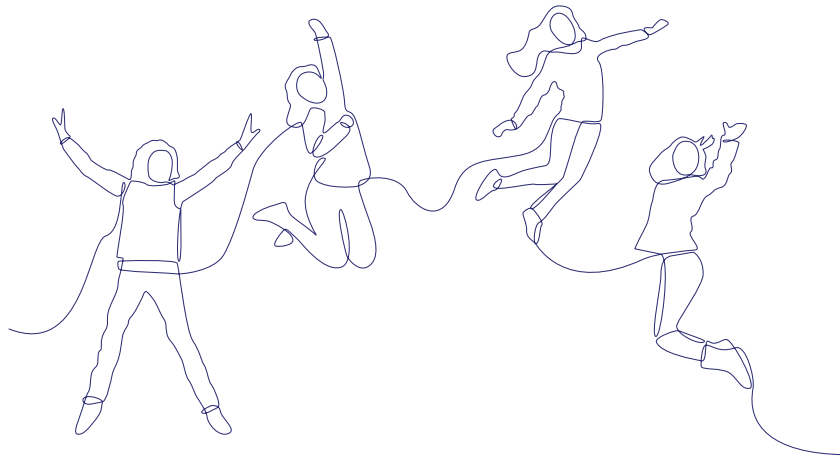
Why?

# Coping skills practice: Body movement

## Body movement

When you have big emotions, like anger, worry or excitement, your body can feel full of extra energy. Your muscles might feel tight, wiggly or restless. That's your body trying to figure out what to do with all those big feelings.

When you stretch, you help your muscles relax and loosen up. When you move (like jumping, walking, or shaking your arms), you help your body release the extra energy inside. This sends a message to your brain that says "I'm okay," and helps your mind feel calmer too.



Below are three ways to move your body. Try each one to see which feels best.

### Stretch your body

- Reach your arms up to the sky like you're trying to touch the clouds.
- Slowly bend down like a rag doll and let your arms hang.
- Roll your shoulders forward and backward like you're drawing big circles.

Move slowly and breathe while you stretch. As your body loosens up, your feelings can start to feel a little lighter too.

### Body soothers

- Squeeze and relax your hands like making fists and letting go.
- Press your feet firmly into the ground and notice how it feels.
- Give yourself a gentle hug or "butterfly hug" (arms crossed, tapping shoulders).

It can help if you take a short rest and then repeat the skill a few additional times.

### Big energy releasers

- Shake your hands and feet for 10 seconds, then stop and notice calm.
- Push against a wall like you're trying to move it.
- Jump in place a few times, then take slow breaths.

It can help if you take a short rest and then repeat the skill a few additional times.

## Check in:

Which skill felt the best?

Why?

# Coping skills practice: Self-expression

**Self-expression** means finding ways to show what you're feeling on the inside, and it can really help your emotions feel calmer and easier to understand.

Sometimes feelings get all jumbled up inside, like a big knot. When you draw, write, talk, dance or create something, you give those feelings a way to come out instead of staying stuck.

When you express yourself, your brain starts to make sense of what you're feeling. That can make big emotions feel smaller and less confusing. It also helps your body relax, because you're not holding everything in anymore.

Below are a list of expressive ways to cope with big feelings:

## Inside vs. outside me:

Draw what you look like on the outside and what you feel like on the inside.

## Worry monster drawing:

Draw a silly monster and "give" it your worries.

## Calm down coloring page:

Slowly color a picture while focusing on your breathing.

## Feelings rainbow:

Create a rainbow where each color is a different feeling.

## Before & after picture:

Draw how you feel before and after using a coping skill.

## Feelings journal:

Make a feelings journal and write or draw how your day went.

## Share your feelings:

Talk to a trusted adult or friend about what is going on inside.

## Feelings poem:

Make up a poem about your mood using simple words or rhymes.

## Say it out loud:

Practice saying "I feel..." sentences to help put feelings into words.

## Coping skills practice: Self-expression

### Scribble out your feelings

1. Take a piece of paper and a crayon, marker or pencil.
2. Close your eyes (if you feel comfortable) and make a big scribble on the page. Let your hand move however it wants!
3. Open your eyes and look at your scribble. What does it remind you of?
4. Turn your scribble into a picture by adding shapes, colors or details.
5. When you're done, think or talk about your picture. What feeling does it show?



## Coping skills practice: Self-expression

### Draw your safe or happy place

1. Think about a place where you feel safe, calm or really happy.
2. Take a piece of paper and your favorite drawing tools.
3. Draw what that place looks like. What do you see around you?
4. Add details like colors, people, animals or things that make the place feel special.
5. When you're done, look at your picture and notice how it makes your body feel.



## Coping skills practice: Self-expression

### Write a comic strip about your feelings

1. Draw three to six boxes on your paper like a comic strip or use the space below.
2. Think about something that happened in your day.
3. In each box, draw a picture of what happened, step by step.
4. Add speech bubbles or words to show what people said or thought.
5. In the last box, show how you felt and what helped you feel better (if anything did).

The image shows a comic strip template with six panels arranged in a staggered, overlapping layout. The panels are outlined in different colors: green, yellow, teal, orange, pink, and purple. The panels are empty, intended for drawing and writing.

# My coping plan

When I have big feelings, I can use my coping skills to help my body and mind feel calm. Fill out the coping plan below so you know what to do next time your feelings grow really big.

## 1. How I feel when things are hard:

(Examples: Mad, worried, sad, overwhelmed, wiggly)

## 2. How my body might feel:

(Examples: Tight muscles, fast heart, shaky, hot, restless)

## 3. Things I can do to feel better:

- Take slow, deep breaths
- Stretch or move my body
- Draw, color or scribble
- Talk to someone I trust
- Take a break or quiet time

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. People who can help me:

• \_\_\_\_\_

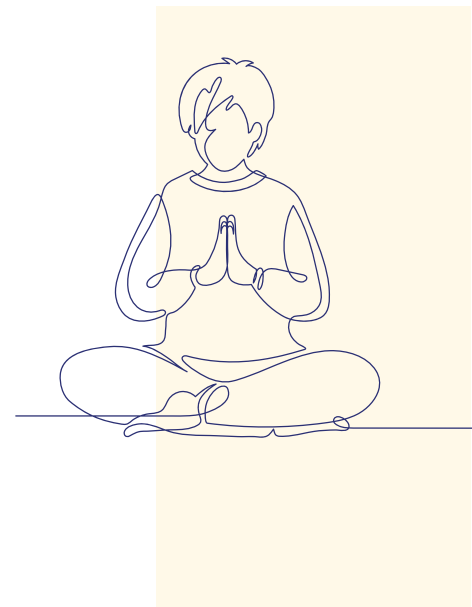
• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. My calm-down reminder:

(Example: "I can handle this." "Feelings come and go." "I am safe.")

**Remember:** It's okay to have big feelings. My coping plan helps me take care of myself.



Use this calendar to write down and keep track of your coping skills practice.

*Optional:* Rate your mood on a scale of 1-10 before practicing your skill and after practicing your skill.

MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

