



my family time is mine.

every question you've had
about family time + tips and
tricks to navigate it all.

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RESEARCH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
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SYDNEY

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All resources created as part of the project are available from the Research Centre for Children and Families website.

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about the author

Hey there! I'm Bobby, and just like you I have experience in the out-of-home care system. I lived in a lot of different places and with a lot of different people from when I came into care at seven years old to when I left at eighteen.



I found family time tough and had a really hard time managing my emotions before and after. Sometimes I'd feel excited, sad, angry, disappointed or exhausted and sometimes I'd feel those things all at once! Over time, I learned a bunch of tips and tricks that made my feelings around family time easier to feel, easier to understand and easier to communicate with my carers, family, and caseworker. I think everyone should have those same skills because they really help! Out-of-home care can be really, really hard sometimes, but there's lots of things that can make it less hard and you deserve to know those things.

I hope you find this book helpful!

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The background is a solid teal color with various abstract brushstrokes and shapes in lighter and darker shades of teal. There are some white brushstrokes, including a large one on the left and several smaller ones scattered throughout. The overall style is artistic and hand-drawn.

CHAPTER ONE

**you have the
right to enjoy
time with
your family.**

It's important to know your rights so you can advocate (speak up) for yourself. You have a lot of rights when it comes to family time:

I have the right to be listened to and have a say in decisions that affect me. This means:

- having my opinion asked for and listened to when adults are making decisions about family time that affect me.
- being included and having a say about plans for my family time.
- having fun and doing activities that interest me.

I have the right to feel safe, valued and protected at family time, which means:

- being able to feel good about myself and who I am, no matter what my sexuality, gender identity, race, culture, religion or passions are.
- being included and treated fairly.
- not being bullied, discriminated against or judged for who I am or what I believe in.
- having a trusted adult I can confide in if things happen at family time that I am not happy with.

I have the right to have contact with people who matter to me. This means:

- seeing and keeping in regular contact with my brothers and sisters, family, friends and other people who are important to me — if it is safe.
- having regular contact and support from my caseworker (and in private if I want that).

I have the right to connect with my culture:

- by knowing what my cultural heritage is and who my family connections are.
- by connecting with my Country, community and cultural services.

I have the right to set boundaries, by:

- communicating what language and treatment I will accept, and any topics of conversation that are off limits.
- speaking up if I am not comfortable attending family time.

If you feel your rights aren't being respected and you need someone who can help you, please talk to a trusted adult or reach out to one of the supports listed on the last page of this book.

What do other kids think?

“

I would like more control, being able to talk freely about what I want.

Dylan

It means a lot when I get to have a say in what we do at family time.

”

Jess

“

Everyone needs that special attention, but there were seven of us kids there visiting with mum. That's the wrong way to do it but I'm not sure if there's much I could do about it. We get to see mum more now and have those special moments.

Aaron

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

What are your favourite things to do at family time? What is something you'd like to do at your next family time?

QUESTION TWO

Do you feel like you can talk to your family / caseworker / carers / guardians about what you like and don't like to do at family time?

QUESTION THREE

What makes family time special for you?

QUESTION FOUR

Who do you feel you can talk to if something unsafe or something that makes you unhappy happens at family time?

CHAPTER TWO



The background is a vibrant green with various white and light green abstract shapes and brushstrokes. There are diagonal white lines in the upper right, a large white brushstroke in the upper left, and several white circles and irregular shapes scattered throughout. The overall style is modern and artistic.

**it's okay to
not feel okay
before or after
family time.**

Sometimes you might feel things and emotions that don't really make sense. Like how you can feel sad about things that usually make you happy, or you might just feel angry for no real reason! Learning about why you feel these things and how you can work with them can be really cool.

It's totally normal to feel a bit nervous before family time even if you really like family time and are looking forward to it! And in the same way, it's totally normal to feel sad or disappointed when it's over, even if you had a really great time. Visiting your family can bring up a lot of emotions. These emotions are totally valid and deserve to be felt, and sometimes it can be really helpful to know more about why you're feeling those emotions so you can regulate them. Regulating your emotions doesn't mean pushing them down or hoping they will go away, it means letting yourself feel them and working through them. It means getting some control back! Once you understand a bit more about what you're feeling and why you might be feeling that way, it can be really helpful to talk about them with someone you trust, like your caseworker, carer or the person who drives you to family time.

What can I do when I'm feeling anxious, angry, or overwhelmed about family time?

Calm

Take 5 slow breaths. Inhale and exhale, then pause.

Remind

Remind yourself that this feeling will end, you won't always feel like this. Feelings are temporary.

Distract

Look around you. Distract your brain by finding five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can smell, two things you can hear and one thing you can taste. Distract your body by running cold water over your hands, tapping your fingers or toes, or let yourself watch or read something that makes you laugh.

Debrief

Either by yourself or with a trusted adult, think or chat through what happened and how you felt. Try breaking it down like this: 'I felt _____ because of _____. I did _____ and it made me feel better.'

This is the feelings master list.

Having the right words to describe how you feel can help you to understand exactly what you are feeling and why you might be feeling that way. It can also really help you communicate how you are feeling to your carer, family, caseworker, friends, teachers and any other person who might be important to you.

There's a lot of words to describe a lot of feelings, but here's a few that might help you:



Happy

joyful
delighted
glad
pleased
content
enthusiastic

loving
content
marvellous
excited
eager
peaceful

hopeful
cheerful
optimistic
proud
overjoyed
thrilled



Worry

afraid
scared
anxious
fearful
panicky
terrified

jumpy
nervous
shaky
threatened
distressed
tense

uneasy
frightened
paralysed
guilty
cautious
unsure



Surprise

stunned
dismayed
perplexed
moved
speechless
awestruck

confused
astonished
shocked
taken aback
shaken up
unsettled

amazed
wowed
uncertain
startled
puzzled
rattled



Sad

disappointed
lonely
isolated
upset
hurt
sorrowful

dismayed
regretful
grieving
powerless
ashamed
despaired

sorry
empty
dejected
blue
lost
devalued



Anger

hostile
agitated
frustrated
annoyed
jealous
resentful

envious
disgusted
grumpy
exasperated
enraged
revolted

fuming
outraged
offended
bugged
stormy
furious

If you are unsure of the meanings of some of these words, ask an adult or look for them in the dictionary!

A really good exercise to try when you're in a situation that's making you feel confused about exactly what you might be feeling is to do a 'feelings check in'.

Ask yourself these questions, and just like the Quick Quiz you can do this either in your head, in a notebook, or with a trusted adult like your caseworker or carer — whatever works for you!

1 What happened?
(describe the situation)

2 What is going through your mind?
(describe your thoughts)

3 What emotions are you feeling?
(note the intensity from 1-10)

4 How can you think about the situation differently? *(challenge your thoughts)*

A lot of things are out of your control, but you can have a say in how you react and feel about them.

Have you ever seen a little kid have a temper tantrum at the shops because their caregiver won't get them a toy or some lollies? You can see the frustration on their face, they want that thing so bad and just can't understand why they aren't getting what they want. So they scream because they don't have the words or skills to communicate their wants and needs in any other way. Temper tantrums are very normal for little kids, and feeling frustrated because you're not being understood or your needs and wants aren't being met is also normal no matter how old you are.

But just like that little kid in the shops can't always get what they want, life doesn't always give us what we want or go as planned. Sometimes it goes the opposite! And that might make us want to throw ourselves on the ground and scream as loud as our lungs will let us. But while that might get a little bit of the frustration out, it never really helps or changes anything for long, plus we can learn skills to communicate better than that.



Now let's talk more about anger.

Anger is a big feeling, and getting angry is not often a fun or good thing because it doesn't make us feel great. I'm sure there's been times when you've been really angry before — we all have! Sometimes you might be really angry about your situation and all the things that are out of your control. Sometimes the actions of others might make you want to explode, and it's okay to be upset and disappointed when things don't work out. Maybe your family member doesn't turn up to family time, or family time doesn't go as expected. There's no point beating yourself up and feeling guilty about your anger, but maybe there is a way to learn how to be calmer moving forward.

What should I do when I'm angry?

Try not to lose control if you get angry because taking it out on others or yourself never fixes it. Instead, admit to yourself that you are angry, try to figure out why and do things that make you feel better.

It can really help to talk about your anger with an adult like your carer or caseworker. Once you talk about anger, those bad feelings usually start to go away.

Family time can bring a lot of overwhelming emotions. A great way to manage those emotions is to come up with a routine!

An easy way to get a routine going is to come up with a list of things that you enjoy doing, or that make you feel happier or more in control of your emotions. Once you've got a bunch of great things you can do when you're feeling overwhelmed about family time, talk to your carers or even your caseworker/ the person who travels with you to family time about implementing it as a routine for before/after family time to help you regulate your emotions. Here's a few suggestions to help get the ball rolling:



What do other kids think?

“ I cry in the car on the way home from seeing my family. Sometimes it’s because I’m sad I can’t stay with them but sometimes I don’t why I cry! But I know it’s okay to feel sad and I can talk to my caseworker and carer about what I’m feeling.

Ricky

It’s really hard seeing my family sometimes because I wish I could stay, but I know I can’t.

”

Katelyn

“ Sometimes I get so angry that I might explode but I’m learning how to talk about it.

Ayden

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

What might you do the next time you feel upset about family time?

QUESTION TWO

Who do you feel you can talk to about your emotions around family time?

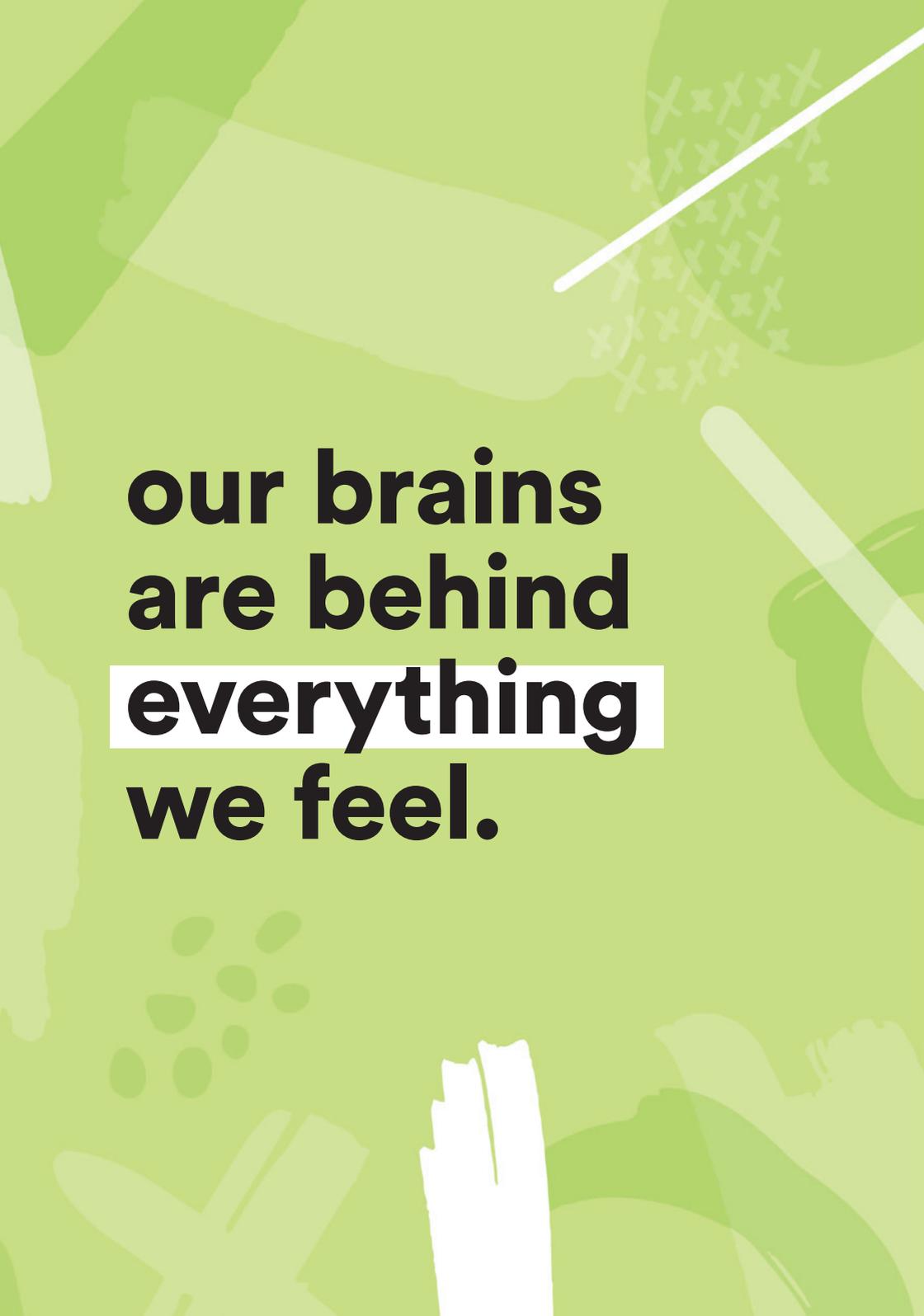
QUESTION THREE

What are some things that cheer you up when you're feeling down about family time?

QUESTION FOUR

What are some things you might put in your before family time routine and your after family time routine?

CHAPTER THREE

The background is a vibrant green with various abstract elements. There are overlapping translucent shapes, a white diagonal line in the upper right, a cluster of small white 'x' marks, a white brushstroke at the bottom, and a white rectangular highlight behind the word 'everything'.

**our brains
are behind
everything
we feel.**

Our brains are pretty amazing, and they have lots of clever ways to help us when we need it — without us even realising what they're doing!

Did you know that we have a part of our brain called the **amygdala**? The amygdala is like an alarm in your brain that's always checking to see if you are safe. It's more like a smoke alarm than a wake up alarm though, and sometimes all it takes is burnt toast to set it off! If you get worried, stressed or scared, then it turns on the alarm. Our bodies and brain respond to this alarm in ways to keep us safe, and those ways are called **fight, flight, freeze** and **fawn**. Your brain might respond like this after something happens that makes you feel anxious, unsafe, upset or angry, or if you're reminded of a time when you felt unsafe. When we feel these things, we can be grateful that our body is looking after us in the best way it knows.

For each of the Four F's, there's specific things you can do to try to shake out of what you're feeling.



What is fight?

Fight is a response to frightening situations that makes your body feel like it's preparing for battle. It might make you want to scream and hit something, to fight back at the thing that is making you feel unsafe.

What does it feel like when my body wants to fight?

- wanting to yell, stomp, kick or punch
- clenching your fists
- feeling hot inside
- fast heart rate and breaths

What can I do when my body wants to fight?

- Dance! Choose a song to rock, sway or move rhythmically to.
- 5 slow breaths. Inhale and exhale, then pause and do it again if you need to.
- Pop some bubble wrap! Even if you're feeling great, you should pop some bubble wrap. Everyone needs to pop bubble wrap sometimes.
- Blow some bubbles, see how big they can get!
- Go for a stomp. Find space outside and see how far you can hop on one foot and two feet.

What is **flight**?

Flight is a response where your body prepares to run away from your scary situation to keep you safe.

What does it feel like when my body wants to **flee**?

- feeling restless and fidgety
- your heart pounding and your breath feels fast
- feeling trapped
- shaky legs and feet

What can I do when my body wants to **flee**?

- Walk backwards. Decide on a spot and walk backwards to it. You can count steps or make your steps bigger or smaller.
- Blow up balloons. Try to see how small and big you can blow the balloon up to be.
- Put some headphones in and listen to nature sounds that make you happy, like the beach or a forest filled with birds.
- Mediate! Sit somewhere comfy and think of a place where you feel happy and safe.
- Find a piece of string and put it down in a straight line on the ground. Pretend it's a tightrope!

What is freeze?

Freeze is when your body knows that sometimes staying still is the best way to keep you safe from stressful situations or threats to our safety.

What does it feel like when my body wants to freeze?

- like it's too hard to talk
- feeling frozen, numb or stuck in your body
- feeling spacey and disconnected
- holding your breath

What can I do when my body wants to freeze?

- Look around you. Try to find five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can smell, two things you can hear and one thing you can taste.
- Drum on something, use your hands, some chopsticks. See if you can get to 80BPM.
- Yoga! Learn some fun poses like child pose and cat's pose and get your body moving.
- Skip. Count your skips until you lose count.
- Take a deep breath and ROAR as loud as you can.

What is fawn?

Fawn is when your body and brain tries to please the people around you to calm down conflict and bring back a sense of safety in stressful situations.

What does it feel like when my body wants to fawn?

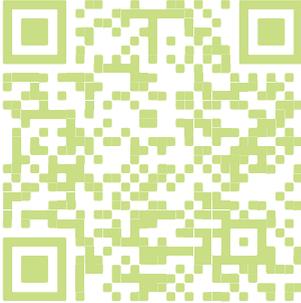
- too scared to talk in case you say the wrong thing
- feeling like you need to ‘fix’ something or do something to change someone else’s mood
- high heart rate
- thoughts going really fast through your mind

What can I do when my body wants to fawn?

- Play the ‘my medal a day’ game — award a medal a day to each other for something that you notice has gone well, or been achieved. This can be done by telling each other what their medal each day is.
- Karaoke! Pick your favourite song to sing to and sing along to it loud.
- Play the ‘would you rather’ game — similar but different choices: Coke/Fanta, McDonald’s/KFC, Bath/Shower etc

Music can be a great distractor.

Here's some Spotify playlists filled with great music that you can listen to that might help when you're feeling some of the stress responses.



Fight



Flight



Freeze



Fawn

Now let's talk a bit about anxiety.

Feeling anxious is a very normal feeling, even if the thing you're anxious about feels small or silly. As you learned in the pages before this one, anxiety comes from our bodies learning how to protect us from threats and danger. Back in the day, our bodies learned this to protect us from wild animals and other big and scary threats, but nowadays it's also learned to protect us from other threats, like being worried about a test or a party or going somewhere new. You might feel really anxious before family time, and that's normal — your body knows that there's a lot of things that can be overwhelming about family time and it has learned how to do protect you without you even realising!

A really important thing to do when we're feeling anxious or feel our fight, flight, freeze or fawn response kick in is to remind ourselves that things will be okay. Not in the way that people might say 'don't worry, everything will be fine', because we know that never really helps. But more in the way of:

WHATEVER HAPPENS, I WILL GET THROUGH IT.

Sure a school test might not go well and maybe family time won't go as great as you wanted or planned, but you will get through it.

Reminding ourselves that we will get through the hard and scary things is part of **resilience**. Resilience means being able to bounce back when things go wrong. I'm sure you can think of a lot of times that you've proved that you are a strong and resilient person — you've gotten through a lot of really hard times, even if you didn't think you could at the time!

A lot of anxiety can look like this:

If (*insert thing here*) happens



I won't be able to get through it.

Sometimes when people are trying to calm our anxieties, they focus on the first part, on telling us that the thing we're worried about will never happen. This usually comes from a place of good intentions, but doesn't really help because what if that thing does happen? So instead let's focus on the second part, the thought that you won't be able to get through it. Whatever you might be anxious about, remember that you will get through it and have proved over and over again how strong you are and can be. And don't forget, there are a lot of people around you (carer, guardian, caseworker, teacher, and other adults/friends you trust) that you can reach out to when you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed. You are strong, but everyone needs a little help and support sometimes and that's okay!

What do other kids think?

“ When I get so overwhelmed I can't talk, it makes me feel even more scared. So I remind myself that I am safe and that my words will come back.

Deklan

Knowing that my brain is doing things to protect me makes me be nicer to it when I'm feeling things that I don't understand.

”

Fei

“ When I feel scared or grumpy about family time, I go outside and play basketball. My carers know that I need some time alone and that basketball helps me calm down.

Aliviyah

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

Which of the Four F's do you think you feel more often? Are you able to notice when you're feeling them?

QUESTION TWO

What things might you try to do the next time you feel anxious?

QUESTION THREE

What is something you find yourself often feeling anxious about? How do you feel about it now that you know more about anxiety?

QUESTION FOUR

What is your favourite song to listen to when you feel upset or worried or angry?

CHAPTER FOUR

**knowing
how to
communicate
effectively
can be a big
help.**

Communication is something that can be a bit tricky, but it is really important to try to help other people understand what we mean.

Communication is essentially just sharing information, such as our thoughts, feelings and experiences with others. There's lots of ways to communicate — you can use words, your body and face, writing or typing it down, etc! A huge part of being a human is learning how to communicate well with others, because everyone wants and deserves to feel heard and understood.

Sometimes it doesn't go smoothly. The real problem is that it's hard to get a thought that's in your head over to the head of another person exactly the same as it is in your head! Plus it can be hard to put what you're thinking and feeling into words. Because of this, sometimes the other person might get a slightly wrong or super wrong idea of what you are trying to communicate.

You can get better at describing what you're thinking and feeling though, and better at understanding how the person you're communicating with tends to understand the things you say. Sometimes it takes a few goes and using different words to help the other person understand what you mean.

Being a good listener is a lot more than just allowing the other person to speak. You've got to really hear what the other person is saying to understand what they mean.

How to become a better listener:

- Pay attention. Try not to be distracted by things around you.
- Give them eye contact, notice their facial expressions and body language.
- Instead of thinking about how you are feeling or what you want to say next, put your thoughts aside and try to focus on understanding exactly what someone is saying to you.
- Be responsive. Nod your head or ask them questions to be certain that you're understanding what they really mean.

**EVERY GOOD CONVERSATION STARTS
WITH GOOD LISTENING.**

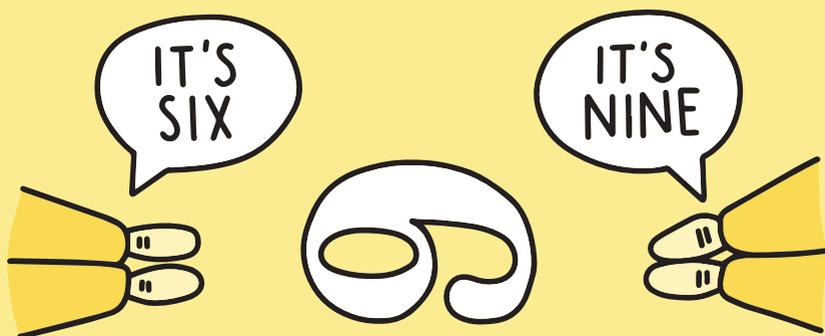
Everyone has the responsibility to communicate clearly, including you!

How to become a better communicator:

- Use a respectful voice. It's hard for people to hear what you're trying to communicate if you are yelling or being rude, and people don't like to communicate with people who are being disrespectful with their words or tone.
- Keep an open mind. It can be easy to jump into communication thinking we already know the whole story, but often when we have an open mind and listen to others, we find out there is much more that we did not know beforehand!
- Be kind. We all make mistakes and we all have different experiences and understandings, so it's important to express our thoughts without being mean or rude.
- Try to think about the other person's needs when it comes to communication. Like when you're communicating to someone younger than you, you might try not to use big words, etc.
- Communicate your needs! Maybe you might need other people to be more patient with you as you try to think of how to best respond, and you can definitely ask for that.

Something that is really important in communication is understanding other people's perspectives.

A really big thing that is important in life but especially in communication is **empathy**. Empathy means seeing people's point of view — to put yourself in their shoes and imagine what you would feel, think, or do if you were in their situation. Look at this picture, can you see how a lot can change when you look at the other person's perspective?



When you are able to imagine a situation from someone else's perspective, you can gain a better understanding of their view and change your own actions and words so you can help that person understand your situation and feelings. Communication is a two-way street, and if everyone tries to see things from another person's perspective, it gives us all a better chance at being understood!

What do other kids think?

“ When I’m trying to talk about my feelings, sometimes it feels like I can’t speak and don’t know the right words. But if I tell them ‘I’m trying to think of the best words to say’, they know I’m trying and just need time.

Jamie

When I’m confused about what someone is saying, I try to think about what it might look like from their point of view and that helps me understand.

”

Kane

“ Everyone wants people to listen to what they have to say.

Jada

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

What is something you find really hard when you're communicating with others?

QUESTION TWO

How can you help people better understand your point of view?

QUESTION THREE

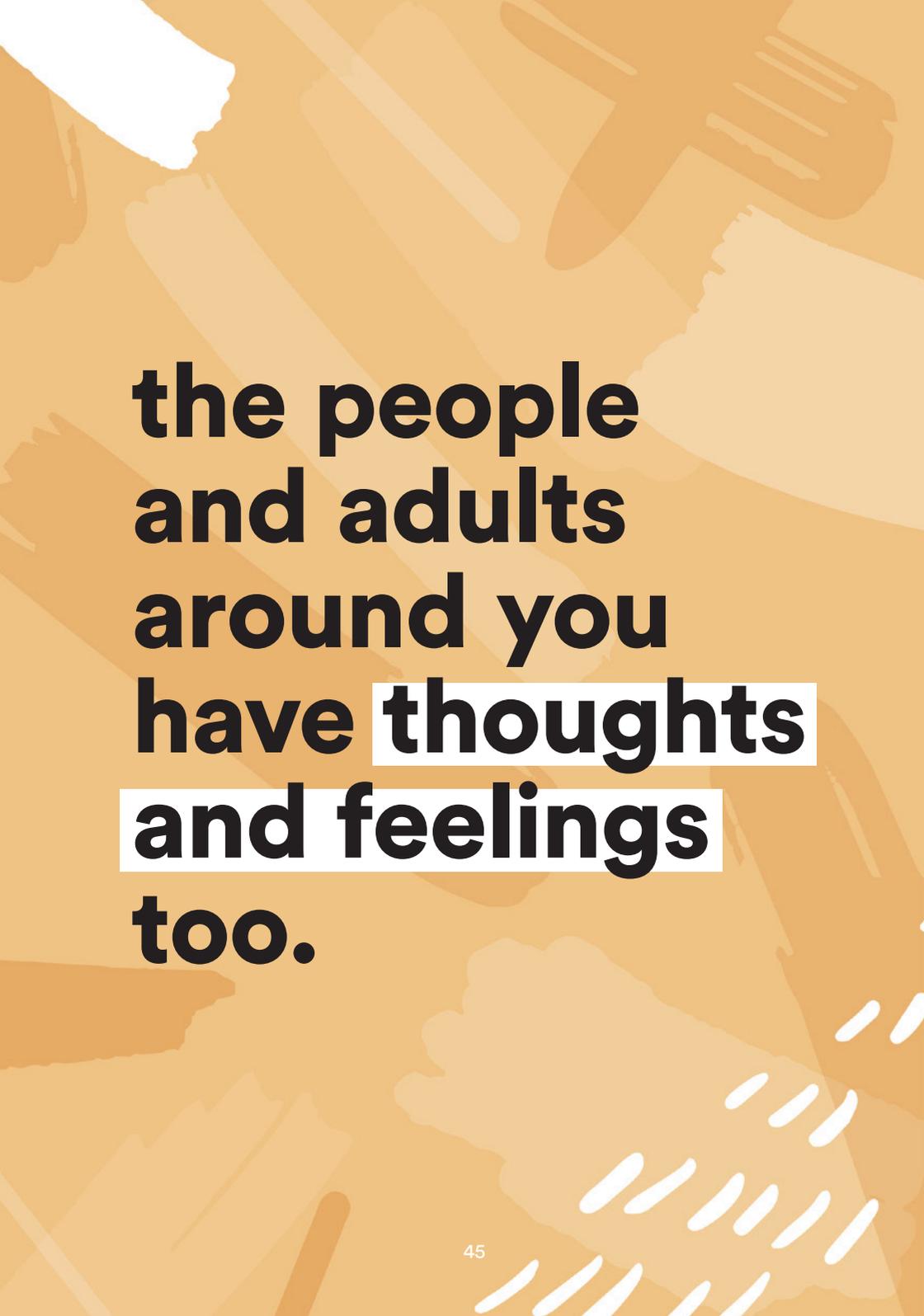
How can you better understand other people's point of view?

QUESTION FOUR

What is something you can try to improve on when it comes to communicating?

CHAPTER FIVE





**the people
and adults
around you
have thoughts
and feelings
too.**

The adults in your life are in your life to help you grow into a happy, healthy adult.

Did you know that a baby giraffe can stand up and walk around as soon as they're born? Or that baby lizards and snakes hatch out of their eggs and go out into the world without ever meeting their parents? Humans need a bit more help though, and this is why we have adults as our guardians — to teach us how to walk and talk, to show us how the world works, to feed and look after us.

The adults that look after us (parents, carers, caseworkers, etc) have a lot of big decisions to make in their role to look after us, and it might be a bit annoying at times having adults in charge of so many aspects of your life. But the adults around you have your best interests at heart and are trying their best, even if it might not feel like it all the time.



It might feel like adults don't understand sometimes, but they were kids once too!

Adults might seem boring and like they don't remember what it was like to have struggles in their childhood. But despite time passing, they still remember how it felt when someone was mean to them at school or when they were in trouble for doing the wrong thing or when they really wanted to do something but their guardian said no. And even though the adults around you are older and have lived different lives, they still might understand a lot about what is happening in your life and what you're feeling if you give them a chance.

If you have things you need in order to stay happy and healthy, you can talk to the adults around you to make sure you can do and have those things. Whether that's things like not having family time on Saturdays so you can play your favourite sport or listening to music you like sometimes in the car, you are allowed to ask for things you want and need. Adults aren't mind readers, and they can't give you the things you want and need unless you tell them about those things!

You are not responsible for other people's feelings or actions.

You might have already discovered this, but just in case, it's important to understand this: adults are human too. You might think they know everything and do everything right, but they can make mistakes too and get things wrong. Just because they are older, doesn't mean that they are automatically right or perfect at handling their feelings.

Even if the adults in your life are reacting to your behaviour or something you've said, you are still not responsible for their actions. Everyone (adults included) is responsible for their own actions and feelings. Just like we talked about at the start of this book, you are in charge of working through disappointment, hurt, anger, frustration and sadness — and so are other people. You can definitely have an impact on other people's feelings, but someone's bad mood will never be your fault.

Just like you, adults have the responsibility to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a calm and respectful manner. If you feel like someone (even an adult!) is not communicating with you respectfully or treating you fairly, you can tell them! You deserve to be treated with respect, and you can ask someone to treat you more kindly.

Sometimes we might immediately respond to something someone does or says, but there can be better ways to look at things.

SOMEONE ELSE'S ACTIONS	WHAT THIS MIGHT MAKE YOU THINK	A BETTER WAY TO LOOK AT IT
Raising their voice	'It's all my fault.'	'This is their problem, I don't need to feel bad.'
Being distracted	'Why won't they notice me?'	'It's okay for people to be busy.'
Acting gloomy or grumpy	'I have to cheer them up.'	'I'll do my best but I am not responsible for their feelings and I won't let it affect my self esteem.'
Putting you down	'I'm not good enough.'	'There are lots of things I am good at and my value isn't determined by someone that can't see my worth right now.'

What do other kids think?

“ Adults seem so together and grown up so it’s easy to forget that they can do things wrong too, like forget important things!

Anne

It makes me really sad when my carer gets mad. But we’re all people, and I get mad sometimes too so I just give her space.

”

Tobie

“ I like that I can tell my caseworker how I’m feeling and ask if they can help me do the things I want. We get to do family time at a park now so I can play footy and run with my brother!

Christian

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

What are your favourite and least favourite things about the adults in your life?

QUESTION TWO

What are some things you might need that you can ask the adults in your life to help you do/get/implement?

QUESTION THREE

How can your feelings and actions impact other people's feelings and actions?

QUESTION FOUR

What's one behaviour from an adult in your life that you can think differently about?

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of various shades of red and pink. It features thick, expressive brushstrokes in white and light pink, creating a sense of movement and texture. There are also several white geometric shapes, including circles, ovals, and a cluster of small crosses, scattered across the page. The overall effect is dynamic and artistic.

CHAPTER SIX



**it really is
okay to make
mistakes —
nobody is
perfect.**

It takes mistakes (sometimes a lot!) to get something right.

It doesn't matter who you are, big or small, old or young, successful or not, you will make mistakes. Everyone does! Here's something cool. Thomas Edison is one of history's most impressive people. He invented the light bulb, the movie camera and made huge advancements to the telephone. He's famous not only for his inventions but for his quote on mistakes:

***I have not failed
10,000 times —
I've successfully
found 10,000
ways that will not
work.***



Life is all about learning and the best way to learn can be by trying new things and making mistakes. It's almost impossible to do something perfectly the first time you try, but if you keep trying you'll get better at it and you'll be proud of yourself for persevering. Mistakes allow us to grow.

It is important to apologise when our mistakes impact on other people.

One thing that really doesn't feel great is realising that you were wrong and hurt someone in what you've said or done. You might feel like you've let them down, and you might realise that there were better things you could have said or better ways you could have behaved, but we can't rewind time to change the things we regret! Luckily though, there is something we can do and that is communicate how sorry we are to the ones we have hurt.

Here's a good step-by-step way to say sorry:

1 I am sorry for...

Explain what you are sorry for doing/saying.

2 It was wrong because...

Take responsibility for your actions.

3 Next time I will...

Let them know it won't happen again and you'll try better.

4 Will you forgive me?

Try not to expect forgiveness.

Think about the reason behind why you might make certain mistakes. This can help you to not make the same ones next time.

Maybe you yelled at your carer or guardian because you were frustrated or you gave your family the silent treatment at family time because you didn't get to do exactly what you wanted. Probably not the best behaviour, but I bet there was a reason behind it. But whatever the reason, we can learn better ways to handle our frustrations and disappointments in ways that don't hurt people so next time you don't react the same way and make the same mistake. You know how yucky it feels when you realise you've done the wrong thing, it's worth learning how to avoid making same mistake in the future so you can avoid that yucky feeling!

Everyone makes mistakes, and that doesn't make them any less worthy of love, especially if they apologise and try to make up for their mistakes. It might take a few goes to get something right, and all that matters is that you're trying.

We all make mistakes, stuff up and regret things from our past. But you are not your mistakes and you are not your struggles. You are here now with the power to shape your day and your future.

People that love you will understand any mistakes, failings and imperfections. They know the real you, and know that you have a lot of good things about you and a lot of strengths. In fact, We're all made up of a mix of many strengths as well as some weaknesses. People who love you know that, and they can see the link between your strengths and your weakness and will forgive you for the latter. They'll be patient with you and be proud of you when they see you trying to strengthen yourself — which you definitely have the power to do! No matter what mistakes you make, you always have the ability to learn and grow from them. Your mistakes won't last forever and neither will your feelings around them. Everyday is a fresh start! To quote 'Anne of Green Gables':

Isn't it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day with no mistakes in it yet?

How you talk to yourself matters.

Our brain, body and mindset are heavily influenced by our self-talk. All the things we say to and feel about ourselves can have a big impact on us.

Positive self-talk is when we are kind to ourselves. It can boost our confidence and self esteem, help us reach our goals and gets us through the hard times. It sounds like 'I am getting better' and 'I am going to keep trying.'

Negative self-talk is when we are critical of ourselves. It can lower our self confidence and self esteem, affect our friendships and relationships with others and make reaching goals harder. It sounds like 'I should give up' and 'I am not worth it.'

It can be easier to say mean things to ourselves rather than kind things, so we might have to try a little bit to change those thoughts. But after a few goes of turning negative self-talk into positive self-talk, you'll get really good at it!

Be a good friend to others and yourself.

Sometimes the voice in our head (our self-talk) can be mean to us and to others. But once we notice that we're not being nice, we can try to change the way we speak inside our head.

A good way to get the hang of this is to imagine what a nice friend would say, or what you would say to a friend if things went wrong. So when you are feeling sad, silly, embarrassed, or are upset that you've made a mistake, you can ask yourself, 'What would a nice friend say?' Every time you do this will help it to become a habit and the mean voice in your head will get quieter. If your friend dropped a glass and it broke, what would you say to them?

WOULD YOU SAY:

'Is it really that hard to hold things? Why do you always make a mess?'

OR WOULD YOU SAY:

'It's okay, it was an accident. It's just a cup and objects can be replaced. Let me help you clean it up.'

I think you can tell which one a mean friend would say and which one a nice friend would say!

What do other kids think?

“ I wish I didn’t make mistakes, but nobody is perfect and perfect is boring anyway!

Hailey

Saying sorry when you do something bad is really really important. Especially if you hurt a friend.

”

Erika

“ When I catch myself thinking mean things about myself, I realise that a lot of the mean thoughts aren’t actually true! That makes it easier to turn them off and then I think nice things instead.

Thomas

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

What is something that you're good at now that took a lot of trying and practice?

QUESTION TWO

What are some things that you think you could try to get better at?

QUESTION THREE

How can you become better at saying sorry?

QUESTION FOUR

What makes you a good friend? How can you be a better friend to others and yourself?

CHAPTER SEVEN



**you can
and will get
through the
hard times.**

**You are a strong, resilient person
and no matter how tough life gets,
you are tougher.**

Being a resilient person means you're really good at bouncing back from difficult situations, even if it doesn't feel like it all the time. Being resilient is a bit like being a glass mug. It doesn't mean that you're a magic type of glass that doesn't break no matter how many times you drop it, but instead means that if you're dropped, you can repair yourself to be better and stronger than before. There's this really cool art form in Japan called **kintsugi** where broken pottery is repaired by using gold as glue to put the pieces back together. They do this because recovering and healing from damage makes the pottery even more beautiful and valuable than before — isn't that neat?

Being resilient means being strong and adaptive. It means when things go wrong and life feels like it's crumbling into pieces, you know that you can come back stronger than before, even if it feels like that takes some time.

Even the strongest people need a little time to bounce back, remember kintsugi cups take ages to make!



It is important to tell yourself these truths whenever you feel like you need to hear them.

All of my problems have solutions.

I get better at things every day.

I am proud of who I am and who I am becoming.

I can reach my dreams and goals.

I am choosing my own attitude.

I am enough.

I am strong.

I am worthy of love and care.

I forgive myself for my mistakes.

Your past is not your fault, but it doesn't have to be what defines your future. You can become whatever and whoever you want to!

It can be really hard to imagine what your future looks like, especially when your present feels uncertain. But there are no limits on what you can do or become when you grow up. You could be an Olympian, or a teacher or anything you dream up! You are a really cool person overflowing with potential to become whoever you want to be, and nothing can hold you back.

Fun activity: Write a letter to yourself to open in the future.

Think about how different you were just one year ago, or even three years ago. Think about all the things you've learned since then. Now think about how much you might learn in another five or ten years! You can pick anytime to write it for future 'you' to open, maybe write a letter to yourself to open in five years time, or even to open on your eighteenth birthday. Write about what you hope future 'you' has achieved, and write about all the things you like about current 'you' that you hope future 'you' still is and has.

Remember: you can't always control what's happening, but you can have a say in the way you respond to what's happening.

Life is 10% the things that happen to you and 90% what you do with it. When bad things happen, it can really shake us — that's part of being human. But when bad things happen, it's nice to know that they don't have to always affect our lives and that we can always choose to have a better attitude about the things we can't control in life.

Things I can't control

other people's
actions and feelings
where I live
who my family is
what other people
want
being sick
what others think
past mistakes

Things I can control

my actions
my attitude
my effort
how I treat others
how I treat myself
my goals
who my
friends are
my learning

What do other kids think?

“

I can't wait to be grown up because I'm going to do what my caseworker does so I can help kids like me.

Kai

I am proud at myself for trying hard at everything I do, especially maths and learning how to control my emotions.

”

Matt

“

I know I'm going to have a really cool future because I've gotten through every hard thing I've had to go through, and nothing is able to stop be from becoming who I want to.

Angie

Time for a Quick Quiz!

You can answer these questions in your head, in a notebook or by talking them through with your caseworker, carer, family member or friend.

QUESTION ONE

What is something you are proud of yourself for getting through?

QUESTION TWO

What are a few things that make you special?
What do you like most about yourself?

QUESTION THREE

What are some things in your life that you have control over?

QUESTION FOUR

If you wrote a letter to your future self, what would it say?

To see more resources, view the digital version of this book or check out other cool stuff, scan this QR code to be directed to our website.



If you don't think your rights are being respected and you need someone who can help you, you can:

- speak to your carer
- speak to your caseworker
- speak to the manager at your caseworker's office

This is who you can call if you need extra help:

- Kids Helpline (24 hours) 1800 551 800
- Headspace (for young people over the age of 12) 1800 063 267
- CREATE Foundation 1800 655 105
- Your caseworker! Put their number in this box:

- Use this space to put in any other phone numbers for people you can reach out to for support:



Ever wondered why you feel
anxious before family time?

Or how to communicate your
feelings around family time?

Want to learn how to manage
your anger, or why you get
angry in the first place?

There's probably a lot of things you've
wondered about family time and a lot of
questions you wish you had the answers to.

In this book we've answered a bunch of
questions and come up with some tips and
tricks to help make family time and your
feelings around family time easier.

**DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE ARC LINKAGE PROJECT
FOSTERING LIFELONG CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN
IN PERMANENT CARE (LP180101332)**