It's Raining In My Garden
A mental health guide for kids

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When the days have been looking a little gloomier than normal...

What do you do?
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CHAPTER 1: What are Emotions?

Emotions are the immediate reaction you get after an event.

They can help with telling your body how to instantly react to certain situations, give you warnings, and give your body ‘data’ about the world around you!

Some situations that could trigger your emotions:
- Something you celebrate
- Something you’re upset over
- Something that frightens you

Emotions release chemicals that only last about 6 seconds in the body!

So why is that sometimes, you really feel emotional?

What you’re feeling are... FEELINGS!
So then...

What are FEELINGS?

Feelings are what you notice!

Your BODY senses the emotion, and your MIND lets that “sink in” for a while until you understand what the emotion means.

Feelings are how you begin to make meaning of emotion. They cause you to pay attention and react to something that’s wrong or something that’s great in your lives.

You feel feelings in many different ways!

Feeling ‘hungry, cold, or in pain’ can be different from feeling ‘cold inside’ from feeling sad, or ‘feeling like your heart will burst’ from feeling so in love.
Mood is when your emotions and feelings mix and creates a long mental state that you go through your day in.

Because of your mood, you might see situations differently – more positive than usual, or more negative.

*For example,*
Something good in the morning can make you feel happy for the rest of the day. But if something negative happens, that might ‘spoil your mood.’

What are some moments you've noticed a situation has affected your mood?
“I can’t sleep and I feel so jittery. But I don’t feel anxious over anything.”

Some days, you might find yourself feeling a lot more tired than usual. There may be times it feels really hard to get out of bed, get dressed, and your mind can’t seem to catch up with the day at all.

Some days you might feel over-energized. You can’t get any sleep, yet you don’t feel tired at all. Your mind feels like it’s racing, with so many thoughts, actions, and things you feel like you want or need to do.

Other times, you might feel worried over many issues: things that might seem like small events to other people, but for some reason are making you feel really nervous.

“Nothing bad happened today, so why do I feel upset?”
There are some common conditions that might make you feel different than what you think you should be feeling.

Some school nurses have described the most common problems kids your age deal with. Have you felt any of these?

- Always tired
- A lot of headaches
- A lot of stomach aches
- A change in your breathing pattern
- Going to the nurse a lot
- Not wanting to go to school because you feel sick but don’t know why
- General pain and aches in your body
- Not wanting to look at anyone
- Not feeling the need to talk or speak to anyone

Maybe you’ve experienced these feelings and emotions or maybe you’ve noticed a friend act this way. What might it be?
Here are a few examples of what it could possibly be:

Depression
- Feeling sad, discouraged, or irritated for weeks to months.
- Thinking negatively about a lot of things.
- Feeling so tired, you don’t want to do your favorite activities.
- Feeling like it’s hard to eat, play, or do work.
- Feeling like no one likes or loves you.
- Not wanting to spend time with family, friends, or people you care about.

Anxiety
- Getting really worried over things that most people don’t worry over.
- Feeling like it’s hard to focus because you’re always thinking about other things that make you nervous or worried.
- Tests, friends, parents, grades, all make you so worried you don’t feel like you can function properly.
- When problems gets too overwhelming, you feel like you’re about to ‘break down.'
ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
- Having trouble sitting still or paying attention.
- Getting distracted very easily, or you feel disorganized a lot.
- Feeling restless, fidgety, easily bored, and frustrated.
- Rushing through homework or chores or making mistakes because you just want to be done.
- Doing things you shouldn’t, even though you know not to.

Maybe you’ve experienced these actions and feelings, maybe you haven’t. Many times, you don’t notice them until someone points it out.

Sometimes these feelings happen for no reason. Sometimes, there are very big events that happen in your life that can make you feel a certain way for a long time, even without you realizing it.
CHAPTER 2: Life Happenings

Sometimes, situations happen in your life that causes your emotions to change, our mood to go sour, and your feelings to flip like a light switch.

There are also moments where you don't realize that the life event is affecting you, or *still* affecting you. Something could have happened two months ago, but you're still dealing with the affects to this day.

When you deal with moments of extreme sadness or feeling extra tired, it's important to look for a reason, if there is any!

Knowing and recognizing the *source point* of your emotions will help you learn how to handle them as well.

Here are several different life events that you or a friend might have experienced:
1. Getting Bad Grades

This is no fun! Sometimes, you work really hard to get the grade that you want, and it comes back surprising you.

How you might feel: Angry at yourself, frustrated at what you think is a lack of skill, scared of the consequences.

What can you do: Remember, your grade doesn’t define who you are!

- Remind yourself that you are not a grade, and that you learn at a speed that is unique only to you.
- It’s okay to feel upset and frustrated, but don’t let that stop you from studying for the next test.
- *Don’t give up* – Just like in life, you have many chances to do things! This one test, assignment, or project is one of many chances to prove yourself.
2. Adjusting/Moving to a New Place or Home

A new place can mean new people, school, teachers, new situations. This can be extremely intimidating, and you might feel stuck trying to feel comfortable with your new surroundings.

How you might feel: Scared, nervous to try new things, intimidated, angry at the change

What can you do: Remember that change always happens in life – it's not something you can prevent.

- If you’re mad at the change, think about why there was a change. Maybe it was better for the family, or a safer place.
- Try to see making new friends as a fun challenge, not a roadblock. This is your chance to find your new group of people!
- Human beings aren't meant to be alone! You might be the ‘new kid,’ but just like how you’d like to have new friends, so does everyone else.
3. Getting Bullied or Made Fun Of

Sometimes you might feel like people don’t understand you or who you are. They might point out what they think makes you different.

How you might feel: Hurt, angry at others, insecure about yourself, anxious to go back to school or events

What you can do: Remember that fighting back will only make problems worse. Strengthening yourself as a person is your best bet in standing up for yourself!

- Find your allies: Who are your best friends? If you stick up for them, they’ll be there to watch your back too.
- Learn to deflect: Don’t insult or be mean back, but instead find ways to ‘defuse the situation.’
- Walk away: Sometimes the best choice is to simply not get involved. If they try and force you otherwise, stand your ground.

Remember!
Treat others how you want to be treated.
4. Not Feeling Included

Sometimes you may feel alone or that people don’t want you around. Perhaps you’re really nervous and don’t know how to join a conversation. Remember: Humans aren’t meant to be alone!

What you might feel: Lonely, think you’re hated or disliked, angry at others for excluding you, scared or anxious to join groups/organizations

What you can do: Everyone, including adults, feels this way at some point. At a new school, place, or job – at some point, you have to find a way to connect with others.

- You’re interested in things, and so are others! One of the best ways to strike a conversation is to talk about things you and the others are interested in. Games? Books?
- Create a friendly coping kit with a list of these important people such as:
  1. Someone I can go to in school for support is ___.
  2. Someone from another class that I can talk and hang out with is ____.
Nobody’s perfect, and sometimes your parents or adults get mad. Whether or not the reason was because of something you did, getting yelled at is difficult to handle.

What you might feel: Upset at your parents, scared to make another mistake, angry at others because you’re in a bad mood

What you can do: Breathe! Everyone makes mistakes and has bad days. Remember the phrase: The storm will end. This means bad times don't last forever!

- Stay calm. Fighting back with parents, relatives, or adults usually makes the situation worse.
- Relieve your stress afterwards. You're most likely also upset after the situation – do something that can help you relax.
- If you have to speak, do so after thinking about your responses. When people are angry, most times they don’t realize what they’re saying.
6. Feeling Pressured to Do Something

Growing up means experiencing new things. Some are good, bad, and some make you uncomfortable, but all your friends are doing it. So, trying it out once should be okay…right?

What you might feel: Nervous about the situation and consequences, feeling like you don't want to be made fun of if you say no or like you don't have a choice

What you can do: You are your own person! You have full control of your choices so if someone is trying to force you to do something, think why?

- Saying No does not make you a bad person, and instead helps you create boundaries. Next time, people won't try to force you again.
- Explaining why you feel uncomfortable with something will help others understand you, rather than assuming you're just 'no fun.'
- Just because everyone is doing it doesn't mean you should! Think – is it Safe? Healthy? Legal? Appropriate?
7. Losing Someone/Something Important

Whether it’s a death, someone leaving, or losing something, goodbyes can be extremely difficult. Everyone handles loss in their own way.

What you might feel: Depressed and not wanting to do anything, angry because they/it is gone, anxiety because of the change in your life.

What you can do: Life is full of new beginnings and things ending. Coping with change and loss takes time, so make sure you understand your own feelings and thoughts during times like this.

- Don't ignore your feelings. It’s okay to be very upset but don’t ignore tasks such as eating, sleeping, and homework.
- Stick to your routine! Get up, make breakfast, go to school or work and keep moving. Keeping busy keeps your mind busy.
- Talk to someone. Your parents and other adults most likely know exactly what you’re going through and can help you through the pain of loss.
8. Divorce

When your parents are separating, it can feel extremely confusing. It might feel like your world is splitting at the seams and in some cases, you're forced to make very difficult decisions.

What you might feel: Scared because someone important is leaving, angry because people you looked up to are separating, relieved because you believe this is for the best.

What you can do: Be honest with your parents, as they truly value your input. Be honest if you want one or the other to stay active in your life, or not. Be kind and understand that divorce is a difficult situation for everyone.

- Don't assume the divorce is your fault. Ask your parents to explain the situation, as you're a member of the family as well. Doing so will help you understand what everyone is going through.
- This is a hard change and people at your school and your friends are there to support you.
- Each situation is different – understand that you do need to process feelings, and take your time doing so.
9. Getting Hurt/Abused at Home

If you’re being physically hurt or emotionally abused (being called or spoken to with mean or rude words), you should tell someone.

What you might feel: Confused because someone who’s supposed to care for you is hurting you, angry because you don’t know why this is happening or what you did to deserve getting hurt, scared to go home.

What you can do: If you’re in a place to tell someone, it’s best that you do. If you can’t, or you feel scared to, find someone you can trust to at least confide in and be a comforting person to you.
  - Telling someone: People who care truthfully want you to be safe. Depending on the situation, they might call someone else to come help too or find someone you can talk to.
  - Exercise good coping mechanisms at home. Know how to destress or relax after moments of intensity.
  - Try and get involved – staying busy will keep you out of the house and keep you active and enjoying activities in other places with your friends.
10. Hurting Yourself/Your Friend is Hurting Themselves

If you’re hurting yourself, it may seem as if this is your final option that will fight the pain, sadness, confusion, and hurt inside your hearts. If you know someone who is hurting themselves, it’s best to talk to them and suggest that they also talk to someone like a teacher, parent, or another caring adult.

What you might feel: Scared of the situation, unsure of who to talk to, if anyone, worried someone might find out

What you can do: If your friend is hurting themselves and they ask you to keep it a secret, say that you’re unsure if you can because you care.

- Realize that hurting yourself comes with many consequences, such as scars that won’t heal, possible infections, and bruises that are hard to hide.
- Find resources – friends, caring family members, teachers, other adults – and use them to speak your feelings to.
- People care. No one is truly alone and there are people out there that will not ignore your feelings.
CHAPTER 3 – Common Mental Health Issues

You’ve heard your friend say they’re struggling with ‘depression and anxiety’ but what is that? And why do they always seem sad?

Your parents said your cousin is handling an ‘eating disorder’ but what is that? And why do they never eat at parties?

Your classmate seems to always get in trouble for talking back to teachers or getting angry for no reason, why is that?

You can’t seem to sit still, and you can’t focus on your homework or classwork, even though you’re not anxious about anything. Why can’t you stay focused?

These are some examples of situations that you may come across in your daily lives with the people around you! Here are explanations for each one:
Sadness is a natural human emotion. Sometimes it can last for a moment and sometimes it lasts for far longer and feels much stronger.

Depression is when sad feelings last for longer than usual, hurts too much, and makes activities that you usually like really hard to enjoy.

There are many reasons in life that might make you depressed. Getting stressed, losing someone, or facing really difficult problems in life can cause you to think that life will never get better.

Possible signs of depression:
- Thinking that things will never get better
- Thinking that you’re worthless or bad
- Feeling sad, grumpy, crabby, for weeks or months
- Not wanting to hang out or play with friends or family
- Not wanting to go to school
- Finding it hard to even just get out of bed
- Not feeling hungry, or not wanting to eat very often anymore
- Feeling extremely tired, or not able to sleep at all
- Getting a lot of stomach aches or headaches that don't get better
- Feeling like you're better off not around, or that they're better off without you

Always remember that Depression is NOT you or the other person’s fault.

Sometimes, your emotions get the best of you and if you can't find the energy to go see your friends, you can’t. But that doesn't mean you can’t find ways to manage it!
Tell someone how you feel. This is easier said than done, but most likely someone such as a family member has noticed that you haven’t been yourself lately.

It may be hard to handle sadness and depression if you don’t know much about it, so sometimes the best action for your mental health is to let your parents or an adult know what you’re going through so they can help you.

Doctors, therapists, or counselors are types of people that know all about depression which means they know how to help you.
Here’s how you can help yourself!

- Eat healthy foods, don’t binge a lot of junk food because chances are you’ll regret it.
- Get the right amount of sleep. Sleeping helps your mind and body get the right rest you need, and oversleeping can actually make you feel sluggish and more depressed during the day.
- Exercise, walk, and be active. Sitting around makes depression worse, so find something to keep yourself busy, even if that’s something like cleaning your room or walking to the park.
- Take time to relax. Do activities or tasks that help you calm down if you find that you’re always worried. Sit and watch your favorite movie or read a book.
- Spend time with people that you care about. Most likely they’re the people that can help put a smile on your face!
What is ANXIETY?

People get worried, nervous, or fearful of many things. Anxiety is the body’s natural response to stress and stressful situations.

Anxiety is normal and not dangerous! It can help you prepare for real danger, as it triggers your ‘fight or flight’ response. This response helps us defend ourselves. Anxiety can feel uncomfortable, but it eventually goes down.

Feeling anxious over things such as tests, competitions, presentations, trying things you've never done before, doing something you're scared of, or talking to someone about something important is normal.

However, anxiety can become a problem if you’re overwhelmed by it. Focusing too much on your worries, fears, and nervousness can cause you to make mistakes or get hurt.
You might feel these if you feel anxious:
- Your head hurts
- Your face gets red, hot, or sweaty
- It feels like there’s a lump in your throat
- Your hands and feet feel cold or sweaty
- It feels like there are butterflies in your stomach, or it feels bad
- Your legs feel weak and shaky
- Your hands keep clenching, or you feel restless
- It’s hard to speak or think of what you’re trying to say

Be a detective and investigate your anxiety
Try to recognize what your SIGNS are for your anxiety.

Before a test, do you get butterflies in your stomach? Do you begin to sweat and bite on your nails?

Most times, you won’t completely get rid of the anxious feelings, but you can do relaxing techniques that will help you feel better and think clearer!
Here are ways you can fight back when anxiety is getting you worried!

- Slow down your breathing. If you slow down your breathing, your thoughts slow down and you have time to figure out the situation.

- Try to relax the muscles in your body. Relax your shoulders, unclench your hands. Doing this is another ‘release' and can help you slow down and manage your thoughts.

- Try to become comfortable with a little bit of uncertainty. Not *everything* in life is going to be completely planned out and perfect.

- Think Realistically. Before planning goals, think to yourself – is it something that can actually be done and accomplished? Setting yourself up for very high standards can make you very anxious about being perfect.
What is ATTENTION DEFICIT / HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder aka ADHD makes it hard to focus and pay attention - like your brain is a TV that’s changing channels every few seconds.

Because paying attention is hard, it may be difficult to do other tasks such as chores, homework, projects, or other activities that need you to focus. It can be hard to sit still at school, or to stand waiting in line.

Most times, someone who feels this way goes to the doctor who tells them they have ADHD. Often, they'll start taking medications that will help their mind and body keep still to focus on daily activities.
Make sure important people such as your family, friends, and teachers know about you having ADHD because they'll be able to help you focus in your own unique way!

What does ADHD look and feel like?
- It feels impossible to focus on your assignments and homework
- It's hard to wait for other people to stop talking and you interrupt them to speak first
- It feels like you get bored of activities very fast
- It's hard to focus when your parents are speaking to you
- You're stuck in a daydream, unsure what's going on around you
- You seem to lose items very easily
- It's hard to remember what you just did or learned in school a few hours ago
- You can't remember instructions
- You don't like or try to avoid tasks that makes you think a lot such as homework
- You fidget a lot: tapping your hand or feet, squirming in your seat
- It's hard to sit still or play quietly
If you take medications for ADHD:
Medications can help your mind and body focus on the task at hand. Taking them regularly and staying positive about your medications will both help with making sure your ADHD doesn't always bother you in your normal life.

- ‘It tastes bad! It makes me feel weird.’
  Let your parents and your doctor know! There are many different medication options and if you don't like something, they can help you find one that fits you best.

- ‘I don't need it. I can make it go away.’
  ADHD isn't something you can just mentally wish away. Your family and teachers can tell if the medications are helping or not and can tell you.

- ‘They're saying medications are bad.’
  Everyone has different opinions. Someone who doesn't agree with ADHD medications might not truly understand what you're going through and what your needs are.
What are EATING DISORDERS?

While sometimes you might feel picky about what you like to eat, eating disorders are illnesses where someone eats *way* too much or too little for a very long time.

Eating disorders can be very serious because your body needs a certain amount of nutrients from food to function properly. If you eat too little, your body starts to starve, and you can get sick. Even if you eat too much, your body can find it harder and harder to break down all the food – you can get sick from that too!

There’s no exact cause to an eating disorder but many times, people want to change their appearance – and that wish can get out of hand.
What's the difference of being picky and having an eating disorder?

Being picky means you have certain foods you like and dislike to eat. An eating disorder means you're either not really eating anything or choosing to eat almost everything.

Spotting an eating disorder can be difficult but here are observations you might notice with someone who does:

Eating too little
- They look like they lost a LOT of weight all of a sudden
- They're extremely focused on their weight, amount of food, calories, and diets
- They always say they're not hungry even if they haven't really eaten
- They seem to work out a lot to ‘burn off’ calories
- They look uncomfortable when eating
- They feel cold all the time
- They might have stomach aches or feel weak and tired
Eating too much
- Being able to eat a large amount of food in a really short time.
- Going to the bathroom a lot after meals.
- They smell like vomit (because they threw up all the food they just ate)
- They use a large amount of mouthwash, mints, or gum
- Their teeth might be a weird color (from the vomit)
- They're very concerned about their weight and appearance
- Skipping meals or fearing meals

You need to seek help for eating disorders. Nutrition counselors (food coaches), therapists, and sometimes doctors are part of the team that helps those with eating disorders.

Eating disorders can't be fixed with one solution and requires a lot of help to get the person back to eating normally. Ignoring an eating disorder might hurt someone because of the nutrients they're not getting.
But I want to be look perfect!
Healthy ways to change your appearance are exercise, eating healthy foods, and learning to accept who you are first before you work on changing it.

But I want to lose weight *fast.*
Losing weight fast is actually very unhealthy for your body. Your body is used to your current weight and the nutrients you give it. Suddenly cutting off all your body’s power source will surprise it and react by making you sick.

But I get stressed a lot and I feel better by eating. Eating is an okay stress-reliever, but it shouldn't be your only one. Look into other ways to relax and cope so that food doesn't feel like your only option.
What are CONDUCT DISORDERS?

Conduct disorders are conditions in which people are purposefully very mean and hurtful. They can be physically violent to others or throw mean words around. People with this disorder are incredibly rude to others and sometimes don't even see that what they're doing is wrong.

One of the main signs of this disorder is that they don't care that they're causing harm to others and see no reason to apologize.

Be careful around those with conduct disorders as it can seem like ‘bullying gone to the extreme.’ They might also try to convince you to help them steal or join their activities and break the rules.
Some signs someone might find enjoyment in doing mean or hurtful actions:
- Pushing, hitting, biting
- Bullying a lot
- Hurting animals
- Always picking fights
- Stealing
- Vandalizing (destroying or marking other people’s property)
- Arson (Setting things on fire)
- Trespassing (going into places they're not allowed to)
- Lying a lot
- Cheating
- Not caring about any rules
- Skipping school or running away
If some of these behaviors sound like things you do:
Most likely, your family and a therapist will help you work on getting through a conduct disorder. You may have one-on-one meetings with a therapist to help you work on your goals by yourself. There are family meetings where your family helps you create goals and limits. There may also be times where you are with a group of people your age to work on social skills and interacting with others appropriately.

Fixing a conduct disorder may seem difficult, but it’s not impossible. Slowly learning to find value in things as well as learning proper behaviors are the steps towards fixing one.

Remember, you might not always agree with your friends, teachers, parents, or other adults. However, taking time to understand that hurting people or using rude words isn’t the way to work through a conversation.
CHAPTER 4 – How Do I Reach Out?

Telling people how you’re feeling can feel extremely scary and make you anxious. You might get worried about what they’ll say in response.

It’s easy to get worried before telling someone but something to keep in mind is that getting help is better than struggling by yourself because

You Are Not Alone

You're a part of a Community of people that might be struggling through the same issues that you are. There is ALWAYS someone to talk to.
Here is how you can get started:

1. Write down what you’re feeling.
   You can better understand what emotions and feelings you have this way rather than rambling to someone. The better idea you have of how you feel, the easier it will be to explain it to someone. The easier it will be for you to understand as well!

2. Give someone a heads up.
   Prepare them and yourself! Whether they're a parent, a friend, or someone else, letting them know that’d you like to talk to them about something important will help them take the time out to focus on you.

Who do you talk to? There are more people around you that are willing to listen than you think!
1. Figure out who your People are.
   If you can't or don't feel comfortable speaking to your parents, find someone who you are comfortable talking to! That could be another relative, a teacher, a coach, or another adult you're close to. Make sure they're kind to you and will listen.

2. Go beyond friends.
   Friends are really good places to find support and encouragement. However, sometimes it feels like your problem is a lot bigger than what your friends can offer. Try to find people that will help you get the help you need, and sometimes friends can't always do that.
3. Find people you trust
If you can’t talk to your parents or are not sure what adult to speak to, check out this list of other people that are always willing to listen.

1. A teacher or another adult at school
2. Your school counselor
3. The school nurse
4. A close family friend
5. A relative you're close to
6. A doctor or pediatrician
7. A therapist
8. Your religious leader

You might know your people, but you’re unsure of what to say. Here’s how you can start:

1. Go at your own pace.
   Your thoughts might feel overwhelming so take your time explaining how you feel. Sometimes it might take multiple conversations at different times for you to completely explain what’s going on. Most likely, you’re talking about something that
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upsets you or is a problem, so it’s alright to feel emotional and nervous.

2. Don’t say the problem is lesser than it is. If you’re going to someone for help, most likely the issue is extremely difficult for you to handle by yourself. Tell someone exactly how you’re feeling because you’re not being dramatic! It gives the person a better idea of what you’re going through. Be truthful! It will help you out in the end.

3. It’s okay if you can’t figure out what to say. Sometimes you just sit there, unsure what to say, which is okay! You can always try again when you’ve sorted out your emotions a little better and that person will still be there to listen next time around.
You've told someone...but they don't seem to be taking it too well. They got angry, confused, or upset at you. What do you do?

1. Some people need time.
   If they're someone like a parent, most likely they need time to understand and think through the situation in order to help you. It doesn't mean they'll never understand, but just like how you need time to think about your feelings, so do they.

2. Build your team of People.
   A Support System is your team that will watch your back. They can consist of different people you can talk to. Friends are good for listening and being supportive. Parents and adults are better for hard decisions or explaining things. Having people will remind you that:

   You're never alone!
   There’s always someone to talk to.
   It may be hard but looking for help is better than no help at all.
CHAPTER 5 – Can I Help Manage It Myself?

There are many ways to manage your own feelings if you don’t feel comfortable seeking help right away. These are called Coping Methods as they help you cope (or manage) stressful situations.

Many of these you might already do without noticing and some you might find as extra helpful.

1. Taking Deep Breaths

Before anxious situations or times that make you scared, have you noticed that you try and calm yourself down by taking deep breaths? Doing so can help you relax and help your heart stop beating so fast. Here are some steps:

   o Close your eyes.
   o With your mouth closed, breathe in for 4 seconds until you can feel your belly fill up with air.
   o Hold the air in for four seconds.
   o Slowly blow out the air until it’s all gone.
   o Repeat if you’d like, then see how you feel!
2. Counting to 10

If you feel so upset that you feel as if you’re going to explode, try to count to 10.

Count *slowly* and go all the way up to 10.

Doing this can help you ‘defuse the bomb’ inside your mind and will help you think clearly.
This also helps if you feel anxious or nervous. Calming yourself down helps in many different ways.

3. Relax your muscles

Sometimes you find yourself tensing all areas of your body when you’re stressed.
Tension can make cause or stress and pain.
Go down this list of body areas one by one and try to relax them as much as possible.

1. Hands and arms
2. Arms and shoulders
3. Shoulders and neck
4. Jaw
5. Face and Nose
6. Stomach
7. Legs and feet
4. Enjoy your hobbies

Hobbies are a great way to keep your mind and body busy. Not only that, but your hobbies are activities that you enjoy!

Whether it’s playing with friends, art, exercise, reading, video games, or anything else, doing them can help cheer up your mood if you’re feeling down, or relax you if you’re feeling stressed.

5. Write about it

Some people compile diaries or journals where they write down what they’re feeling. You can carry a small notepad or journal in your pocket or backpack so that you can write down your thoughts while on the go.

Writing out your thoughts is a great way to clearly figure out what your feelings are.

There’s no right or wrong way to journal, so write down whatever you feel. It can be as organized or disorganized as you want!
6. Goal setting

Goal setting is good when you have a problem that seems too big for you to handle. Goal setting helps you break down the big problem into smaller tasks that you can handle – Bite sized!

Here’s an example:
You have a test in a few days that you haven’t studied for at all! You think you’re going to fail and that there’s no hope for passing. What can you do?

Break your goals down:
1. Set aside time to study – cut down on video games and TV, or don’t hang out with friends. Your grade is on the line!
2. Look at what topics will be on the test.
3. What topics are you not confident on?
4. Start with the first topic and look over those notes.
5. Keep going with the next topics.

While it doesn’t change the amount of work, it’s better to break goals down piece by piece rather than focus on all the tasks you have to do at one time. Doing tasks one at a
time helps you feel more accomplished and less hopeless!

7. Use ‘I feel’ phrases

When talking to people, make sure to explain your feelings clearly. Saying phrases such as ‘it feels like I’m about to explode’ is a way to show a lot of emotion, but sometimes that can be confusing.

‘I feel’ phrases explain your feelings clearly.
   o I feel angry at him/her for doing this.
   o I feel sad because of my grade.
   o I feel like you’re not listening to me.

Not ‘I feel’ phrases
   o It feels like pins and needles. (Anxious)
   o It’s like there’s no point. (Worried, sad, or nervous)
   o I just want to hit something. (Angry or upset)

Saying your feelings clearly will help other people understand you and not confuse your words.
8. Do a Mood Booster

Mood Boosters lift your mood! They can be any of the other methods, such as hobbies, and are meant to make you feel better.

Here are other examples of mood boosters:

- **Play outside**
  Being in the sun is healthy!
  Staying inside too long can make your mood go down.

- **Eat properly**
  Eating the right foods will help your body feel better which will make your mind feel better.

- **Get the right amount of sleep**
  Staying up all night can make your body and mind get exhausted and doing things while tired can make you cranky.
9. Create a Calm-Down Kit

Calm-down kits are a way for you to have items by you quickly that will help you calm down. You can bring them to school or wherever you go and if you find yourself getting anxious, you can easily pull it out and take some time to relax.

It can be in a box or a bag or whatever you feel is better for you to bring with.

Here are some ideas of things to put in a calm-down kit.
- Bottle of bubbles
- Small puzzles
- Fidget tools
- Stretchy bands
- Earphones to block out noise
- Gum
- Blank notebooks or sketchbooks
- Crayons, pencils, etc.
- Stress balls
- Silly putty or slime
- Rubik’s cube
- Snacks

Put things in your calm-down kit that you know are going to help you feel better – they can be whatever you want!
CHAPTER 6 – Words from Your School Nurses

Here are some thoughts that the nurses at your school want you to know:

“I encourage journaling and checking in with someone they are comfortable with daily. You should be able to talk to someone about anything and try not to deal with things alone. Don’t self-medicate.”

“Don’t be afraid to try something new. Don’t be afraid to fail at something, as everyone has at one time or another.”

“Be kind to everyone and help someone. We may all look okay on the outside, but maybe we aren’t feeling so great inside.”

“Speak up and ask for help – you shouldn’t be afraid to tell someone if your friend your yourself aren’t doing so well.”

“Mental health is no different than having a physical health problem. You should not feel shame!”

- Diane Isbrandt & Sandra Ubelhart, Certified School Nurses
**Last Reminders**

Sometimes these feelings are an ongoing thing that you feel day to day. There's no ‘one cure’ that can stop bad feelings in a day, as it takes time to manage. Be patient with your own mind and body and give it the best care that you can.

Your Support System is important. They’re the people you can go to and use as a ‘check in’ so that you don’t have to struggle with your feelings and thoughts alone.

It’s perfectly okay to have good days and bad days, but remember to know how to recognize the bad days. Those are the days you should make sure to take time for yourself and relax.

Everyone is unique – Including you! You face your own battles and fight your own worries. There’s strength inside of you.

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It’s Raining in My Garden
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It’s Raining in My Garden

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