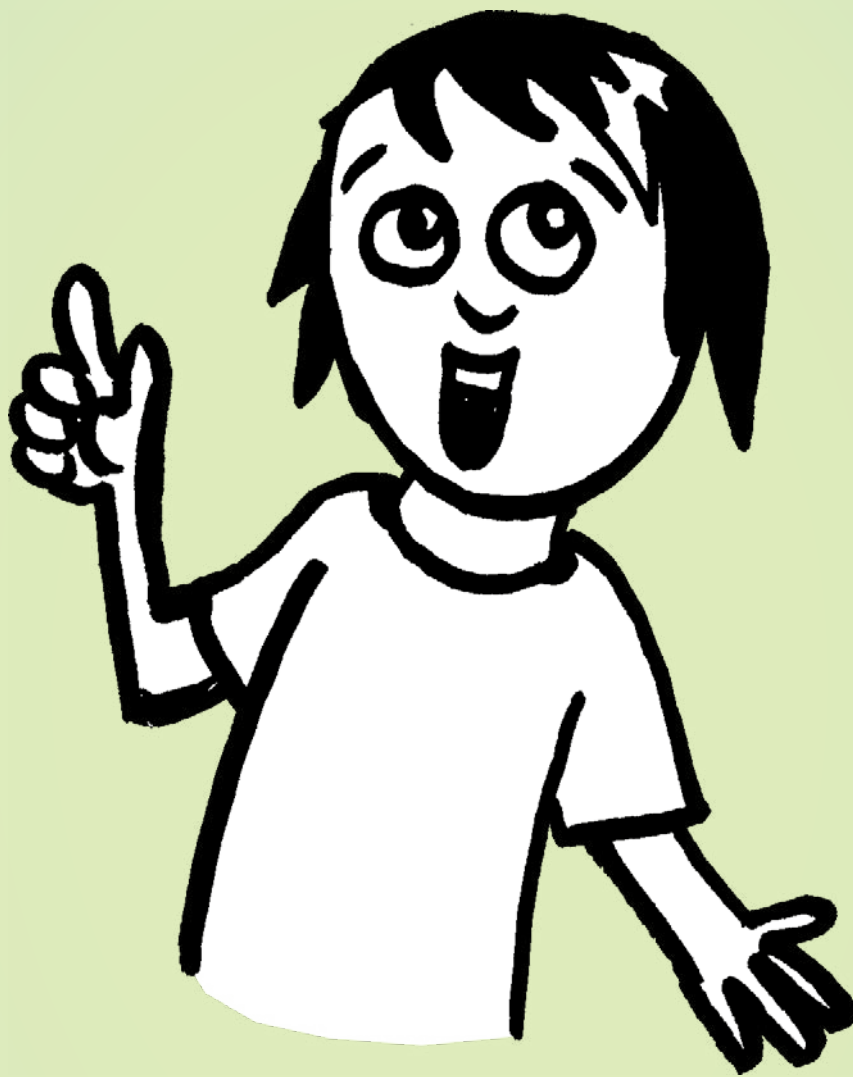


Storybook



Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions



**World Health
Organization**

unicef 
for every child

The storybook is designed to be used with the Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions intervention manual.

Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE): group psychological help for young adolescents affected by distress in communities exposed to adversity. Geneva: World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2023. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Instructions

The EASE storybook accompanies the adolescent sessions and is organized by session. The storybook is read aloud while showing the corresponding picture. While reading the story, all participants should be able to see the picture. The EASE intervention manual provides prompts for when the story is read and when the corresponding picture is shown.

In order to show the picture, the storybook should be printed on size A3 paper or larger. The storybook can be printed double sided to enable the helper to read the text and show the picture at the same time. We encourage the storybook to be printed in colour, where resources are available. The storybook can be bound loosely (for example a ring-binder).

Session 1

Picture 1



Text 1

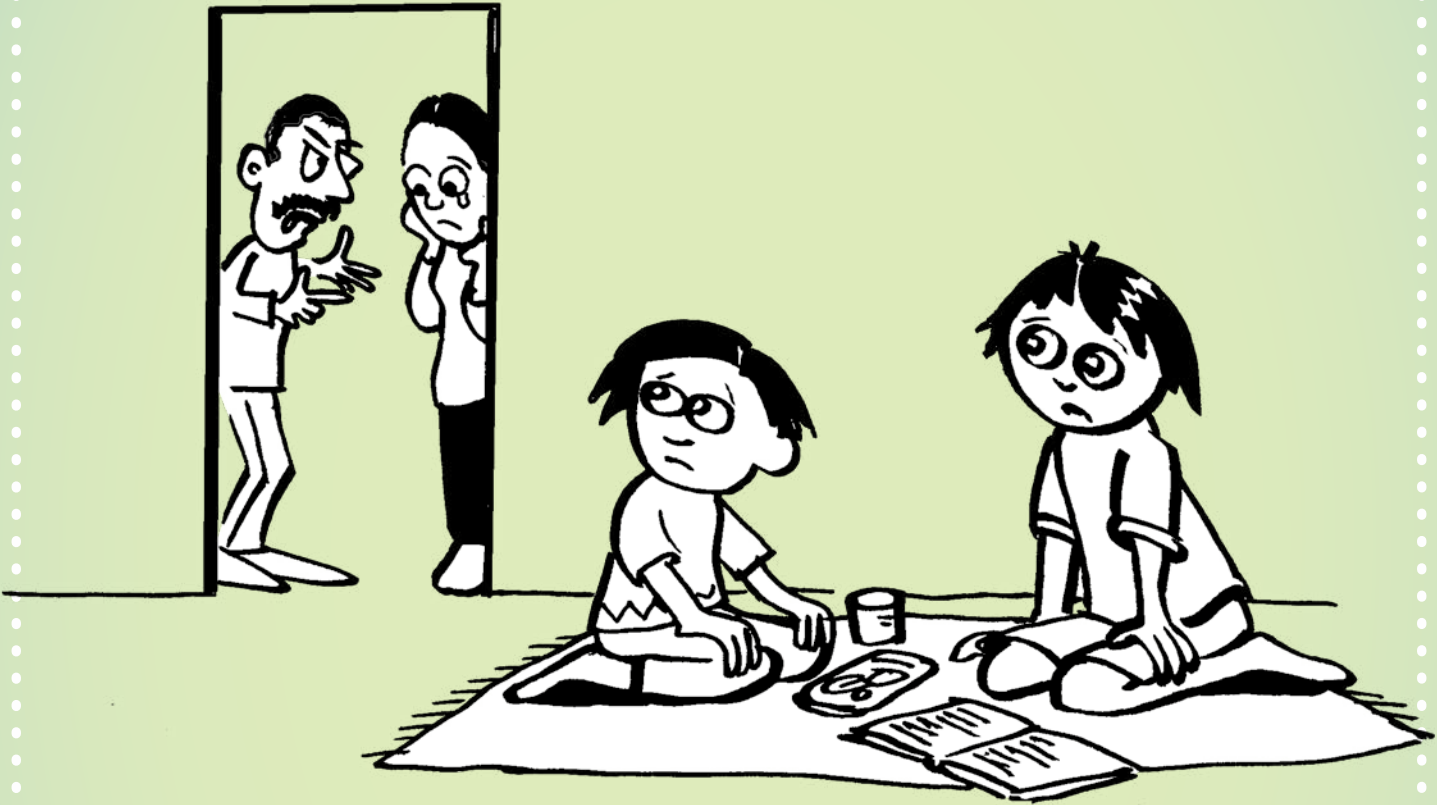
It is not easy to cope with big feelings. It's time to meet someone just like you who has also experienced difficult times.

Once there was a young person called Kian...

- How old do you think Kian is?
- Where does Kian live?
- Who else is in this picture?
- What are some of Kian's favourite things to do?
- What are some things Kian is very good at?
- Does Kian go to school? What are Kian's favourite subjects?

Kian's family looks happy here, but there was a time when they were having some problems at home.

Picture 2



Text 2

Kian's dad lost his job and started to get angry with everyone in the house. He fought with Kian's mother.

Night after night the shouting continued. Kian was afraid that one day his father would lose his temper at him too.

With so much happening at home, Kian did not feel like playing with his friends. Kian usually felt so happy to be with his friends but now he felt embarrassed and did not want anyone to know about his family's problems. Soon he felt very lonely.

"Can we do some singing, Kian?" his sister would ask.

"No, leave me alone!" Kian would shout at her.

He felt very bad. He saw how sad this made her. But even if he wanted to sing, he just felt so angry.

The only things Kian truly enjoyed were listening to music, and spotting birds, which he usually enjoyed doing with his friends.

Picture 3



Text 3

Zooooooooooooom!

“Hey! You! Watch out!” came an angry voice. The sound of flapping wings filled the air.

Kian gasped. He looked up and saw a huge bird shaking her red feathers. “Who are you?” he asked.

“Why should I tell you!” shouted the red bird.

“Don’t be so unpleasant, can’t you see he’s scared of you?” came another voice. Kian looked around and saw another bird smiling down at him. This bird was bright orange.

“Don’t worry about him, Kian,” the orange bird said gently. “He’s always angry. Look how red he is!”

“I’m not always angry,” said the red bird, scowling at Kian. “And he doesn’t look scared.”

“He’s sad,” said another bird, with blue feathers, looking sadly at Kian. “Poor Kian. I saw him crying yesterday.”

“Then why is he not blue?” asked the red bird.

“But... I can’t change colour!” said Kian.

“You can’t change colour? Then how do you know how you feel?” asked the blue bird.

“What do you mean?” asked Kian.

“We change colour all the time!” cried the red bird angrily.

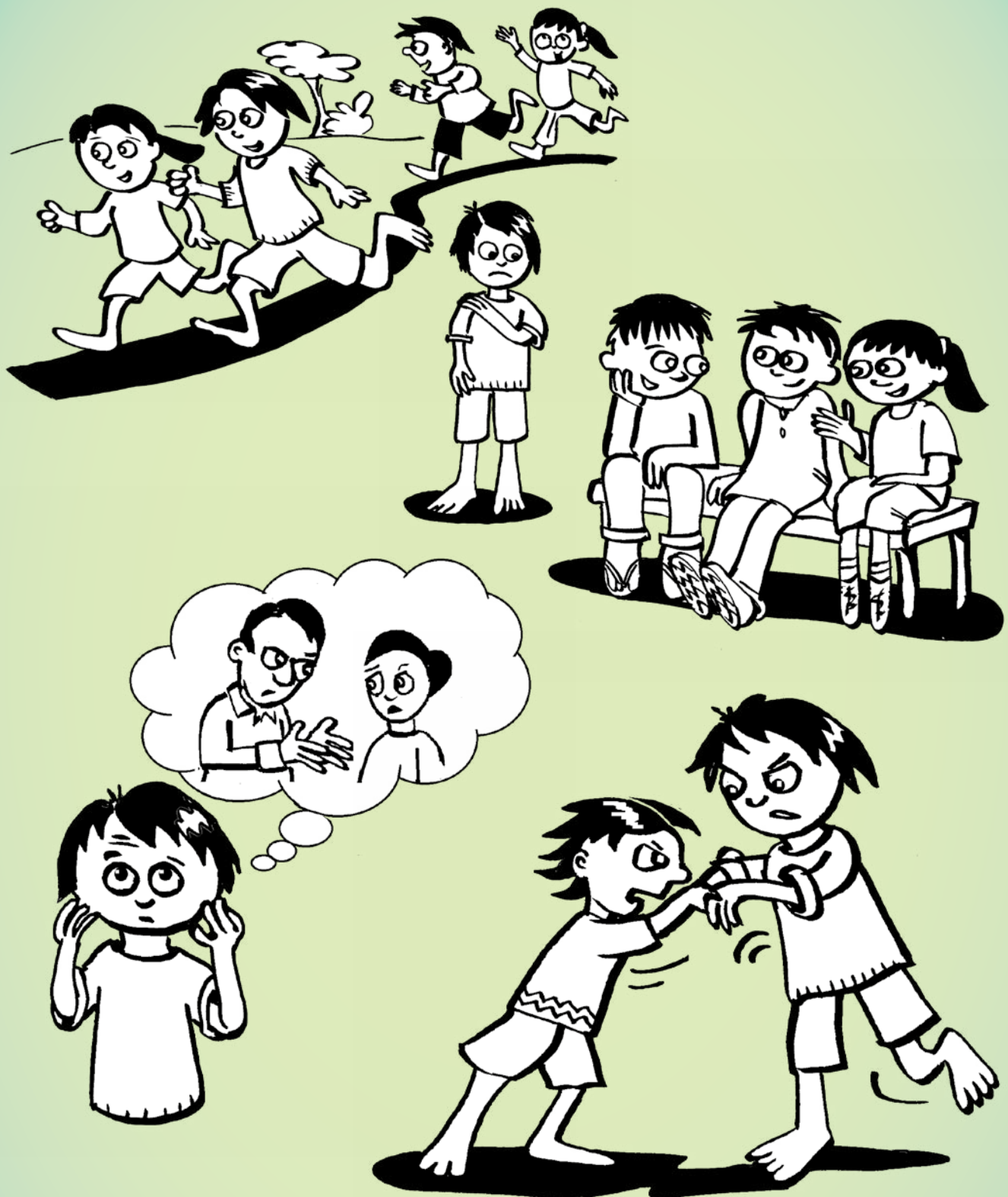
“We turn blue when we feel sad,” said the blue bird.

“We turn orange when we feel happy!” said the orange bird. “And if we turn pink, it’s time to...”

The school bell rang and all of the birds turned pink at the same time.

“... fly away!” they squawked, and disappeared into the sky.

Picture 4



Text 4

Kian could not believe he had found such interesting talking birds outside the school.

He went to school and wished he could tell someone his secret.

That morning he played with his friends and felt happy. But later that day he felt excluded by his friends. This made him feel upset and angry.

Kian looked down at his body to see if he had changed colour like the birds, but he hadn't.

How would anyone know he was feeling upset, he wondered?

On the walk home he felt even worse. He remembered his parents fighting the night before. When he got home his sister wanted to play.

“Get away from me!” he shouted. They started to fight.

He hurt her and felt bad. He wished he could change colour when he was angry, so his sister would know not to bother him.

Picture 5



Text 5

The next day, Kian told his helper about the birds he had met.

She smiled and said that she had once met the birds too.

“You should not worry about changing colour, Kian,” she said. “Humans are different. We often keep our feelings inside. But once we know what they are, we can start to learn how to manage them.”

“How can I see what my feelings are?” Kian asked.

“You can draw a pot, and draw your feelings in the pot each day” she said.

“But what do feelings look like?” Kian asked.

“Well, some people think they are like shapes – so they draw different shapes for each different feeling,” she said. “Other people think of colours – like red for anger, and blue for sadness.” Some people think feelings look like different creatures or characters.

Kian took out his colouring pencils and started to experiment.

He decided that yellow was a good colour for happiness, because it reminded him of the sun.

He chose blue for sadness, because sadness felt lonely like the night, just like he felt when excluded by his friends.

He chose red for anger, because anger felt hot like a fire.

Green felt like the right colour for worry. It reminded him of his parents arguing.

Picture 6



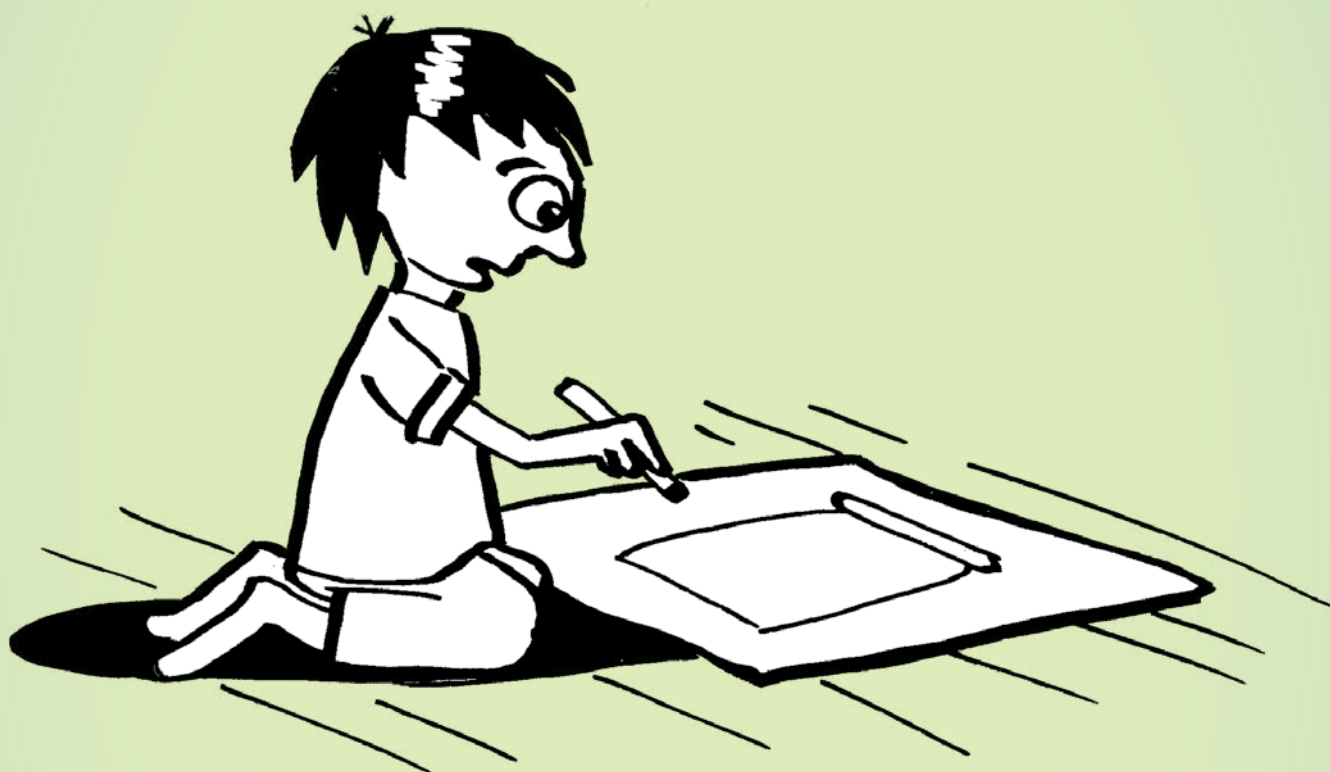
Text 6

On many days, Kian added lots of green to his Feelings Pot, so he knew he felt very worried. On these days, he could not stop thinking about his problems. Sometimes he was so worried, that it made it very hard to concentrate on his school work. Other teachers would get so mad at him. This made him worry even more.



Session 2

Picture 7



Text 7

Kian was very worried about what was going on at home. His parents were still fighting every night. Sometimes he forgot to draw in his Feelings Pot. This made him worry even more.

Kian told a friend what had happened. The friend said he had forgotten too.

“I wish I did it every day, because I feel better when I put my feelings in the pot,” said Kian’s friend.

“Maybe we could remind each other to practice,” said Kian. “Will you meet me after school and we can do it together?”

“Ok,” smiled his friend.

Picture 8



Text 8

That afternoon, Kian and his friend filled in their Feelings Pots.

“I’m glad we’ve done it,” said his friend.

Kian had secretly hoped the colourful birds would be there so his friend could see them too.

But even without the birds there, they had a great time telling jokes and talking.

Picture 9



Text 9

Kian noticed three main feelings in his pot that day: worry (green), happiness (yellow), and anger (red).

Kian felt worried about getting into trouble with the helper for not drawing in his Feelings Pot every day. His worry feeling felt so big that he did not feel confident about seeing more of his friends that week. Though, Kian did feel some happiness because he had fun with one of his friends when they completed the Feelings Pot together. Kian also felt angry that morning because he found his sister playing with his stuff without asking him.

“There’s lots of green in your pot, Kian,” said the helper.

Kian looked at his pot and saw the helper was right. Worry was the most big feeling he had felt that day. Kian thought about his parents. They had been arguing so much. He was worried they would hurt each other or that his dad might leave the family.

Have you had any similar feelings to Kian in the last week? What did they feel like?

Picture 10



Text 10

“Our feelings can affect how our bodies feel. I wonder what does worry feel like for you in your body, Kian?” the helper asked.

Kian thought about it for a moment.

Every time he felt worried about his dad leaving them, Kian noticed his stomach would twist and turn. His face would feel warm and he would feel like he was going to cry.

Picture 11



Text 11

On his way home, Kian walked with some of his friends. He still felt his stomach twisting and turning until...

“Kian! Where have you been?”

Kian turned around to see one of the colourful birds sitting in a tree.

Kian ran to the tree to show his friends the bird. But as soon as they arrived, the bird turned pink and vanished. “Sorry I have to go!” said the bird.

Kian felt very happy to see the bird! He noticed a very different sensation in his body when he felt happy.

When he saw the bird, his whole body felt light. There was a slight buzzing sensation throughout his body.

Picture 12



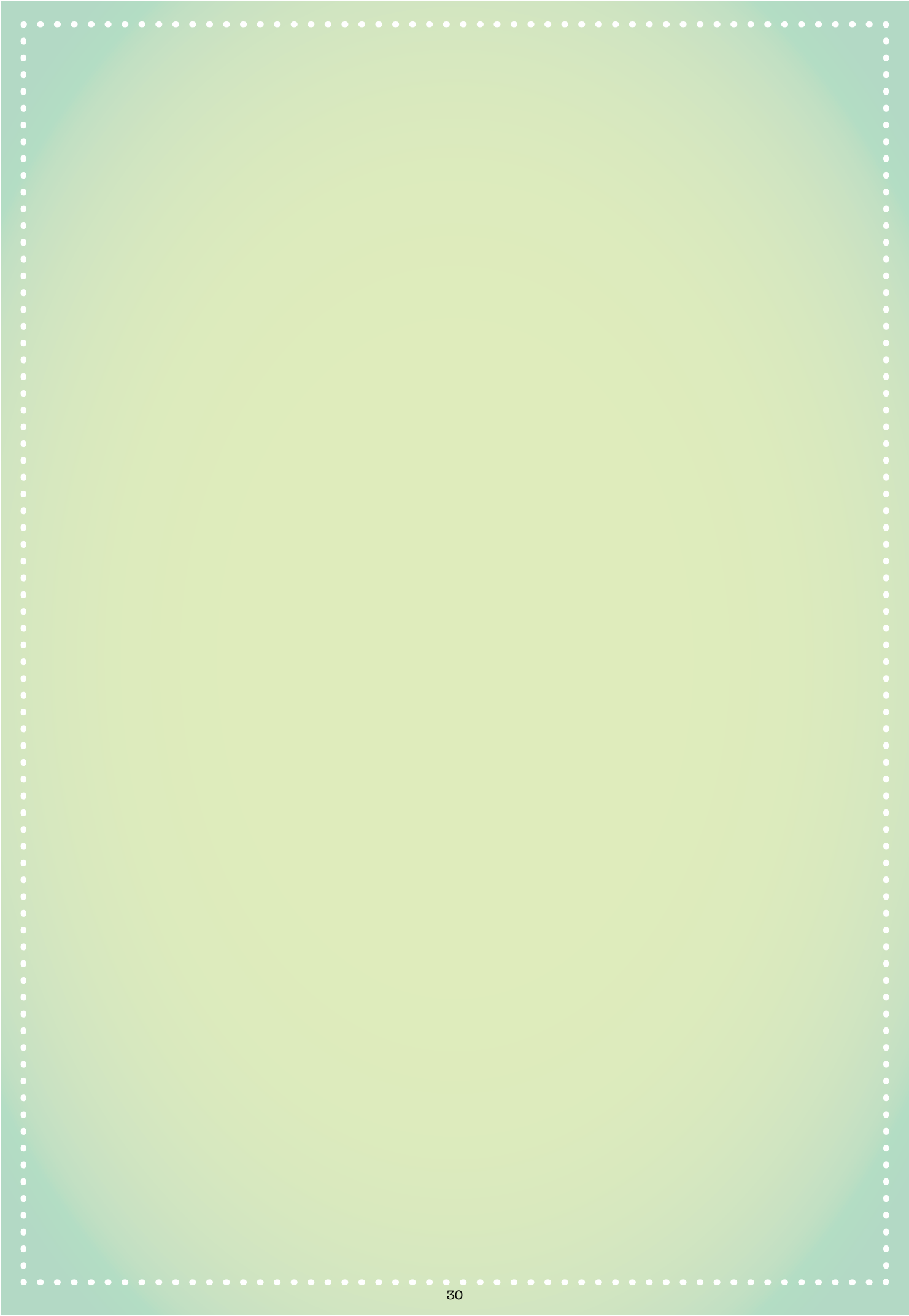
Text 12

When Kian arrived home he found his sister playing with his stuff... again!

“Stop taking my things without asking me!” he shouted.

Kian felt anger growing inside him. This felt very different to the happy and worry feeling he had felt earlier today. He noticed then that his heart started to beat hard and fast. His muscles got very tense and his face felt hot.

Kian wondered if there was something he could do to help himself when he was feeling so bad...



Session 3

Picture 13



Text 13

When Kian first learned to do Slow Breathing, he practised every night before he went to sleep. He put his workbook where he slept to remind him.

At first, he found it hard to breathe slowly and from his belly. One night he was concentrating so hard on doing it right that he started to feel dizzy. He got scared that he wasn't getting enough air into his body.

So he stopped trying to do it perfectly. He just focused on breathing calmly and this felt a lot easier.

After a few days of practising Kian felt good at breathing calmly. He noticed it helped him feel relaxed and calm in his body.

What happened when you practised Slow Breathing to calm your body?

Picture 14



Text 14

Even though the Slow Breathing helped to calm his body, when Kian felt very sad he didn't want to do anything.

Sometimes this got him into trouble at home.

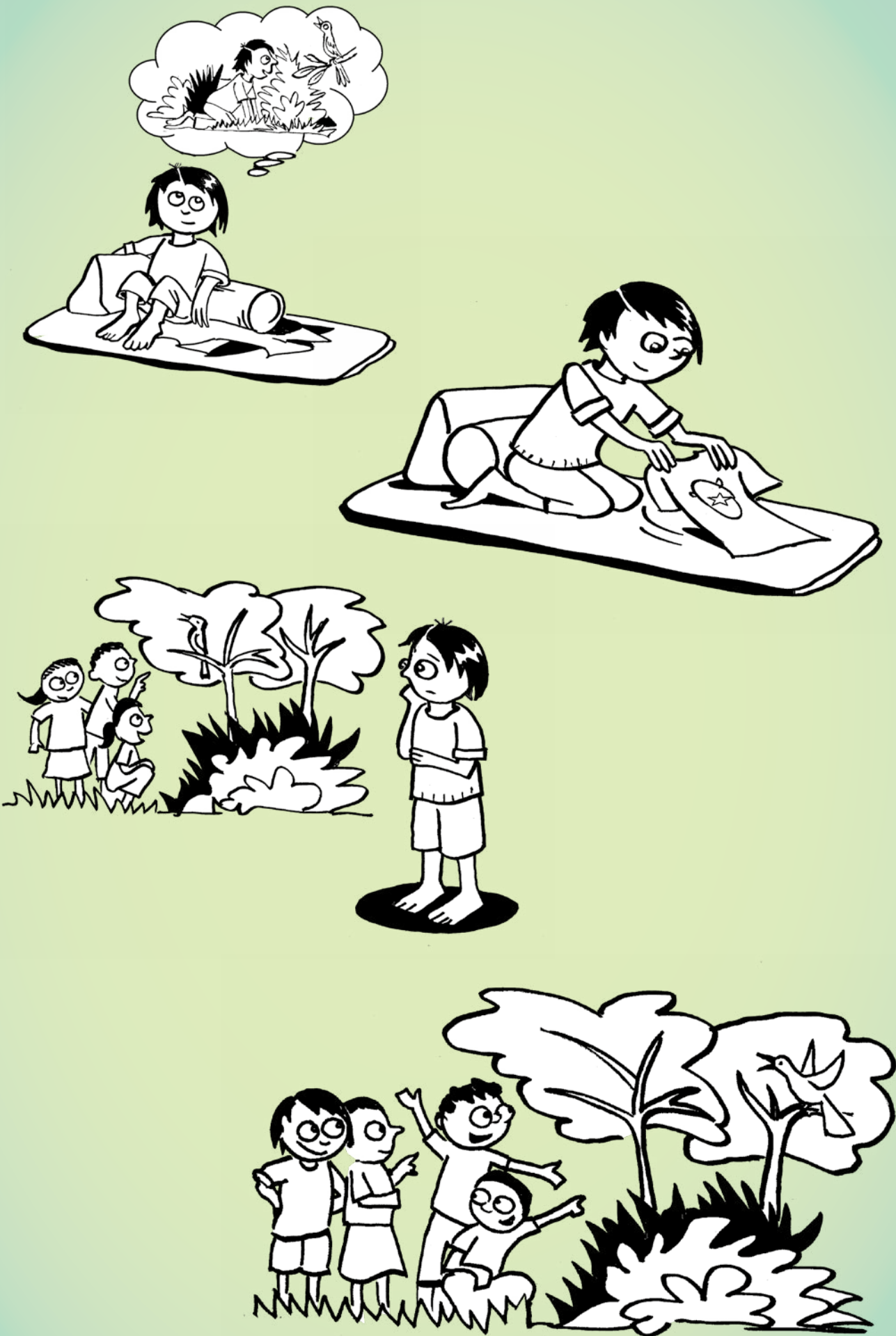
“Why don't you help with house chores?” said Kian's father.

Kian did not know what to say to his father. He knew that sadness made it too hard for him to do his chores. Kian thought he would feel better if he just did not do them.

Sadness also made Kian miss out on things he usually enjoyed, like looking for the colourful birds with his friends. He just didn't feel like spending time with his friends anymore and he didn't even have the energy to go and look for the colourful birds.

But after not seeing his friends or the birds for some time, he started to feel lonely and even sadder.

Picture 15



Text 15

Kian's helper noticed how lonely Kian seemed.

"Wouldn't you like to see your friends more, Kian?" the helper asked.

Kian nodded. "But it feels too hard to spend time with them".

"Changing My Actions is all about gradually increasing your activity," she explained. "So if you want to start playing with your friends again, you can plan it in a way that doesn't make it feel so hard to do."

Kian liked the sound of that. He really wanted to start bird spotting with his friends again. Perhaps he could find the colourful birds again...

Using Changing My Actions, Kian thought about his plan:

1. Every day: Imagine bird spotting with my friends.

Even remembering what it was like made him feel a little happier.

2. Friday night: Get my clothes ready to go bird spotting the next day.
3. Saturday: Go to where my friends spot birds and watch them from a distance.
4. Sunday: Join in with my friends spotting birds.



Session 4

Picture 16



Kian found it easy to get through the first steps of Changing My Actions. These were:

1. Imagining spotting birds with my friends, and
2. Getting my bird spotting equipment ready.

But the next step of going to watch his friends was quite hard to do. Kian felt nervous and didn't have much energy because he still felt sad about many things. He decided to ask his sister to join him. He thought it would help make amends with her too.

She got so excited that Kian had to go, even though he didn't feel like it. When they found where his friends were spotting birds, Kian was feeling better so he decided to ask his friends if he could join them, even though he had planned this step for the next day.

"Great idea, Kian!" they said. And so they all went searching for the colourful birds.

They didn't find the birds, but Kian had great fun spending time with his friends and he even enjoyed his sister coming too! Kian's nervous feelings disappeared and he felt so happy. He noticed light, buzzing sensations in his body. Kian was sure that if he was like the colourful birds, he would turn bright yellow with happiness.

And because they had already been bird spotting on Saturday, Kian found it much easier to join his friends again on Sunday.

Picture 17



Text 17

Kian was soon feeling confident that he could continue bird spotting with his friends. Because doing this made him feel happy, he decided to find another activity he could start doing again.

Kian thought about how hard it was to do his chores when he felt sad or angry. His dad was already annoyed with him for not helping with the sweeping. He used to do it every week to help around the home. But he hadn't done it in a long time.

"Dad, shall I sweep the floor this week?" Kian asked his father.

"That would be very helpful, Kian," said his father. "Thank you."

Kian felt very happy to be helping his family.

Now all he needed to do was break down the task into small, manageable steps.

Can you help Kian complete the Changing My Actions steps for sweeping the floor? First, we need to break down this task into small steps. Then we need to plan when he could do these steps.



Session 5

Picture 18



Text 18

Sweeping the floors seemed like such a big task to Kian. He started to worry.

Maybe this wasn't such a good idea, he thought to himself.

But the night before he swept the floor, he heard a soft flutter of wings outside his window. He looked up and saw an orange bird fly into his room, carrying the family broom!

"What are you doing here?" Kian whispered. He looked over and saw his sister was still asleep.

"I have come to put the broom by your bed, to remind you to sweep when you wake up!" the bird sang back.

Then, just as quickly as the bird arrived, it flew away. "Sorry got to go again!"

The next morning, Kian woke up to find the broom at the end of his bed. He smiled at the memory, and remembered what he needed to do that day.

But for the next two days he couldn't sweep because he felt so sad and tired. His dad was starting to get more angry with him.

So instead of doing all the sweeping at once, Kian decided to only sweep for 2 minutes to start with.

"Mum, can you time me?" he asked his mum.

And so she timed him. Kian swept for 3 minutes.

Kian's parents were happy that he could do a little bit of work, even though he had a lot more sweeping to do.

He decided that he would try to sweep for a little longer each day.

The next day he swept for 5 minutes and by the end of the week he had finished all the sweeping.

What actions have you been trying to change?

Picture 19



Text 19

Kian noticed he was starting to feel happier since spending time with his friends and helping with the sweeping. He felt that he had more energy to do other things as well.

But he was still having other problems that were bothering him.

Kian's dad had been offered a new job but it was in another district. It would mean Kian and his sister would have to move house and school.

"I don't want to leave!" his sister cried. She was sad and upset. So was Kian.

Kian also had problems with a boy from his class. The boy was bullying some younger children and stealing their food. Kian wanted to do something about it. But he didn't know what to do.

Everyone faces problems. Some of them are big and some of them are small. Do you or other young people that you know, also have practical problems like Kian?

Picture 20



Text 20

Kian lay in bed that night. He could not sleep. He was very tired but he could not stop thinking about his problems.

Also, his sister had to sleep with the light on but this made it too light for him to sleep.

He lay there looking at the moon, until suddenly, he heard his mother coming softly towards him.

“Can’t sleep?” she asked, leaning down to kiss his forehead.

Kian shook his head. He told his mother what was happening.

“You can’t solve all your problems at once, Kian,” said his mother. “Sometimes we have to choose one, and start there.”

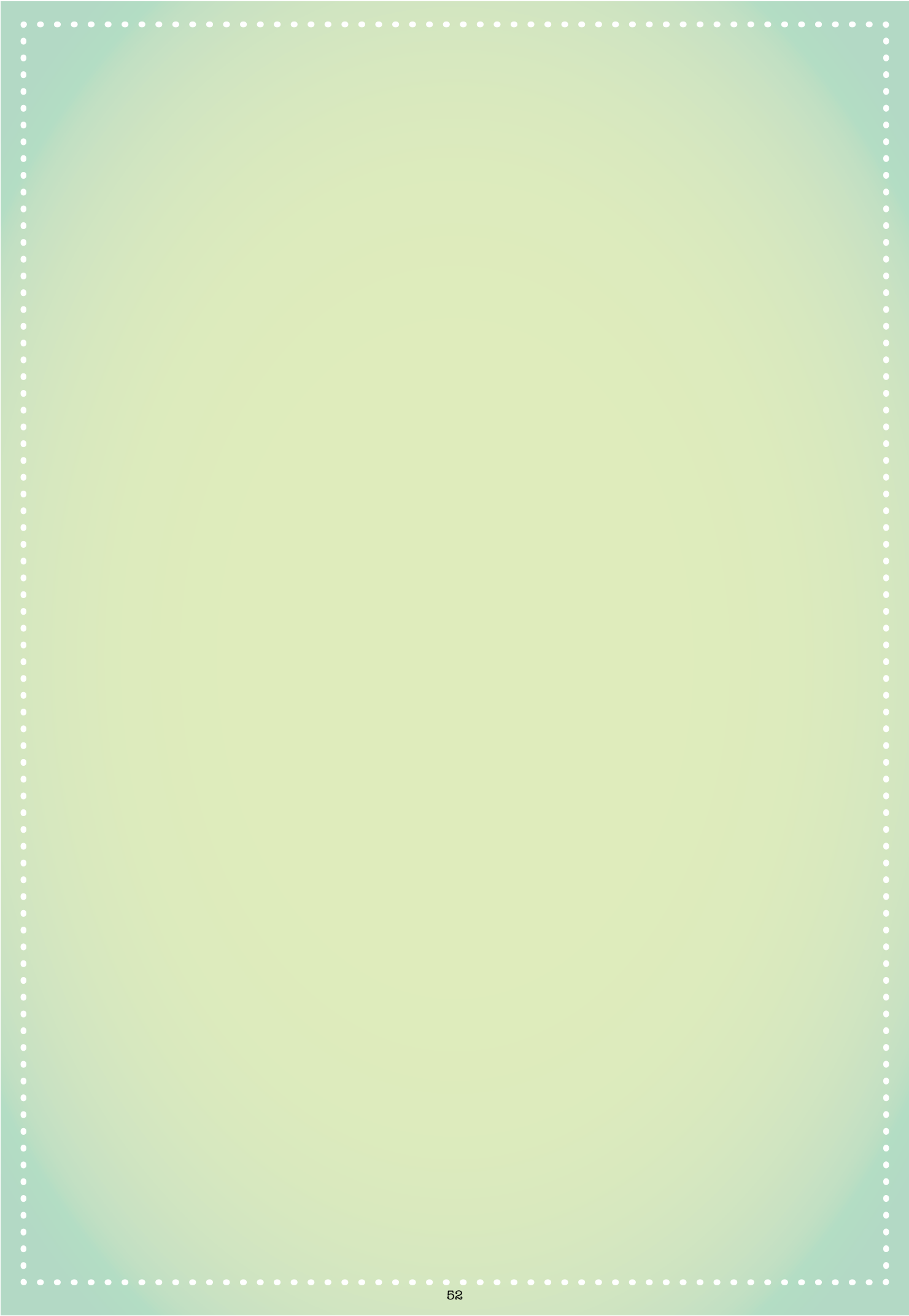
Kian thought about this. Problems like his parents arguing and his dad’s new job were too hard to solve at that time. But he really wanted to solve the problem of the bully.

“Problems are much easier to solve when you have had a good night’s sleep, Kian,” his mother said. “Why don’t you try your Slow Breathing?”

Perhaps his mother was right. If Kian could have a good night’s sleep, he could feel better in the morning. It seemed as though trying to solve the sleep problem was the easiest problem of them all.

But he did not know how to solve his problem.

“What do I do? Where do I start?” he thought to himself.



Session 6

Picture 21



Text 21

Remember Kian's sleep problem? Well, his ideas for managing his problems were:

- Try to practise Slow Breathing to help him stop thinking so much
- Turn the light out after his sister has fallen asleep
- Talk to his mother about his problem

Kian was already practicing his Slow Breathing each night. He also thought it might be easiest to turn the light out after his sister had fallen asleep. He tried that idea first, but it didn't really work out as he had hoped.

His sister woke up as soon as he turned the light off.

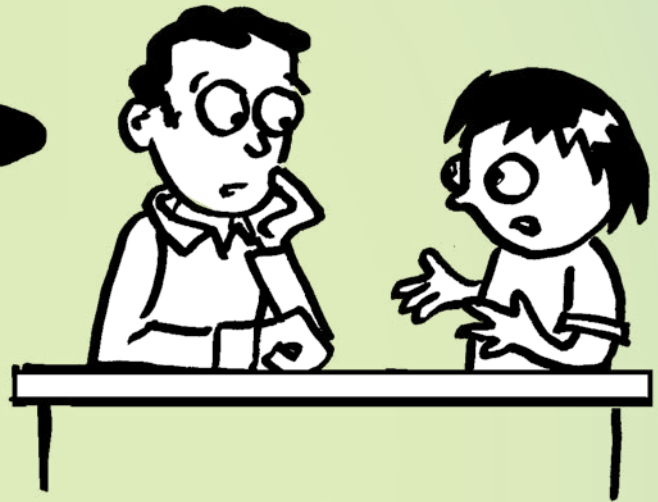
"Kian, I'm scared!" she whispered.

So Kian had to turn it back on so she could fall asleep. He didn't want to turn it off again in case she would wake up.

Kian felt frustrated. "Now what I do?!" he thought.

Kian was not sure what he should do next to solve his sleeping problems. Do you have any ideas for him?

Picture 22



Text 22

Thanks for giving Kian some more ideas to solve his sleeping problems.

Now Kian was feeling more rested, he wanted to solve the problem of the bully. He had seen the boy teasing his sister and her friends. This made Kian feel so angry he had to practise Calming My Body.

Just as he started to relax, a flutter of wings filled the air. The colourful birds had returned!

"Oh no, Kian looks angry!" the blue bird said.

"What's wrong, Kian?" the orange bird asked.

Kian explained the situation to the birds.

"What a horrible bully! Where is he, Kian? I will fill a balloon with water and drop it on his head!" said the red bird.

"It's OK," said Kian. "I think I can use Stop, Think, Go to solve this problem."

Kian started thinking. He knew the first thing was to Stop and Think of the problem. He decided the problem was to 'try to stop the kid from bullying others'.

Kian thought of a few ideas for solving the problem. These were:

- Tell a teacher
- Ask my father for advice
- Tell the boy to stop bullying other kids
- Hit the bully next time I see him teasing my sister

"And what about another option: drop a balloon filled with water on his head?" the red bird asked.

Kian laughed and said "Ok let's make that the fifth idea!"

Even though sometimes he felt so angry he wanted to hit the bully, Kian knew this would not solve his problem. It would probably make things worse.

He thought it would be too hard to tell a teacher. Kian thought he would need more support before he was ready to try this solution.

"I think the easiest idea first will be to ask my father for advice," Kian told the birds. "Maybe he can tell me how I could talk to the boy to get him to stop bullying others."

"Good idea, Kian," said the orange bird. "Maybe you could practise what to say with your father?"



Session 7

Picture 23



Text 23

Kian was starting to feel good again. He felt confident using the skills to help him cope better and improve his feelings.

But then, one day, many months later, his father decided to take the new job. This meant they had to move to a new house and school.

“Maybe it is a good thing my father has a new job. He will be less angry and my parents will argue less,” Kian thought.

But Kian also felt very sad and angry about having to leave his friends, and the colourful birds. He was also scared about going to a new school.

When he felt sad, Kian stayed at home a lot and didn’t spend much time with his friends. “Oh no... I can feel the Vicious Cycle starting again” said Kian.

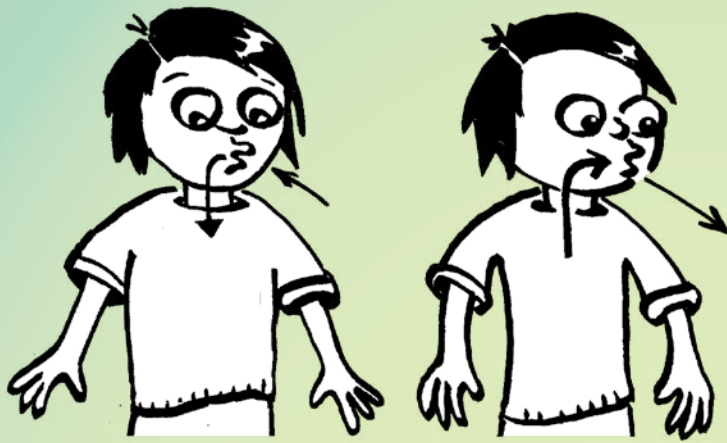
“What if we don’t make any new friends?” Kian asked his sister. She held his hand and started to cry.

These feelings were affecting Kian’s body too. He noticed his muscles were tense and he felt sick in his stomach a lot of the time.

His heart would beat fast whenever he thought about starting at a new school. When he noticed these feelings, Kian put them in his Feelings Pot.

Kian thought about which new skills he could use to help with the new big feelings and problems. Can you help? What do you think would help him cope better? Maybe you know some from your EASE group?

Picture 24



Thank you! That was really helpful.

Kian thought back to the skills he had learned. He remembered that to manage big feelings and body sensations he could calm his body. He practised Slow Breathing every day, especially when he noticed big feelings. This helped his body relax.

He noticed that when he felt sad he stopped seeing his friends again, but this made him feel worse. He needed to apply Changing My Actions: to feel better he had to keep seeing his friends and keep outsmarting the big feelings.

After they moved house, Kian still felt sad about not seeing his friends and felt worried about making new ones.

Kian decided that these were two problems he could try to solve with Managing My Problems.

The first problem was easier to manage. He thought of ideas to stay in contact with his friends.

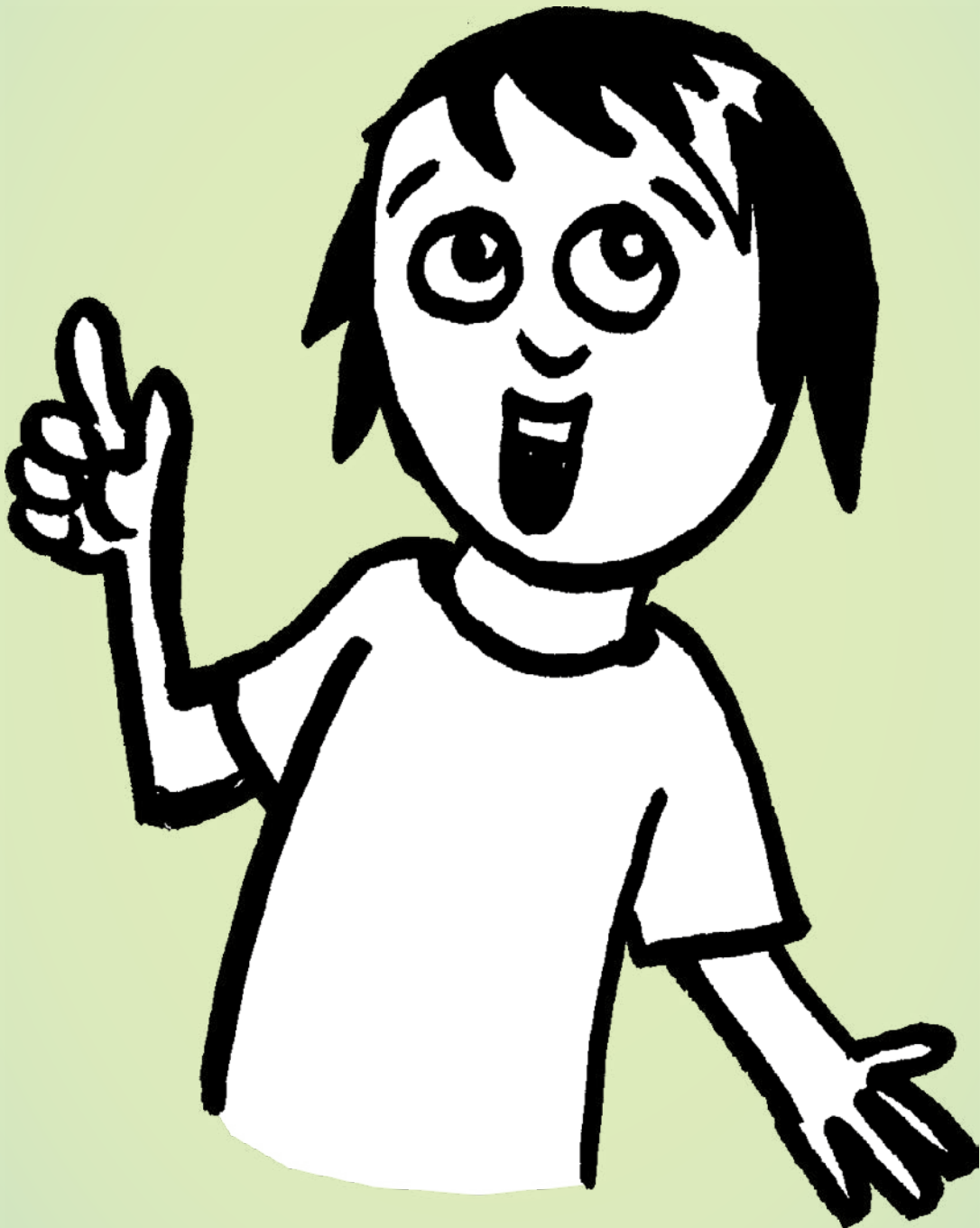
“Can we still visit?” Kian asked his mother.

“Of course we can,” she said. “We can contact your friends and ask when they are free.”

The second problem was a little harder to solve. Kian talked with his family about how to make new friends. They all thought of some ideas for Kian and his sister to try.

They even practised some of the ideas together, like asking to join in a game and introducing themselves to others. Kian’s father laughed a lot, which made them all happy.

Picture 25



Text 25

Kian still feels a little nervous about starting his new school next week but at least he feels more confident about making new friends now.

The only things he's missing are the colourful birds, but something tells him they will be back to visit.

In fact, maybe he can introduce his new friends to bird spotting!

If you have a big problem that makes you feel big feelings, remember to practise your EASE skills. It can really help. And now, like Kian, you know how to do them by yourself.



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