

HOW TO BE A KID

RESOURCE PACK

Created by
**OUR TIME
CHARITY**



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About Our Time Charity and Next Door But One

As the only UK charity dedicated to the issue, [**Our Time Charity**](#) is dedicated to supporting and transforming the lives of the estimated **3.7 million children and young people** across the UK who have a parent with a mental illness (sometimes called CoPMI). Despite the widespread prevalence of this issue, it remains largely unrecognized and under-supported, despite its profound impact on children's mental health, education, and life outcomes.

The impact of parental mental illness on children can be profound and long-lasting. These children are at a higher risk of experiencing emotional, behavioural, and academic difficulties. Without adequate support, they may struggle with isolation, anxiety, and a lack of understanding about their parent's condition. Our Time addresses these challenges head-on by providing targeted support that fosters resilience, understanding, and a sense of belonging. By intervening early and offering sustained support at school and in the community, Our Time helps to break the cycle of disadvantage and empower young people to achieve their full potential.

[**Next Door But One**](#) are a multi award-winning LGBTQ+ and disability-led theatre company based in York, promoting creative skills and encouraging community cohesion, particularly with those who face barriers to accessing theatre. Their established programme focuses on workshops and performances for and with cohorts of the community with disabilities, mental ill health, those experiencing bereavement, those who are carers and individuals from the LGBTQ+ community. Their activity ranges from workshops to touring performances, training programmes and professional development opportunities.

If you would like to know more about either Our Time Charity or Next Door But One, please contact:

Our Time Charity:

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Next Door But One:

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Character Investigations

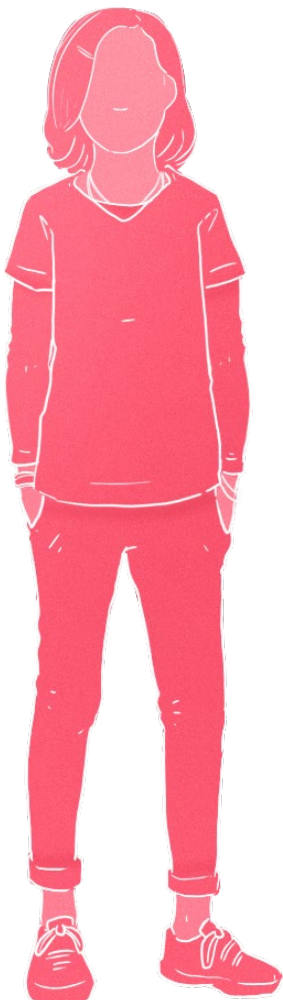
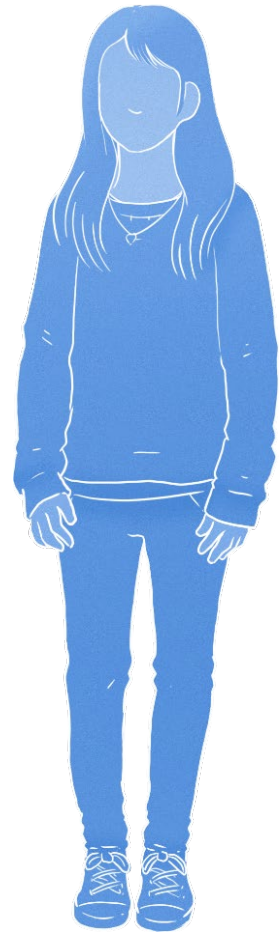
Using what you have learned from the play, let's investigate the story's **three main characters**.

Molly

What emotions does Molly have throughout the play?

What challenges does Molly face?

What helps Molly?



Taylor

How do you think Taylor feels at the beginning of the play?

What changes for Taylor throughout the play?

What do you think is important to Taylor?

Joe

How do you think Joe feels at the beginning of the play?

Do you think Joe realises how his sister feels?

What do you think is important to Joe?

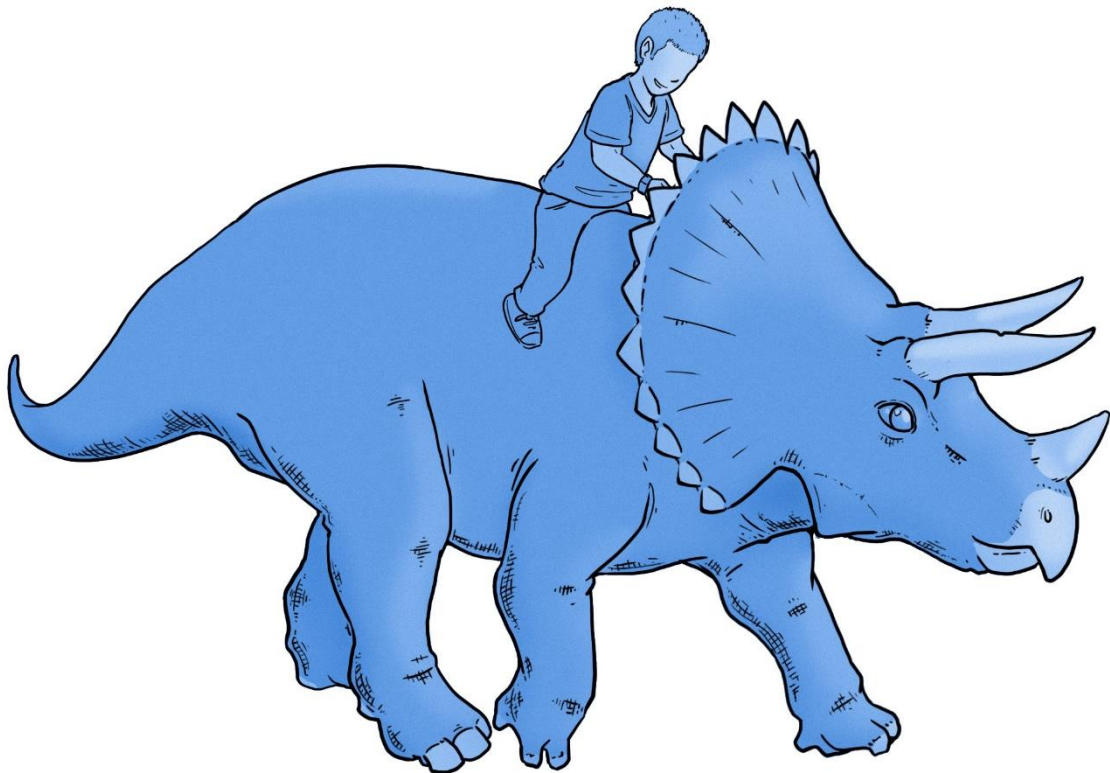


Escape from Dinoland – Instructions

On the **Escape from Dinoland worksheet** try to navigate along the jungle paths with Joe's triceratops to the **escape** either on your own or with a partner.

Along the way, whenever you reach a question try to write a short answer into the bubble in order to pass.

Afterwards, try it again with the **Your escape worksheet** answering the questions about yourself instead. Were they similar to Joe's answers?



Escape from Dinoland worksheet

Start

Navigate Dinoland with Joe and answer the questions on the way

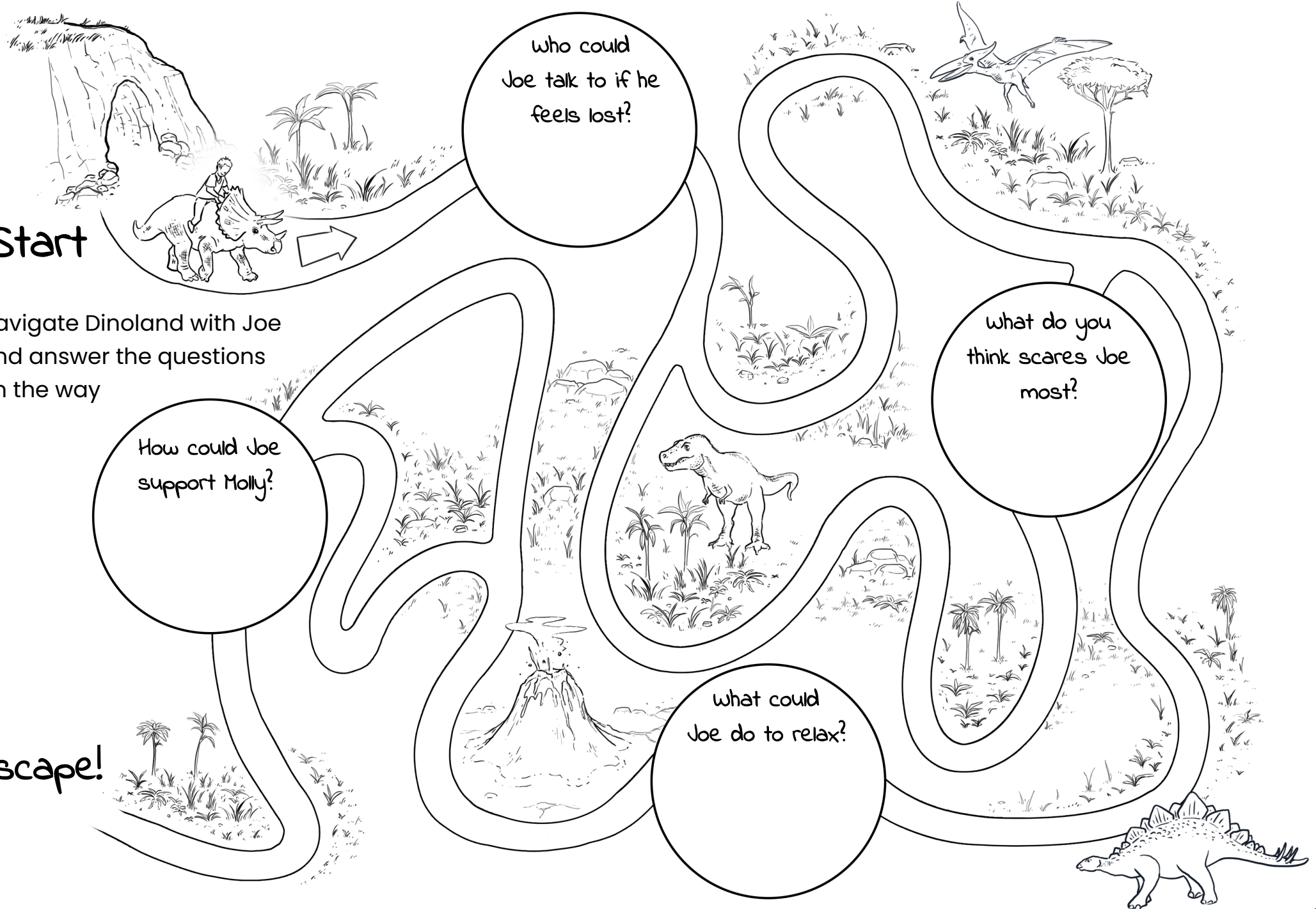
Escape!

How could Joe support Molly?

Who could Joe talk to if he feels lost?

What do you think scares Joe most?

What could Joe do to relax?



Your escape worksheet

Start

Navigate the path again,
this time answering
questions about yourself

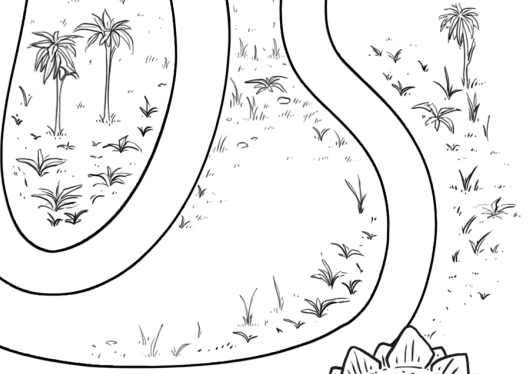
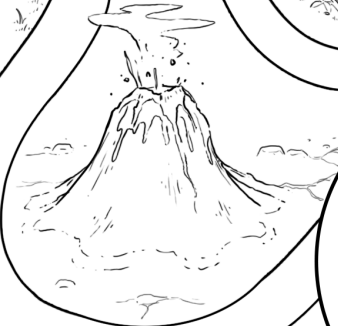
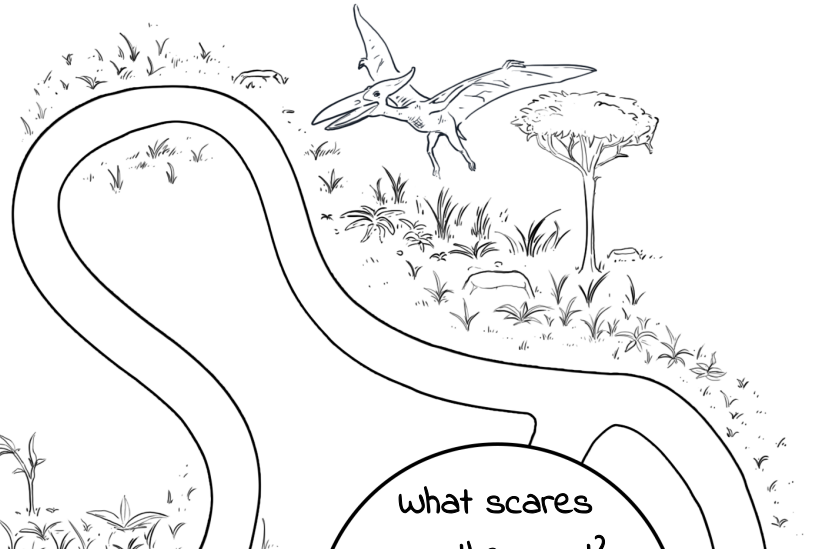
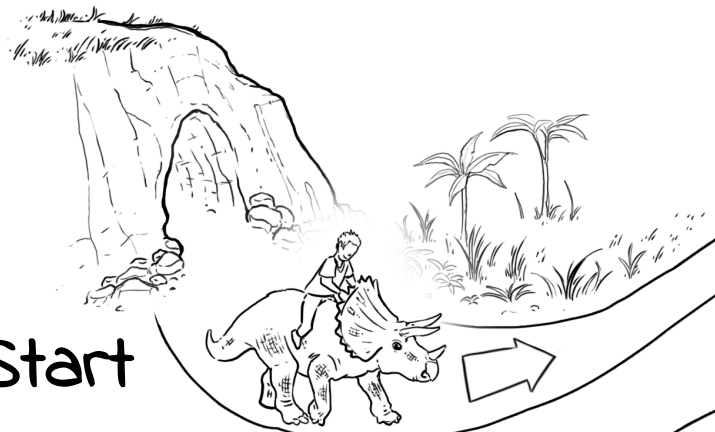
Escape!

who could
you talk to if you
feel lost?

How could
people support you?

what scares
you the most?

what do you
do to relax?



The red box

Below is a picture of Taylor's imaginary **red box** she mentioned in the play and all the good things she keeps in it.

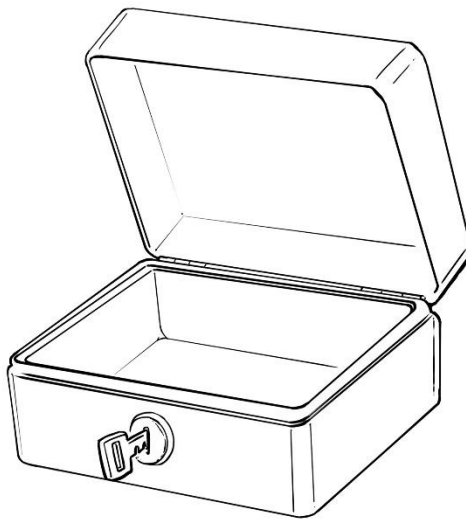


What do you think?

If Molly had a red box what **good things** would she put inside it? What **bad things** do you think she would put in her imaginary bin to forget about?

Your red box

What **good things** would you put in your own imaginary red box? Try drawing and writing some around it.



Red box

(what good things would
you put in it?)

Symptoms quiz

While they sound similar, mental health and mental illness are different things.

Mental health is something we *all* have. Depending how we are feeling it may be described as good or bad. Stresses and worries can negatively affect our mental health making us feel sad, irritable or quiet while activities we enjoy may make us feel relaxed and content.

Mental health tends to vary in life depending on what's going on around us and does not mean we are have a mental illness. Having a bad day and feeling sad isn't unusual, just as having an enjoyable day will likely make us feel and behave in a happy way.

When someone has a **mental illness** though they may struggle to control their mood, thoughts and behaviour regardless of what's going on around them. Examples may include them being angry, sad or tired for a long time without an obvious reason.

Keeping this in mind, please read each of the described symptoms below and write whether you think that mental illness or a less severe issue affecting their mental health is responsible for their behaviour. Also, try to explain *why* you think this is the case.

Molly

Molly has seemed very tired at school this week. She's fallen asleep in class and cried a few times. When asked by a teacher what's wrong she mentions that she's been taking care of her brother Joe, the housework and shopping as her mum won't get out of bed.





Molly's Mum

Molly's mum hasn't been shopping or prepared any meals for her and Joe in the last few days. She was quite happy and talkative last week but she stopped taking her medication and is now crying in bed for most of the day time.

Taylor

After moving placements Taylor seems very quiet and has been ignoring the other children at Riverside. She eventually mentions to Molly that her favourite Rainbow Dash teddy she'd been given by her Nan got left behind and is probably lost forever now.





Joe

After the tumble dryer caught fire and he went to live with his dad and baby brother, Joe has been regularly misbehaving. He's refused to clean his room and has broken some ornaments playing ball inside, even after his father told him to stop.

NOTE FOR TEACHERS: Keep the following page separate from the main worksheets until children have given their answers.

Symptoms quiz answer sheet

Molly does not have a mental illness. However, her mental health is clearly poor as she is taking on *lots* of responsibilities at home and at school which she is struggling with.

Molly's Mum has a mental illness. While we do not learn any specific details about the mental illness she has, it affects her daily routine greatly and is unpredictable. There is no obvious cause for her sudden change in mood besides not taking her medication.

Taylor does not have a mental illness. Her lack of engagement is almost certainly due to the loss of her teddy. While this may not seem like a big problem, remember that it was given to her by her nan who died. When we lose or break things given by friends and family who are no longer with us, it is normal to feel sad being reminded of their loss.

Joe does not have a mental illness, it's not too difficult to see why his mental health would be affected though. The tumble dryer fire was likely very scary for him and being taken away from his Mum must have been a big shock.

IMPORTANT: Please remember, you should *always* be mindful about sensitivity and avoid rushing to conclusions about whether someone has a mental illness or a mental health problem.

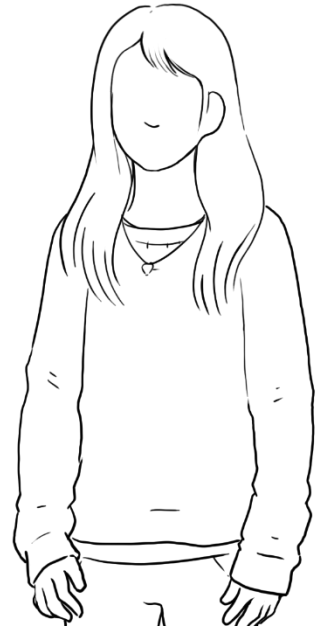
Writing a letter to Molly

When we are struggling, sad or stressed having a close friend to offer us support can make a big difference to our overall mental health and resilience.

While Molly has **Taylor** as a close friend who cares about her she can't always be there to offer support.

Imagine that you are another close friend of Molly's who has heard what she is going through and that her mum is unwell again. Try writing her a **letter** or message of support below, continuing on a separate sheet if you need to.

In it, consider what words of kindness and understanding are most likely to make Molly feel better and make her feel less alone in her difficulties.



Dear Molly,

From -----

Map to Riverside – Instructions

We all have places in our lives which bring us feelings of happiness, safety and comfort. It could be somewhere we like to eat, a park we play in, a shop or a friend's house.

Using a **Map to Riverside worksheet** please try completing the following activities on your own or with a partner.

Activity 1 – Molly and Joe's places

The worksheet shows a representation of the route **Molly** and **Joe** took Vera on to reach Riverside. Remembering the things which were important to them in the story try the following for the **four empty circles** on the map:

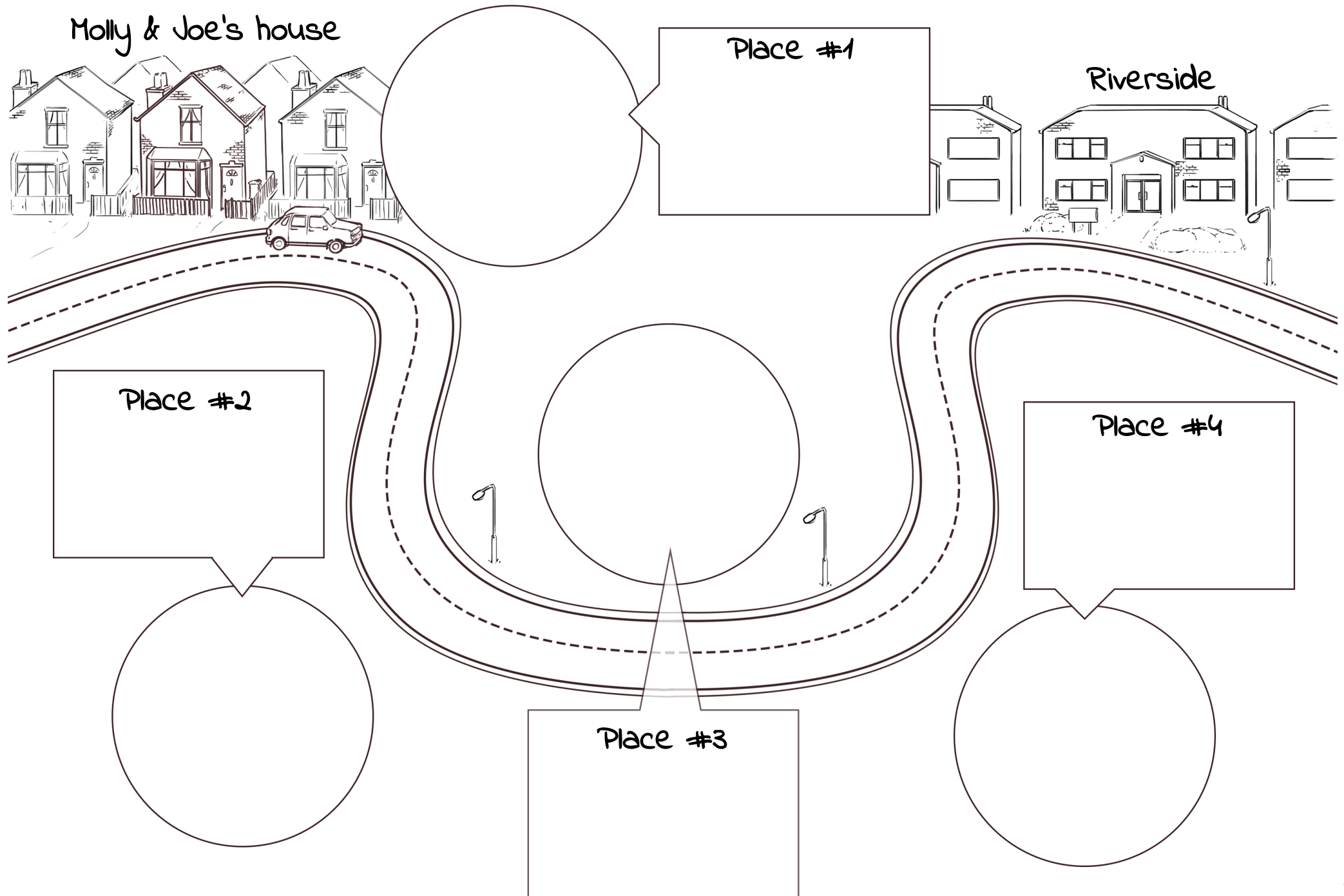
- Draw places which you think would help bring Molly and Joe happiness or reduce their worries.
- Write in **the box next to these places** why you think visiting them would be helpful for Molly and Joe.

Activity 2 – Your places

Using a fresh version of the worksheet, try the following in the **four empty circles** on the map:

- Draw places which bring you happiness or help you to relax.
- Write in **the box next to these places** why you enjoy visiting them.

Map to Riverside worksheet



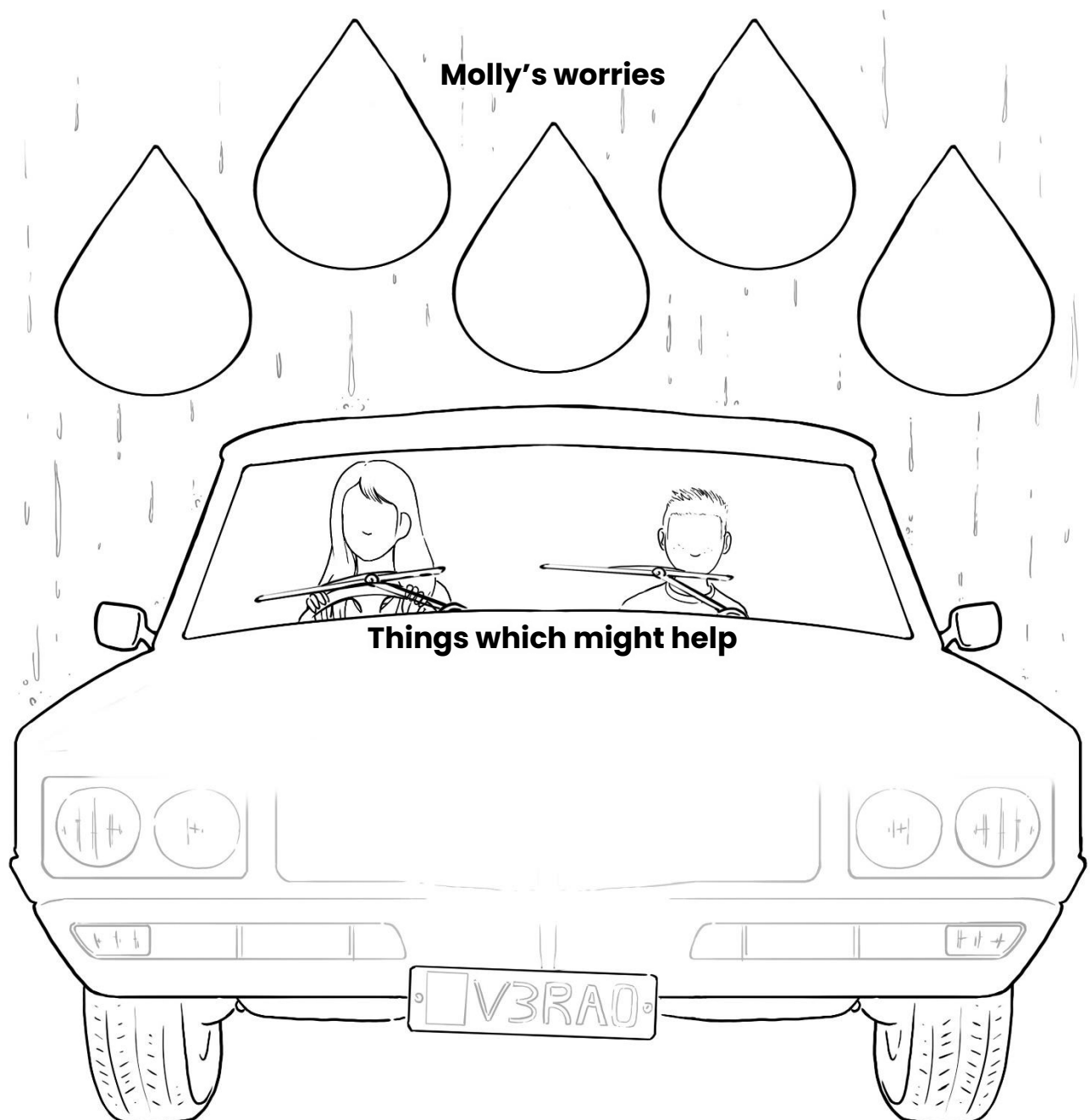
Protecting mental health

We all have **mental health**. It can become *better* when we relax and enjoy things while it can become *worse* when we worry lots or are unhappy.

Protecting Molly's mental health

When worries about her mum became too much for Molly to cope with in the play she escaped in her nan's old car **Vera**. In the image of Vera below, try writing in the following:

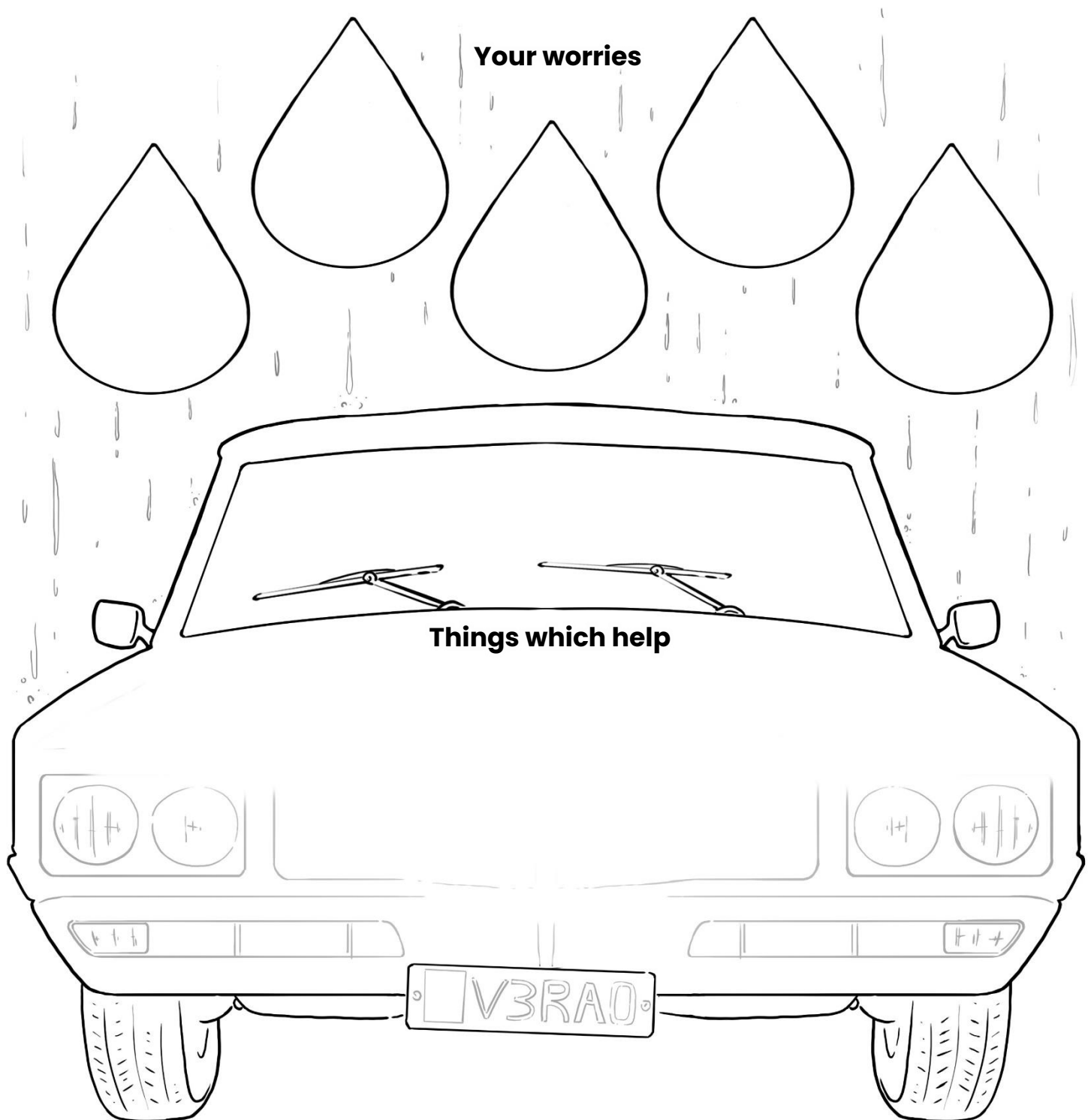
- Inside the falling **raindrops**, write or draw some things that you think Molly **worries about**
- Then; inside of **Vera's outline** write or draw some thoughts and activities which you think might help Molly worry less and protect her mental health



Protecting your own mental health

Now, try the same thing again in with the image of Vera below. However, this time write some of your **own worries** inside of the raindrops and write things which **help you worry less** inside of Vera's outline.

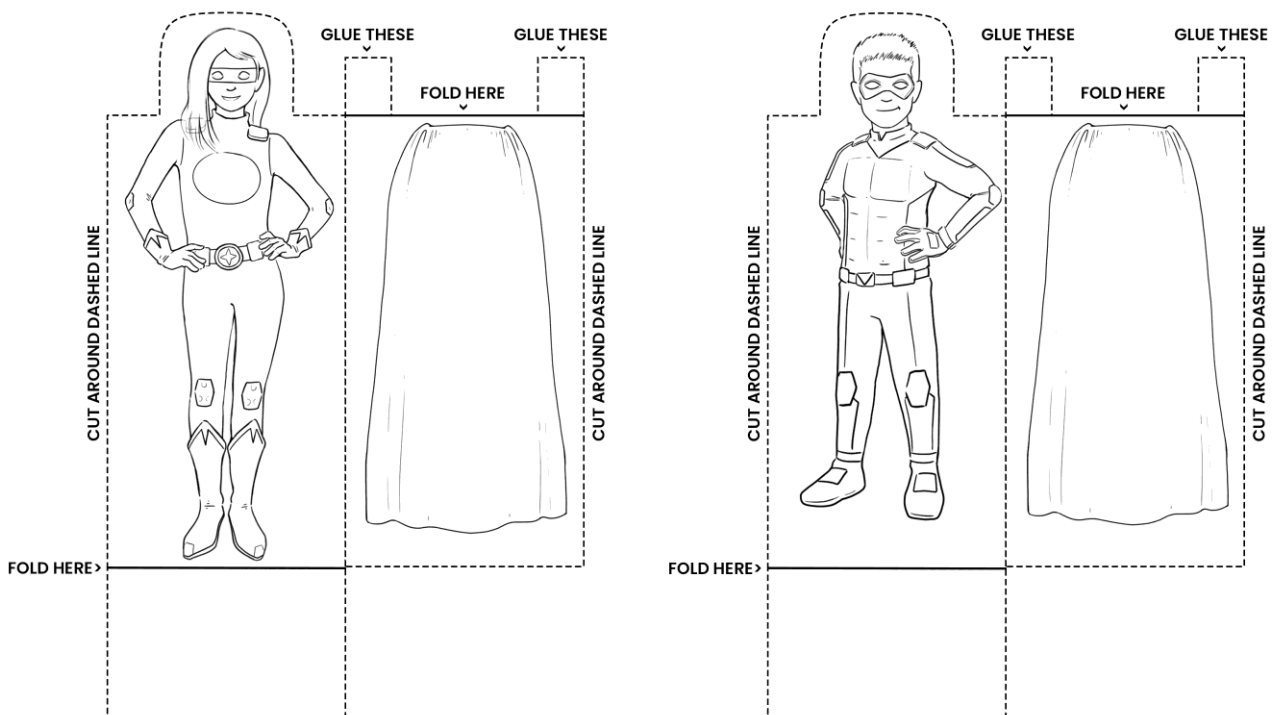
Things which might help can be fun activities, thoughts or even talking to someone you trust.



Superheroes worksheet – Instructions

Using the **superheroes worksheet** try cutting out the super versions of Molly and Joe. By folding the base you can make them stand and you can even stick on their cape at the back with the provided tabs.

Before you do this though try drawing in a **super symbol** on the back of their capes along with a few words describing their “super power” in the real world. This power should be something they can do to help others or themselves, a unique ability you think they have base on the events of the story.



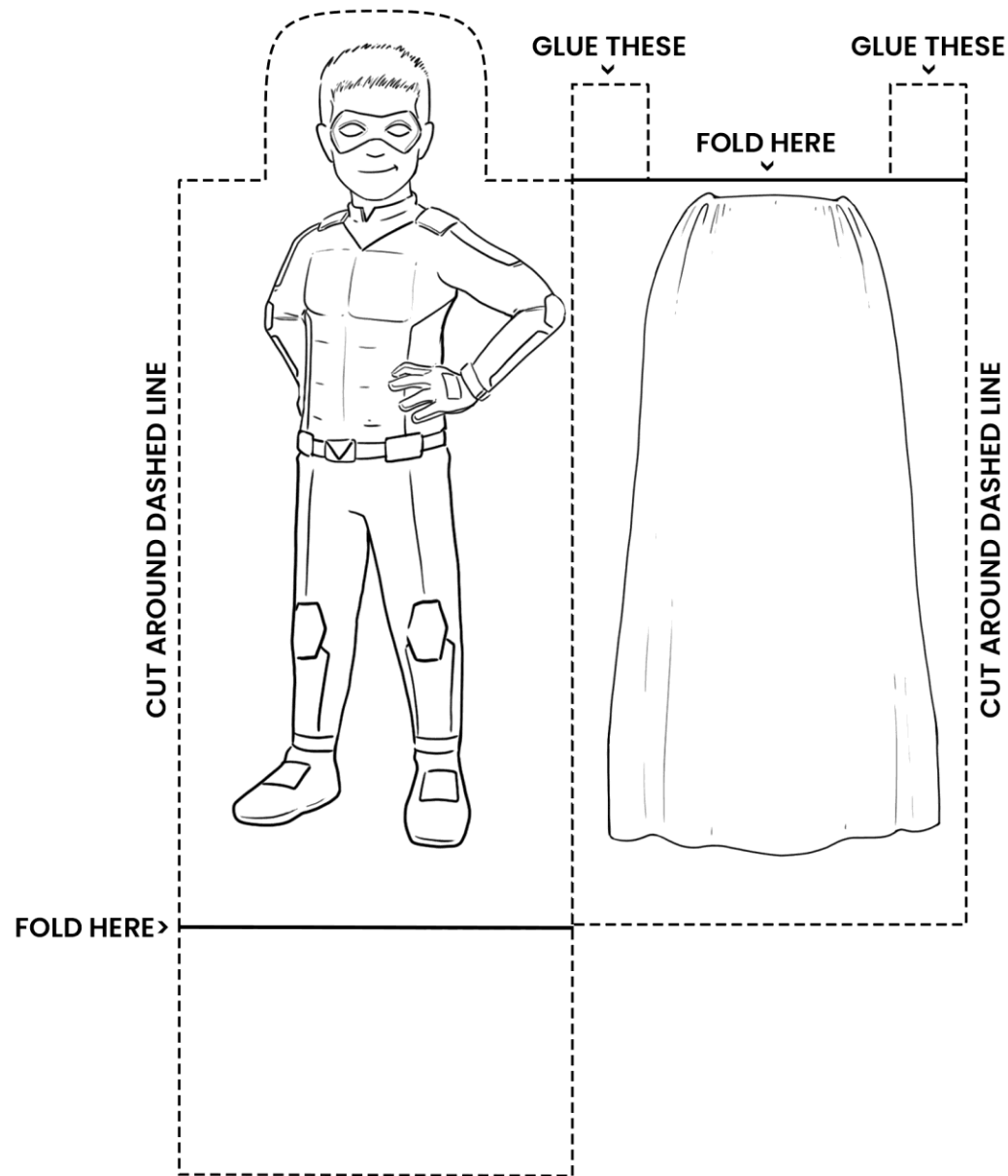
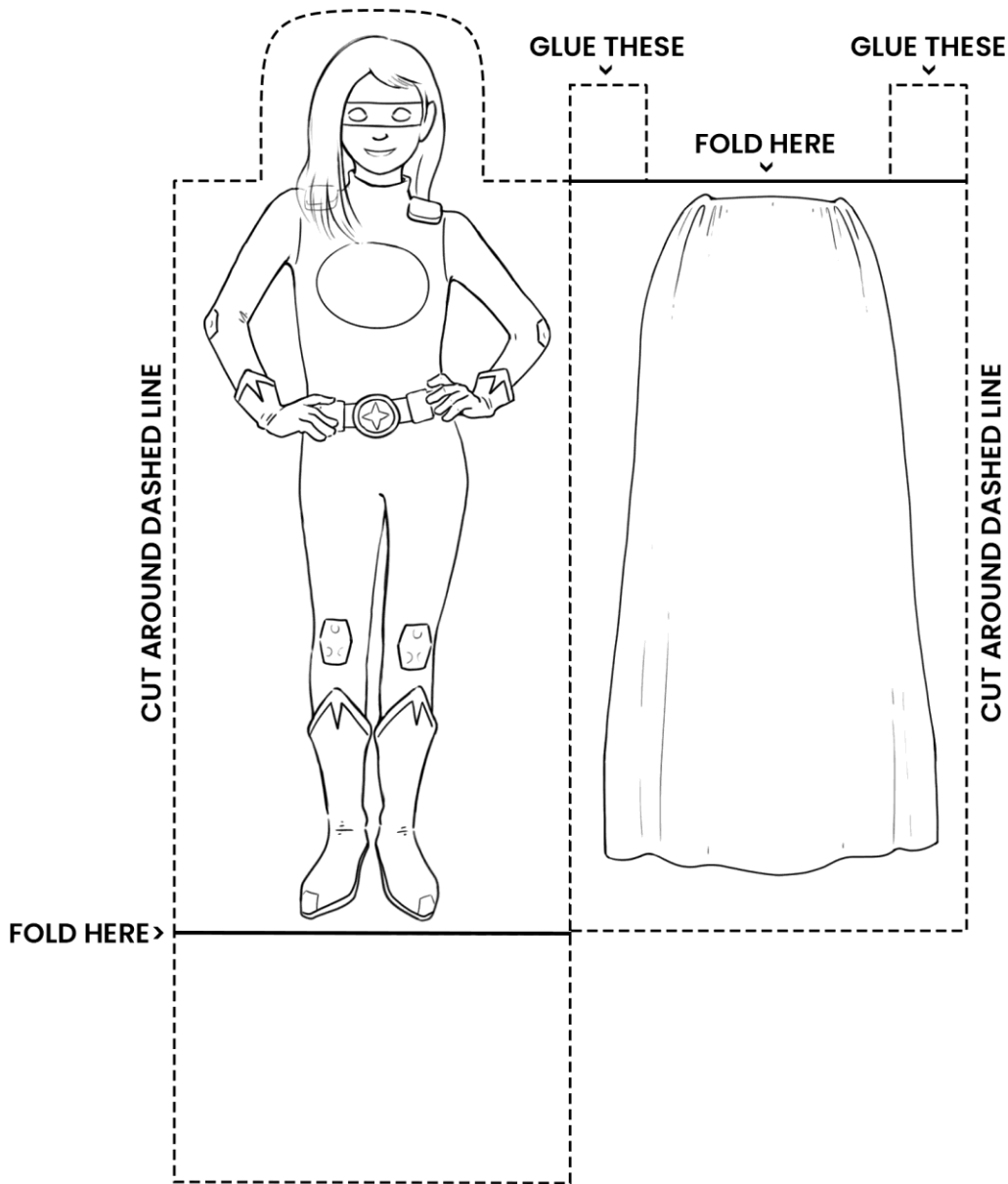
Activity – You’re the hero

Using the **blank version** of the hero sheet, try drawing yourself as a super hero before cutting it out, standing it up and attaching the cape.

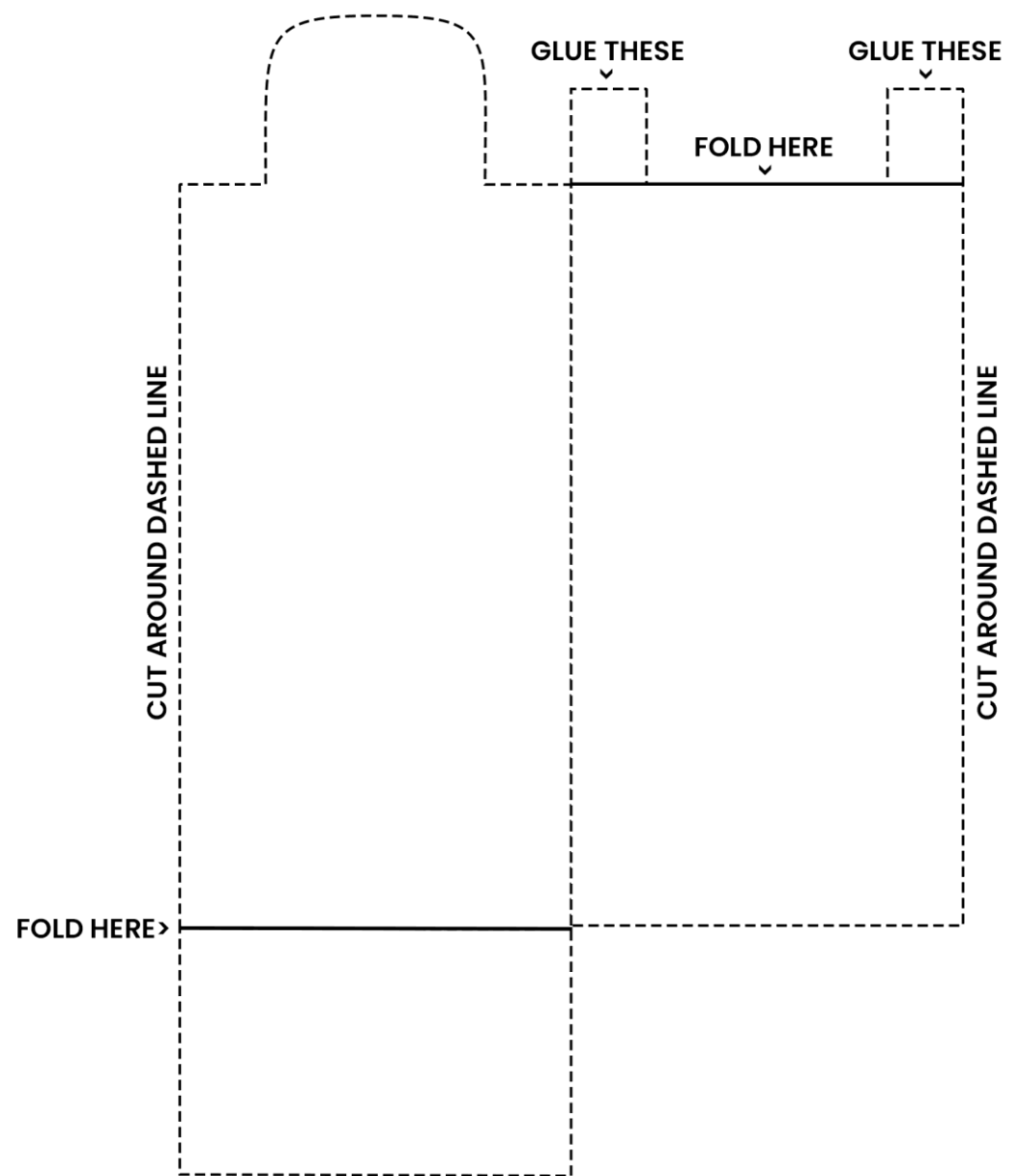
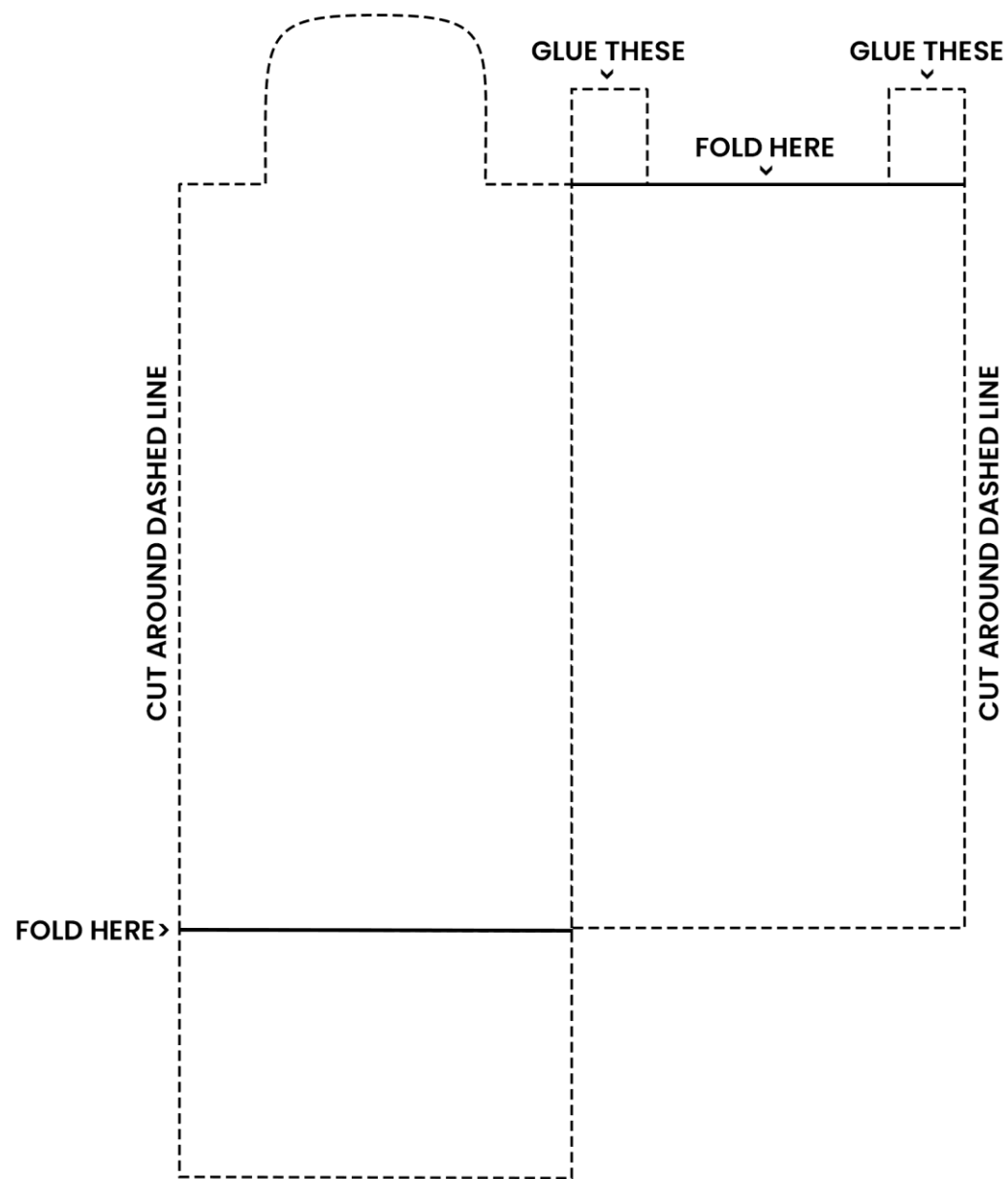
Try writing your own real life “super powers” on the back of the cape.

What are yours? Kindness? Remembering things? Noticing when someone needs support?

Superheroes worksheet



Blank superheroes worksheet



Swiftly bracelets – Instructions

On the Swiftly bracelets worksheet (pictured right) you will see **eight bracelets** with one half of a sentence spelled out across each.

Try to match each bracelet *starting* a sentence about the story from the **left-hand set** with one *ending* a sentence from the **right-hand set**. You can do this by:



- Using pencils or pens to colour in the beads on each bracelet and use the same colours on the matching bracelet.
- Drawing a thread between the matching bracelets.
- Cutting out bracelets and sticking matching pairs together on a new sheet of paper.

Additional task – Create your own bracelets

Using the **Create your own bracelets worksheet** try writing in your own positive thoughts in short sentences across them. For inspiration consider:

- Why your friends are so important to you.
- What helps you feel better during a bad day.
- How you might support others who are struggling.

Remember to use a small number of words to fit across the beads! You can also colour them in and even cut them out to strap around your wrist.

Swifty bracelets worksheet

○ ○ M O L L Y ○ T A L K S ○ ○

○ ○ T O ○ T A Y L O R ○ ○

○ ○ T A Y L O R ' S ○ ○

○ ○ R E D ○ B O X ○ I S ○ ○

○ ○ M O L L Y ' S ○ M U M ○ ○

○ ○ C A L L S ○ H E R ○ ○

○ ○ S U P E R G I R L ○ ○

○ ○ M O L L Y ' S ○ B E S T ○ ○

○ ○ F R I E N D ○ U S E D ○ T O ○ ○

○ ○ B E ○ A B I ○ ○

○ ○ A N D ○ H E R N A N ○ ○

○ ○ D I D ○ A S W E L L ○ ○

○ ○ B U T ○ S H E ○ H A S N ' T ○ ○

○ ○ T O L D ○ H E R ○ A B O U T ○ ○

○ ○ R I V E R S I D E ○ ○

○ ○ B E C A U S E ○ T A Y L O R ○ ○

○ ○ U N D E R S T A N D S ○ ○

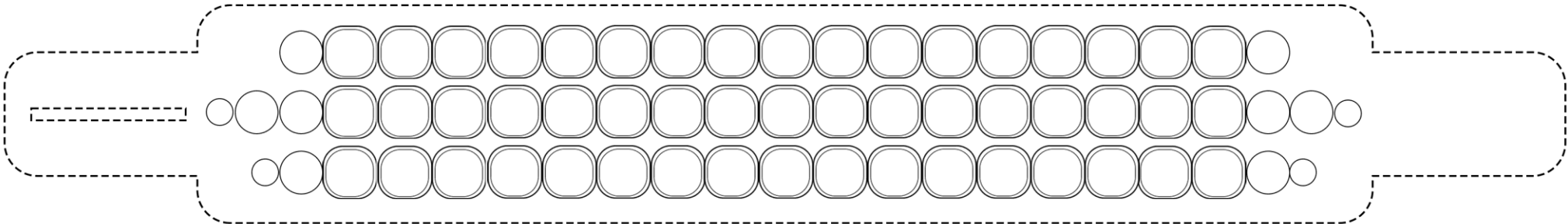
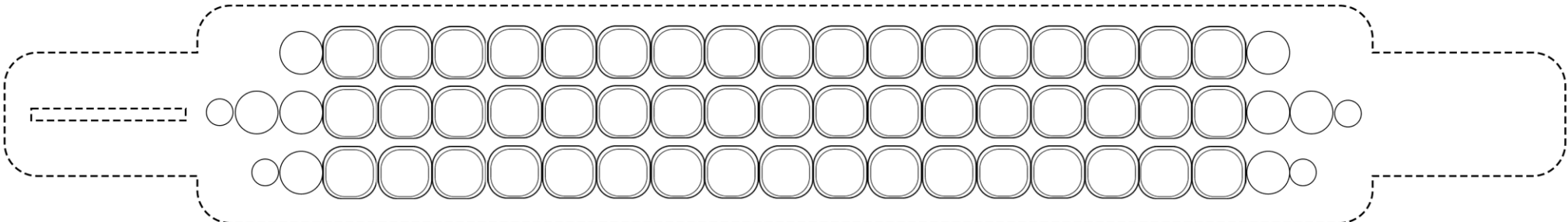
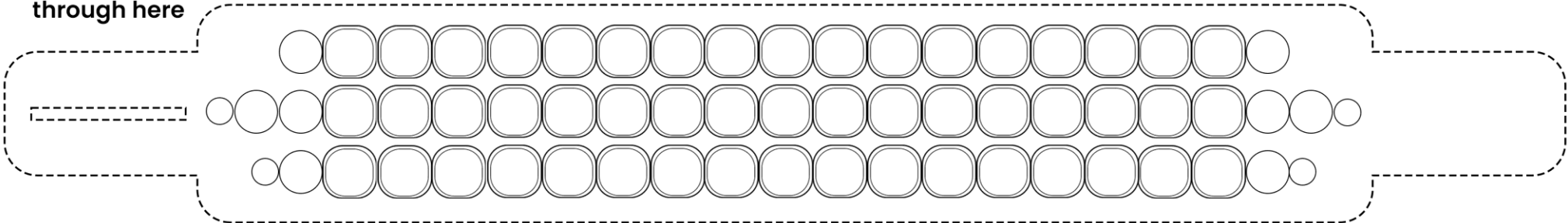
○ ○ F O R ○ T H I N G S ○ S H E ○ ○

○ ○ D O E S N ' T ○ W A N T ○ ○

○ ○ T O ○ F O R G E T ○ ○

Create your own bracelets worksheet

Tape, glue or
thread the
other tab
through here



Mythbusting worksheet

Mental health and **mental illness** can be complicated topics. Not everything you hear about them is necessarily true with many myths being created by people who are misinformed on the subject.

What do you think about them?

For each of the following statements place a tick in the box for **'true'** or **'false'** based upon what you think. If you're uncertain and don't want to guess tick the **'not sure'** box instead.

		True	False	Not sure
1	Mental illness and mental health are the same thing			
2	Mental illness is contagious			
3	Only adults develop mental illness			
4	People with mental illness are sad all the time			
5	If you look after your mental health, you will be happy all the time			
6	A person with mental illness can grow out of it			
7	Mental health is as important as physical health			
8	Having a mental illness doesn't mean you're a bad person			
9	A person can choose whether to have a mental illness			
10	Parents with mental illness are rare			

When you are done, you can ask for the **answer sheet** to see how you did.

NOTE FOR TEACHERS: Keep the following pages separate from the main worksheet until children have given their answers.

Mythbusting answer sheet

- 1. Mental illness and mental health are the same thing** – This is false. We all have mental health which can be good or bad depending on how we are made to feel. Having a mental illness can change how we feel, behave and how we experience the world regardless of what is going on around us. For example; you could say that **Molly** has poor **mental health** near the end of the play when she drives away in Vera, but **her mum** is crying and unable to help because she has a **mental illness**.
- 2. Mental illness is contagious** – This is false. You cannot *catch* a mental illness by being in contact with someone who has one.
- 3. Only adults develop mental illness** – This is false. While it is typically more common in adults, children can also develop a mental illness under some circumstances.
- 4. People with mental illness are sad all the time** – False again. All mental illnesses are different and the symptoms they cause can vary a lot between people.
- 5. If you look after your mental health, you will be happy all the time** – This is false. It is almost impossible to be happy *all* the time as feeling other emotions such as sadness is a part of everyday life. It is perfectly normal and healthy to feel sad from time-to-time.
- 6. A person with mental illness can grow out of it** – Largely false. A person with a mental illness can possibly find ways to *manage* it through medication and lifestyle changes, however they cannot grow out of it.

- 7. Mental health is as important as physical health** – This is true. Just as we might exercise or watch what we eat to take care of our physical health, we should also care for our *mental* health by finding time to relax and reduce stress.
- 8. Having a mental illness doesn't mean you're a bad person** – True. Just like any other illness, having a mental illness *never* means you are a bad person.
- 9. A person can choose whether to have a mental illness** – False. No one chooses to have a mental illness. Mental illness develops due to a variety of complicated factors.
- 10. Parents with mental illness are rare** – This is false. Parents with mental illness are quite common throughout the UK and the world.

How did you do?

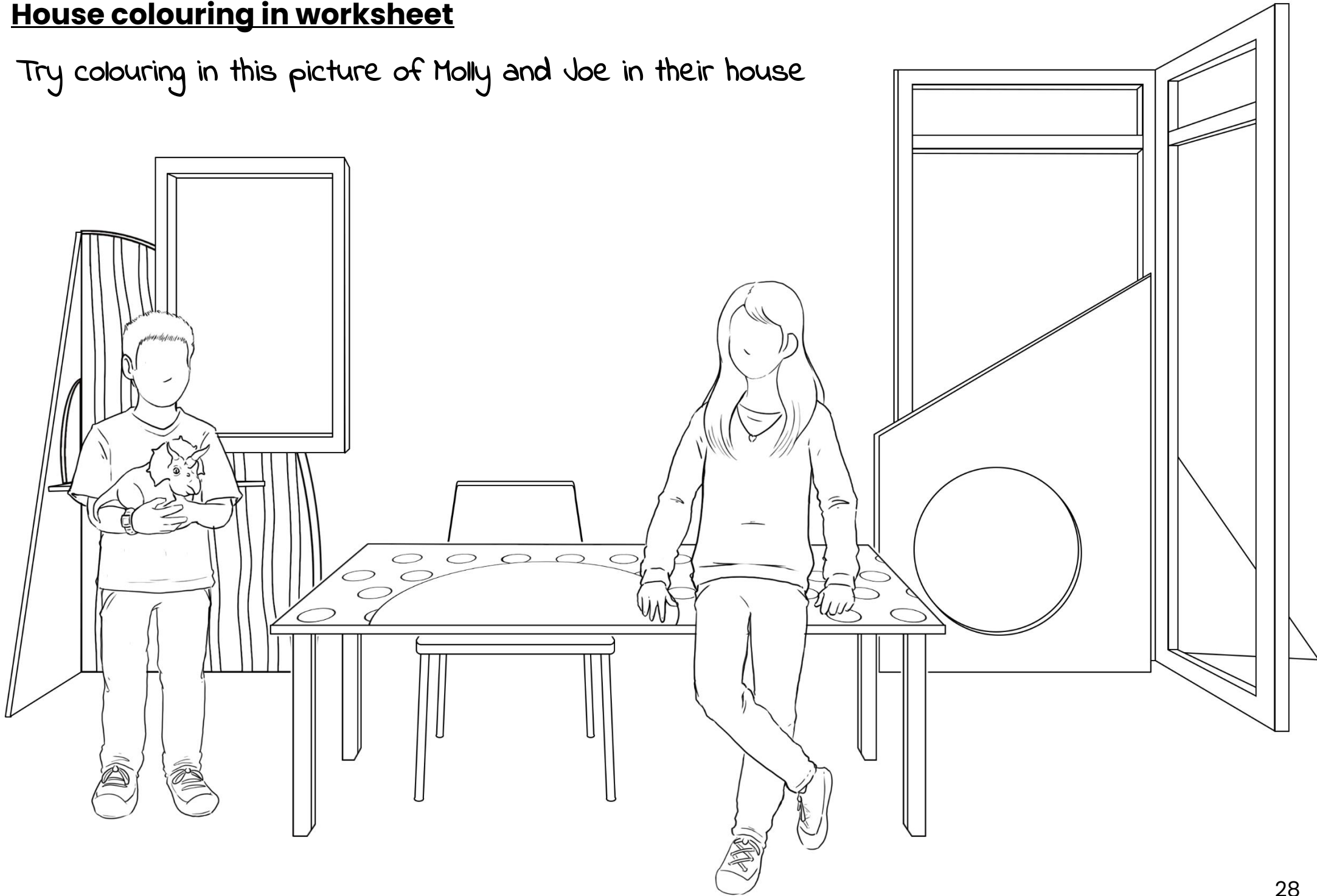
Remember, that if you got some answers wrong or weren't sure that's fine.

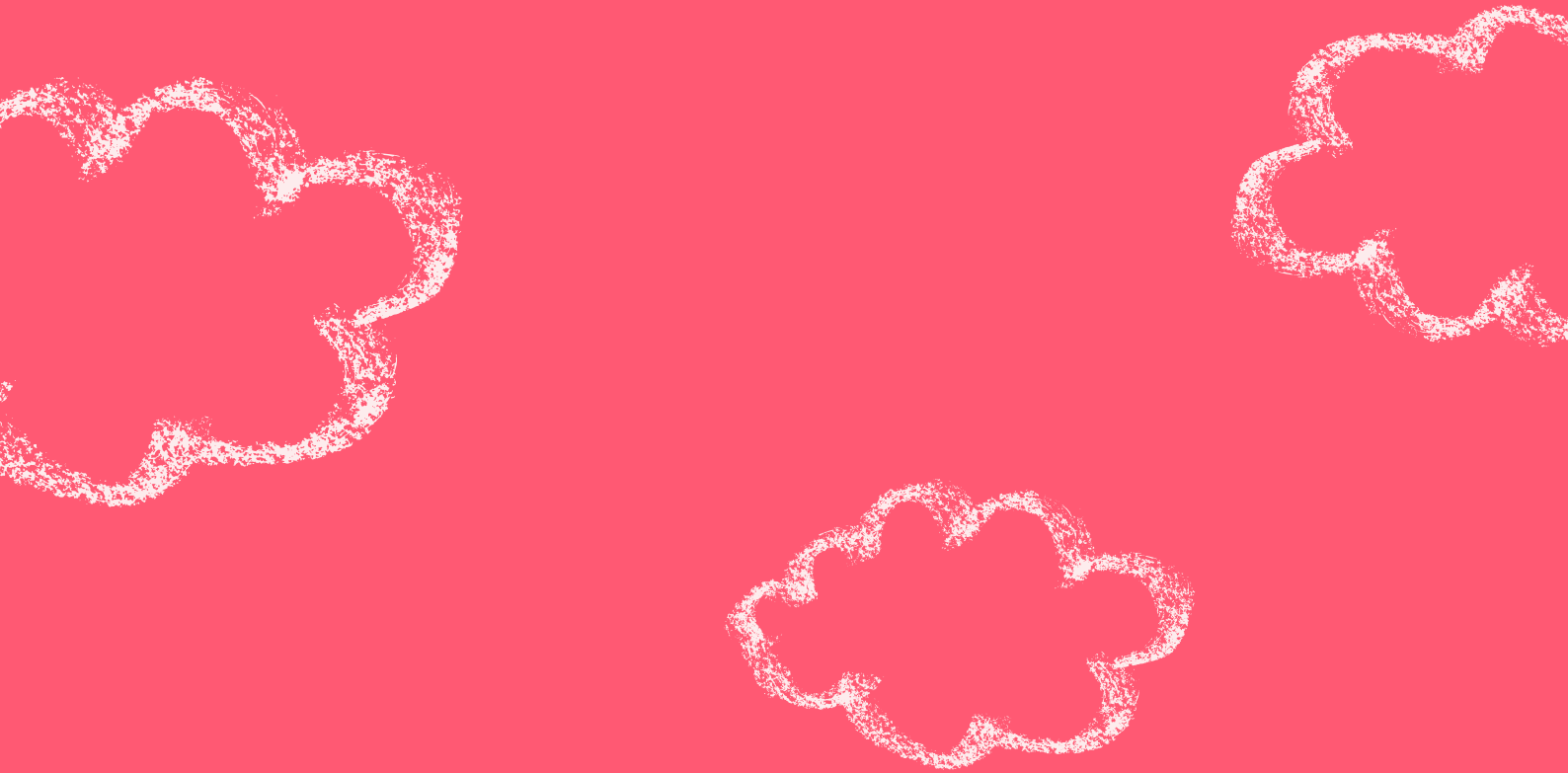
It is important though to question what people may tell you about mental health and mental illness. If you're not sure about whether something is true or not, refer to other trustworthy sources to make sure you are not spreading myths.



House colouring in worksheet

Try colouring in this picture of Molly and Joe in their house





**Play written by
Sarah McDonald-Hughes**

**Resources
Created by
OUR TIME
CHARITY**

**Find out more
about our work at:
ourtimecharity.org.uk**

