

# Children's Mental Health Week

## MY HELPING HAND

Remember the caring people around you. They help you feel safe and know you are never alone. Connection is a vital human need, no matter how old we are.

**With a parent's or carer's guidance, this activity can help to open up a conversation about who are the key people in your child's life, who they feel they can trust and who will listen to them: essentially, who is on their team.**

Drawing your child's 'Helping Hand' offers them a visual to remind them they are never alone. It's a good idea to hang it up somewhere so they always remember who they can turn to when things feel difficult.



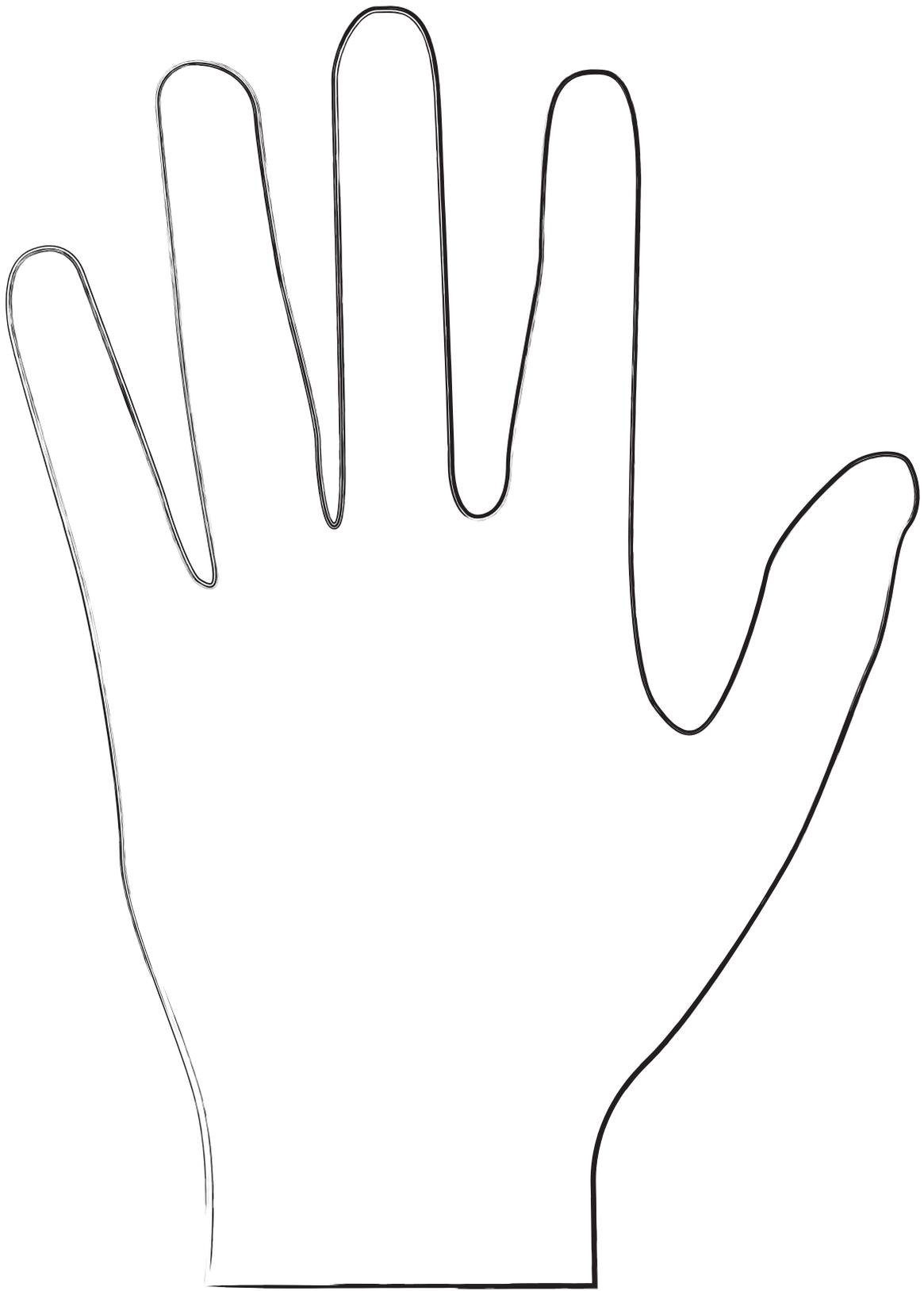
Trace around your hand on a piece of paper, or use the hand on the following page. Use each finger to draw / paint / collage one of your Fab Five adults.

Some questions to ask:

- **How do you know you feel comfortable and safe with someone? What does it feel like?**
- **What are some of the things you might want to share?**
- **How could each person help you?**
- **Some things are difficult to talk about. How else could you let someone know how you are feeling? Could you write them a note or turn it into a drawing? Maybe even send a song or a poem that describes it well for you?**

Some extra notes to guide the conversation with your child:

- **Knowing who your trusted adults are is important, so that if something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable, worried or even happy, you know who you can share those feelings with.**
- **A trusted adult is someone whom you feel comfortable talking to and who you can ask for help.**
- **A trusted adult is someone who may have helped you before.**
- **You can have different trusted adults for different things or situations in your life.**
- **You can change the people you choose to have on your Helping Hand.**



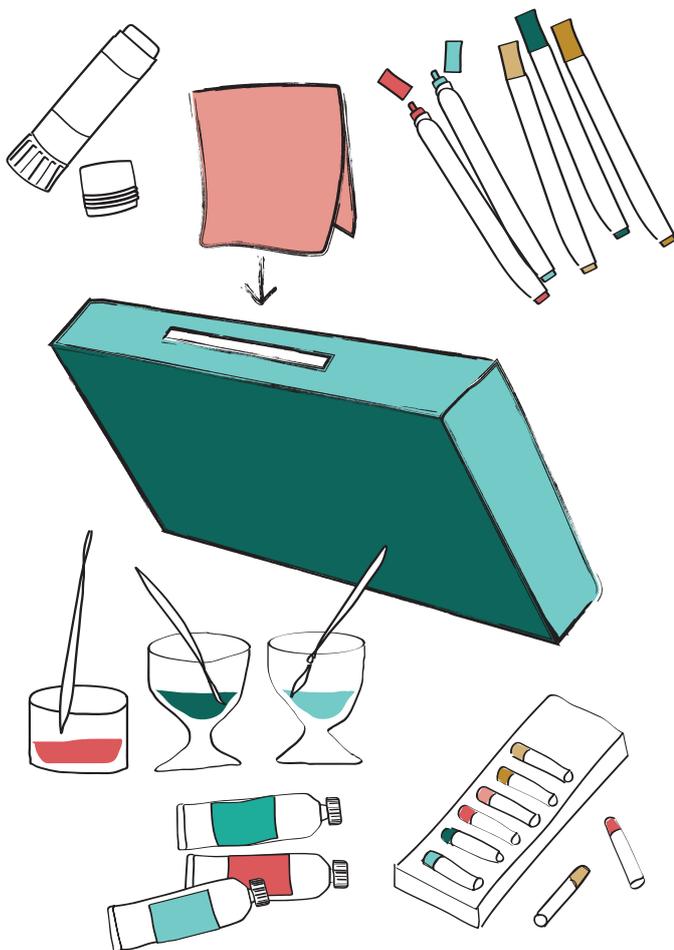
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## A FUNNY FEELINGS BOX

Feelings can be messy and confusing! Especially when we feel lots of them at once. Even as adults, we can find it difficult to know and understand what is going on inside us and we have feelings all the time!

**A Feelings Box can be a great way to help your child express how they feel, develop their emotional vocabulary and learn that feelings change. The box can serve as a safe container to 'hold' their feelings for them.**

Whenever they want, your child can either write or draw how they feel on a piece of paper: perhaps how they feel sad or angry, or some of their worries, even how they feel happy or excited. All feelings are welcome!



This is an activity for parents and children to do together. Use a cardboard box from the recycling bin to make your Feelings Box. With the help of an adult, simply cut a hole in one side (to slip in your notes like a letterbox!) and decorate to your heart's content!

- **Decide on a safe, accessible place to keep the box and agree as a family on how to keep the notes private.**
- **It's also a great idea to create a ritual: when and how often do you check what's inside the box?**
- **What should you do with the notes once the feelings have passed?**
- **If your child is having lots of feelings at once, perhaps you could talk about them in 'parts':**  
"It looks as if one part of you feels really nervous, whilst another part feels excited!"

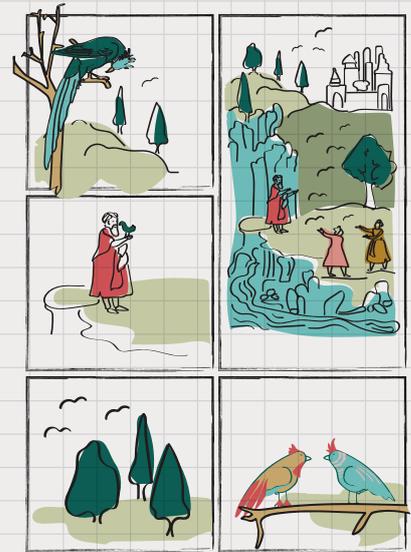
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## STORYTELLING

We can use stories to help children make sense of their experiences and also to help them calm down when having a strong emotion. This also offers them tools to navigate future difficult moments. Sometimes, an experience can be too upsetting to talk about.

**With your support, storytelling can help your child understand what has happened so they can begin to deal with it emotionally.**

It can also offer them words for their experiences, as well as a sense of control when revisiting unpleasant memories. At the same time, storytelling is a great tool to revisit happy memories and reminisce together!




Create your own set of boxes or use the boxes on the following page to draw or write your own story (you could also do it on bigger paper!). With younger children, it might be helpful to re-enact the story using toys, as well as drawing it. Help children along the way by offering words and lots of empathy for their feelings. Then maybe you can follow up with a few questions:

- **If you could change anything in this story, what would it be?**
- **Do you have a title for your story?**
- **If this happens again, what could you or I do differently to make it better? Shall we draw what that would look like?**

