

The comic story of

Magnificent Mei and Friends





The **Magnificent Mei and Friends** comic series
was developed as part of the **WHO-UNICEF Helping Adolescents Thrive** initiative.
This comic series was created in partnership with **UNICEF** and **WHO** experts,
as well as young people, teachers and mental health practitioners from 15 countries.

Illustrated by

Aizat NOM

Written By

Joanna Lai, Tanvi Jain, Faraaz Mahomed, Sarah Watts, Maternal Newborn Adolescent Health Unit, UNICEF HQ; Chiara Servili, Batool Fatima, WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Use; Gunjan Dhorju, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit, Kanti Children's Hospital; Sagun Ballav Pant, Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, Tribhuvan University; Jackie Stewart, Sarah Skeen, Department of Psychology and Department of Global Health, Stellenbosch University, Bhawana Shrestha and Sagar Satyal, My Emotions Matter Nepal.

Magnificent Mei and friends Comic Series

WHO-UNICEF Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT)
initiative

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13- year old Mei and her friends Yasmin, Addo and Pablo are navigating the ups and downs of their first year as official “teens”.

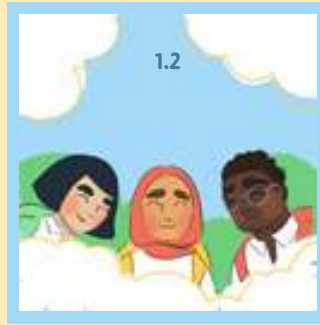
Nicknamed “Magnificent Mei” by her grandmother, Mei doesn’t always feel magnificent these days. Living in a world with many twists and turns, Mei and her friends must learn how to deal with their feelings, navigate relationships, overcome challenges, and make good choices.

Join Mei on a journey where she discovers her own abilities and realizes just how magnificent she really is!



A New Start

Page 6



First day of school

Page 14



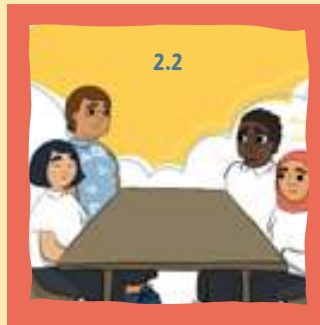
The way I feel

Page 21



Mei's homework stress

Page 32



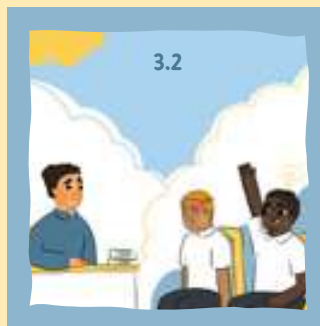
Addo's worries

Page 38



Yasmin solves a problem

Page 50



What's the problem, Pablo?

Page 60



I have something to say

Page 67



The class trip

Page 74



Dahn makes risky choices

Page 87



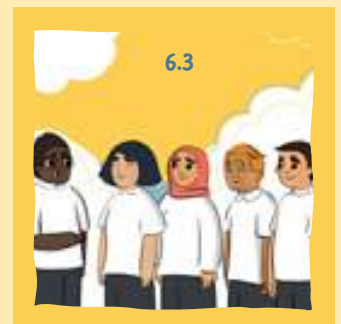
Are you listening to me?

Page 103



Mei works things out with mom

Page 108



Here for each other

Page 114

1.1

A New Start



Hi, I'm Mei, or Magnificent Mei,
as my grandmother likes to call me. 🙄



This is my family ❤️

She spends most of her time working at our family's store.

I want to be a rocket engineer!



He loves singing and dancing with me.

Grandma

She named me Magnificent Mei when I was born. She gives me hope and strength.

Lulu

Brother

He is in grade 3. He wants to become a veterinarian.



Ever since I turned 13,
my life has felt like
it's upside down. 🙄

Let me
tell you
why...



I woke up on my birthday excited to celebrate.
But started to feel nervous thinking about
going to a new school where I don't have any friends
to celebrate with.



I am so annoyed after spending
the entire summer
holiday with my brother



I keep thinking
about how tough
school will be this
year. Will my teachers
be nice? I am so
worried about
passing my exams.







Will I ever catch up on my schoolwork?

Will I get good marks in my exams?

What if the teachers are mean?

Will Mom and Dad keep fighting?

Will I be able to make new friends?

I hope I can still spend time with Grandma now that I'll be busier





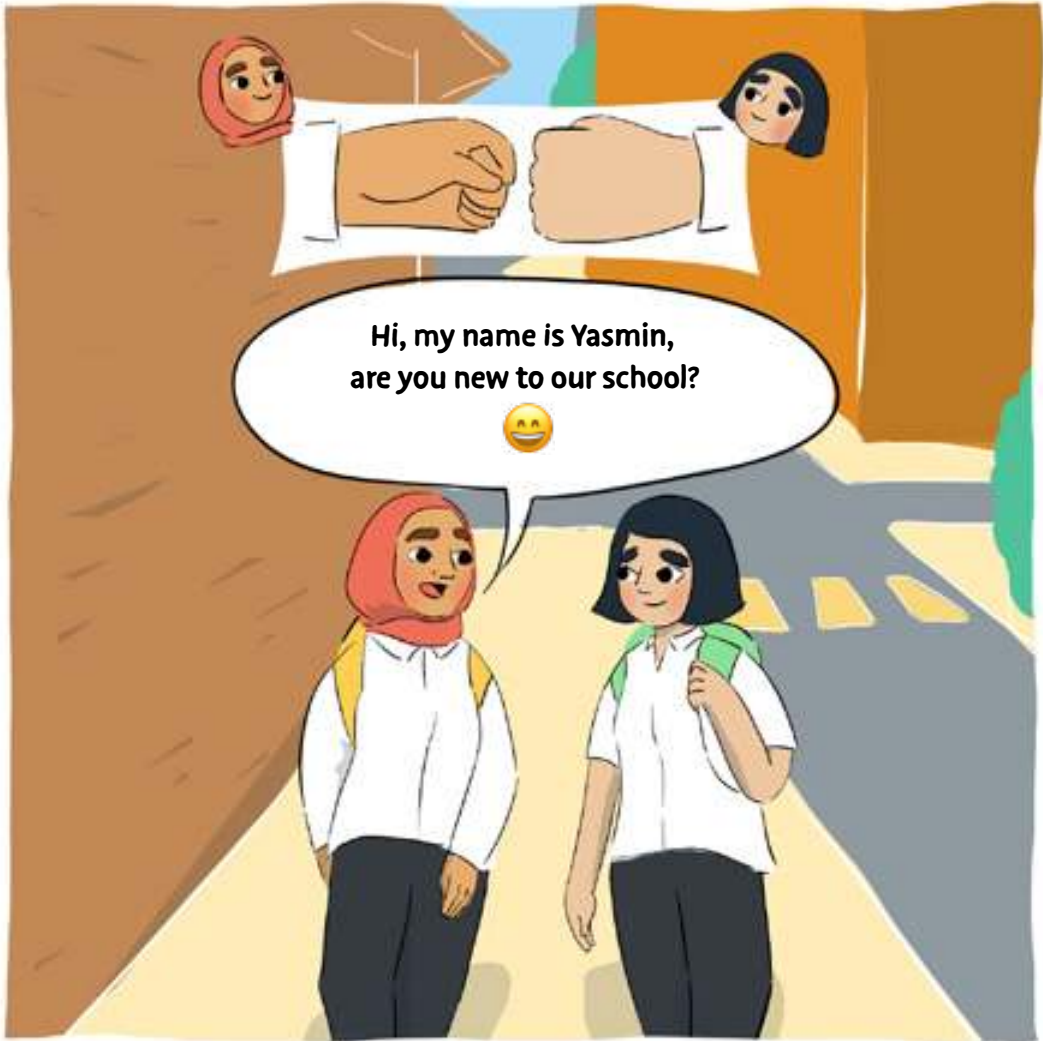
1.2

First day of school





Oh, is that a new student
in our class this year...
maybe i should go
say hi



Hi, my name is Yasmin,
are you new to our school?
😊

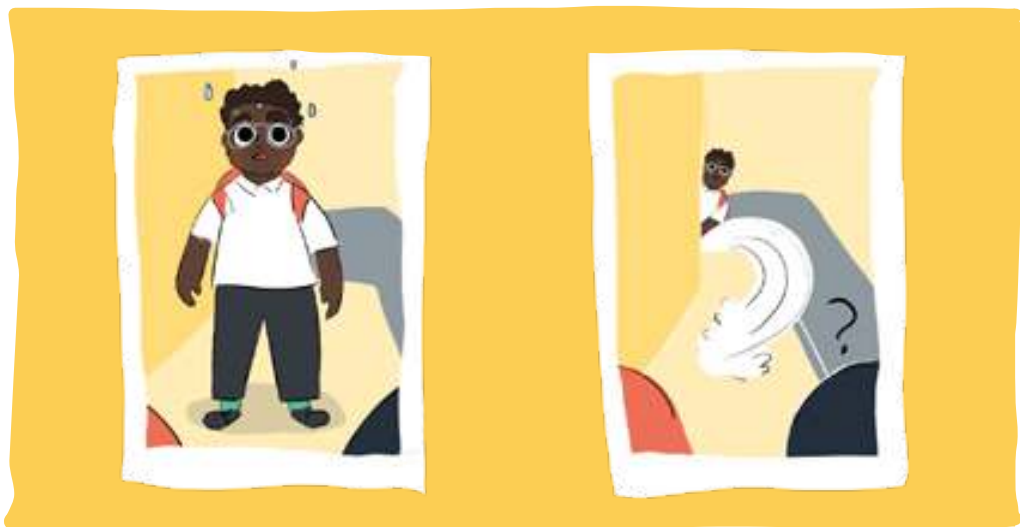


Hi, I'm Mei! 😞
Yes, it's my first day and
I'm super nervous...
How do you like the school?
😞




I love it here and so will you!
I can't stop smiling at the thought
of being with my teachers and
classmates again! 😊
Oh wow! That doesn't
sound too bad.
😊

I do still feel
nervous
though. 😞








I know new beginnings
are tough, but we are here
together 😊



You're right Yasmin.
C'mon, Addo. Let's go in.



That's true.
We are in this
together.



1.3

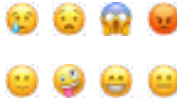
The way I feel





Good morning! Let's start by taking a moment to think about how we are feeling.

How are you feeling?



This is a feelings chart. We experience different feelings every day. Let's take a moment to think about how we're feeling right now.

How are you feeling?



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |
| sad | worried | afraid | angry |
|  |  |  |  |
| happy | silly | excited | calm |



We all experience different feelings like happiness, excitement, sadness, anger... to name a few.

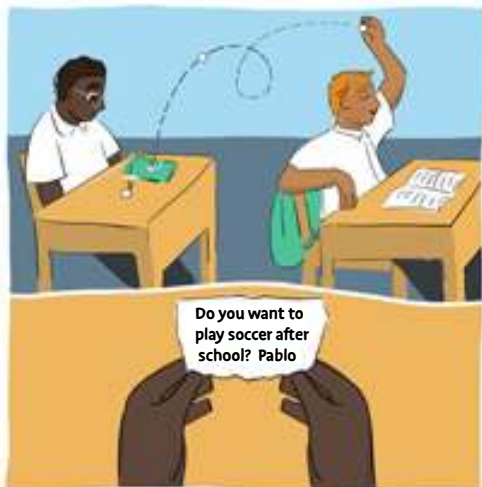
We can feel many different feelings throughout the day or even at the same time. All of these feelings are ok.



Meanwhile...

Psssss...

Addo!



I can't. I just don't feel like seeing any friends today.



Back to the lesson.

Being able to recognize our
different feelings is actually a
SUPERPOWER!

Superpower?



Well, I can see all of you must be busy practising your superpowers...



I know this is a new school year and you might be having strong feelings about making new friends, or finding the school work difficult.

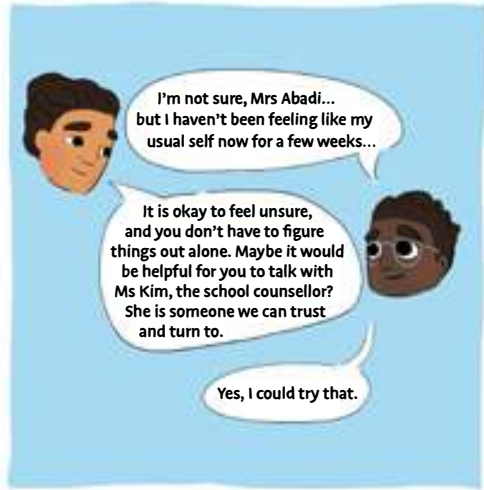
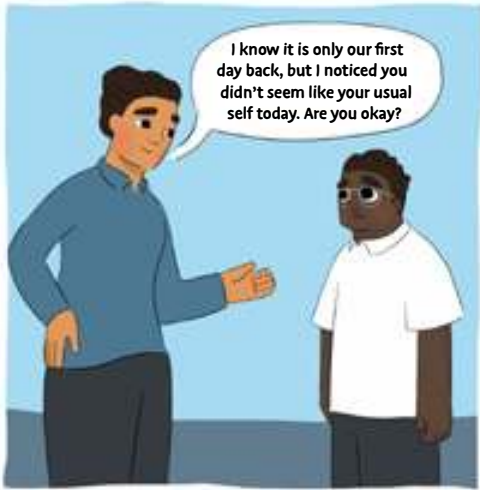
It is important to notice how we feel, and to be able to manage strong feelings.



When you have strong feelings, what are some things that can help you?



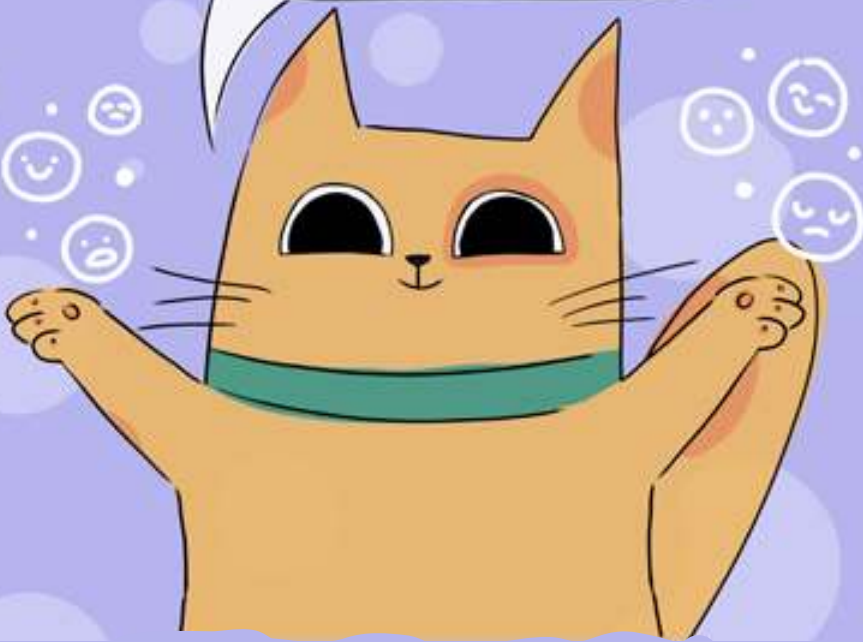




After school that day



We all experience different feelings like happiness, excitement, sadness, anger... to name a few. We can feel many different feelings throughout the day or even at the same time. All of these feelings are ok.



Take a minute to look at the feelings chart below – which of these faces best matches how you feel right now?

Try to do this exercise every day and keep track of your different feelings!



From time to time, we all experience strong feelings. It is important to notice how we feel, and to be able to manage strong feelings. What are some ways you manage strong feelings?



I take slow breaths, breathing in for three seconds and breathing out for three seconds to help me feel calm! Talking to my grandmother always helps too!

I use the Feelings Chart so I can notice what I am feeling and then write in my journal. Playing soccer helps me get my mind off of things as well.



I jump up and down and try to move my body! Talking to Addo also usually makes me feel better.



Listening to music and getting a hug from my mom and dad always makes me feel better.



2.1

Mei's homework stress



Hmm, Mei looks so stressed!
She hasn't been drawing much lately
either... She seems so worried. 🐱

Mei...oowwww

Meeeoowwww

Hey, Lulu.
Today is so hard. 😞
I don't understand any of
the math lesson, and I couldn't
concentrate no matter how
much I tried. What if I fail??
What do I do?? 😞

Ughhh I hate math.
I'll never get this homework done.

What is happening
to me? Every time I think
about math my heart starts
racing and it feels like I can't
breathe. Am I getting sick?
😞😞

AHHHH! 😞

Hey Mei... what's
going on?

Dad, I don't feel so
good. It feels like my
heart is pounding.

Is something bothering you?
If there is, I am here to listen
and support you. 😞

I've been trying to do
this math homework for
so long but I just can't get it.
I don't know if I can study
anymore. 😞

I'm sorry that you are
going through this. I can see that
you are stressed, especially after
not having been at school
for a long time... 😞

No matter how hard
I try, I can't understand the
math homework. What's
wrong with me? I feel
so helpless. 😞

I know this is not easy.
I can understand how
you must be feeling.
Is there anything I can
do to help you?



Can I have a hug? 🥺

Of course, you never have to ask me for that! 😊

Meeooooow

And it seems Lulu is here for you, too. 😊





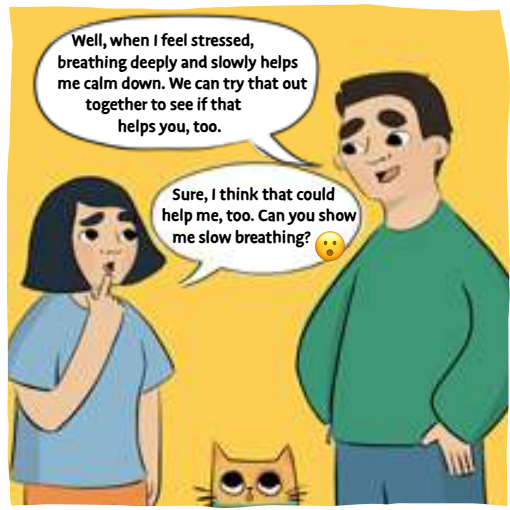
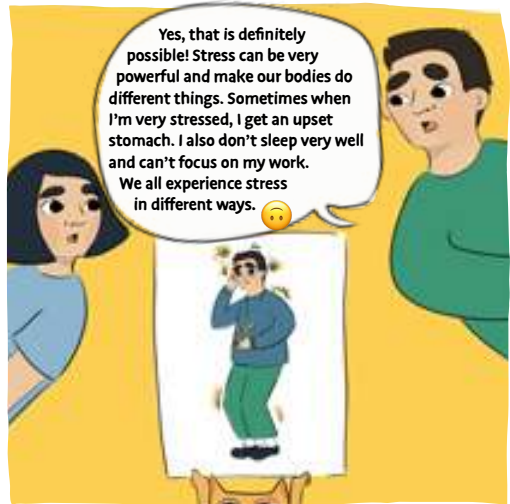
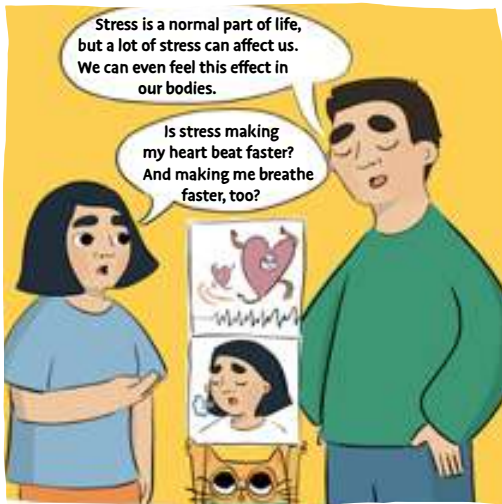
Would it be helpful if we talked about why you are feeling stressed? 😊

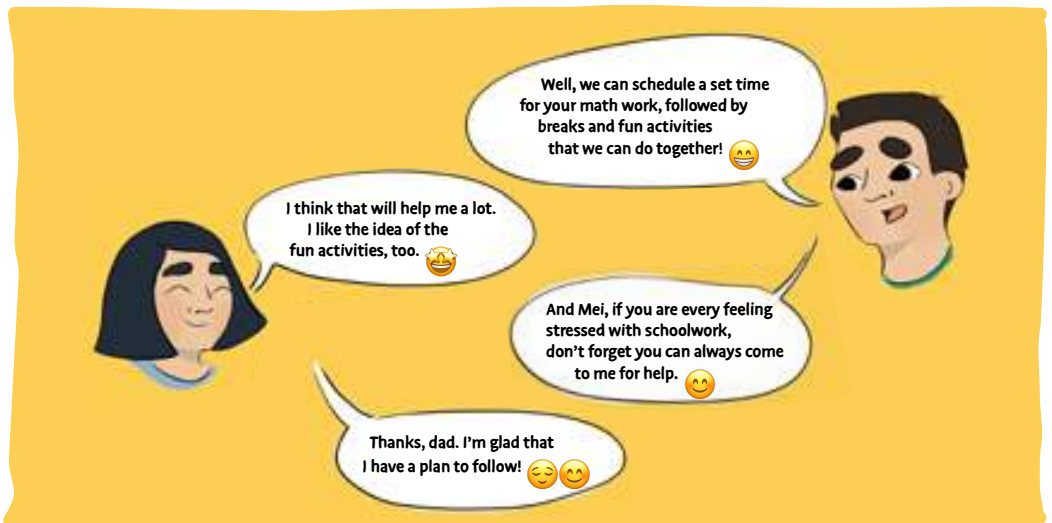
I guess... 🤔

Everyone goes through stressful times, even me!

...and Lulu. 🤔

Meow!





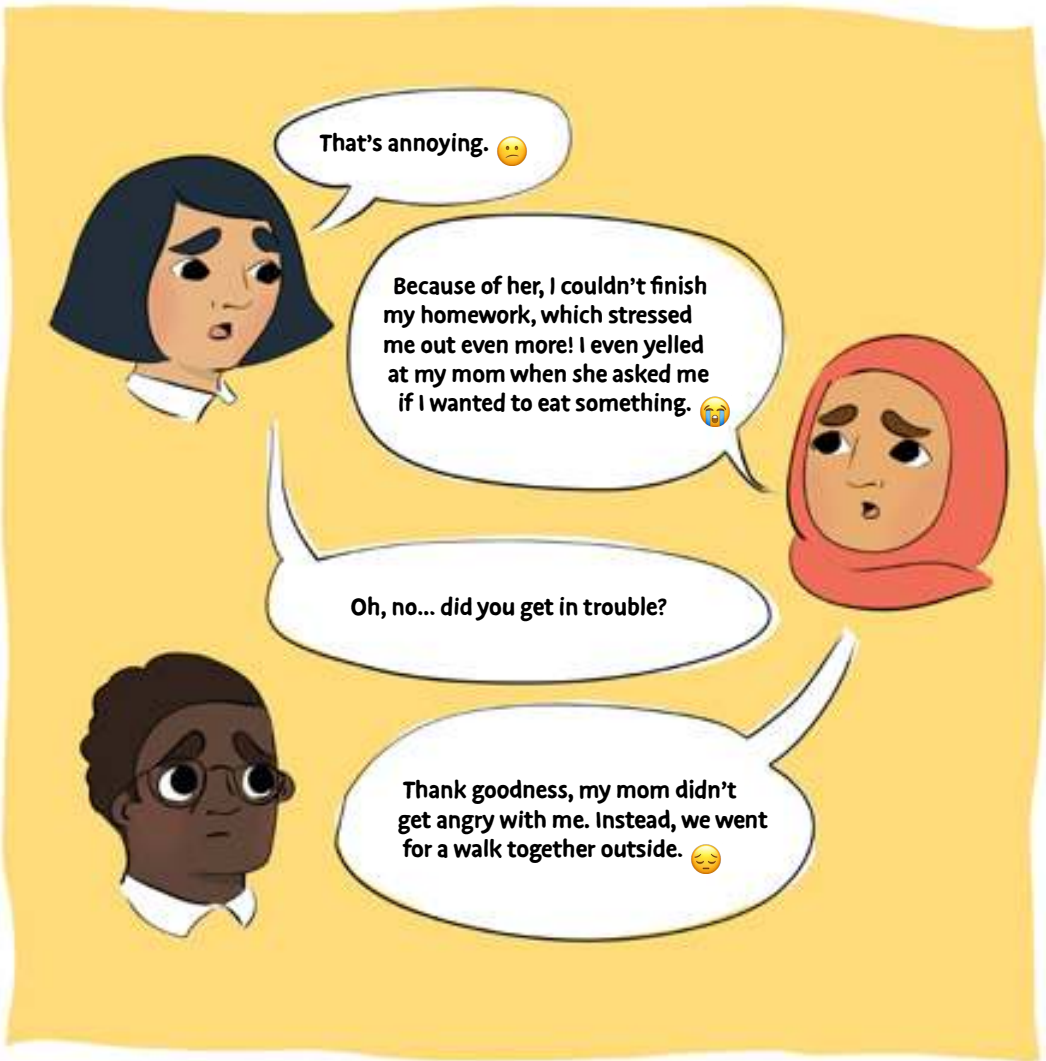
2.2

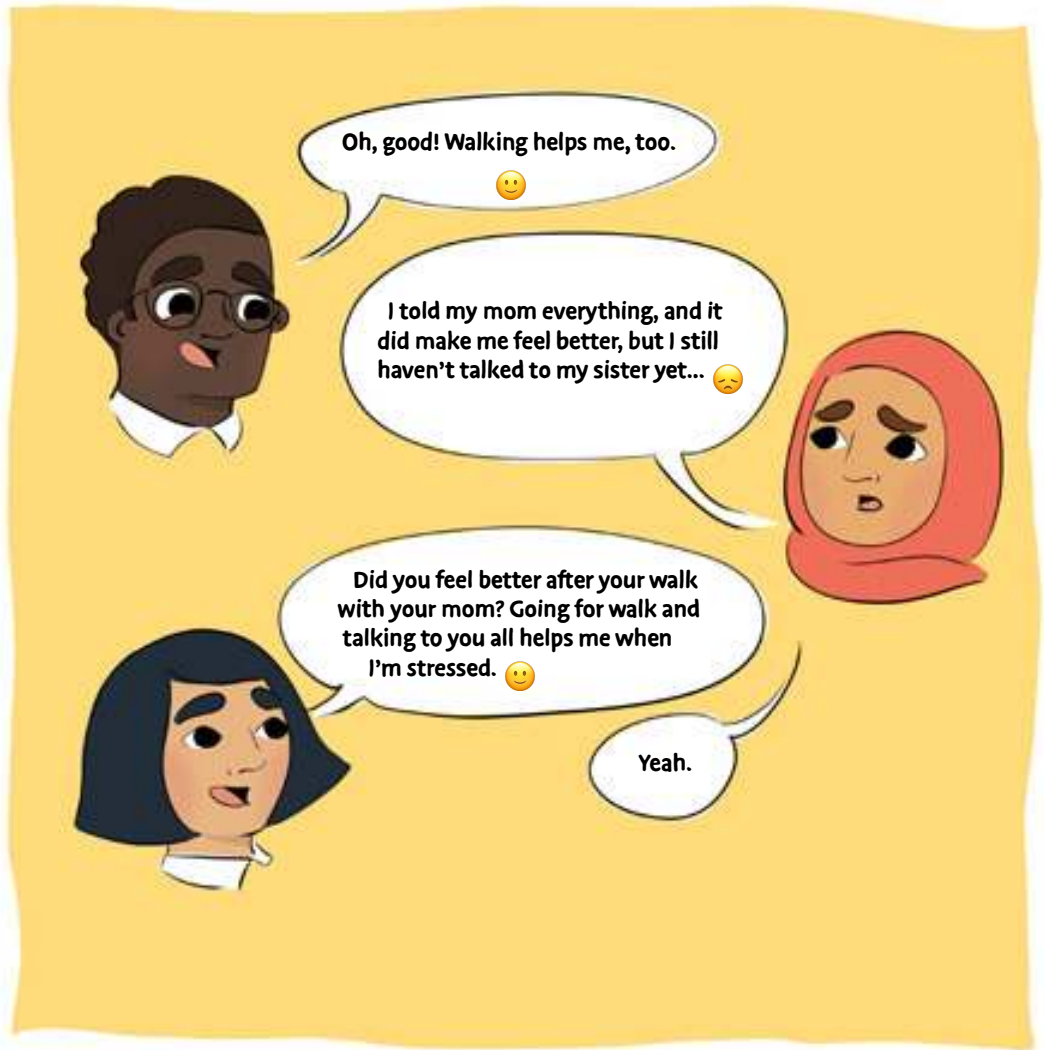
Addo's worries



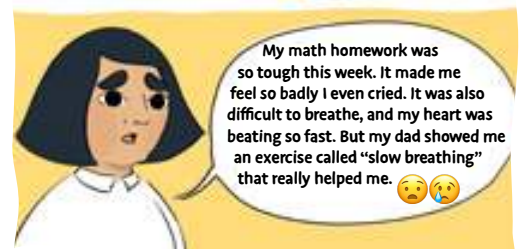


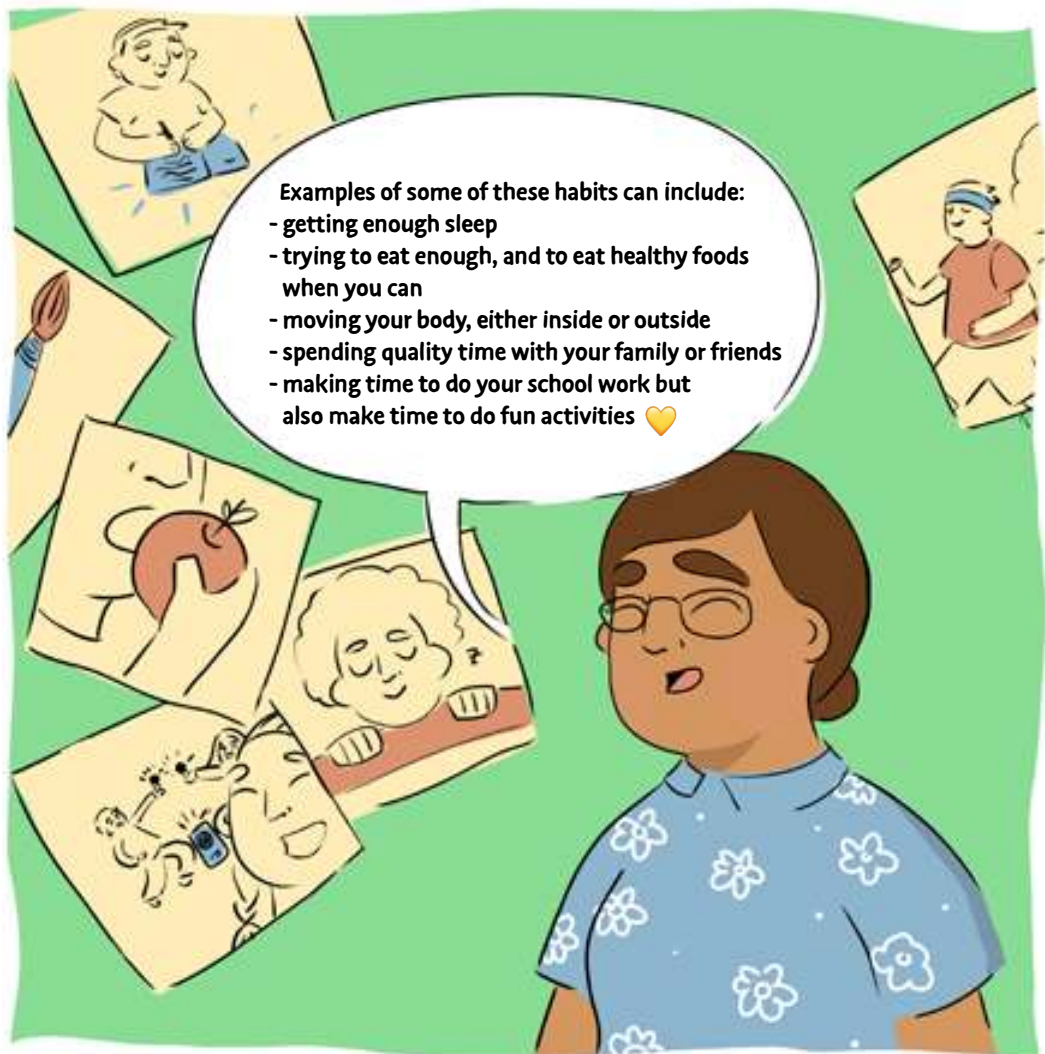
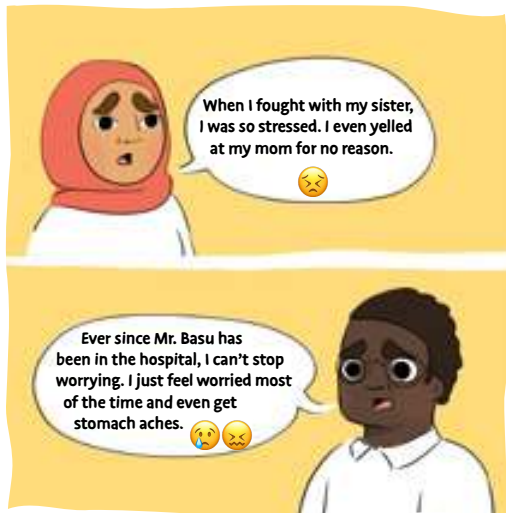
It looks like Yasmine and Addo are also having a difficult time like me... 😞

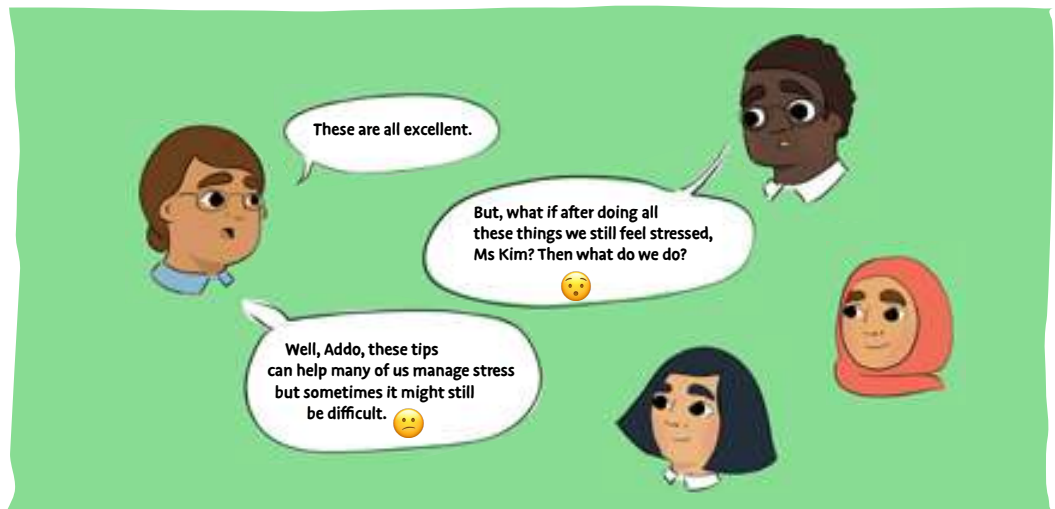
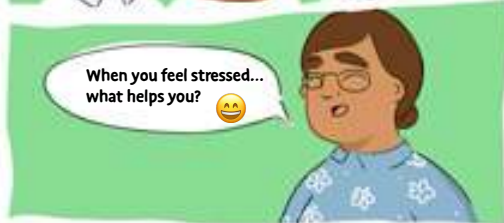


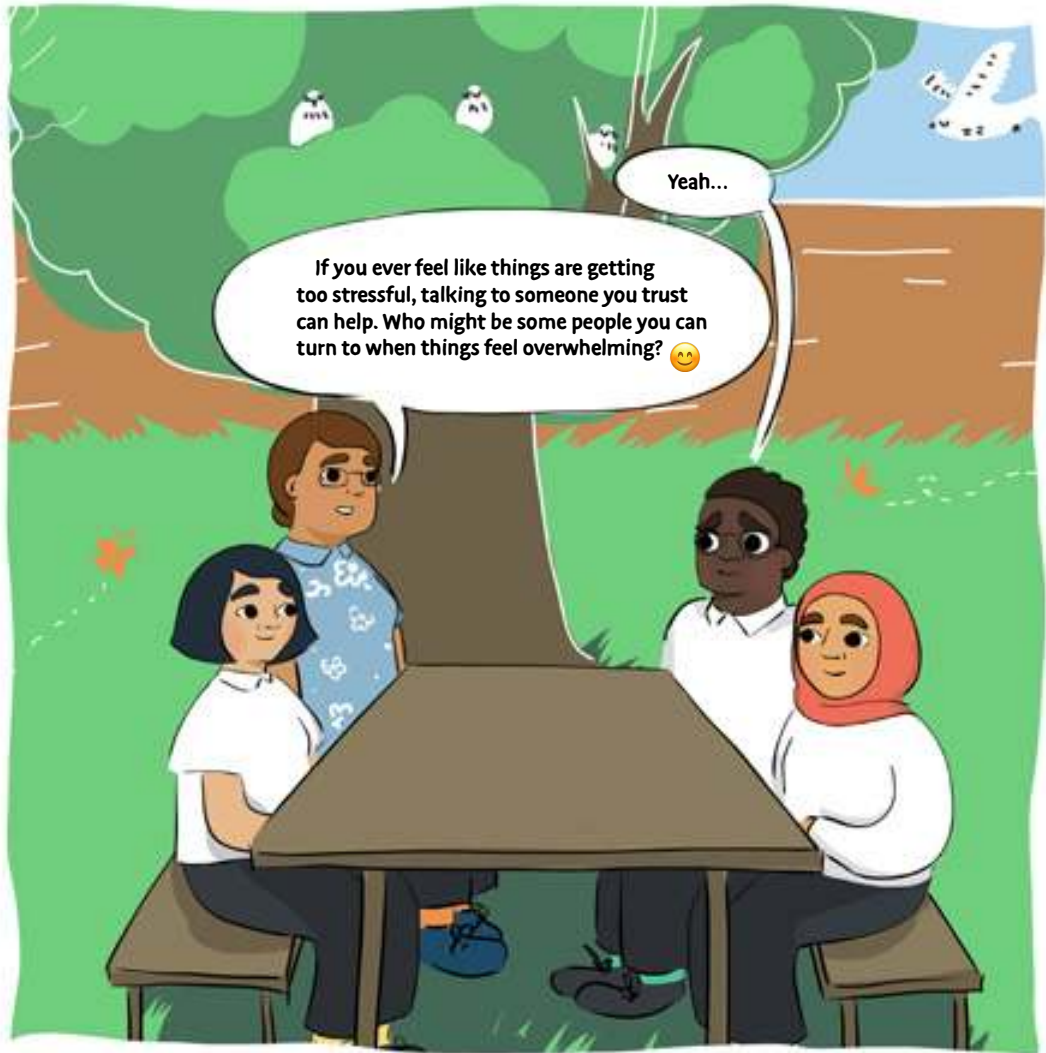




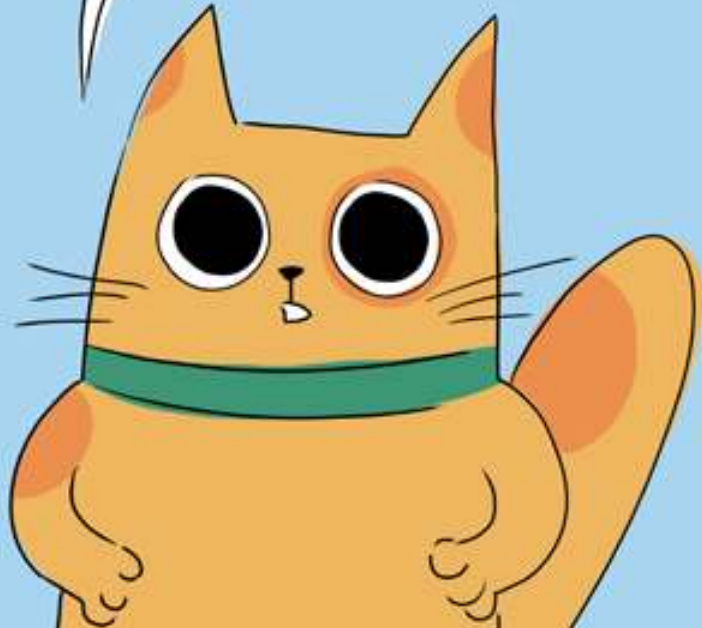








**Life can be stressful at times, and stress
can affect us all differently...**





You may experience having lots of worrying thoughts that make it hard to concentrate or make it hard for you to fall asleep...

...your heart rate and breathing increasing, excessive sweating...



...or you might find it easier to get into arguments and feel irritated with others more frequently...

How does stress
Make you feel?



It is normal to feel stressed at times,



but too much stress can be difficult to deal with.

Slow breathing helps me relax!



Breathe in for 1, 2, 3...



Breathe out for 1, 2, 3...

Repeat this as many times as you need until you feel calm.

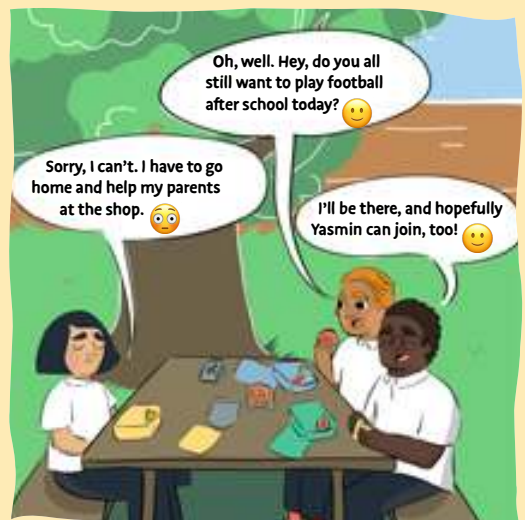
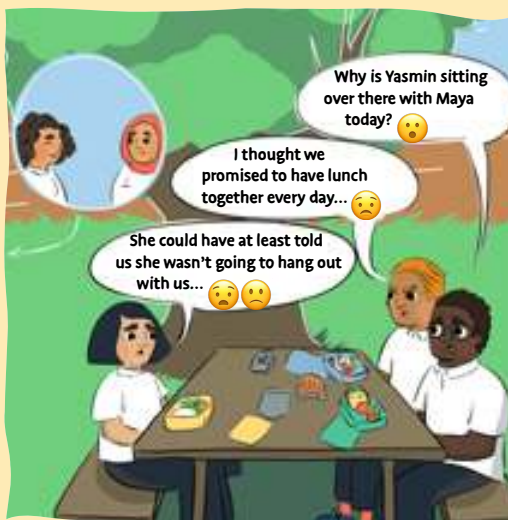
**What are three things
you do to cope with stress?**



3.1

Yasmin solves a problem



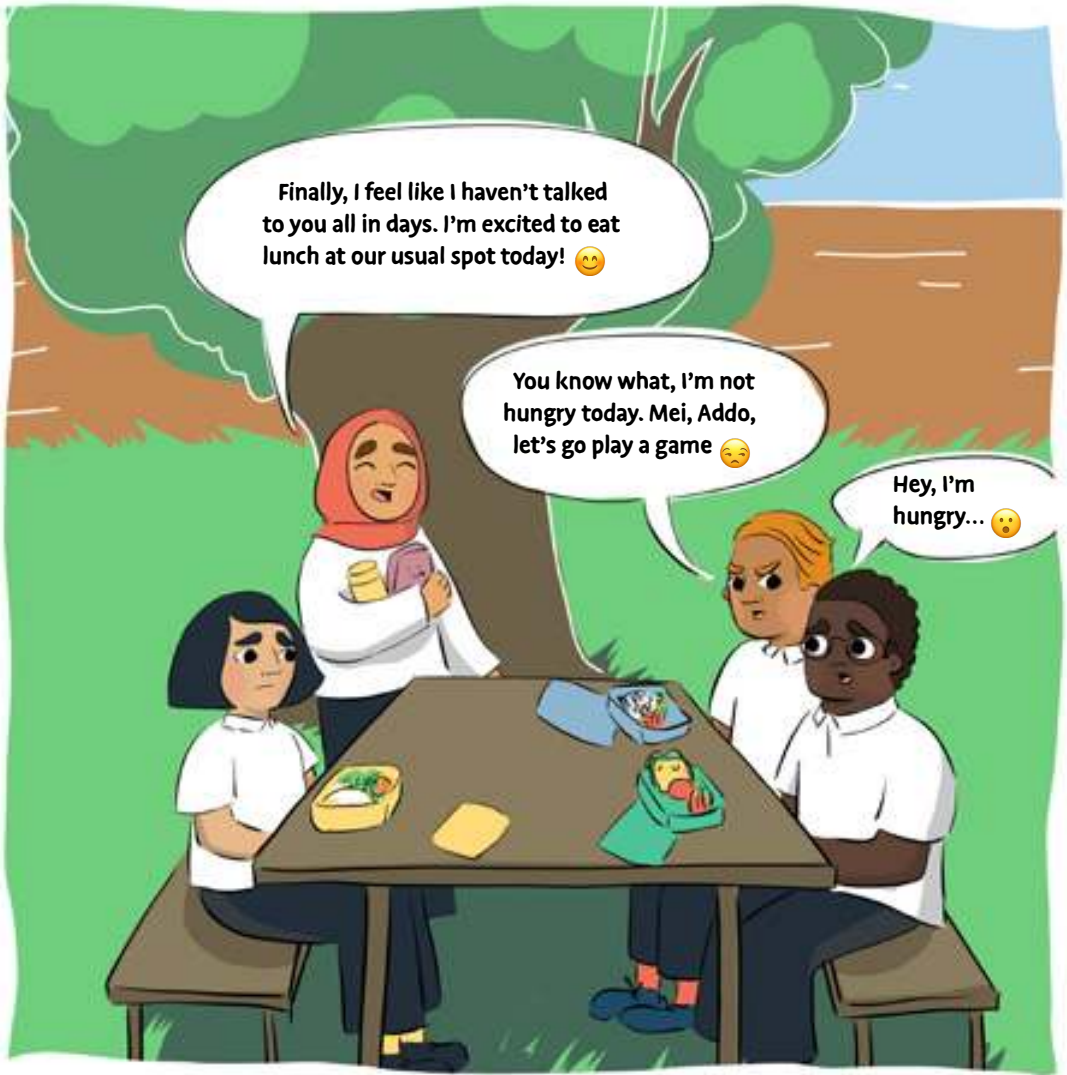


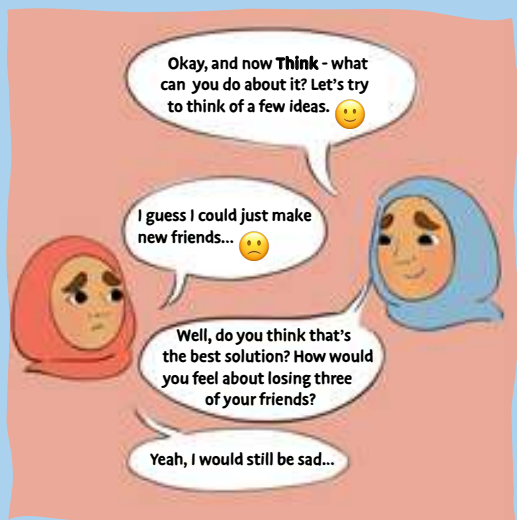
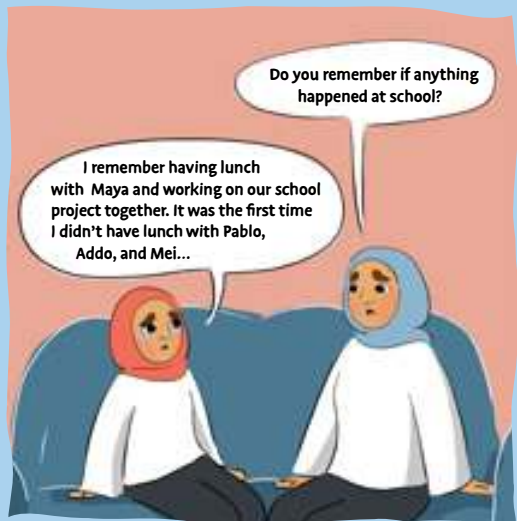
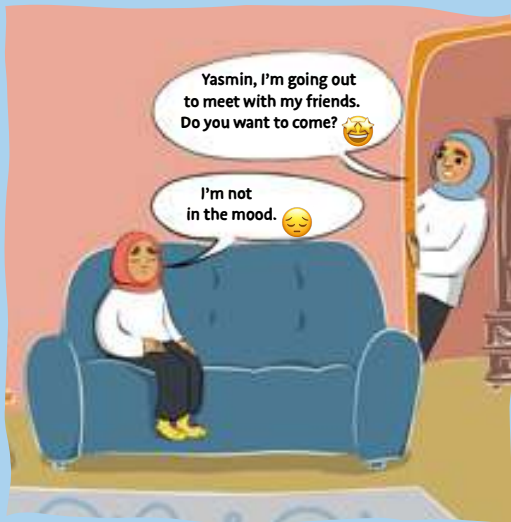
After school

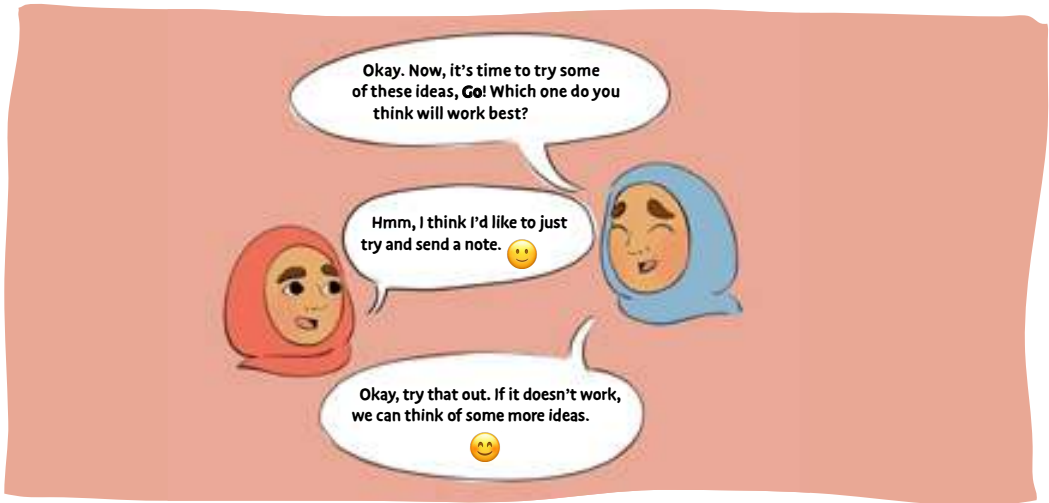
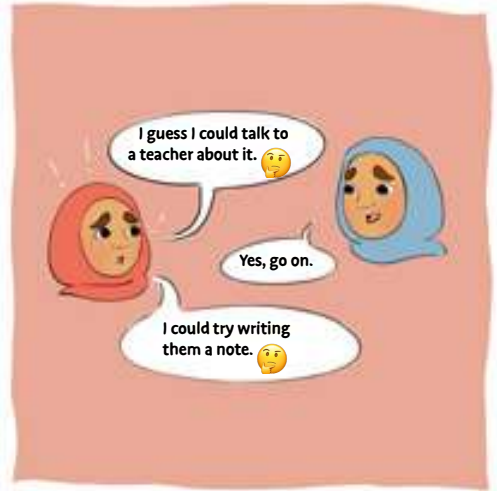
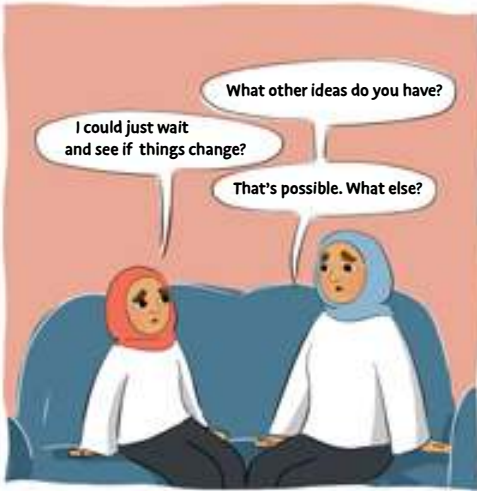


The next day





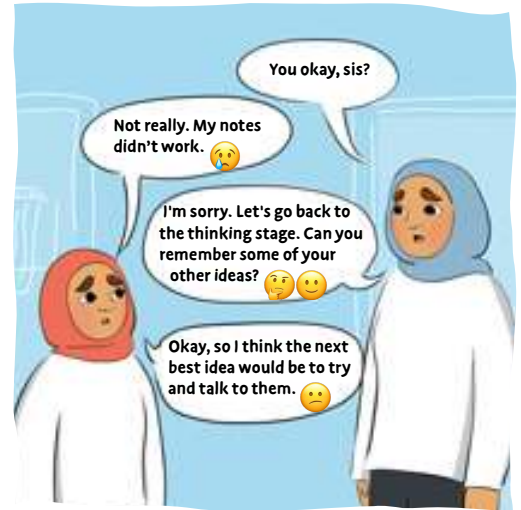






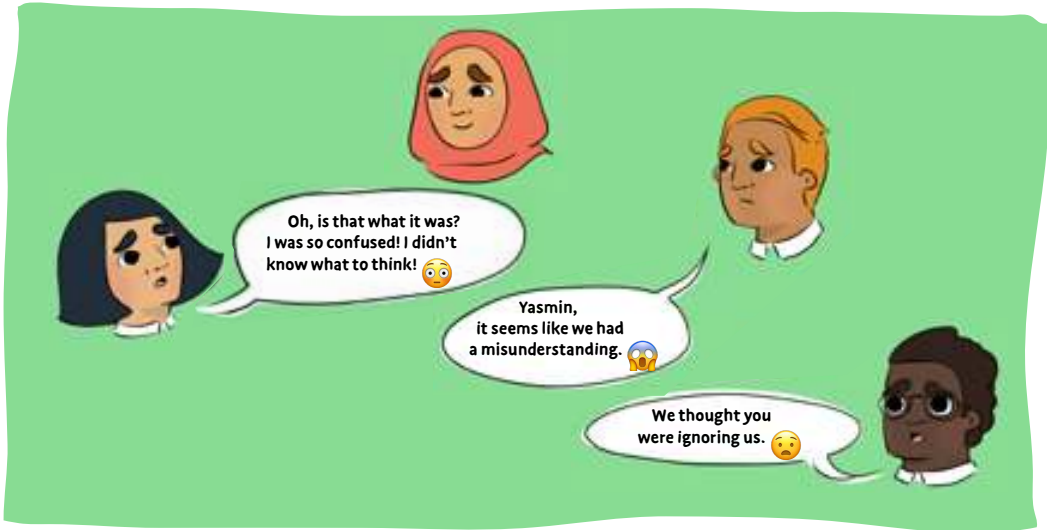
The next day
at school







Before you walk away again, I just wanted to say I'm sorry I broke my promise about meeting you at lunchtime. And for not being able to play football. I didn't get a chance to tell you at the time, but I'm working on a project with Maya, and it's a really hard topic. We are trying to put in a lot of extra work! 😞



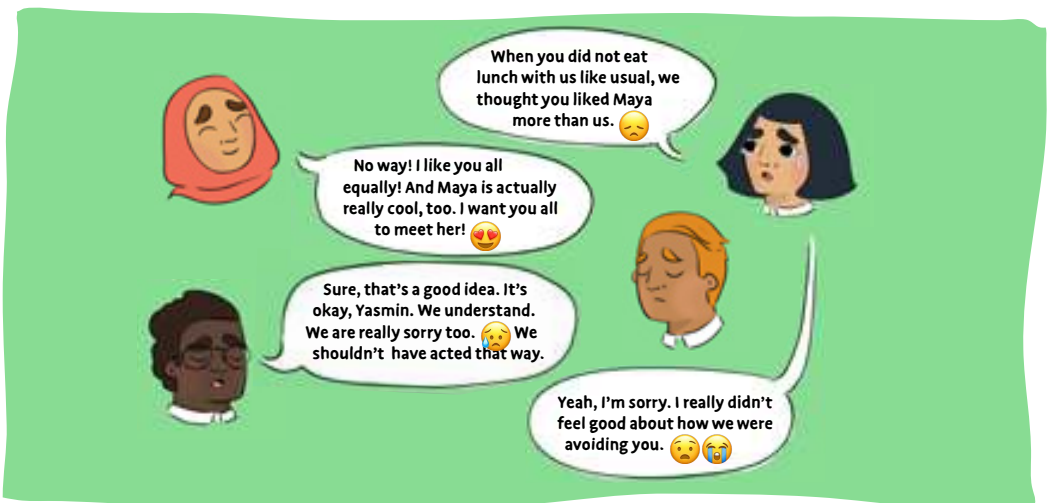
Oh, is that what it was? I was so confused! I didn't know what to think! 😞



Yasmin, it seems like we had a misunderstanding. 😞



We thought you were ignoring us. 😞



When you did not eat lunch with us like usual, we thought you liked Maya more than us. 😞

No way! I like you all equally! And Maya is actually really cool, too. I want you all to meet her! 😍



Sure, that's a good idea. It's okay, Yasmin. We understand. We are really sorry too. 😞 We shouldn't have acted that way.



Yeah, I'm sorry. I really didn't feel good about how we were avoiding you. 😞😞





That's ok. I'm just glad we cleared things up and can go back to being friends. After school today Maya and I will finish our project, so tomorrow I can play football with you all! 😊

Hey... why don't you invite Maya to join us for football?

Really? I think Maya would like that! So, Pablo...you're not mad at me anymore? 😊😊

Definitely not... I'm sorry Yasmin. I shouldn't have reacted the way I did yesterday. 😊



Apology accepted...but you better bring a really good snack to trade with me tomorrow! 😊😊

3.2

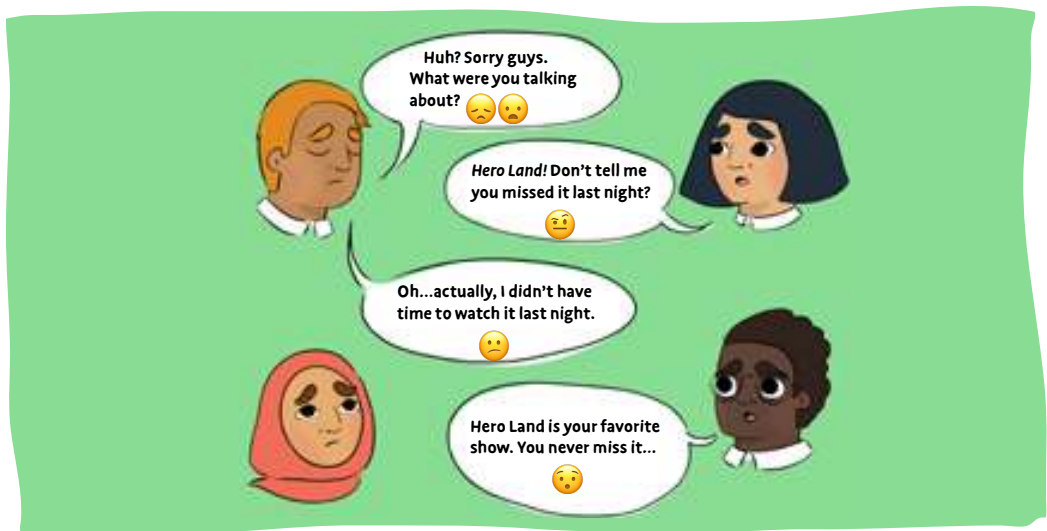
What's the problem, Pablo?





I loved last night's *Hero Land* episode... I was hooked until the end. 😊😊

I know. The ending was so surprising. 😊
Did you watch it Pablo?

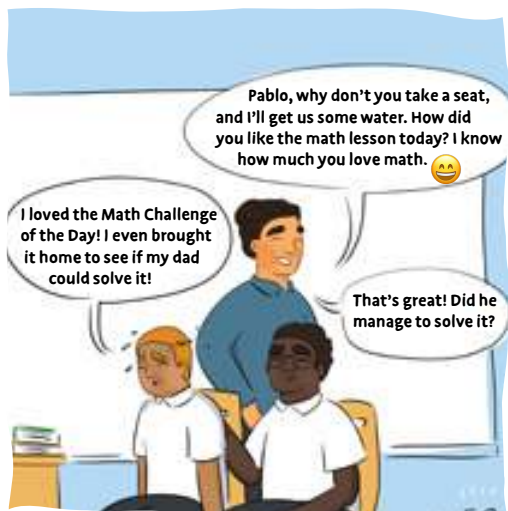
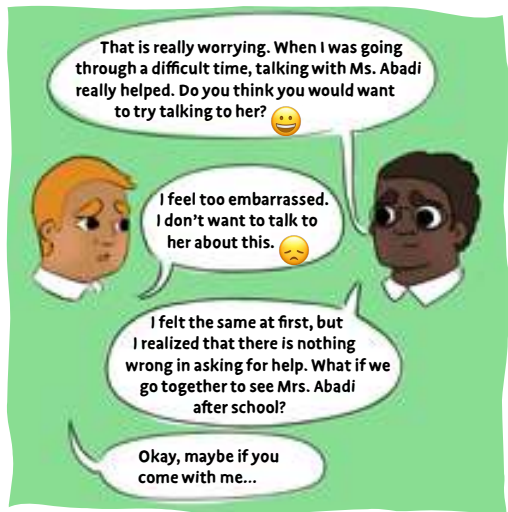
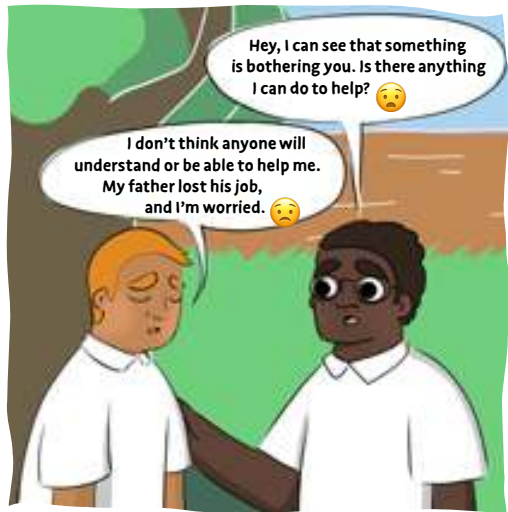


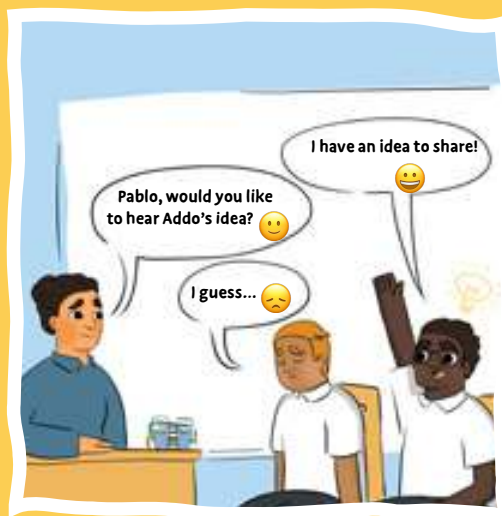
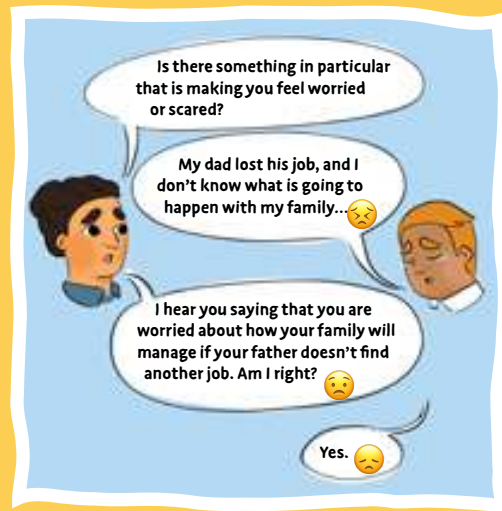
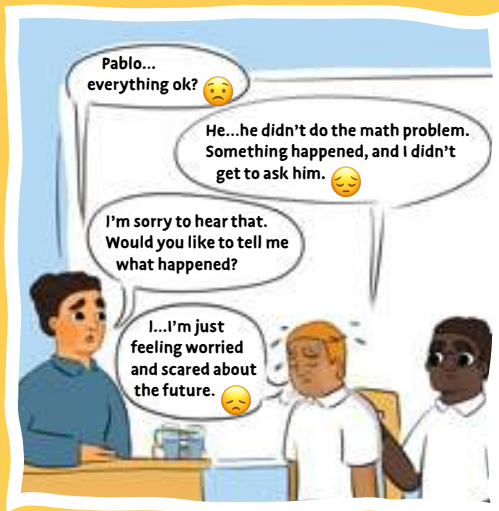
Huh? Sorry guys. What were you talking about? 😞😞

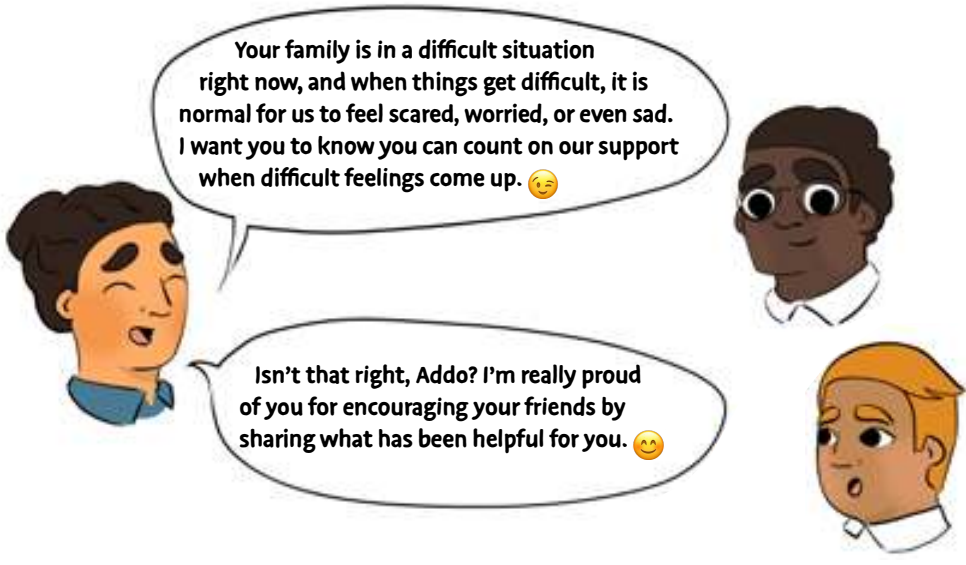
Hero Land! Don't tell me you missed it last night? 😞

Oh...actually, I didn't have time to watch it last night. 😞

Hero Land is your favorite show. You never miss it... 😞







Your family is in a difficult situation right now, and when things get difficult, it is normal for us to feel scared, worried, or even sad. I want you to know you can count on our support when difficult feelings come up. 😊

Isn't that right, Addo? I'm really proud of you for encouraging your friends by sharing what has been helpful for you. 😊



Thank you, Addo. You've been a great friend. I'm already feeling better! 😊

**Try the steps
Stop, Think, Go
when you are trying
to solve a problem**



Stop: What is the problem?

Say what the problem is out loud or write it down, and be specific!

I am struggling with my math homework.

Think: What can you do about that?

Who can you talk to about it?
Who can you ask for help?
Think of. A few ideas!

I can talk to my dad.

I can ask my teacher for help.

I can call Addo to ask how he did the homework.

Go: Choose a solution that you think will work best.

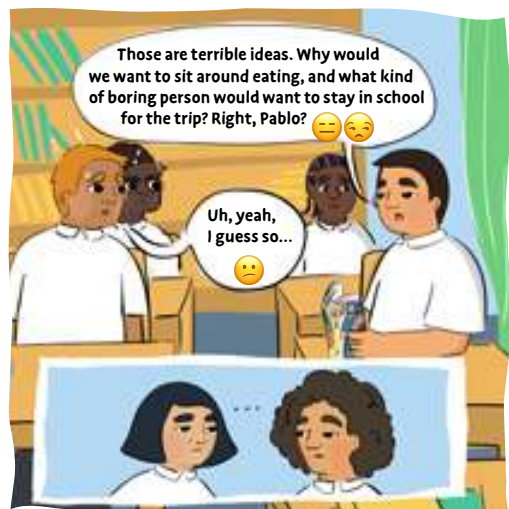
I'll call Addo for help since my dad isn't home, and I can't contact my teacher until tomorrow.

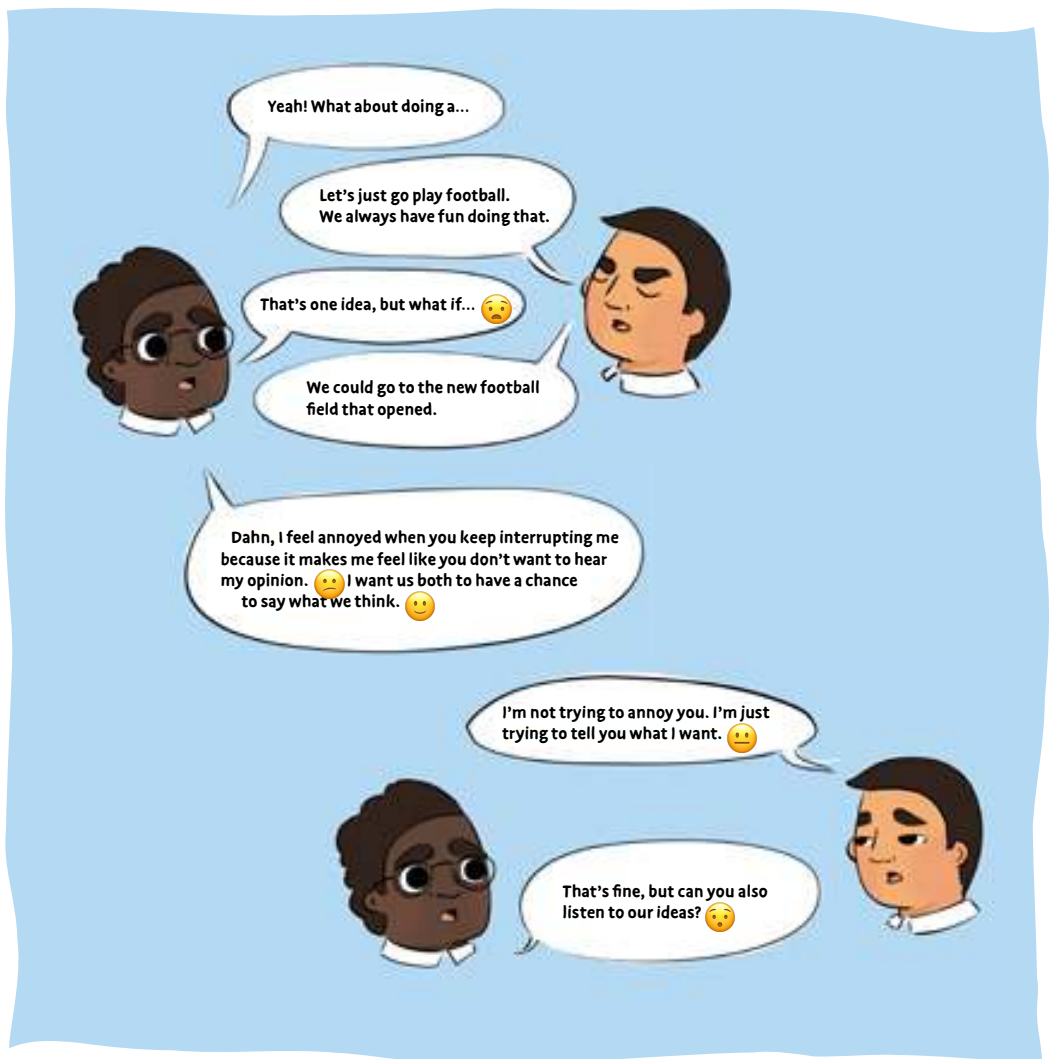
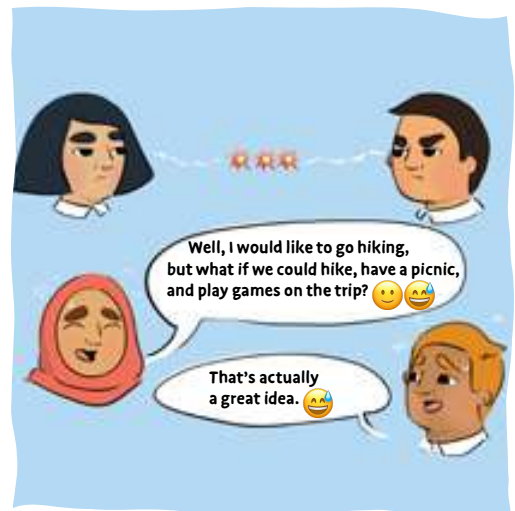
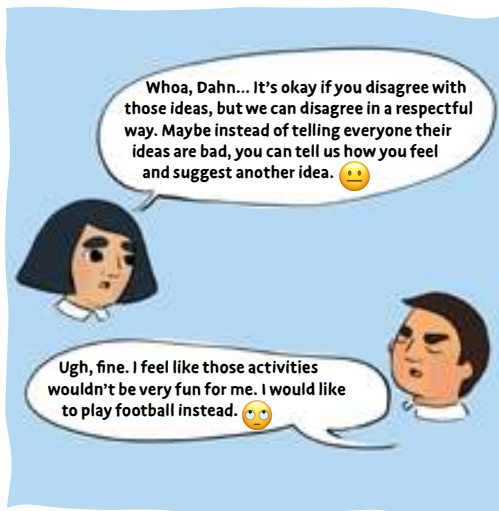
Try it out and see what happens!
If it doesn't work out,
you can always try something else.

4

I have something to say











**How can we communicate
what we think and feel in
a respectful way?**





5.1

The class trip

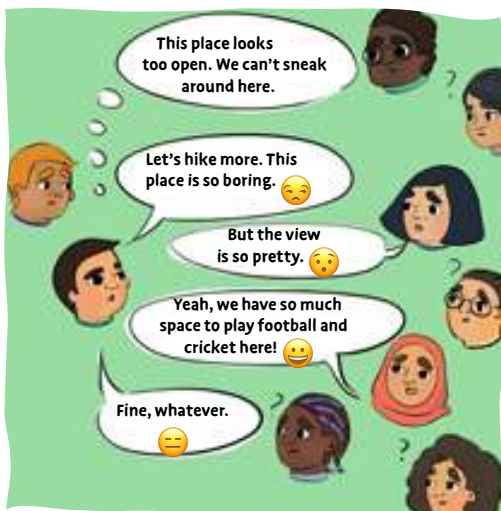
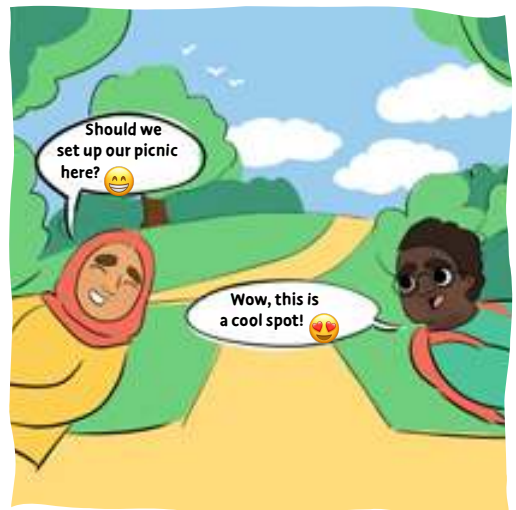























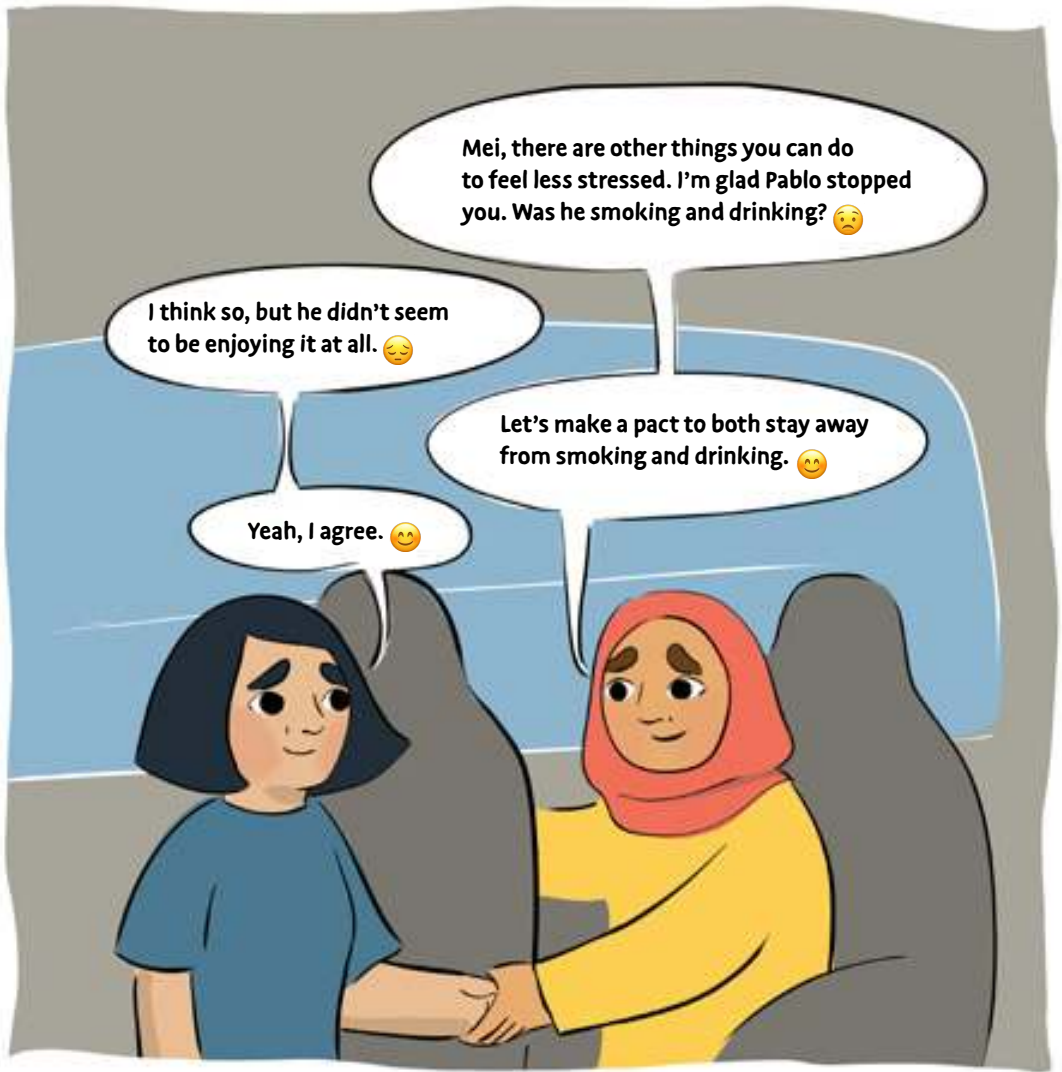
I didn't think you guys were into this stuff... seriously? 🙄

So what, its not a big deal. You are killing all the fun. 😏😏

I...I... 😞

Just chill out and try it. Otherwise you'll be missing out. 😞





5.2

Dahn makes risky choices

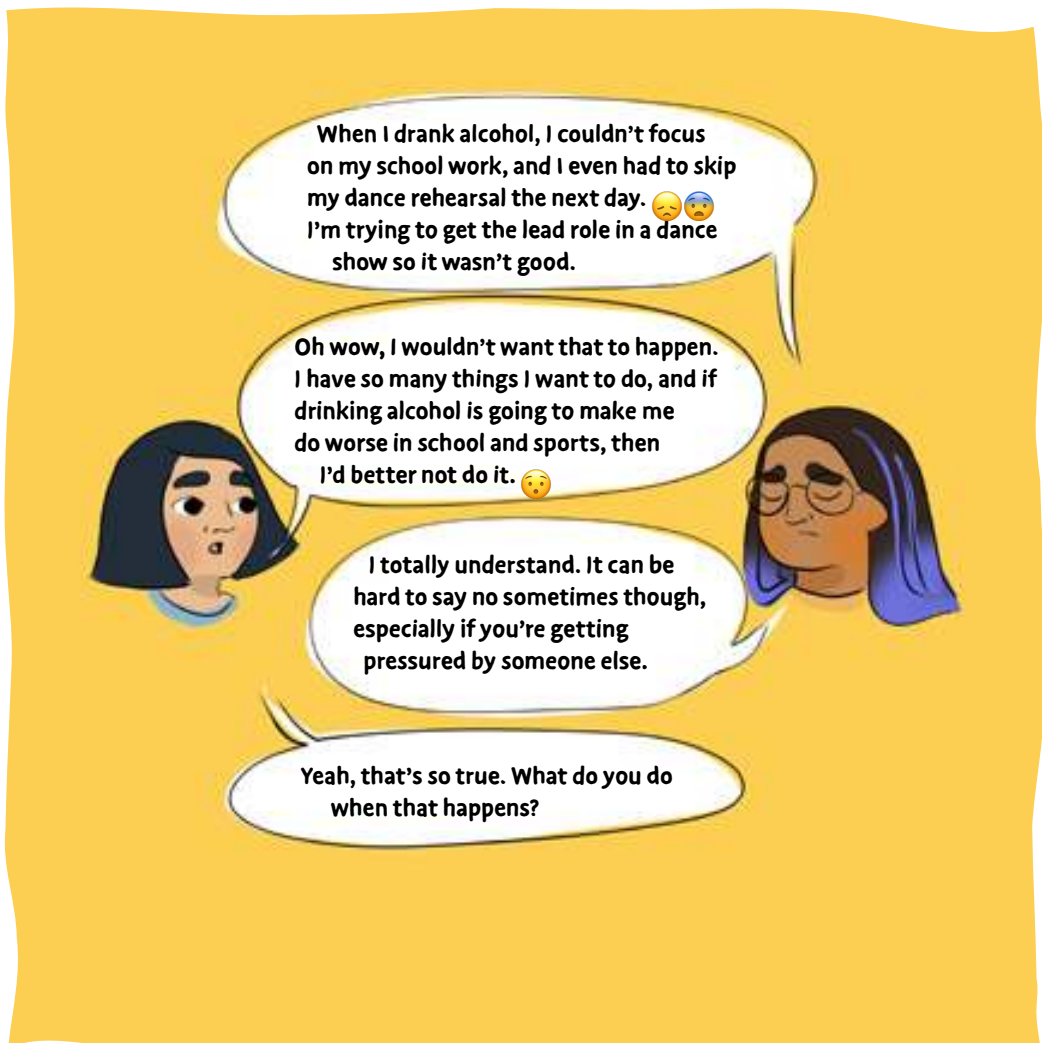




Hey Mei, your dad said that you went on some class trip - what did you do? 😊

OMG, Karina!! I have so much to tell you about the class trip. I know I can always talk to you about these things. 😬

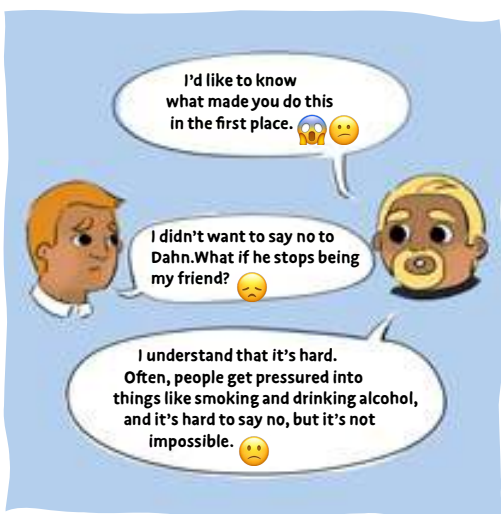
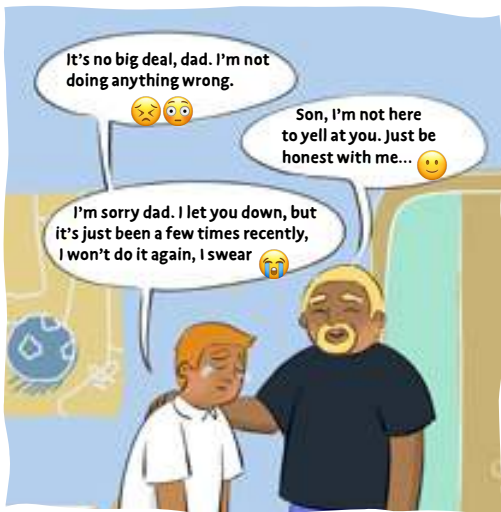












Starting our own band or going to the movie theatre to see the latest action film! 🤩

Those do sound fun. Maybe you can try these activities with Dahn next time, and he will enjoy them, too! 😊

That's a good point, Dad. I'm going to talk to Dahn about that. 😊

I'm proud of you, Pablo, and I'm always here to help you. 😊



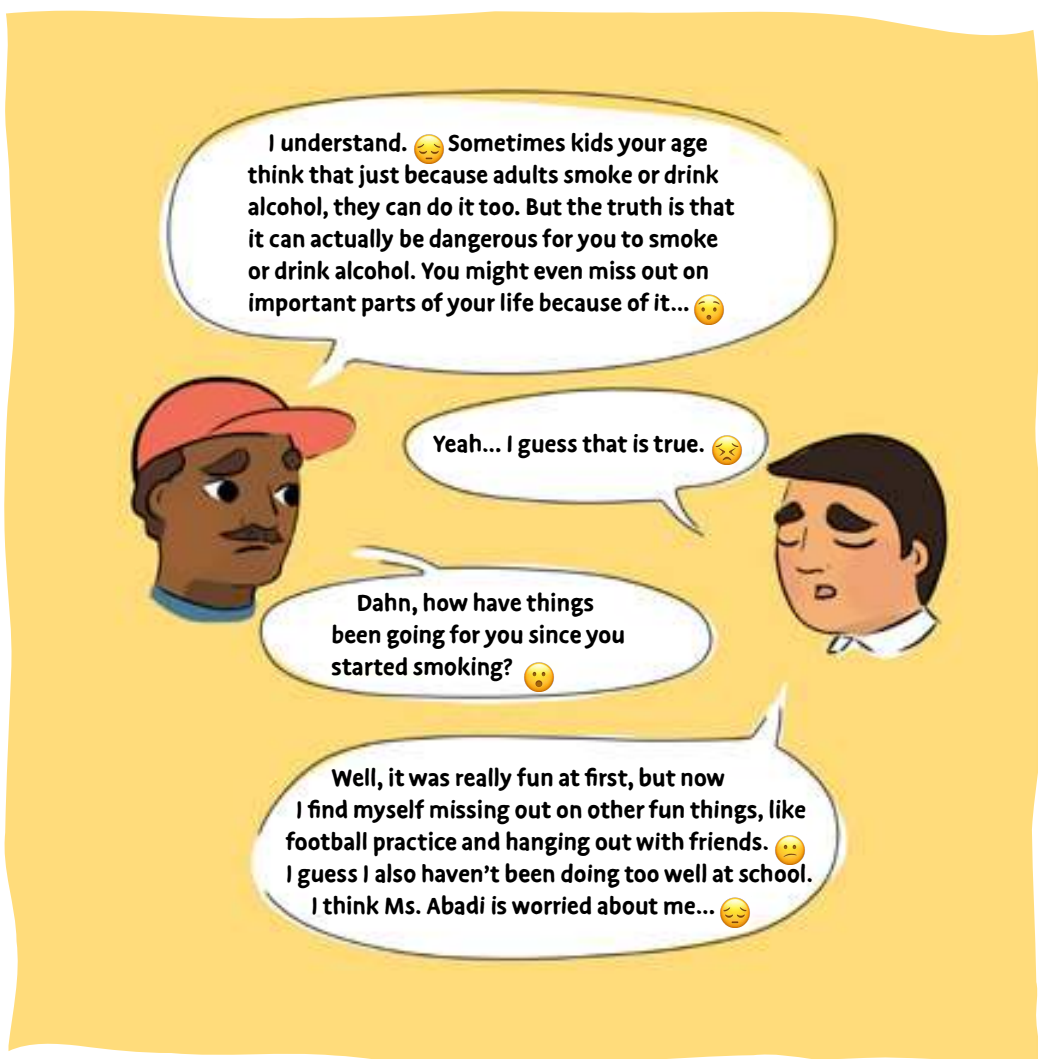
Next morning at school


Let's go for a quick smoke before going to school. 😞

Hey, smoking makes me feel so sick. It's also not healthy for us. I'm not going to smoke or drink alcohol anymore. 😞 I hope you decide to join me.

I'm kind of nervous to say this but I've noticed that you haven't been turning in school assignments, you're avoiding hanging out with our friends, and you've been missing football practice. You used to love football and were the fastest one on the team... 😞


Dahn, it's so nice to see you on time today. Let's chat for a minute... 😊



A coach in a blue shirt and red cap is talking to a student in a white shirt and blue backpack. They are walking on a yellow path with green bushes and a blue sky in the background.


How does it make you feel to be missing school, practice, and hanging out with friends? 😞

Bad. 😞 I'm also afraid I will fail this year. What if I need to repeat class 8 while all my friends move on? I want to change things, but it just feels so hard...

The coach and student continue their conversation on the path. The coach is speaking and the student is listening.

Dahn, it is very strong of you to admit this, and I'm glad that you see the consequences of your actions. I care about you and want you to do well. I am here to support you. 😊

But where do I even start? 😞

The coach and student are walking together. The coach is speaking and the student is listening.

Let's start by having a talk with Ms. Kim, and together we will make a plan. This will be the first step, and you don't have to do this alone. Let's take this one step at a time. 😊

Thanks, Coach. I think I can do this first step. 😊







- Images and messages from influences and celebrities



- Advertisements that make alcohol and tobacco look cool



- Adults who drink and smoke around us



Feeling stressed, sad, worried, and using alcohol or cigarette to help cope...



However, substances like caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs are harmful to our bodies and brains! They interfere with our ability to do basic things like see, hear, talk, walk, control our emotions, and make decisions.



Did you know that the human brain doesn't finish developing until 25 years of age!? That's why alcohol use is especially harmful for young people as it interferes with our brain development.

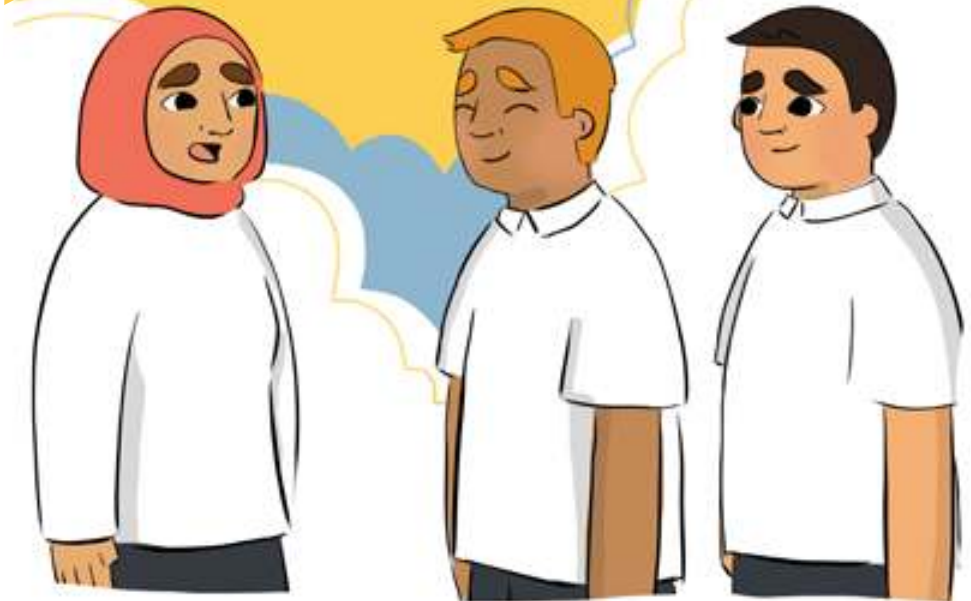


Being a teen is hard enough already! You might want to find a buddy who has similar views about substance use - teaming up with a supportive friend can make a big difference.

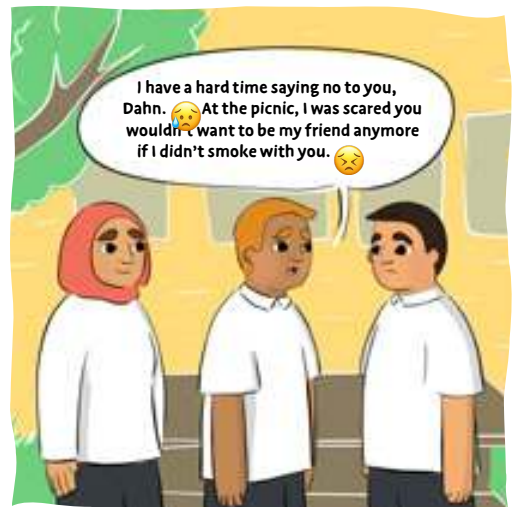
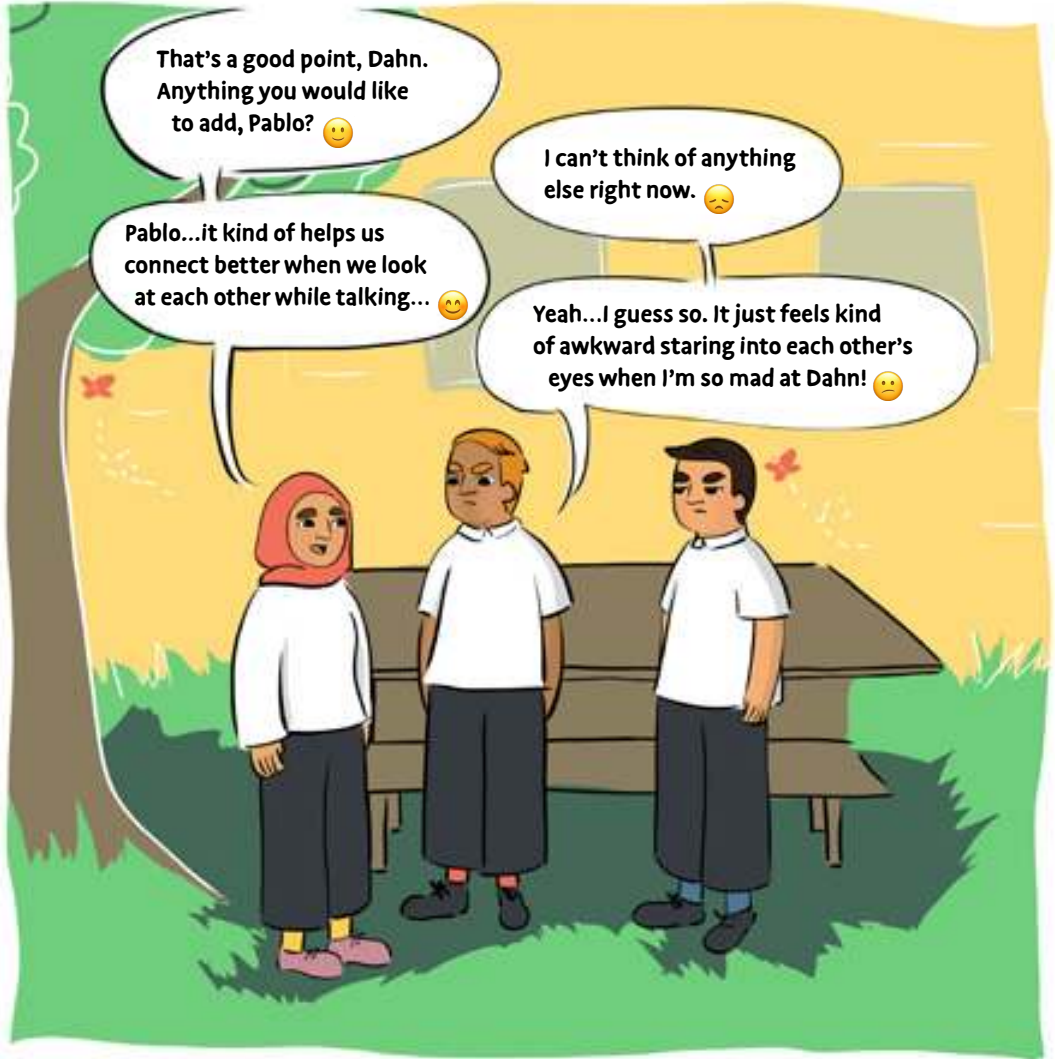


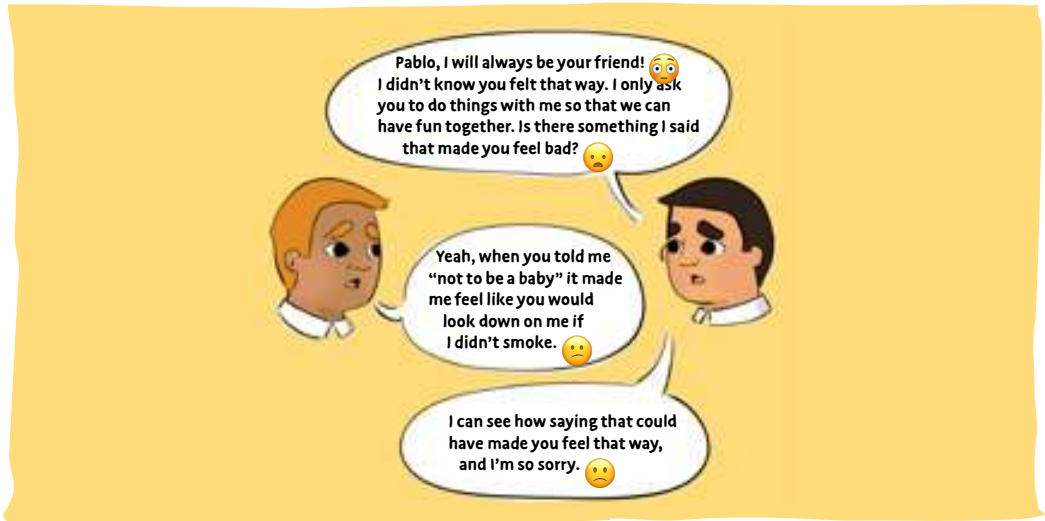
6.1

Are you
listening
to me?











Same. I'm really glad we can work through stuff like this. 😊

Yeah let's go!

Yeah, it feels like a relief to be able to share how I'm feeling. Ok, shall we go find Mei? 😊

6.2

Mei works things out with mom





OMG! The pictures from our hiking trip are so cute! Look! 😍😍

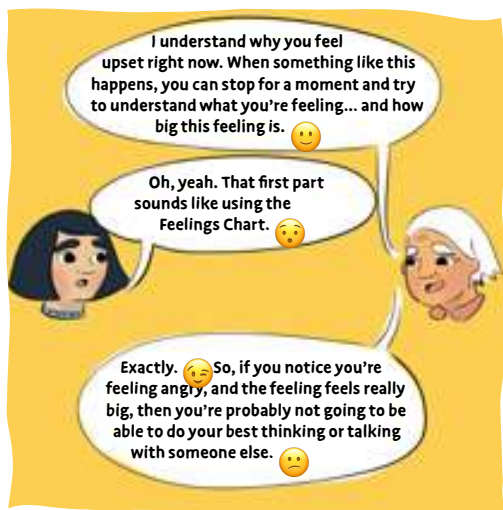
Oh wow, those are so nice! Can you message them to me? 😊

I'm getting a phone tomorrow! Can you send them to me then!? 😁

Ughh, I wish I was getting a phone soon, too. I'll be the only one who doesn't have one. 😞

After school





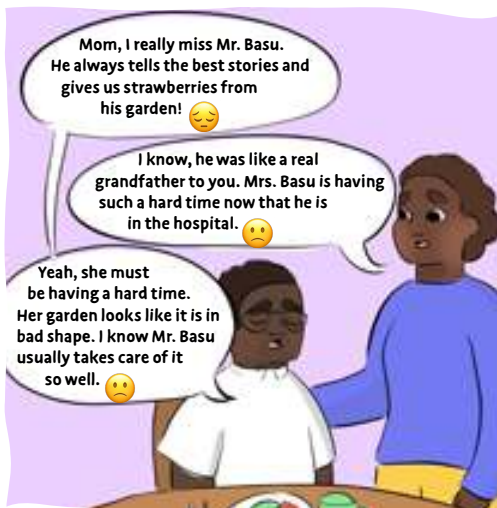




6.3

Here for each other





At school

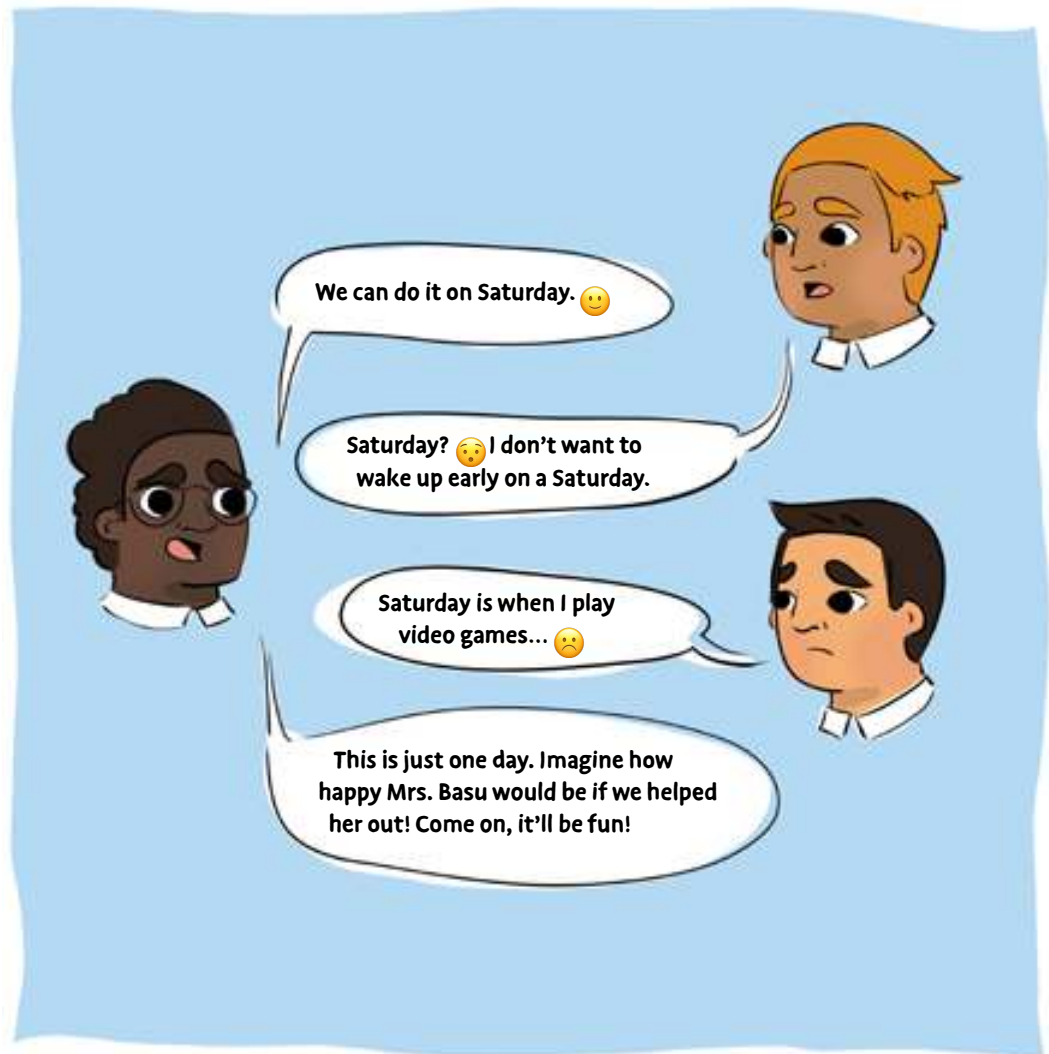
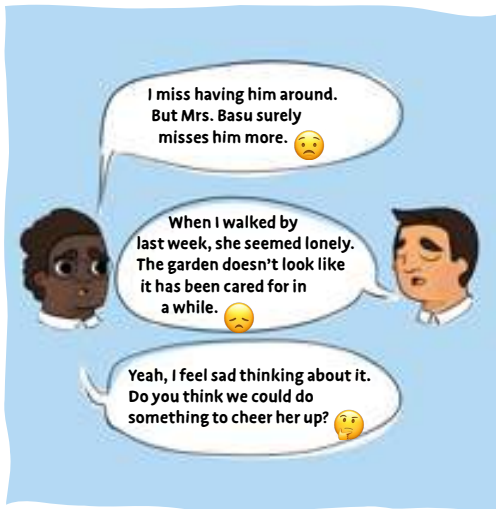
Do you remember
my neighbor, Mr. Basu? 😞

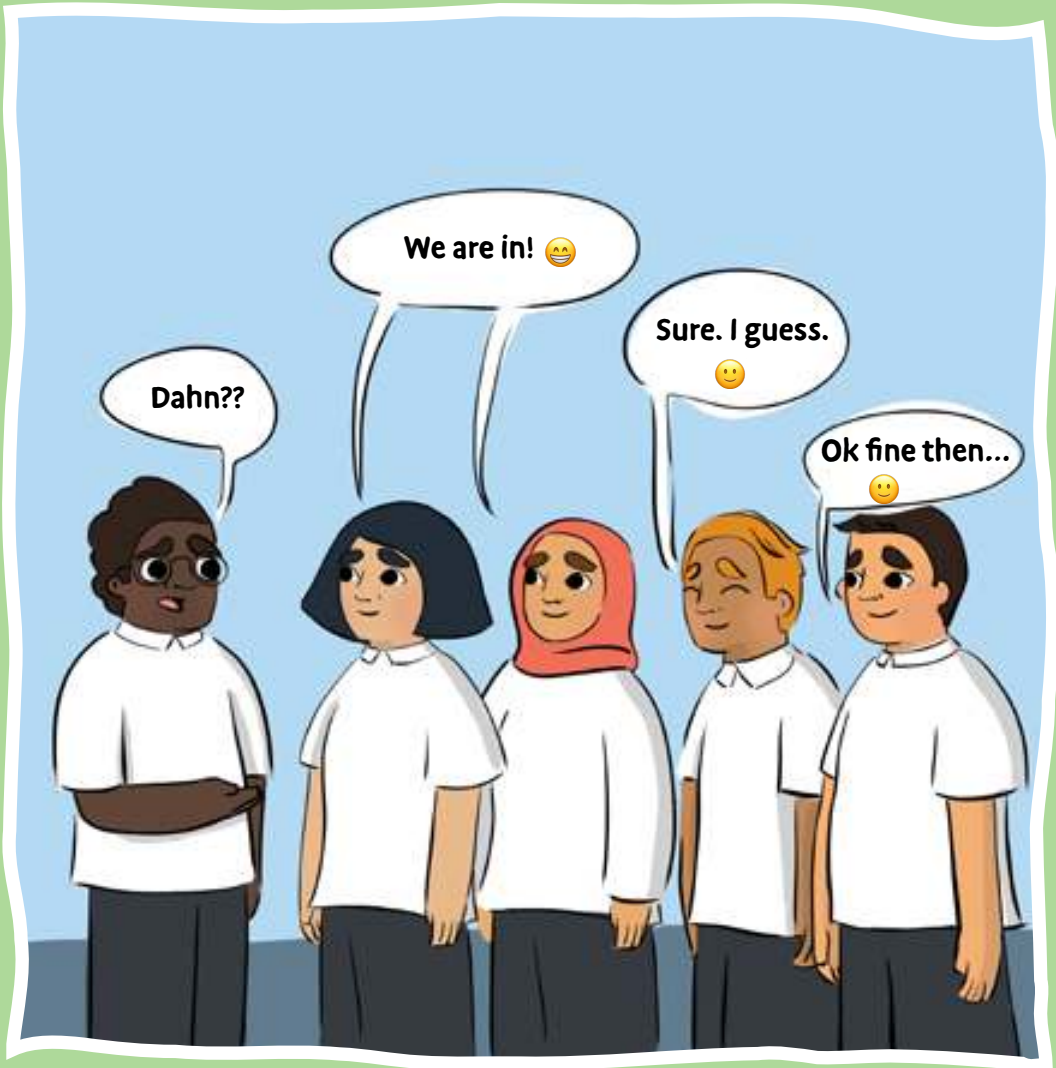
Of course!
He was so kind.

He used to give
us strawberries!

I also remember
Mrs. Basu giving us
homemade sweets.









Relationships are important for our well-being



But all people and relationships are DIFFERENT!
Sometimes, these differences
can lead to conflicts



It is important to know how to deal with
these conflicts. Taking the time to understand
what another person is going through
is a special skill to learn and practices.

Here are some things that can help you!

1

First, I do something that helps me feel calm.
This could mean counting slowly to 10,
slow breathing, or walking away.



2



When I feel calmer, I tell the other person
how I feel and what I need in a respectful way.

3


Then, I ask questions to understand how
the other person is feeling and what they need.



Make sure you show them that
you're really listening by making eye contact,
sitting still, avoiding distractions, and
not interrupting them.

What are three tips that you
can use to manage a conflict
with someone else?





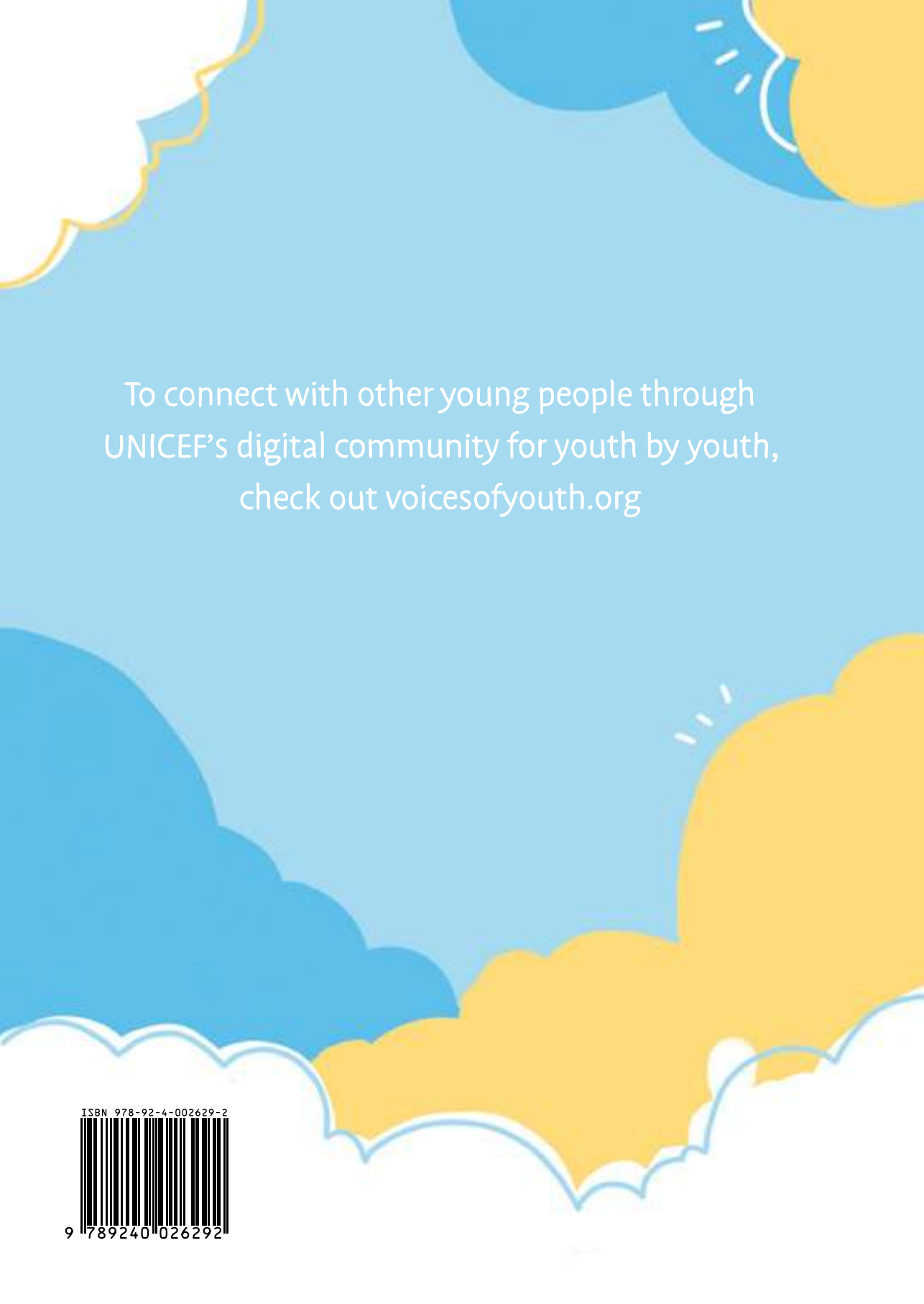
**Remember: if you need more help
or have any questions, make sure
you talk to a trusted adult, teacher,
or family member.**

Love Mei xx and Lulu

Magnificent Mei and Friends

Illustrated by

Aizat NOM



To connect with other young people through
UNICEF's digital community for youth by youth,
check out voicesofyouth.org

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