

The ABCs of Mental Health Booklet



Foreword.....

This Booklet was initiated by the Regional Multicultural Youth Council (RMYC) as a youth-led project to reduce the stigma of mental health. We believe that mental health is everybody's business, because we are all affected by it in one way or another.

Through the simple words we have chosen for our mental health alphabet, we are trying to raise awareness on the common things that impact our well-being, and affect how we feel. By paying attention to some very basic ideas and the thoughts we are sharing in this booklet, we hope that young people will realize that most of the feelings and experiences we have are normal and natural.

The challenge though, is taking charge of our lives. We should be comfortable to talk with family and friends about our health, and seek support, medications, or other forms of treatments that will help us to feel well.

Our goal should be to live a happy and healthy life!

Now, Read on, and enjoy!

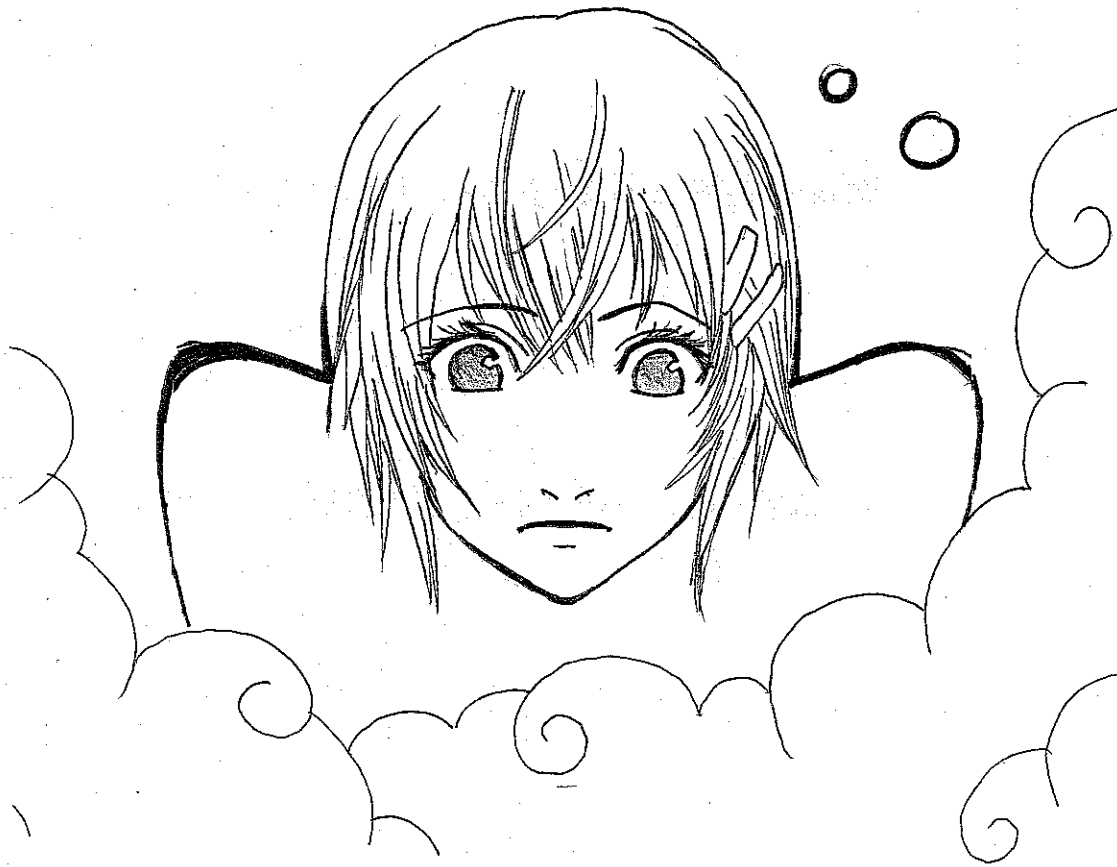
A is for Anger



Anger is a feeling. It is normal to be mad, frustrated, or upset. But, what matters is how you deal with it. Learn to control your **anger** so that you do not hurt others or yourself. Don't let **anger** control you, or your actions. When you feel angry, do not do something you will regret. Instead, find positive ways to release it.

Use your **anger** to motivate you to do good, instead of letting it get out of hand. Should you ever feel angry, remember to act rationally, responsibly and considerately.

B is for Brain



The **brain** is our compass and leader. It controls our thinking, memory and emotions. It is the decision maker. It decides if the action you are taking is good, bad, helpful or unnecessary. If the **brain** is not well, you cannot think properly, or act in a rational manner. It is responsible for how we learn, how we remember, and how we behave.

Use your **brain** to think before you speak or act, and remember it is powerful. Just one thought can be all that is needed to make a drastic change in your life.

C is for Caring



Caring is loving. If somebody is hurting, show them you care. Be kind to them. Not only will that person feel good, you will also feel great for helping that person. **Caring** makes friendship. The bonds formed can help to build positive relationships, and create allies.

By **caring** for each other, we can overcome many obstacles. With the support of people who care, we can avoid feeling discouraged, depressed or upset.

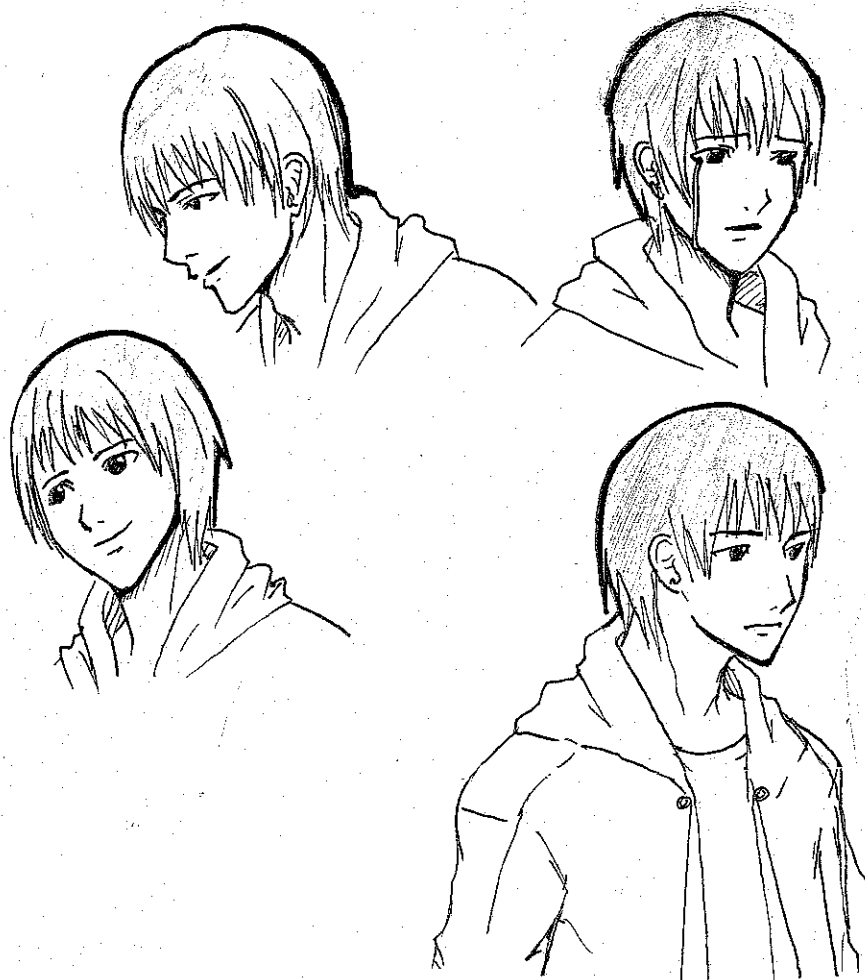
D is for Drugs



Drugs can heal you. However, illegal **drugs**, or drugs that are not properly taken may hurt you. They can cause problems for you, your family and friends. **Drugs** can kill you if you abuse them. Some **drugs** are addictive, and no one is invincible to them. They can control your mind, your behaviour, and your life. **Drugs** can also affect your relationship with others.

You should take prescription **drugs** according to your doctor's orders. Always make sure that you clearly understand all the directions and procedures to use them. Never take more than you need to get well. You should never take illegal drugs, because they are dangerous.

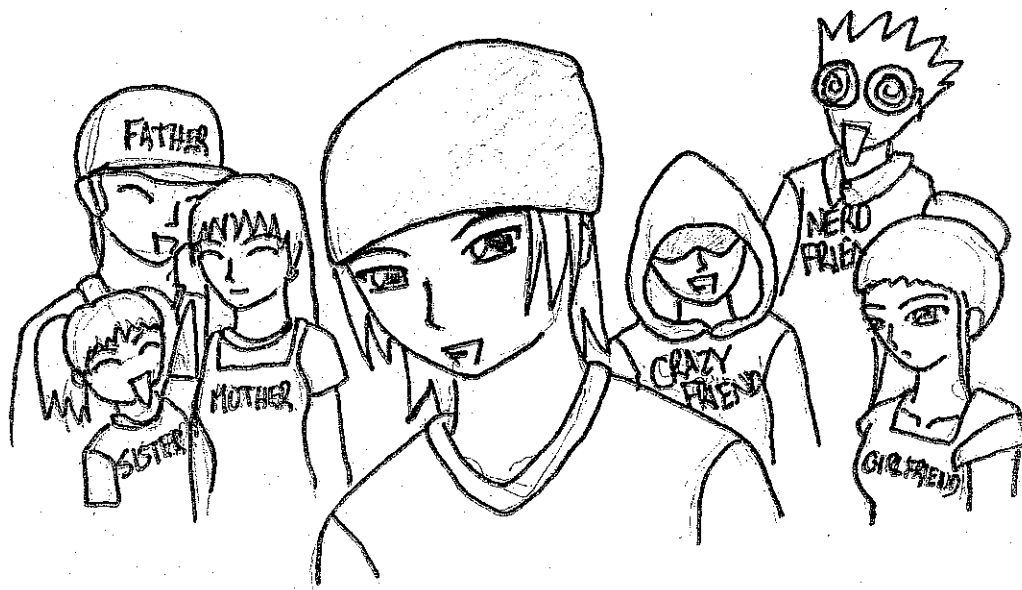
E is for Emotions



Emotions are what you feel inside. There are happy, sad, angry, jealous, scared, friendly **emotions**...the list goes on. Yet, no matter how sour some may be, it is okay to express your **emotions**. But, always think of how this may affect those around you before you express them.

Use your **emotions** to show love and affection, and not anger or resentment. Do not use your **emotions** in ways that hurt other people.

F is for Family & Friends



Your **family and friends** are your retreat to safety. They are there to love you, protect you, support you, and comfort you. Use the love of your **family and friends** to grow and bloom like a flower. Though friends aren't **family**, they are good company, and can comfort you in many tough situations.

But remember that not all **friends** or families are like this. Sometimes there are problems when conflicts or arguments start. Try to create loving families, and keep good **friends**. Life will be much harder for those that don't.

G is for Goals



Your **goals** are what you want to achieve to fulfil your purpose in life. Let them be your map to guide you where you want to go. Set a path and plan the journey towards your **goals**, and get your family, friends, teachers, counsellors, Elders, etc. to be your allies to help you achieve them.

Some people may try to drag you down, and slow your progress out of ill-feelings or jealousy. There are also things that may distract you from focusing on what you want. You should be resilient, and not give up. Tunnels can come in different shapes, sizes and lengths, but they all have ways to get in and get out. Stay focused on your path, and work hard to realize your **goals**.

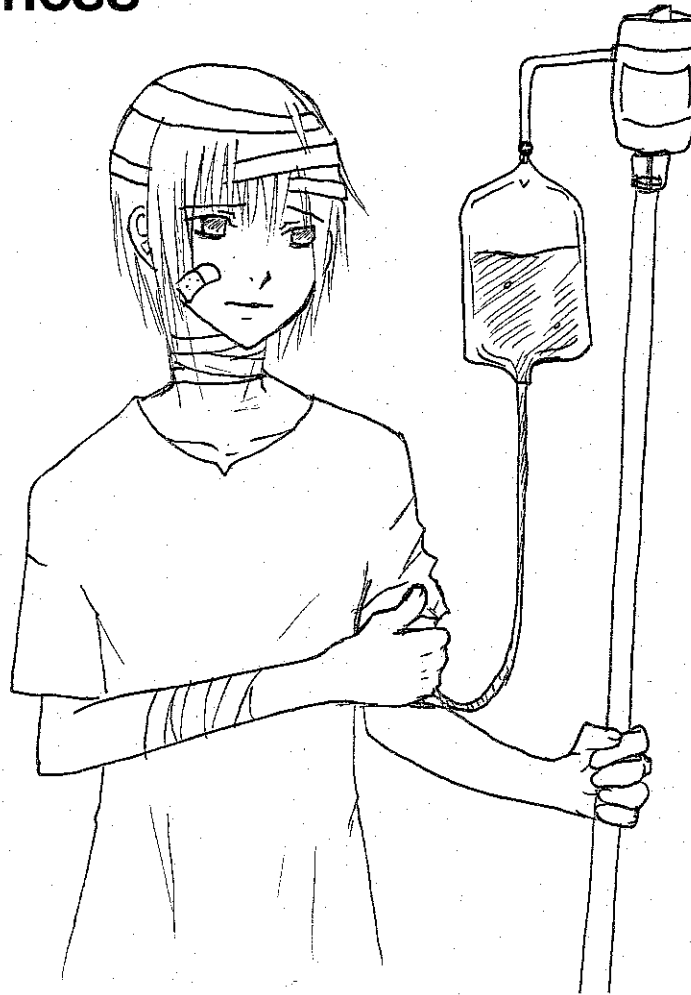
H is for Happiness



Happiness is good for your health. It relieves stress, and cheers you up. Even when skies are grey, be positive and keep a smile to help you through. After all, it takes more muscles to frown than to smile. Make **happiness** contagious. Share your **happiness** to brighten someone's dull days.

Happiness in the mind and in the heart reduces feelings of depression and sadness. To enjoy life, you should develop a happy and positive attitude.

I is for Illness



We all get sick once in a while, and we often take medicine to get well. Some illnesses such as a common cold or the flu are physical. Others are mental and need special treatments including counselling and emotional support. But, there are also more serious types of illnesses such as diseases that cannot be easily treated.

A positive attitude will help the body to heal faster. By thinking on the bright side, getting the treatments available, eating healthy foods, and using the support around you, it will be much easier and faster to pull through your **illness**.

J is for Jolly



Jolliness is feeling cheerful and being happy. It's the excitement we all get and like that makes us feel good. By keeping a gentle and soft heart, you can warm any cold face with your affection. Be **jolly** to cheer that sadness away, and share your love and happy feelings with others.

Being **jolly** makes life fun and enjoyable. It will create a difference in your life, as well as the lives of those that you've reached with your jolliness too.

K is for Kindness



Compassion, sympathy, empathy and caring are acts of **kindness**. We should be kind to those in need, and lend a helping hand to those who are suffering.

Being thoughtful about another person's condition, and a willingness to help shows your **kindness**. Besides, helping other people to improve their situation may just brighten their day and enrich your life.

L is for Laughter



Laughter is happiness! Smile and cheer up. Laugh at a joke. But, there's a difference between laughing at something that is really funny, and just laughing at someone. Do not laugh to tease, embarrass or put down someone.

Laughter is good medicine! Use it to brighten the mood, and to cheer others on. **Laughter** cures stress and sadness. It make life fun and worth living.

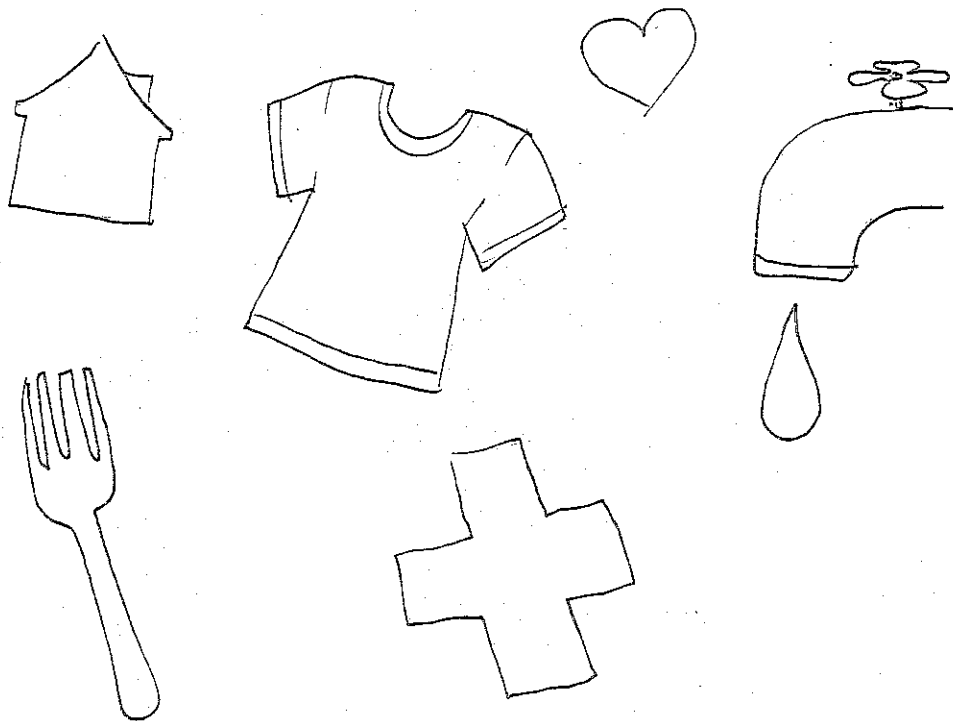
M is for Mind



The **mind** is responsible for our consciousness, how we feel and how we act. It controls our mental capacity--how we see things, and real life experiences. It also creates our thoughts and opinions. A healthy **mind** thinks and acts rationally.

The **mind** influences our mental, emotional and physical well-being. Protect your **mind** from harmful things such as drugs, and hallucinogens.

N is for Needs



Needs are our necessities for living. They are the requirements of life, and not just desires. Basic physical **needs** in life are air, food, water, and shelter. However, there are also psychological **needs** which include love, communication, family, and companionship. These affect our social and emotional well-being, and are just as important as their physical counterparts.

Fulfilling and satisfying our **needs** is good for our physical and emotional well-being.

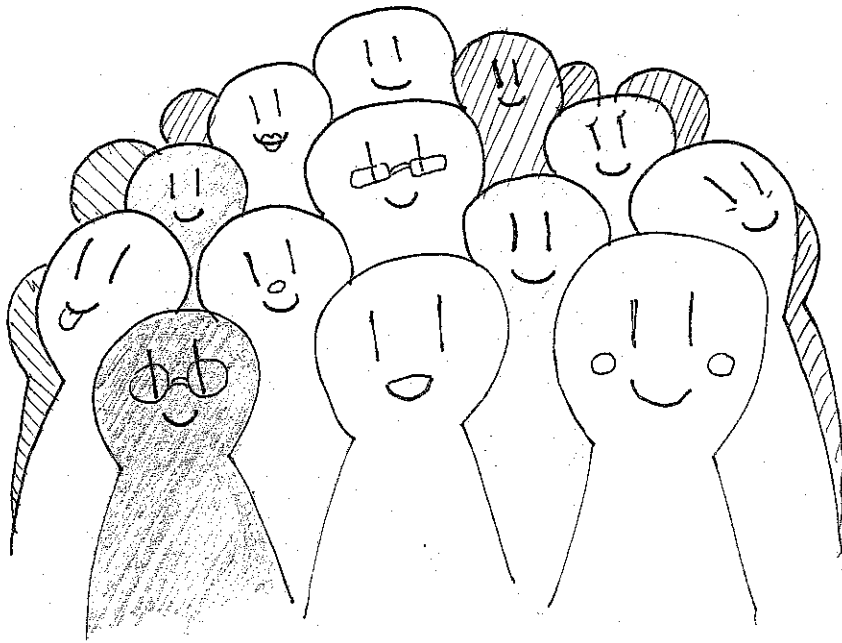
O is for Open-minded



Being **open-minded** is important for learning new things. It allows new experiences to be great adventures. The openness could be just sampling new foods, trying a new hobby, meeting someone from another culture, or moving to another town and making new friends--it does not matter. What matters is that you are **open-minded**, and you welcome new challenges and experiences.

An open mind prepares you to deal with new situations. Your adventures will slowly build you a road to success.

P is for People



People come in different shapes, sizes and colours. They can be old, or they can be young. They can be bald, or have lots of hair. They can even have physical differences, different personality traits, different cultures, and different family backgrounds.

But, whatever the differences, **people** are **people**, and should all be treated fairly and respectfully. We are all part of the human race, and belong to our communities.

Q is for Quilt



A **quilt** is made up of different patches. Even if they are old or new, pretty or bland, when the patches are sewn together, they look fantastic! However, if one patch is unraveled, and the threads slowly slip out of the stitches, it ruins the beautiful **quilt**.

Now, imagine the **quilt** idea with people from different races, cultures, ages and so on. Each person has some relation to another person, and is connected to them by a certain 'thread'. But, if anything happens to one patch (person), be it even a small rip, or a loose end (happiness, sadness, sickness, or suicide), it can greatly affect the bonds between many patches (or people).

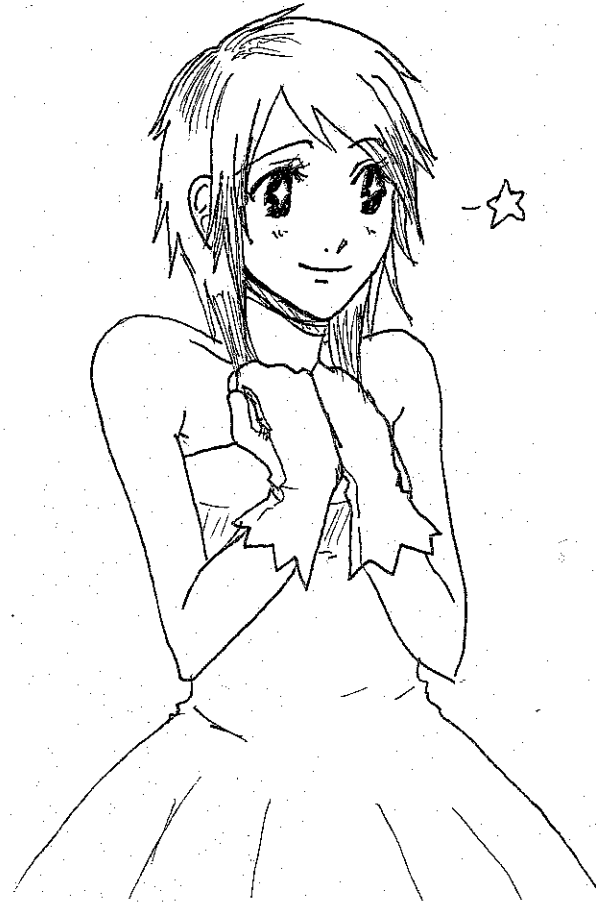
R is for Respect



Respect is the consideration we have for ourselves, for other people, and the things around us. It is very important to have **respect** because it builds good relationships with fellow human beings. It shows appreciation for other people, property, and our possessions. On the other hand, being rude, careless and inconsiderate shows disrespect, and lowers your status.

Being disrespectful can create problems and make other people shun you. It is something you should avoid...unless you like being mean and arrogant.

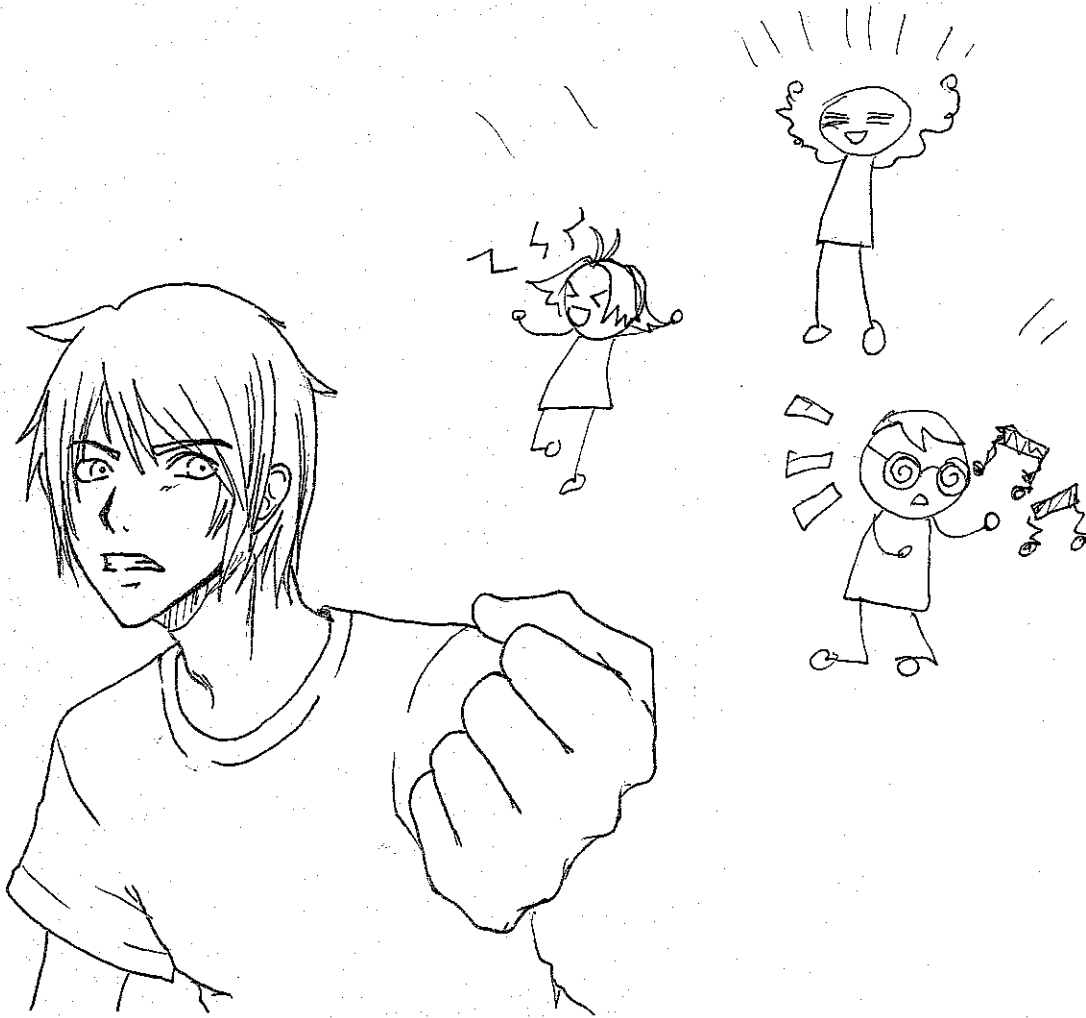
S is for Self-esteem



Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves. Feeling good gives us the confidence to do many things. Praise and encouragement builds our **self-esteem** to believe in ourselves. On the other hand, name calling and put-downs can hurt you emotionally, destroy your **self-esteem**, and make you feel bad.

Bad experiences and peer pressure are unavoidable. Just like a bird in the air, there will always be strong winds and enemies trying to knock you down. The bird needs to spread wings even further and continue flying to reach its destination. If you keep to the ground when the skies are rough, you will find it very hard to get anywhere. Besides, birds that don't fly are easy prey -- from above and below.

T is for Tolerance



Tolerance is how much you can endure or handle. Most times, you can only tolerate so much before you get frustrated, give up, or break down. We have to be strong to deal with the difficult situations and challenges we face everyday.

We need to be tolerant and resilient to succeed in life, and reach our goals. It's like the saying: "It only takes one more drop of water for the vase to overflow." Or "It's the last straw that broke the camel's back". Both these sayings refer to the level of **tolerance** before giving in.

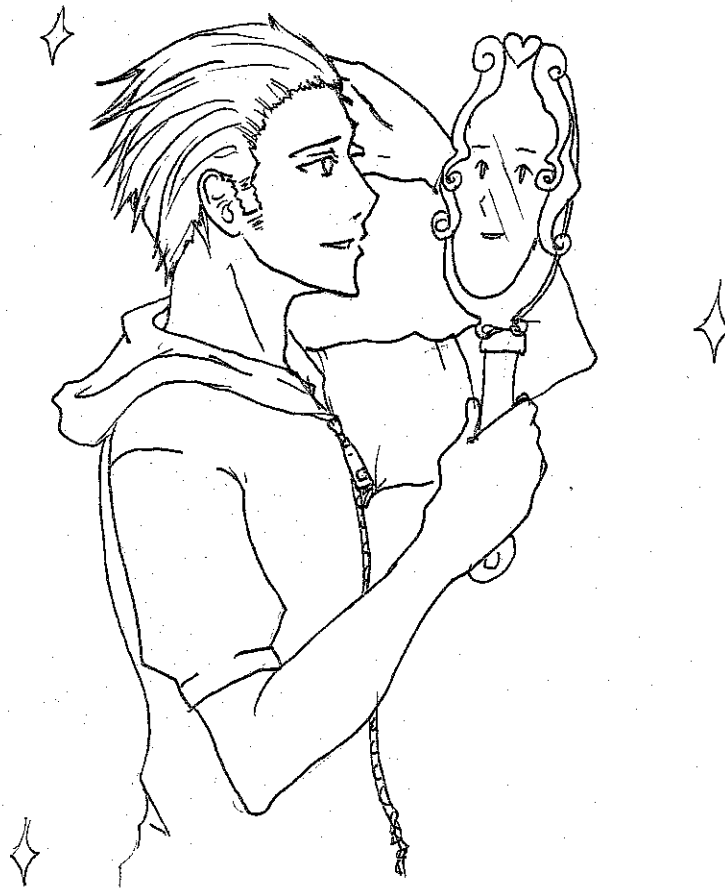
U is for Understanding



Understanding each other is important if we are to learn to get along. It is important to understand someone in order to support and comfort them. Even though their problems may seem small or silly, the person with difficulties will appreciate your effort and value your help if you understand where they are coming from.

You need to know why someone is feeling sad, why they are depressed or upset, and why they are behaving that way if you want to help them find solutions to their problems. However, **understanding** goes a long way if followed by positive action.

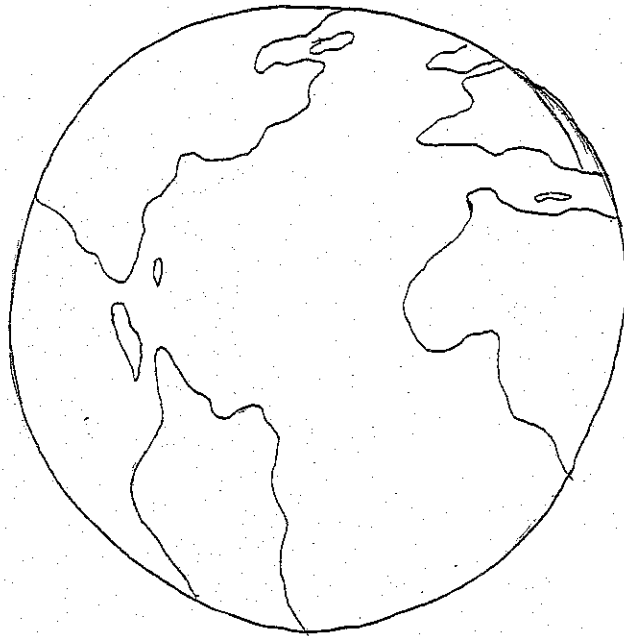
V is for Vain



Being **vain** is acting boastful or self-admiring. This can be seem disrespectful or inconsiderate. But it is part of our nature to want to brag, and many of us want to show off. There is nothing wrong to feel this way. However, you should not think of yourself as an authority figure, and look down on others. Being **vain** must not get into your head, and control you.

You are in charge of how you act. If you want to be admired, appreciated and respected by other people, you should try to avoid being selfish or being **vain**.

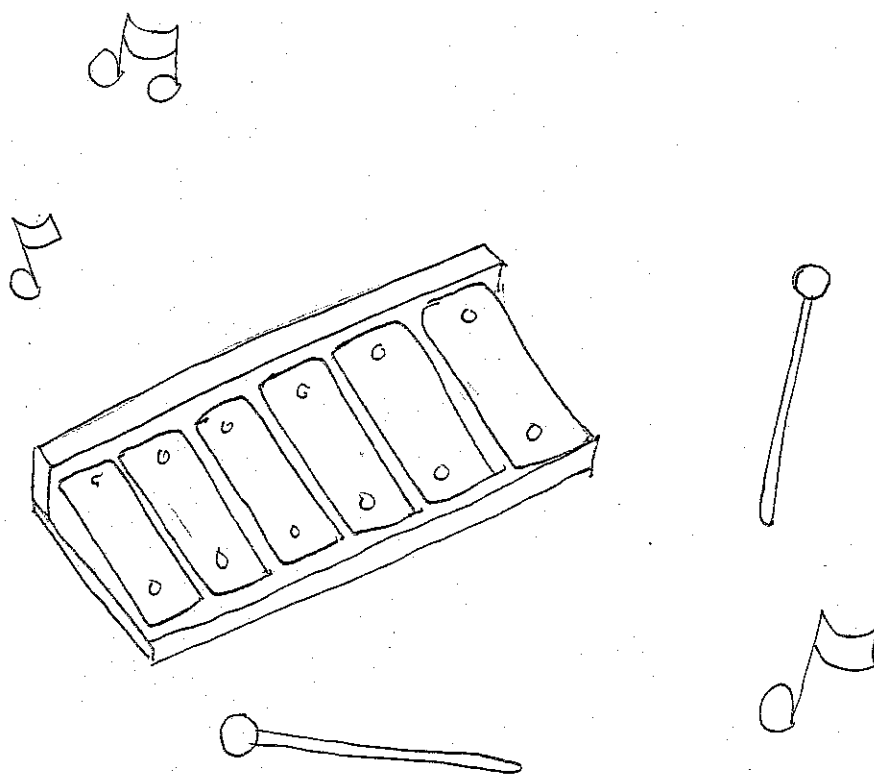
W is for World



Your **world** is the place around you. It's filled with people, plants and animals. We share the **world** with others, yet we are destroying it with violence, crime and pollution. That makes us humans the most destructive, and often inconsiderate of other species on our environment. But, why is this happening, and for what needs – greed, amusement or maybe superiority?

This is the only **world** we have. There is enough space for all of us to live happily. We need to be responsible, share the resources, and use what we have properly. This will ensure that we, and future generations can live together peacefully.

X is for Xylophone



A **Xylophone** is made up of different keys, each with its own sound. When played together, the keys can make beautiful songs and good music. Like a **Xylophone**, people from different backgrounds, races and cultures can do something positive together if they co-operate, and contribute what they have to create a better world.

Every person is an individual with special talents and skills. Our differences make us unique, and we can do great things if we work together. We should share what we have to make life enjoyable for everyone.

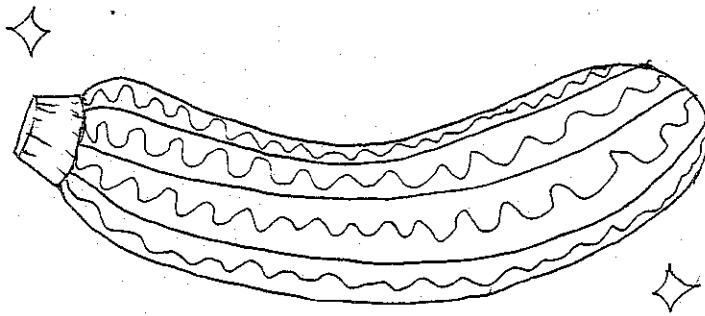
Y is for Yo-yo



Life has its ups and downs just like a **yo-yo**. It goes up and down and keeps on this routine until it hits an obstacle. When it does stop, it needs a little nudge to move again. People are the same, they need motivation and incentives to keep going. But, just like a **yo-yo**, there are problems along the way, and we may need a push once in a while to keep going.

We all need help and encouragement to maintain momentum and stay on course. With proper support and guidance, we can keep moving on and realize our dreams.

Z is for Zucchini



A **zucchini** is like a person. It needs food, water, sunlight, air and tender loving care to grow. As it spreads out in all directions, the **zucchini** needs the help of the gardener to guide it to safe places in order to grow properly. With proper care and attention, it will thrive and blossom.

People have similar needs, and with a lot of love, guidance and support, we can grow and survive in our own way.

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...So we would like to say deeply and sincerely, thank you very much to all who played a part in this booklet for your support. We value your input, and welcome your ideas in our other future projects.

You know your
alphabet, right? Yes,
you probably do.

But ever heard of the
mental health alphabet?

...Probably not.

Well, you can learn it
today! All you have to
do is open this book
and read it.

We hope that you'll
enjoy reading The
Mental Health Booklet!

