

The NEW

Straight Talk

MANUAL

*The Lifeskills & Communication Workbook
for Kids 8 and Beyond*

by Diane Brokenshire



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By Diane Brokenshire

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Australian spellings, phrases and statistics
are used throughout this book.

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- About the Author -

Diane Brokenshire originates from Napa, California but has called Tasmania home since 1990. She's been involved in children's self-development for over 30 years and holds a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. In addition to writing and presenting workshops, Diane is involved with Colony 47 in Hobart, in a shelter for homeless teens.

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Acknowledgments

To Ziggy: My husband and best friend. Thanks for all you do and for joining me on this wild ride of life. You're my everything!

There are many folks who have helped along the way and I couldn't have done this without them: Belinda Ferreira (Small World, Big Imaginations Publishing), Susan Gabrielle, Carol Glass, Kirk Rowley, Nan Gear, Ian Brokenshire, Barbara Renard, Liz Crowley, Scilla Sayer, Tom Giblin, Jo Ristow, Melissa Percy and Malia Cedar. A special thanks on this latest edition goes to Richard Harvey for his awesome computer help, graphic design skills and editing.

The Straight Talk Manual
is dedicated to my mother Lorraine Paulsen
whose lifelong battles with mental illness and substance abuse
provided the inspiration for this project.
1923-2009



A Few Words From the Author

As a child growing up in Napa, California, my life revolved around my mother's ongoing struggles brought on by her mental unwellness and abuse of alcohol and prescription drugs. Her capacity to parent her three children was often severely diminished and her behaviour was unusual, unpredictable, embarrassing and sometimes violent. My brothers and I lived in a constant state of fear of what was going to happen next.

We eventually got through these years but entered adulthood feeling traumatised. We had been carrying around years of unspoken and unresolved 'stuff' and our loads were heavy.

For me to get through the aftermath of those tumultuous years, I developed a willingness to forgive my mother and immersed myself in many self-help books, counselling sessions, a women's group and became passionate about sport.

After receiving a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education, my plan was to help other kids improve their communication and self-help skills so if they were ever troubled by anything, they would be able to speak up and not keep their difficult feelings bottled up inside.

Before starting to build a career, I decided to have one last 'hoorah' and took a year off to travel. It was on this trip in 1989 I met an Australian man (Ian!) and the following year found myself living in Launceston, Tasmania, where Straight Talk all began.

In 1991, I came up with some ideas for school-based workshops that focused on communication and self-help skills. I called it The Straight Talk After School Club, put some ads in school newsletters around Launceston and families started signing up!

Over 200 children joined the club and developed some valuable new skills, made new friends and all received their own personal workbook filled with questions, quizzes, information and tips. The kids seemed to love their workbook and filled them up with their stories, feelings, experiences and dreams.

My mother encouraged me to follow my dream of writing a comprehensive workbook for kids addressing important issues like mental health and substance abuse. I spent a year writing and in mid-1997 self-published The Straight Talk Manual (many thanks to Ian Brokenshire). In less than a year, 1000 copies were sold to schools, youth services and counsellors across Australia. It was a very exciting and busy time!

Twenty years and ten thousand copies later, I'm happy to announce the release of The New Straight Talk Manual. I hope you will find this resource useful and helpful in your work with children and families, and maybe in your own personal life as well!

Contact me anytime with your comments and feedback on this latest edition and visit us anytime at: www.thestraighttalkmanual.com

Finally, I wish you all the best in your work with all the important people in your life, especially kids!

With the warmest regards

Diane Brokenshire



How to Use the Straight Talk Manual



Permission is granted to the purchaser of this manual to photocopy pages for his or her own school, classroom, service provider or clients only.

**Please refer others to:
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for additional copies.**



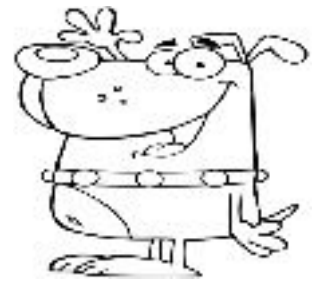
1. If you've purchased a USB stick or an online download, first print a copy of *The Straight Talk Manual* and the Girls Club Manual using at least 100 gsm paper (if possible) and store these documents in a binder for easy access.
2. Now you're ready to start using the manual with kids! Start by introducing the topics and discuss the importance of each of the chapters. Invite participants to share their knowledge, thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences.
3. Allow children to choose any chapters that interest or apply to them.
4. Photocopy required pages (or the entire manual) along with the cover page. Help Tickets on page 234 can be used as a conversation starter. Print this page on coloured paper, cut out the tickets and give to kids.
5. Kids can make booklets with their chapters using staples or a folder. Get creative!
6. Individual pages can be printed as A3 posters and put up on walls.
7. Invite kids to read the pages, fill in the activities and colour in the images and borders with crayons, coloured pencils, gel pens or textas to create a personal work of art. The ink in some pens may bleed to the other side so 100 gsm paper eliminates this problem.
8. Refer back to topics anytime and encourage group discussions, brainstorming and self-assessment.
9. Gently and regularly remind the kids in your care that it is their duty to take responsibility for themselves and speak up and ask for help at any time.
10. If a child's situation or experience is out of your level of expertise, refer him/her to a school counsellor or appropriate service.

This Straight Talk Manual belongs to:

--



 **A Bit About Me** 



My name is:

My motto in life is:

One goal in life I have is to:

I describe myself as:

One of my strengths is:

Three things I do well are:

I am years old. I was born in a place called on the
..... / /

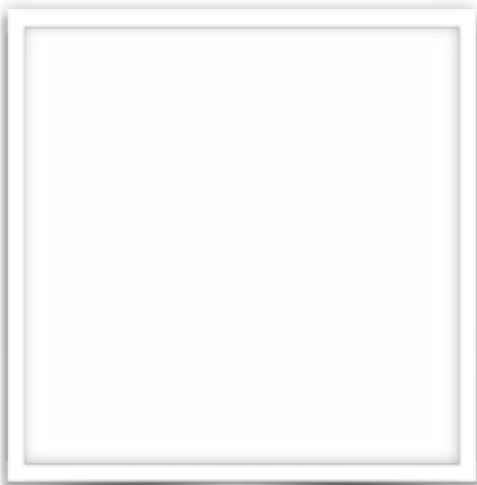
My favourite subjects at school are:

My favourite musical groups or singers are:

Two people I admire are: and

More about me

Picture of me enjoying myself



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Table of Contents



1. Personal

Friendship 11
Communication 25
Self-Esteem 41
Values 55
Feelings 73

2. Health

Stress 83
Healthy Body 97
Alcohol & Other Drugs 113
Mental Health 127

3. Loss

Losing Someone or Something You Love 143
If Your Parents Split Up 157
Let Go and Get On With Your Life 167

4. Empowerment

Bullying 179
Staying Safe 193
Respecting The Differences In Us All 209
Finding Help Fast 221

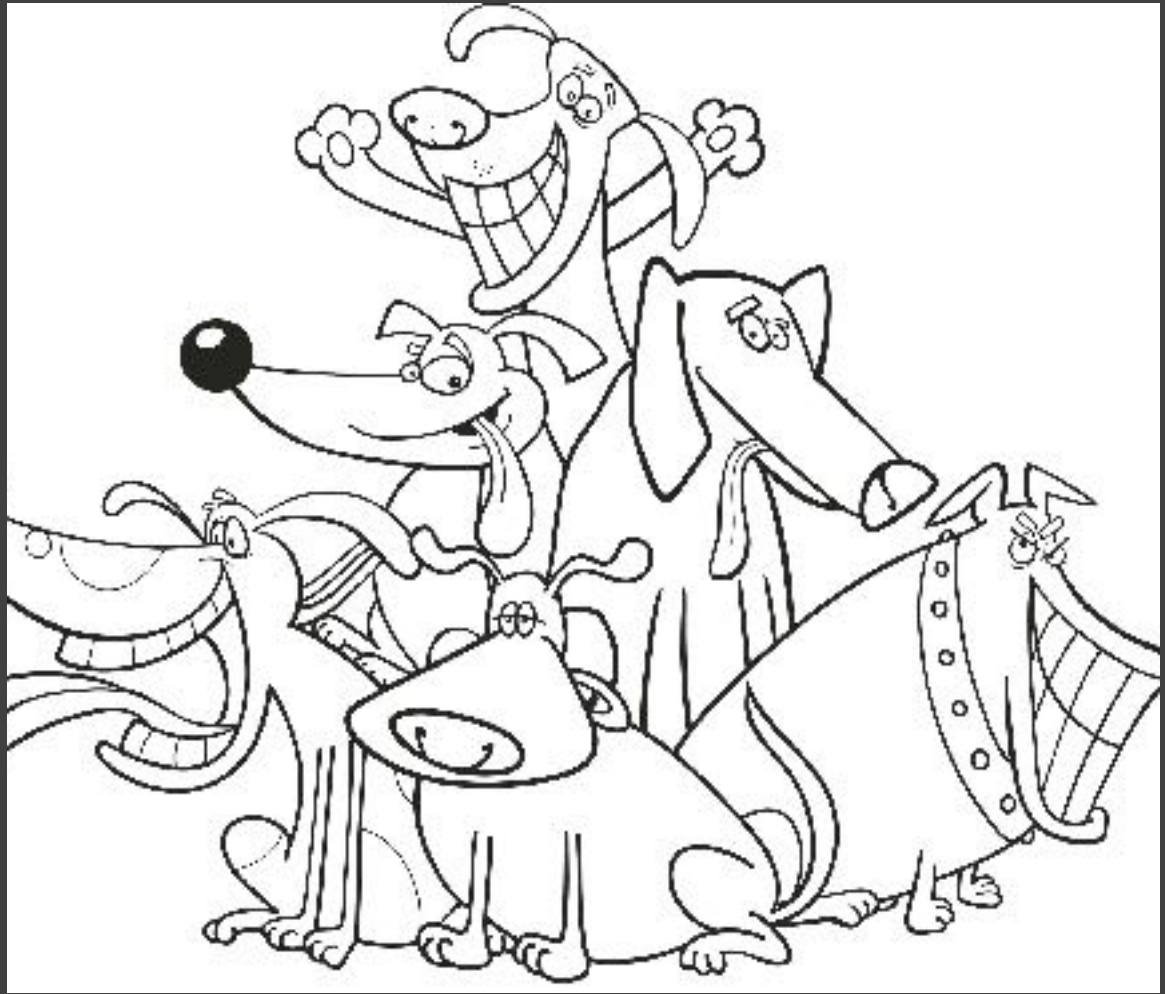
5. Environment

Good Planets are Hard to Find 237

6. Future

Where to From Here 253





Friendship

About Friendship



What's life without it?



For most kids, having good friends is an important and fun part of growing up. We all like to have people we can share our experiences with, talk to, laugh with, have fun with and just hang out!

A Friendship is a caring and respectful relationship between two or more people.

Friends are people who have decided they like to spend time together. They enjoy doing the same things and find it easy to talk to one another. They care about each other's feelings and give each other support when times are tough.

What qualities do you like in your friends? Circle them!

- Healthy ... Loyal Generous Honest Kind Spontaneous
- Trustworthy Reliable Respectful Easy to be around Funny
- Adventurous Exciting Smart Creative Clever Thoughtful
- A good listener Responsible Athletic Has good ideas
- Compassionate Giving Caring Fun Understanding Helpful

More of my friend's best qualities



Some of my best qualities

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Wrapping it up




Time to reflect, revise and grow

*Friends can develop quickly or take time.
Through care and respect, sharing experiences
and doing things for others, friendships grow.
They need cultivating like gardens.*

What are three things you know about friendship?

1.
2.
3.

What advice would you give someone who felt like they didn't 'fit in' anywhere?

-
-
-

What are three things you admire about your closest friends?

1.
2.
3.



- Two challenges -

1. Interview an adult and find out what friendship means to her/him. Have this person tell you about a special friend of theirs.
2. Introduce yourself to someone you think you'd like to have as a friend. Invite that person to join you in an activity of your choice.



Communication

What is Self-Talk?




Most of us do it - and it's fine!

Most of us would admit we spend part of the time (maybe a lot of time!) in communication with ourselves. That's called self talk. In the following list, tick the sentences you sometimes say to yourself:

- 1. 'I should have done better.'
- 2. 'I'll never be any good at this!'
- 3. 'Why did I do that?'
- 4. 'That was a stupid thing to say.'
- 5. 'I am so clumsy!'
- 6. 'I look terrible.'
- 7. 'I am so slow.'



Now finish the following sentences with a positive statement.

That was a great

That was excellent

I am

I'm pretty good at

I did great on that

I'm getting better at

I'm proud of

I'm

.....



Self-Esteem

Personal Strengths

Tick your strengths

- Honest
- Artistic
- Dependable
- Generous
- Supportive
- Funny
- Athletic
- Considerate
- Brave
- Organised
- Loving
- Responsible
- Understanding
- Strong
- An active listener
- A good sport
- Courteous
- Wise
- Efficient
- Appreciative
- Cooperative
- Good with words
- Open to advice
- Hard working
- Healthy
- Loyal
- Musical
- Disciplined
- Compassionate
- Sensible
- Daring
- Admiring of others
- Determined
- Creative
- Calm
- Easy to talk to
- Trustworthy
- Smart
- Enthusiastic
- Reliable
- Polite
- Thoughtful
- Fun to be with
- Friendly





Values

More on Values



Our VALUES are what we believe to be important, right, fair and just.

Examples of some positive values are:

1. To have good relationships with family and friends
2. To love and be loved
3. To be successful at school and work
4. To have spiritual beliefs
5. To believe in freedom, peace and justice for everyone
6. To treat yourself with respect
7. To respect all living things
8. To take care of the planet



Examples of some positive values are:

1.
2.

Think of two more values that some people might have:

1.
2.

All of us had different experiences and upbringings so our values will also be different. That's okay. We can learn a lot about our own values by watching how other people live and behave.



Showing Respect



Tick actions you feel show respect

Showing respect means being considerate, polite and accepting of everyone, no matter who they are or how they live their lives.

Tick actions you think or feel show respect.

- Walking through the house with muddy boots
- Taking good care of your friend's possessions
- Interrupting when someone is talking
- Knocking before you enter your parent's room
- Jumping on the furniture
- Leaving a mess in the kitchen
- Saying hello to your neighbour
- Talking rudely to your grandmother
- Disobeying the school rules
- Being polite to your friend's parents
- Leaving your litter behind for someone else to pick up
- Letting your room get super-messy
- Saying *please* and thank you
- Giving up your seat on the bus to an elderly person
- Ignoring someone who has asked you a question
- Making fun of someone who dresses differently than you
- Talking negatively about someone
- Being quiet at the movie theatre so others can hear

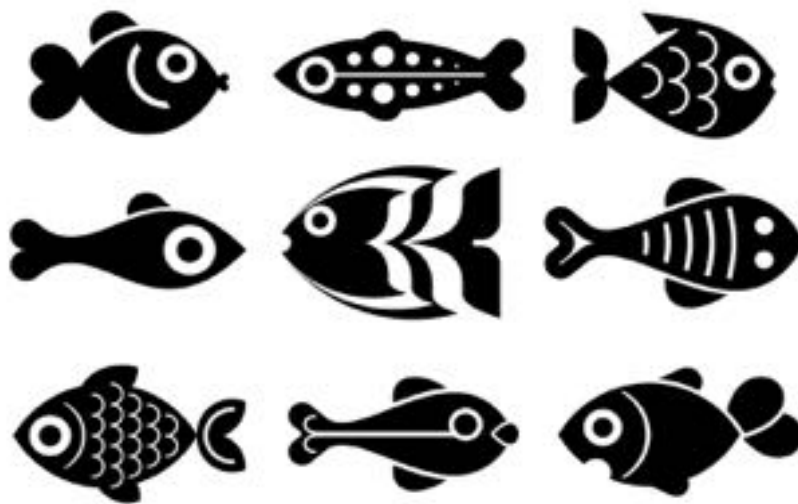




Feelings

Get The Feeling of Feelings

**Feelings are much like waves.
We can't stop them from coming
but we can choose which ones to surf.**



What could be another way to say this?

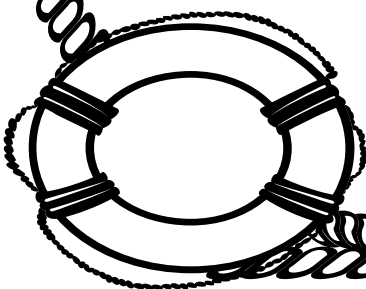
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Stress

What is Stress?

It can be both good and bad



Stress can be anything that feels like a challenge or a threat to your health and well-being. Stress is your body's way of letting you know that whatever is happening is a bit overwhelming.

1. Stress can, for example, help you do well in an exam by encouraging you to study.
2. Stress can keep you safe by bringing up feelings of caution when you're about to do something dangerous or risky.
3. It can also be good for your health as you work out, practice or prepare for a race, a performance or a big game.
4. It can help you be more creative as you try new and harder things.

What are three situations that sometimes cause stress for kids?

1.
2.
3.

What are three situations that sometimes cause stress for adults?

1.
2.
3.



Your Favourite Place



Daydreaming can actually help you relax!

If you're like most humans, you sometimes like to daydream. That's when you can imagine in your mind being somewhere other than where you are!

If you're worried or anxious about something, it doesn't usually help to go over and over it in your mind. Doing that can actually cause more feelings of stress.

People who practice using their thoughts and minds to help them relax, find this technique really works! Try it and see if it works for you....

Tick the places below you think would be especially relaxing, peaceful and free of stress.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A quiet beach | <input type="checkbox"/> In a forest | <input type="checkbox"/> Near a lake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Near a river | <input type="checkbox"/> In a hot bath | <input type="checkbox"/> In a boat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In your room | <input type="checkbox"/> By a stream | <input type="checkbox"/> In a garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On a hike | <input type="checkbox"/> In a kayak | <input type="checkbox"/> On a walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In your yard | <input type="checkbox"/> With your pet | <input type="checkbox"/> In a tree-house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On your bike | <input type="checkbox"/> In a tent | <input type="checkbox"/> On top of a mountain |

From the above pick your favourite place and write it here.

.....
The next time you're feeling under pressure and you need a time-out, imagine being in the special place you chose. Let your mind take you there and allow yourself to relax and enjoy it. What does it look like and what do you like to do when you get there?

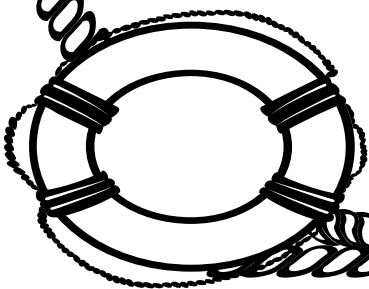
Write about it here:

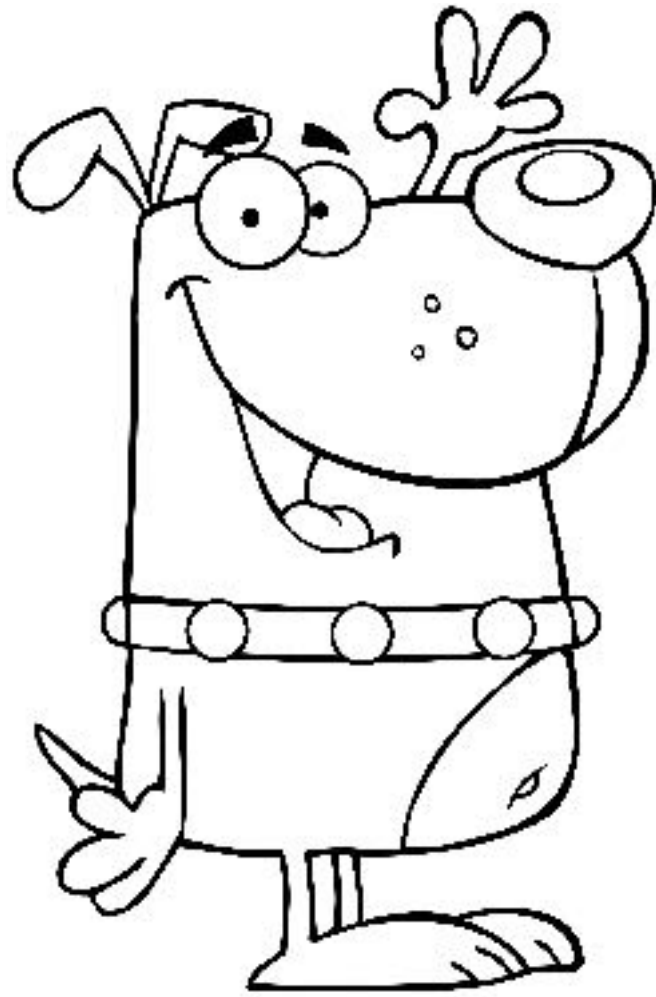
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Healthy Body

How Healthy Are You?

Keep exploring ways to get healthy



What are three things you do that are good for your health?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three things you do that are not so good for your health?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Have you ever been really sick or had a serious injury? What happened?

.....
.....
.....

What is one thing you could do (and will do!) that would improve your health?

.....
.....
.....

Eat More Whole Foods

Healthy foods gives healthy bodies



Whole foods are unprocessed, unrefined and have no additives. They are in their natural state, so naturally, these foods will be better for you.

It's probably no surprise that foods that have been grown or processed with pesticides, hormones and other chemicals are not whole foods and not as healthy or high in antioxidants. Nutrition experts agree home-grown and organic food is the healthiest.

Not sure what foods are whole foods? Just ask yourself: does this food grow in nature? Does it have only one ingredient? Is it made up of only one thing? If the answer is yes, chances are it's a whole food.

The nutrition experts say that at meal times, we should have as many brightly-coloured vegetables and whole foods as we can get and eat less food that comes out of packages.

From the list below, circle the foods that are whole foods.

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Apples | Banana smoothie | Cordial |
| Apple sauce | Bread | Corn chips |
| Carrot cake | Fresh berries | Beans |
| Brown rice | Rice crackers | Yoghurt |
| Muesli bar | Potato chips | Fruit juice |
| Oatmeal | Nutri-Grain Cereal | Pasta |
| Carrots | Orange juice | Tomato sauce |

Write down your four favourite fruits or vegetables here.

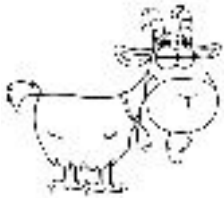
1. 3.
 2. 4.



Alcohol and Other Drugs



Living With Others



When others close to you drink alcohol or use other drugs too much

The misuse of alcohol and other drugs is sometimes called substance abuse. If you happen to live with someone with this problem, you might have some feelings about that. You'll probably know what it's like to experience some or maybe all of the following.



Which of these have you experienced? Tick them.

- Drinks a lot or uses other drugs
- Spends a lot of money on alcohol or other drugs
- Is sometimes 'off the show' with their behaviour
- Sneaks drinks and hides bottles
- Is unpredictable (suddenly loses temper, yells, changes plans)
- Makes promises and then breaks them
- Blames others for their problems
- Uses your behaviour as an excuse to drink or use other drugs
- Denies that using alcohol or other drugs are a problem
- Misses work because of drinking or other drug use
- Is verbally and physically abusive
- Starts fights and arguments for no good reason
- Can't remember what happened the day before
- Ruins holidays and special occasions because of drinking or other drug use
- Can't be counted on to show up to appointments or other important events
- Embarrasses you in front of others
- Sleeps a lot or doesn't sleep enough
- Is often unavailable when needed

If you ticked any or all of the above, take action to get the support you need. Although it's not possible to control other people's behaviour, you can still have a good life by looking after yourself and making healthy and wise decisions that are right for you.



Mental Health



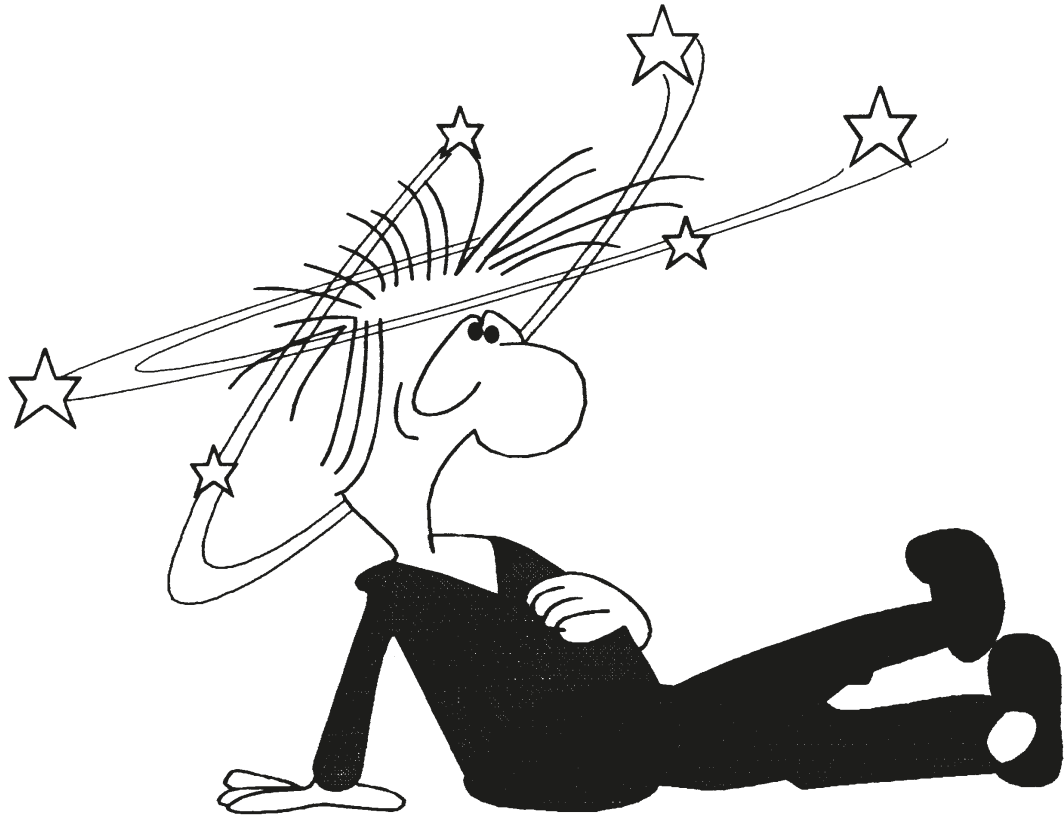
**Losing Someone or
Something You Love**



If Your Parents Split Up



**Let Go and Get on
With Your Life**



BULLYING.....!!!



Staying Safe



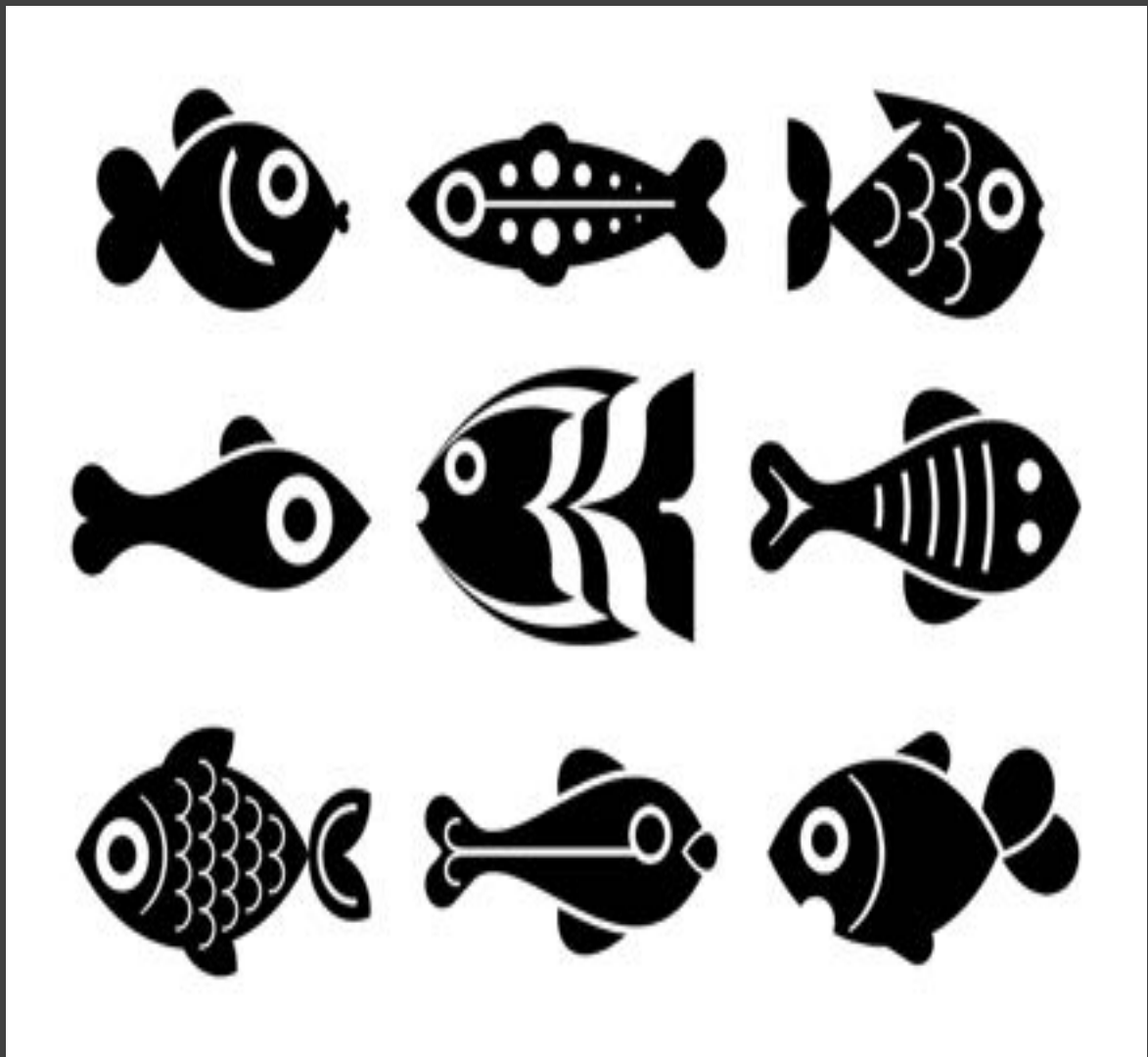
**Respecting the
Differences
in Us All**



Finding Help Fast



**Good Planets Are
Hard to Find**



**Where to
From Here?**