

# Healthy & Happy Families Start Here

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS  
AND CHILDREN TO  
EXPLORE TOGETHER



**EACH MIND  
MATTERS**

California's Mental Health Movement

## INCLUDES:

- The beautiful story of Robert & his mom
- Helpful tips for talking & listening to one another
- Fun games & activities for the whole family

This fotonovela is one in a series of three, which are designed to increase awareness of mental health and wellness options in our families and communities. The series includes characters that may represent someone you know: a mother realizing the impact of the negative words she says; a father who doesn't know how to manage his stress; and a mother who turns to her faith leader for mental health guidance. These storylines are familiar to us because we know many people living with mental health challenges right now. They are our family members, friends, co-workers and neighbors, and they can live full and productive lives, not defined by their condition.

This fotonovela series is a project of the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), an organization made up of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. By creating innovative programs that equip communities with the tools, resources and information they need to foster wellness, Californians are opening their minds to a new understanding of mental health, which is as important as physical health.

**You can be part of the solution and show your loved ones that Each Mind Matters:**

- Accept people who experience mental health challenges in your family and community
- Support other parents who may be struggling with a mental health challenge in their families
- Teach children that it is unacceptable to disrespect people who are living with mental health challenges

FOR MORE INFORMATION on Each Mind Matters, California's Mental Health Movement, visit: [www.EachMindMatters.org](http://www.EachMindMatters.org)



MRS. CRUZ HAS PICKED UP HER 7-YEAR-OLD SON ROBERT FROM SCHOOL. THEY ARE IN THE CAR DRIVING HOME.



THE NEXT DAY...

Good afternoon, Ms. Lucy! How was Robert today?

Hi, Mrs. Cruz. Robert had a great day.

Ah, good. Yesterday, Robert told me the class had an interesting guest speaker.

Yes, we did. Recently, we have been hearing the word "crazy" being said a lot by the children, and has hurt some children's feelings. We brought in an expert to talk with the class.

OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS...

Weirdo

You're crazy. Stay away from me.

But they don't mean anything by it, it's just a word. My aunt is diagnosed with depression and it's a word we say all the time.

What we learned from the guest speaker is that words like "crazy" or "insane" carry the message that mental health is something to make fun of, and that a person who suffers from mental health challenges can be mocked or judged.

If you have questions, you may find this pamphlet interesting.

Oh, I see.

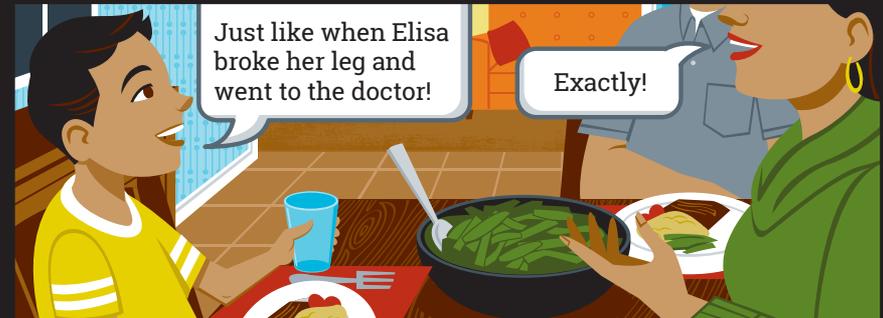
Thank you, I'll take a look.

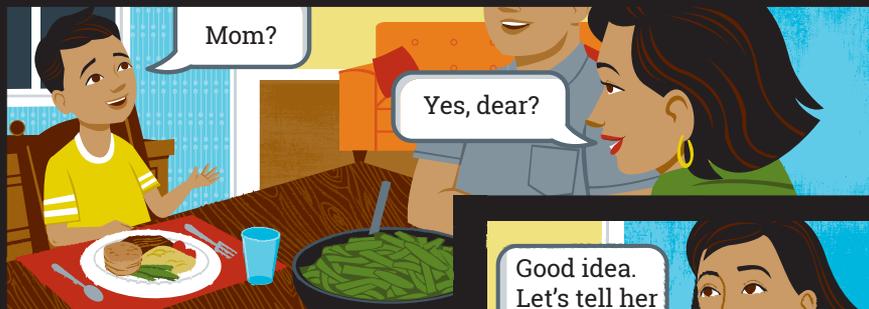


**"I KNOW THAT MENTAL ILLNESS TOUCHES MY STUDENTS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH A FAMILY MEMBER. I CAN HELP PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE."**

— Norma T., Bilingual Teaching Assistant, Sacramento County

MRS. CRUZ SPENDS SOME TIME READING THE PAMPHLET AND REALIZES THAT THESE WORDS CAN TRULY HURT. SHE THINKS ABOUT HER AUNT AND DECIDES TO BRING IT UP TO HER FAMILY AT THE DINNER TABLE.





**“ UNKNOWINGLY, WE PASS ALONG OUR BIASES TO OUR CHILDREN IN SMALL WAYS EVERY DAY. AS PARENTS AND ROLE MODELS FOR THEM, WE ALSO HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND HOW TO TEACH THEM TO BE SENSITIVE, AWARE, COMPASSIONATE AND ACCEPTING. ”**

– Dr. Piedad Garcia, Ed.D. LCSW, Assistant Deputy Director, County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services



## Wellness Wisdom

from Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, M.D., Ph.D.

DIRECTOR, UC DAVIS CENTER FOR REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES,  
PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

**Q: Why is mental health important?**

**A:** Our mental health supports our thinking and feeling, our mood, our ability to relate to others and to function in daily life. Sometimes we experience mental health challenges that disrupt our mental health, which take the form of medical illnesses like depression, anxiety or eating disorders.

**Q: How common are mental illnesses?**

**A:** Just like physical illnesses, mental illnesses are very common and nothing to be ashamed of. Research shows 1 in 4 American adults are living with a diagnosable mental illness in any given year. So, it's almost certain that someone in your family needs your support.

**Q: Can mental illnesses be treated?**

**A:** Yes. With appropriate support and treatment, people can improve their symptoms and live happy, full and productive lives.

**Q: Is there anything I can do to help if a friend or family member's mental health is suffering?**

**A:** Yes. Be supportive and encourage the person to see a doctor or counselor. Remind them that there is hope. Speak and act from a place of compassion and acceptance, rather than fear.

**Q: How can I support my family's mental health?**

**A:** To support mental health and prevent mental illness, pay attention to triggers like stress and warning signs such as trouble sleeping or mood swings. Get routine medical care, and seek mental health care when you need it. Finally, take good care of yourself: sleep, healthy eating and regular physical activity are important to mental health and physical health.

# Talking about Feelings

Getting to know our feelings can be one of the most confusing parts of growing up. In fact, many of us adults haven't quite figured them out for ourselves yet! Feelings guide our thoughts and actions, so getting to know them is very important.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Everyone has feelings.** Some of us try to hide them, but they are always here inside.

**Feelings are always changing.** Sometimes we are sad. Other times we are happy. Usually, a sad feeling will be replaced by a happy feeling in time.

**Our feelings – and other people's feelings – are true for each of us in this moment.** Even if we feel good, we can still accept that our friend or family member might not feel good at the same time. We cannot force ourselves or others to feel a certain way.

**If sad feelings stick around too long, we can turn to someone we trust for support.** This may be a family member, a friend, a faith leader, a counselor or a doctor.

**Talking about feelings is good for our health.** It feels good to talk about feeling good and being happy. It may not be so easy to talk about feeling sad, hurt, lonely or stressed, but talking about these feelings is the first step to feeling better.

**When we try to hide our feelings or keep them inside, they don't go away.** They get stronger and stronger over time. They start to take control over our words and actions, even when we don't want them to. By trying to ignore our feelings, we actually give them more power. They can even make us sick! It's better to let them out by talking about them with people we trust.

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO TALK ABOUT FEELINGS. SOME ARE HELPFUL, OTHERS ARE HURTFUL.**

HELPFUL	HURTFUL
Use sentences that start with "I feel"	"You make me feel" or "Because of you"
Make observations: "The dirty laundry is on the floor."	Make judgments: "How did I raise such a messy child?"
Name your feelings, and be specific: "I feel frustrated when I see clothes on the floor."	Make others responsible for your feelings: "It makes me so mad when you don't pick up after yourself."
Express your needs: "I have a need for the house to be tidy, and for everyone to help."	Repress your needs: "No one cares about what I want anyway."
Make a request: "Would you be willing to pick up your clothes in the next 5 minutes?"	Make a demand: "Pick up your clothes or no dinner for you tonight!"

**HERE ARE WAYS TO BE HELPFUL – NOT HURTFUL – WHEN SOMEONE IS SHARING THEIR FEELINGS WITH US.**

HELPFUL	HURTFUL
Listen with attentiveness	Interrupt or tell our own story
Be respectful	Give advice or try to "fix" the feelings
Show support and compassion	Criticize or blame
Acknowledge feelings with "oh" or "I see"	Deny or ignore feelings
With young children, give a name to the feeling to help them understand it	Label feelings as bad, or tell a child they should not feel them

# Information & Services

## EACH MIND MATTERS

California's Mental Health Movement

### Each Mind Matters

[www.EachMindMatters.org](http://www.EachMindMatters.org)

Each Mind Matters is California's Mental Health Movement. Learn more, find community, discover true and inspiring stories of strength, and join the movement at [EachMindMatters.org](http://EachMindMatters.org).

Reach  
OutHere  
.com

### Reach Out

[www.ReachOutHere.org](http://www.ReachOutHere.org)

1-800-448-3000

ReachOut offers information and chat forums to help teens and young adults facing tough times and seeking support for their mental health.



### Walk in Our Shoes

[www.WalkInOurShoes.org](http://www.WalkInOurShoes.org)

The Walk in Our Shoes campaign shares real stories from teens and young adults to give youth the facts about living with and overcoming mental health challenges.



### SAMHSA

(Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)  
National Mental Health Information Center

[www.Samhsa.gov](http://www.Samhsa.gov)

1-800-789-2647

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Pain Isn't Always Obvious



### Suicide is Preventable

[www.SuicideIsPreventable.org](http://www.SuicideIsPreventable.org)

1-800-273-8255

Know the Signs: Suicide is Preventable aims to help Californians recognize the warning signs of suicide. The campaign is built on three key messages: Know the signs. Find the words. Reach out.

If you or someone you know needs help, there are resources available to assist you.



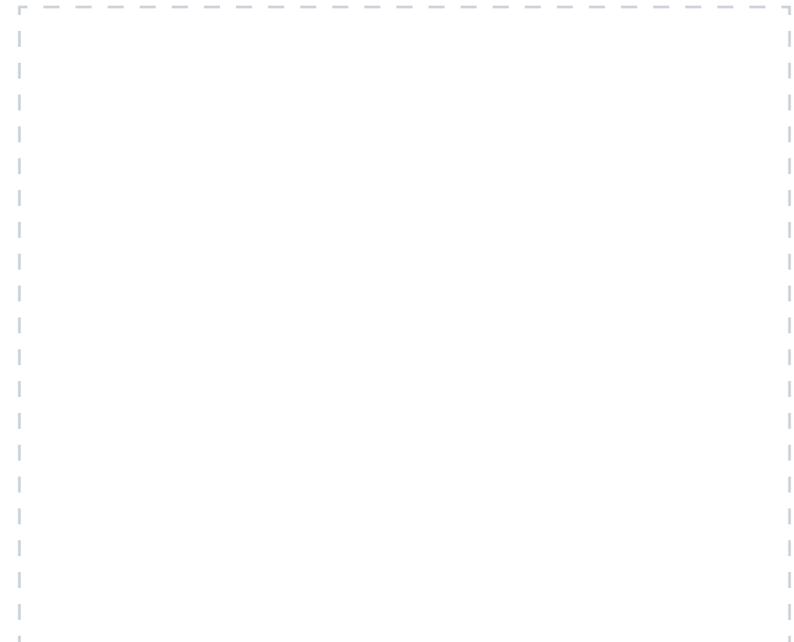
### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

[www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](http://www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org)

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

TO SEARCH FOR MORE LOCAL SERVICES ONLINE, VISIT:  
[www.California.NetworkofCare.org](http://www.California.NetworkofCare.org)



# Games!

## WORD SEARCH

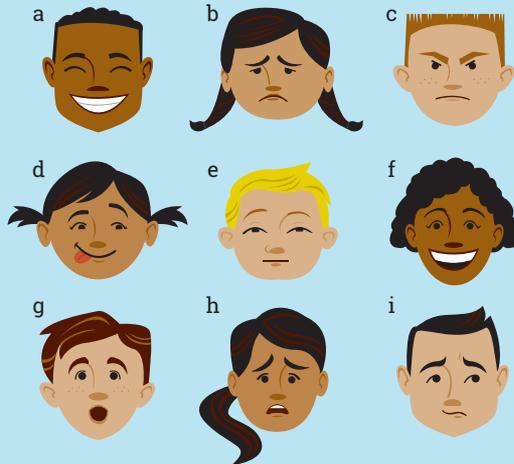
M N Z S W X I X P Z R U U C K  
 V A Y M N C W D Q Y K W P U C  
 I F R I E N D J P V T D C L P  
 S I J L P B E P K A B A O Q P  
 A X P E N L A Y I P U O L E Y  
 A B V E W H Y W B Q H R F K Q  
 Z F I A P F F Q A C E I A W G  
 X J E L M A D E S N J H M I Z  
 Z H B R J V J G E M B P I T N  
 D E A K I I M G K L G N L K Y  
 Z A T E S F V Y B S I G Y H U  
 M L D F A O N G R X H N B I C  
 X T J D D V H Y X I H A G F W  
 X H U I V A D P W N V M O S V  
 H Y A P W X F G R Q H M X F Y

**FIND these words in the puzzle:**

- FAMILY
- FEELINGS
- FRIEND
- HAPPY
- HEALTHY
- MAD
- SAD
- SCHOOL
- SMILE
- TALK

**MATCH the feelings with the face!**

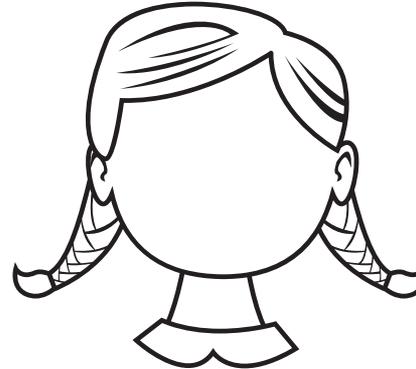
1. Angry
2. Sad
3. Happy
4. Silly
5. Tired
6. Worried
7. Surprised
8. Scared
9. Excited



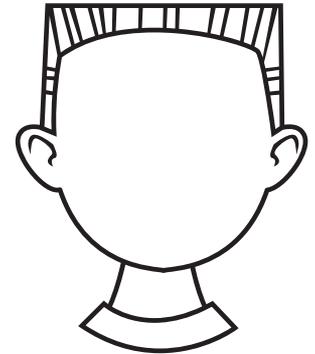
Answers: 1)c 2)b 3)a 4)d 5)e 6)i 7)g 8)h 9)f

# LET'S PLAY!

Can you draw a happy face?



Or a silly face?



Or a sad face?



Or a surprised face?



# More Games!

**NAME THAT FEELING!** Cut out each word and put them all in a bag. Each family member will select one word from the bag and silently act out the feeling that word represents using body and facial expressions. Whoever names the correct feeling gets a point! Continue until all feelings are named and add up points to find the winner.



Angry

Happy

Excited

Frustrated

Disappointed

Nervous

Shy

Bored

Hopeful

Afraid

Sad

Jealous