

WELCOME TO GROW YOUR MIND AT SCHOOL



© GROW YOUR MIND 2017



Why do you think **Flower Dude** here is eating an apple?

Maybe to keep him healthy?

Why do you think he is brushing his teeth?

To stop his teeth from falling out or WORSE from having smelly breath all day.

Good to see he is looking after his body...

what about his mind? What do you think **Flower Dude** does to protect and strengthen his mind?

The answer to that question is what **Grow Your Mind** is all about.

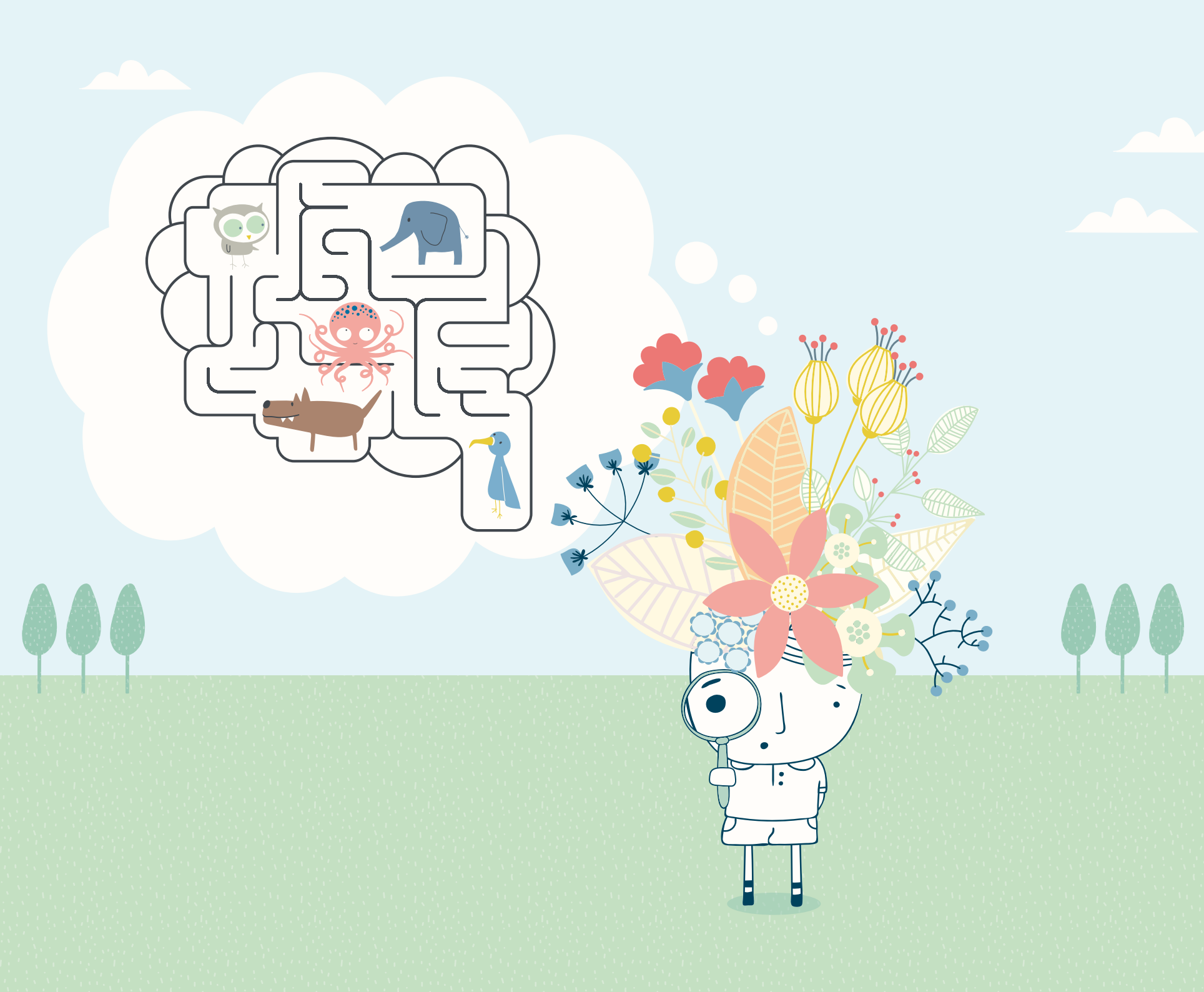
Protecting and strengthening our mental health.

Our what? Our mental health!

So, how DO you protect and strengthen it? These pictures are a hint.

The first step actually involves meeting some animals that live in your brain.

Are you ready?



Did you know that there are five animals currently helping inside your brain?

What? That is ridiculous! How could an animal fit inside your brain? Well technically there aren't real animals hanging out in there but it may help to understand your brain in this way.

Would you like to meet your five animal helpers?

— INTRODUCING —
— YOUR —



Wise Owl

Your **Wise Owl** helps you make good decisions.

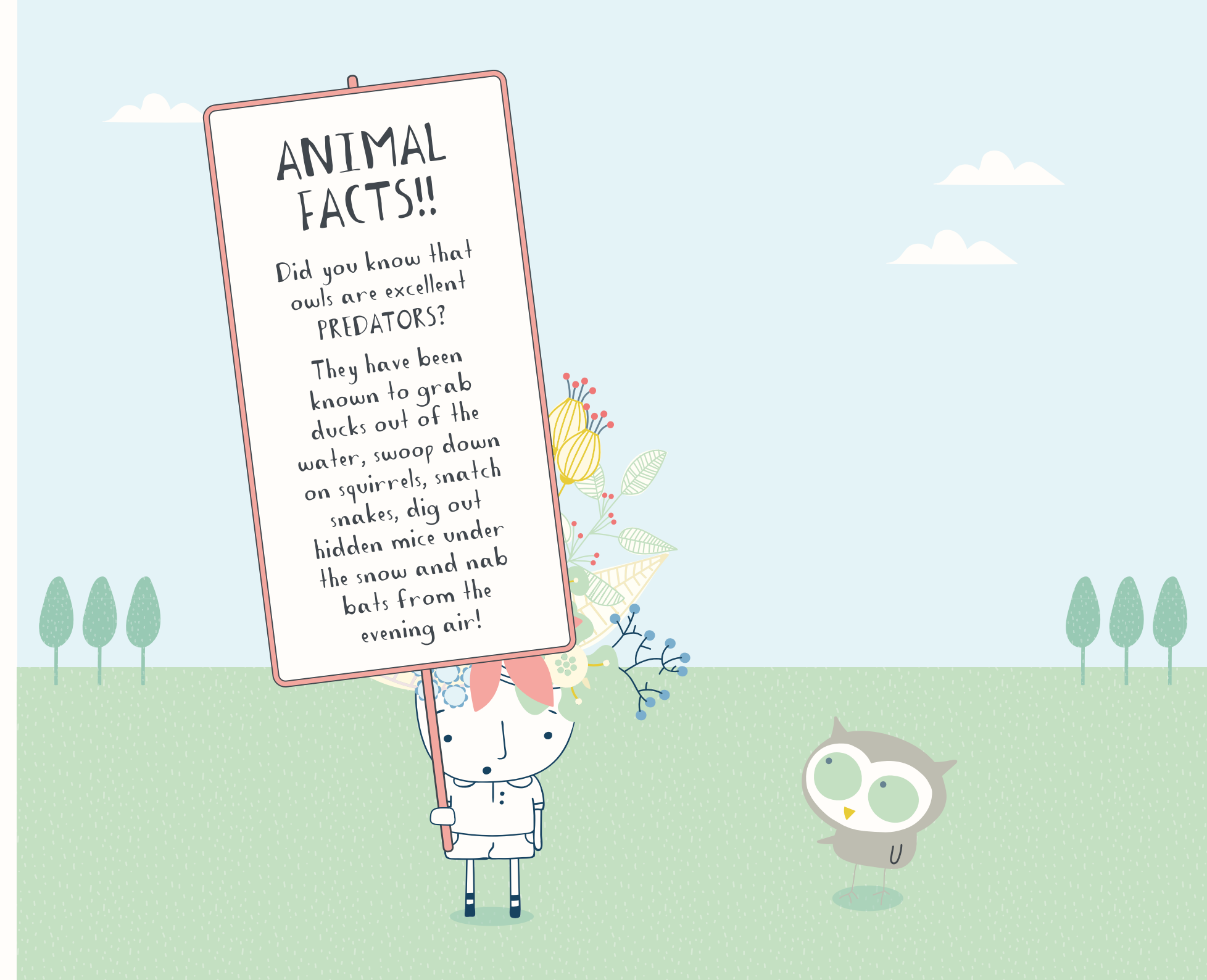
Your **Wise Owl** allows you to be a flexible friend.

It can problem solve and carry out higher order thinking.

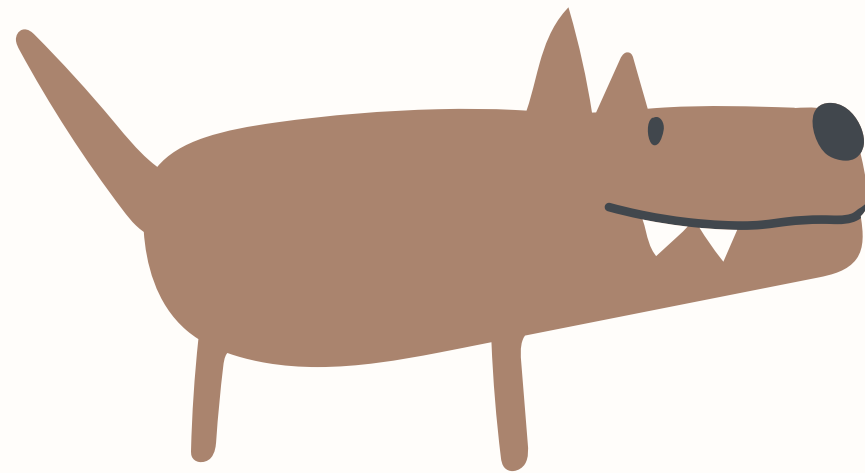
Your **Wise Owl** helps you to predict what might happen if you do something.

FOR EXAMPLE: If I run across the road, I might get hit by a car. If I cheat in this game,
my friend may not want to play with me.

Your **Wise Owl** is very useful.



— NEXT UP IS —
—YOUR—



Guard Dog

Your **Guard Dog** keeps you safe at all costs.

Your **Guard Dog** lets you FIGHT, FREEZE or FLEE without even thinking about it.

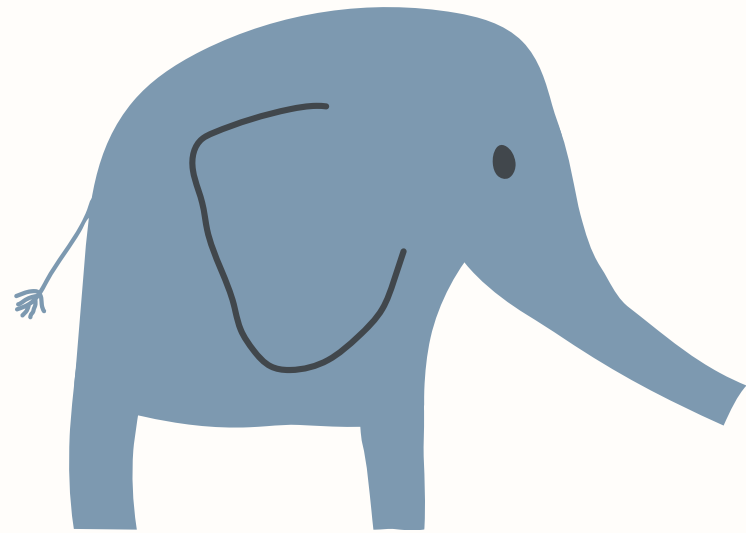
This would be useful if we stumbled across a lion. We wouldn't want to waste precious time talking to our **Wise Owl** about what the best decision would be. However, not talking to your **Wise Owl** when you get out in handball or a friend won't play your game can cause some BIG problems. More on that later.

We can train our **Guard Dog** to ask the question:
"Is this a threat, a challenge or an opportunity?"

Your **Guard Dog** is very useful.



NEXT UP IS
-YOUR-

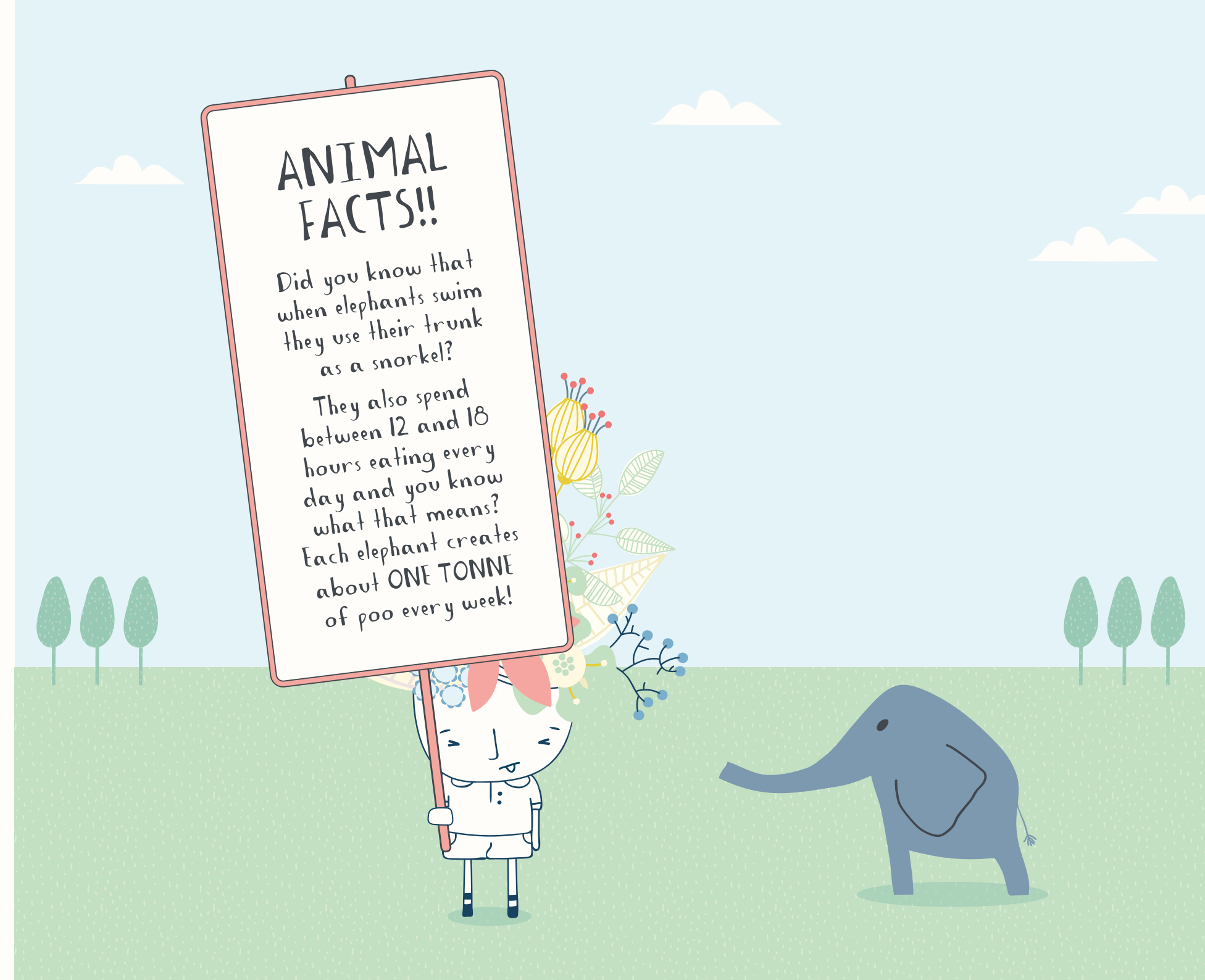


Elephant

(who tries hard to remember)

Your **Elephant** locks in happy memories and stores important information you learn.
Your **Elephant** helps you to remember people's names, places and other new things.
Your **Elephant** stores information and tries to remember it when you need it.

Your Elephant is very useful.

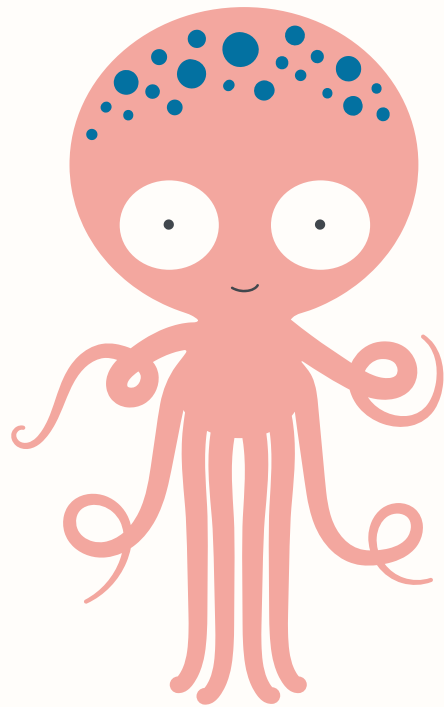


ANIMAL FACTS!!

Did you know that
when elephants swim
they use their trunk
as a snorkel?

They also spend
between 12 and 18
hours eating every
day and you know
what that means?
Each elephant creates
about **ONE TONNE**
of poo every week!

— NEXT UP IS —
—YOUR—



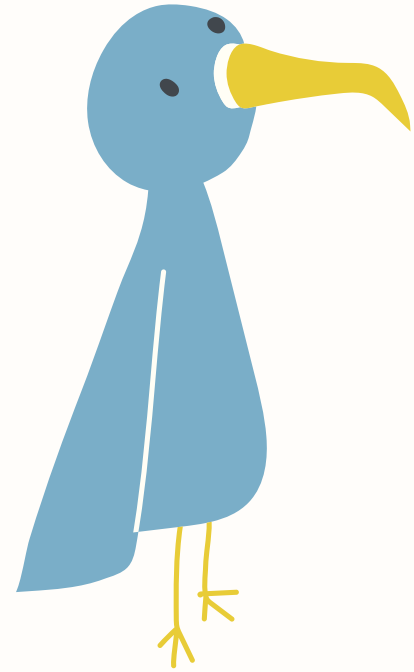
Sensitive Octopus

Your **Sensitive Octopus** helps you to be a good friend.
Your **Sensitive Octopus** does this by using its superpower of **empathy**, which means it tries hard to imagine how someone else might be feeling.

Your **Sensitive Octopus** is very useful.



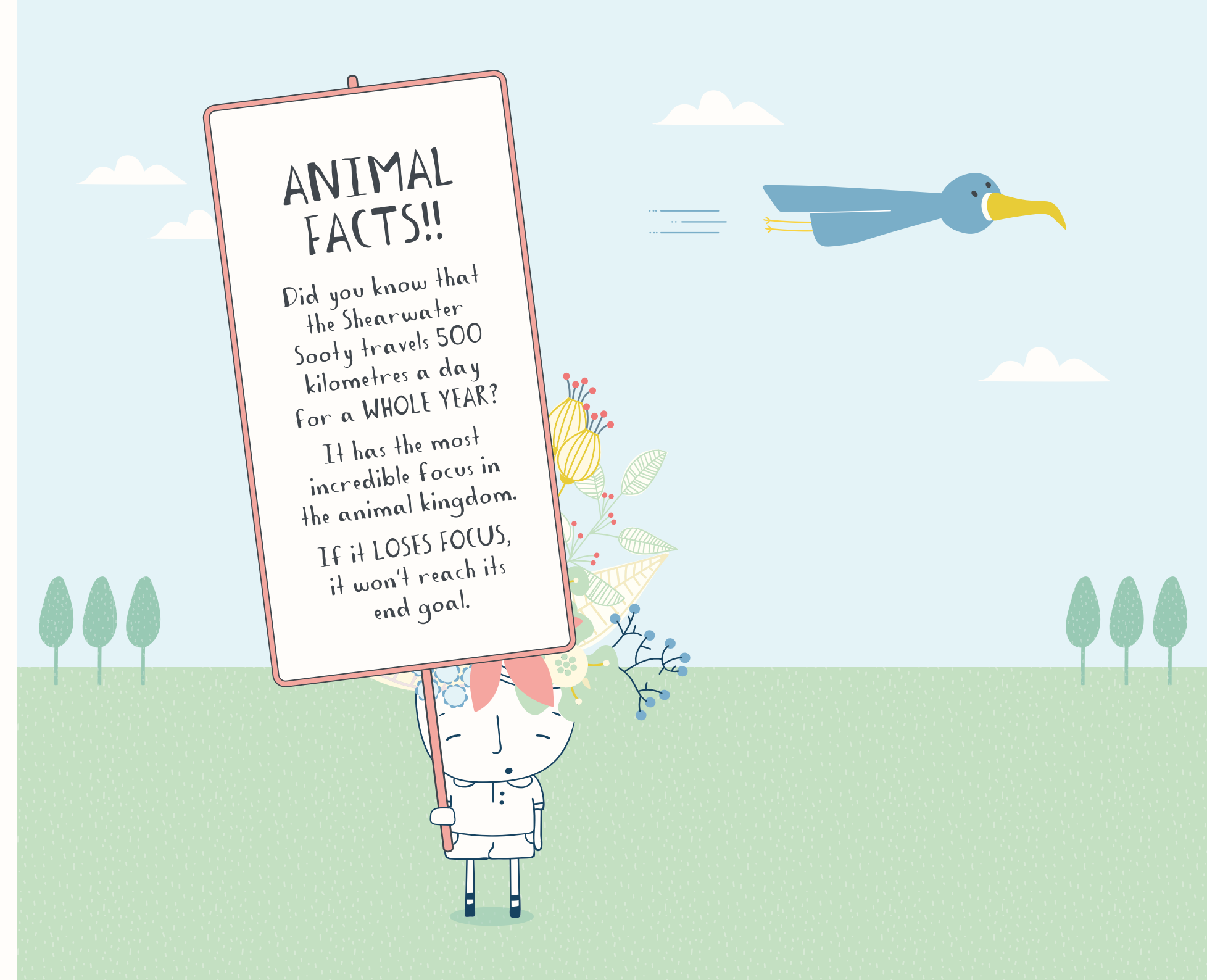
— AND FINALLY —
— YOUR —



Sifting Sooty

Your **Sifting Sooty** helps you to focus. All day long you are bombarded with millions of sounds, sights and information. Your **Sifting Sooty** decides which information is important and should go through to the other animals in your brain. It does this by blocking out information it thinks is not so important.

Your Sifting Sooty is very useful.

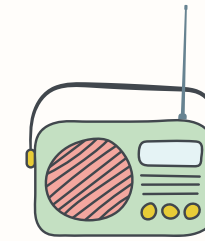
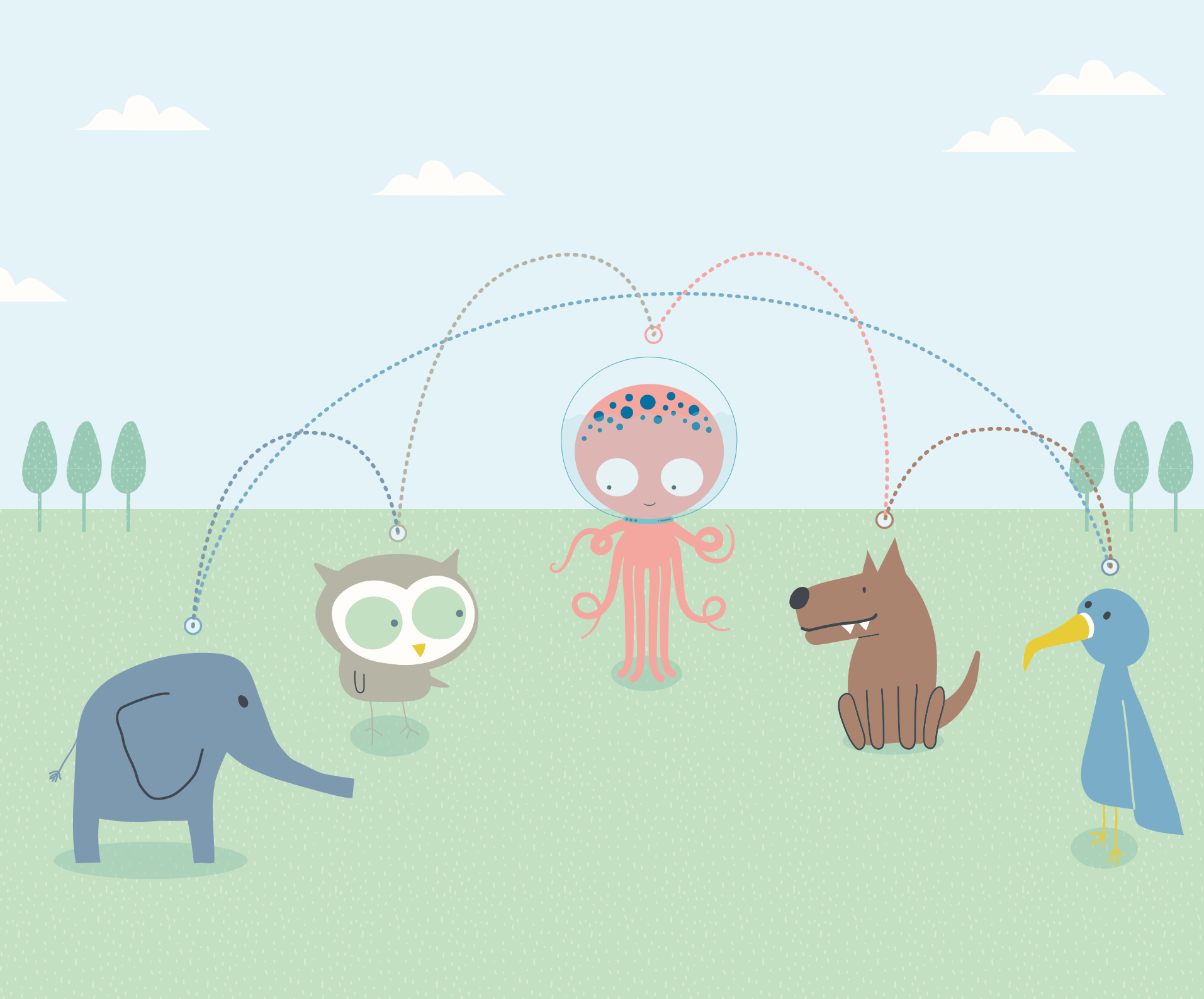


ANIMAL FACTS!!

Did you know that the Shearwater Sooty travels 500 kilometres a day for a **WHOLE YEAR?**

It has the most incredible focus in the animal kingdom.

IF it LOSES FOCUS, it won't reach its end goal.



Everything is going smoothly when the animals are talking to each other.
Your **Wise Owl** can make good decisions; your **Guard Dog** keeps you safe;
your **Elephant** helps you to remember things; your **Sensitive Octopus**
enables you to be a good friend; and your **Sifting Sooty** is able to
keep you focused.

The problem is, your **Guard Dog** sometimes gets

REALLY BIG

and when it gets **BIG**, it gets

BOSSY!



When your **Guard Dog** is bossy, it tends to treat everyday sadness, setbacks and stress as a real danger.

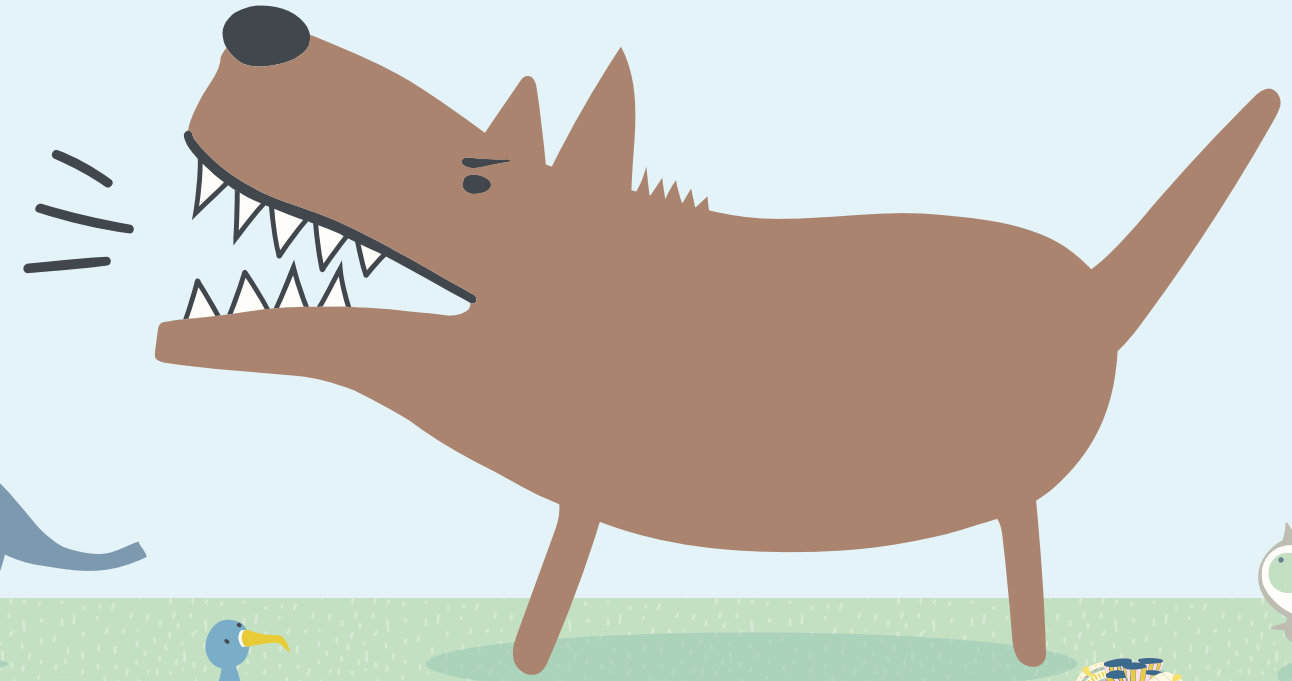
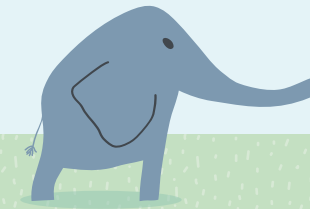
In fact, your **Guard Dog** reacts to these things as though there is a

LION IN THE ROOM!

Have you seen a lion at school or at home lately?

NO WAY!





Let's say someone bumps into you or leaves you out of a game.

You might feel ...

SAD or possibly **MAD**

Your **Guard Dog** might treat this as a BIG danger and therefore, it TAKES over! It blocks all information to your **Wise Owl** so you can't make a good decision, it tells your **Elephant** to stop remembering things because it isn't important anymore, it barks over the top of your **Sensitive Octopus** so you struggle to have empathy for anyone else AND it tells your **Sifting Sooty** there is no need to focus on anything!

You might find yourself yelling, sulking or even hitting.
Right now your **Guard Dog** is very LOUD.



Luckily, we can all learn ways to quieten down our Guard Dog.

We can remind it that this isn't a THREAT, perhaps it is a challenge or an opportunity instead?

One way to remind our **Guard Dog** that we are safe is to breathe mindfully. As you do this think of your **Guard Dog** going from barking to sleeping with every slow and deep breath.

Once your **Guard Dog** is quiet you can remember the things that help you to be a good friend, to focus and to make a helpful decision.



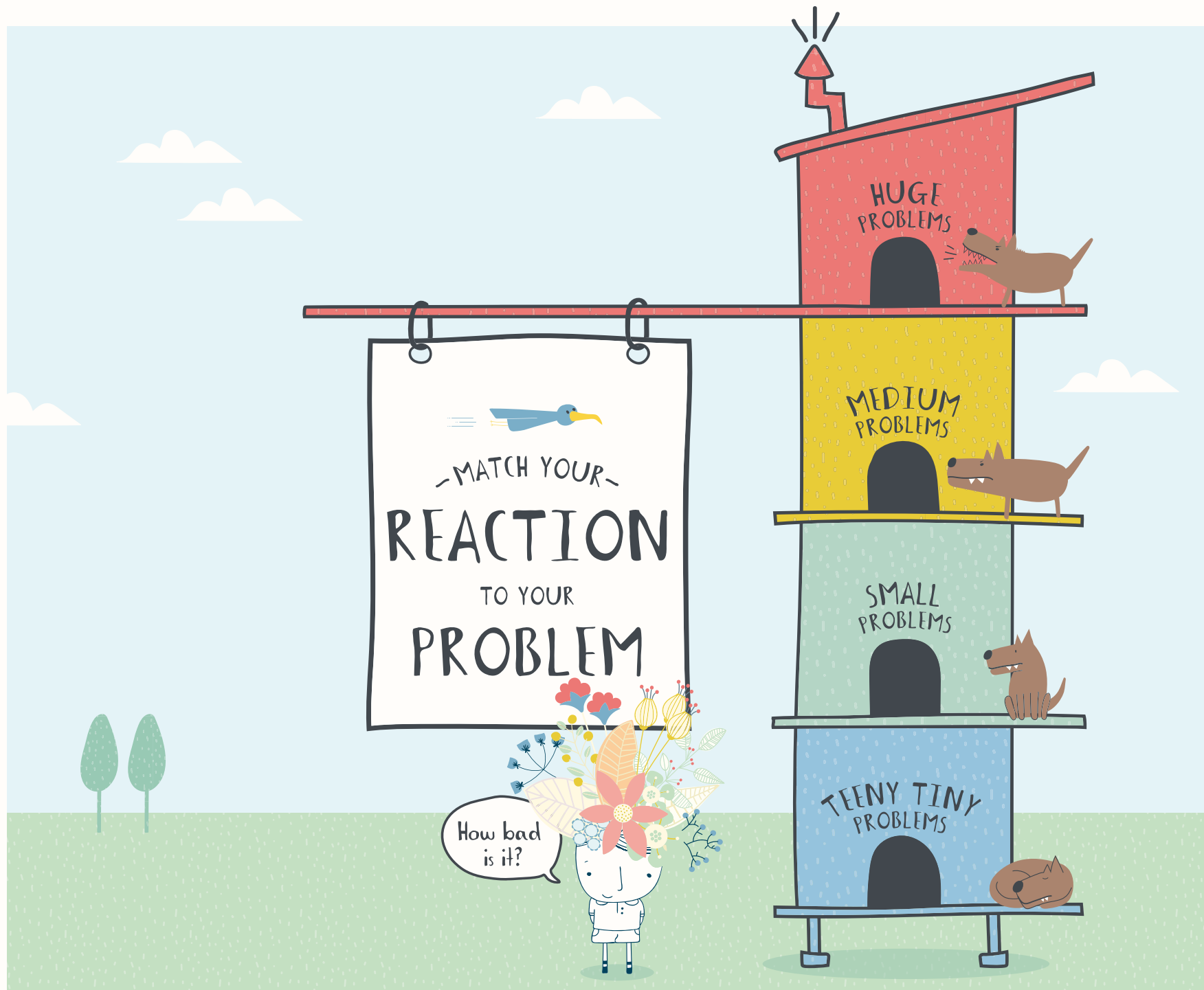
But aren't you breathing all of the time?

Yes, but there is a difference between short shallow breaths (when you are angry or sad) and long, strong, deep breathing.

So, how do you do that? There are plenty of ways. Check out the *Flip to Flourish* for ideas. A really simple one is to practice finding your anchor spot. Storms may rage, but a boat with a good anchor stays put and doesn't get lost at sea. Your anchor spot is where you can notice your breathing. Maybe it's your belly, maybe it's your chest. Find it and breathe in to it. Breathe in and say, '1,2,3'. Then hold your breath. Breathe out and say '1,2,3', then hold your breath. Do this three times.

Your anchor spot is there for you whenever you need it.

Always breathe through your nose and out through your mouth. Almost as if you were smelling a flower and then blowing out the petals.



Let's take a look at the **Guard Dog** catastrophe scale. When you breathe mindfully you can match your reaction to your problem. If you have a teeny tiny problem like spilling your water on your drawing, this may feel like a HUGE problem inside. That is OK for it to feel that way. But you don't actually need your **Guard Dog** to react that way. **You are safe.**

When you name your feelings or take slow deep breaths you are able to talk to your animal helpers and work out the best way to react.

As a class brainstorm all of the possible problems you may face in a day. Where does: School being on fire sit? Where does Having a fight with my friend sit? Next time you have a teeny tiny problem check in with the catastrophe scale, what does your **Guard Dog** look like? What should it look like?

Remember though: you are allowed to feel whatever you feel. The catastrophe scale is to remind you that you don't need your reaction to be HUGE.



Let's face it, it is tricky to match your reaction to your problem. One idea that might help you to tame your **Guard Dog** is to practice being a traffic light: breathe think act.

You may notice you are nervous, sad or angry. So you breathe first. Then you are able to think. Your **Wise Owl** can't help you if you have not taken some deep breaths. Then you act in a way that does not harm yourself or others.

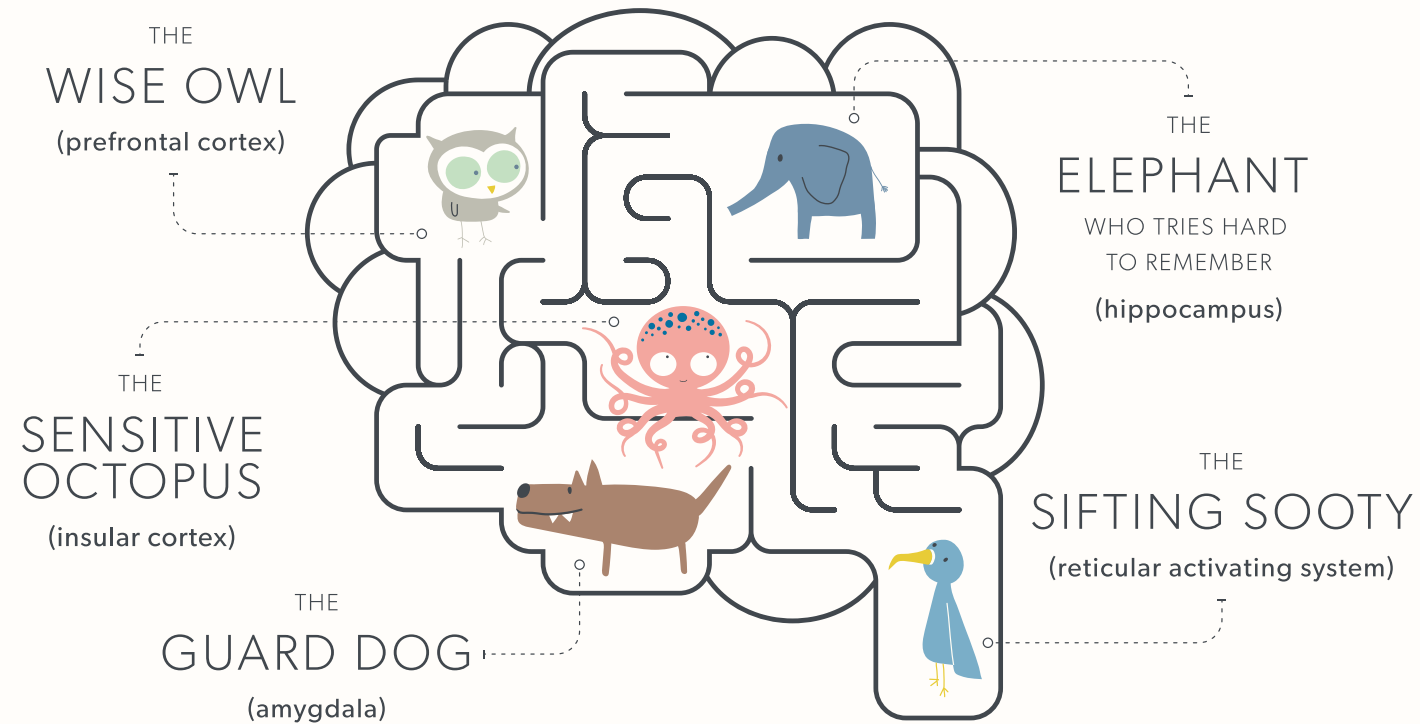
Now, there is a little secret which you should probably find out now. The helpers aren't really called **Wise Owl**, **Sifting Sooty**, **Guard Dog**, **Sensitive Octopus** and **Elephant**.

Would you like to learn their real names now so that you can get a little bit fancy?



INTRODUCING

- The Grow Your Mind Characters -

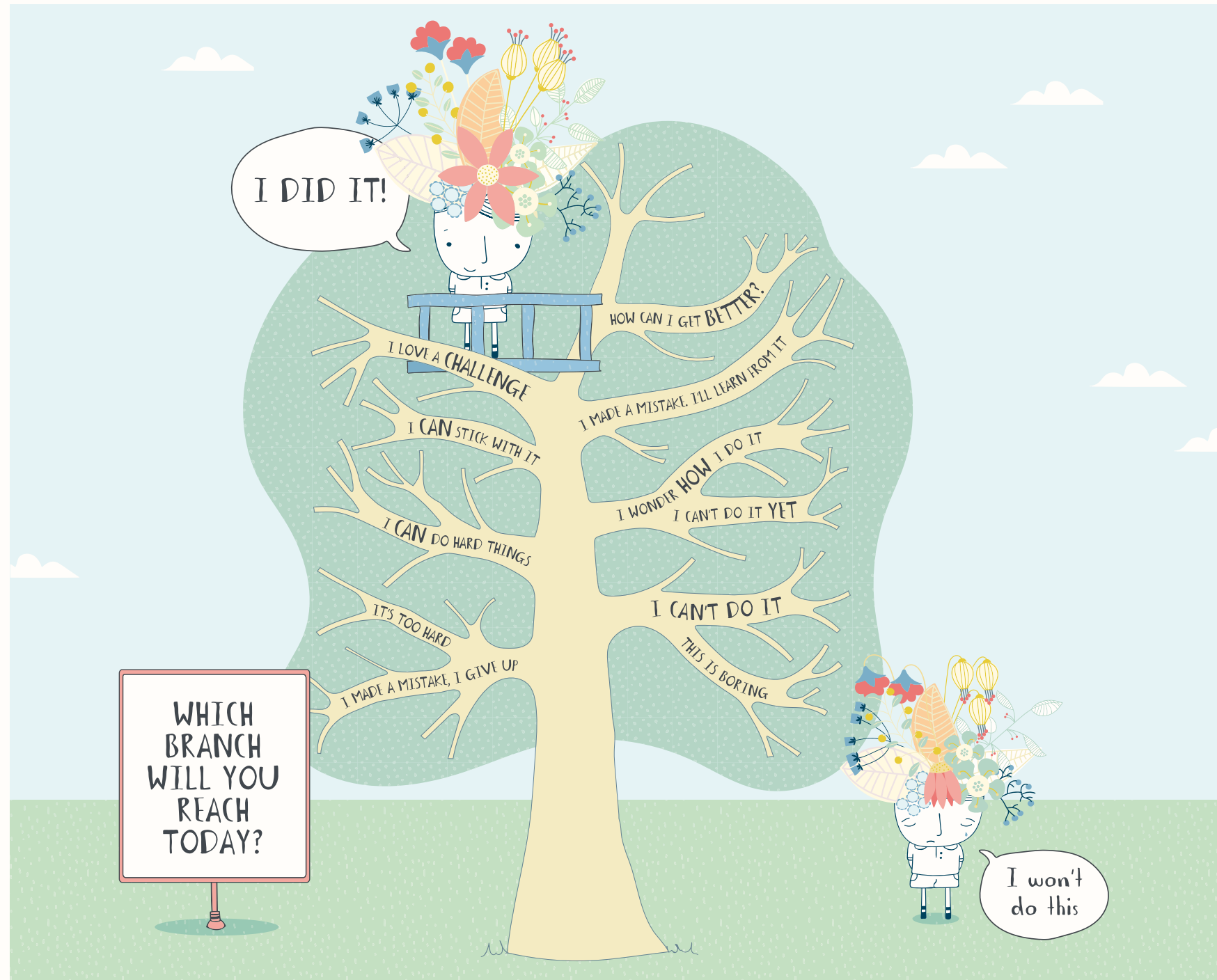


So, your **Guard Dog** is really called the amygdala (ah-mig-dah-la).
Your **Wise Owl** is called the prefrontal cortex, your **Elephant** is the hippocampus, your **Sensitive Octopus** is called the insular cortex and your **Sifting Sooty** is your reticular activating system (RAS).

The Brain Echo

(repeat each line)

Prefrontal cortex
Helps me make decisions
A - myg - da - la
I can run so far
I can fight
I can freeze
I can fleeeeeeeeeeeeeee
Hippocampus
I can remember what I learn
Insular Cortex
I can be a good friend
RAS
I...can....FOCUS



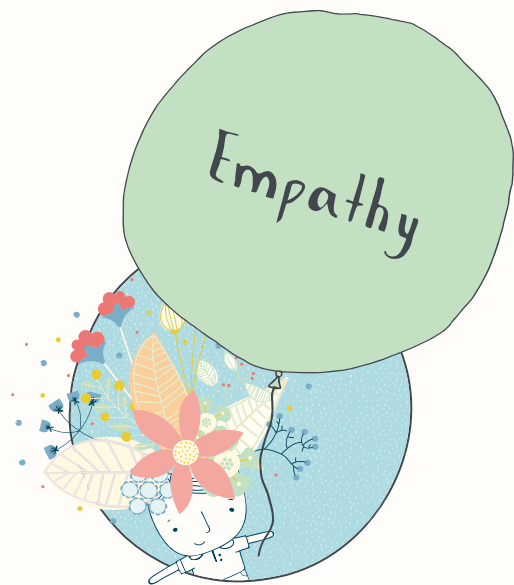
When you know about your animal helpers, you can use them to empower your thinking. Let's look at the **growth mindset tree**.

The way you talk to yourself really matters. If you feel stressed or nervous, your amygdala stops you from learning in the best way. When your **Guard Dog** gets loud, it might mistake the fear we have of trying something new, as a danger that is real.

This might mean you tell yourself something is '**boring**' or say fixed statements to yourself like '**I can't do it**'. If you breathe properly you give yourself a chance to work out whether you are just scared that you might make a mistake. You can then tell your **Guard Dog** that mistakes are the only way you learn. You remind yourself that you can learn nearly anything through hard work and grit.

Remember we can train our **Guard Dog** to ask "*Is this a threat, a challenge, or an opportunity?*" And chances are when it comes to doing Maths work or speaking in public - there is NO threat - a challenge maybe, an opportunity absolutely. You gradually climb the tree and reach your goal.

Thinking like a dolphin can help you reach the higher branches. A what you say? Yes, a dolphin! Check out your **Flip To Flourish** to find out why thinking like a dolphin is helpful and thinking like a shark keeps you on the lowest branches or not on the tree at all!



A superpower for your mental health is to know what your character strengths are. We all have them in varying degrees. We can use them to help ourselves and others.

When you know what your character strengths are you can wake up your **Sensitive Octopus** to be a reliable friend as well as your **Wise Owl** to do better at your work and be a more flexible thinker.

Start by learning what the strengths mean, what they look like and sound like. You could watch one of our **Guess Who** videos to begin spotting them in others. Or you could start looking for them in the characters of the books you are reading.

Then think about what your character strengths might be. If you find that hard to do, what would your friends say about you? Or a parent or carer?

Try and find out 3 of your strengths and the next time you face a tricky moment, use one of them to help you.

A large illustration of a character with a large green balloon. The balloon is filled with various character strengths written in a cursive font. The character is surrounded by various colorful flowers and leaves. The background is a light blue sky with white clouds and a small blue bird flying.

joyfulness
perseverance
empathy
reverence
teamwork
curiosity
forgiveness
judgment
generosity
humour
gratitude
social intelligence
love
honesty
zest
spirituality
perspective
flexibility
bravery
hope
respect
leadership
humility
patience
helpfulness
creativity
fairness
fact
appreciation of beauty
kindness
tolerance
justice
self-regulation
compassion

.....
is one of my strengths
.....
is the strength I am growing today



Another way to practice mindful breathing is to use or make an amygdala jar. Add water and glitter and shake it up. Now with your hands on your belly slowly count your breaths in and out until the glitter settles and the water becomes clear again.

When you are nervous to try something new or have a big uncomfortable feeling like jealousy or anger, your mind can feel a bit like this amygdala jar. It's hard for your **Wise Owl** to chat to your **Guard Dog** with all that glitter in the way.



Perhaps **Darth Vader** breathing is more your thing.

Spin your **Breathing Wheel** and see where you land.

Or click on a breathing style in your **Digital for Teachers** resource.





A simple way to keep your **Guard Dog** small at school is to connect with all the people around you. Your chatterbox is designed to boost connection amongst your classmates and teacher.

The important thing here is, get chatting and be friendly to all of the people around you. You don't have to be friends with everyone but it is a good idea to be **friendly** to everyone.

This chatterbox might give you a chance to find out something interesting about someone you had never even noticed before.

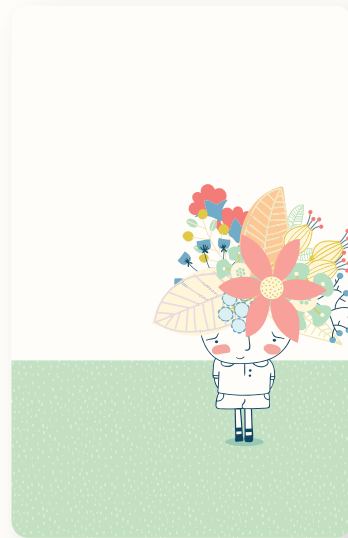
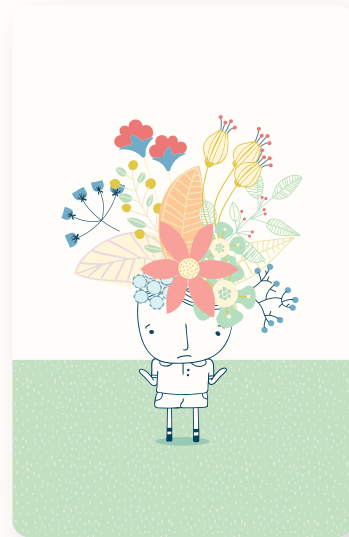


Maybe mindful breathing is **NOT** your thing, that's OK.

Keep practising it but also know that there are loads of ways to keep your animals chatting and your **Guard Dog** calm.

Such as...





NAME IT TO TAME IT!

Guess what? There are tonnes of ways to describe how you are feeling.

All feelings are welcome. Whether they be the joyful, comfortable and energising ones. Or the deeply uncomfortable, big or draining ones. Feel what you feel and give it a name.

Not like **Fred** or **Gertrude** though.
If you start saying
“I’m just feeling so Nancy today,”
you may get a few sideways glances...

What we mean is if you feel **jealous**, say
“I feel jealous”.

When you own what you are feeling you give it less power. That means you can start to choose how you respond to things rather than REACT in a not so helpful way.

So grab your feeling cards and start by **guessing** what **Flower Dude** is feeling in each one. Flip it over to reveal the answer... Or play **Feeling Charades** and act out the feeling. There are more activities you can try in your pack as well as online.

Get naming! Or turn the page and get flipping...

CAN YOU SPOT SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE FEELING A LITTLE BIT.. JEALOUS?



TO FLIP OR NOT TO FLIP

...

That is the question

You could flip...

during crunch 'n' sip

when you run out of conversation

during group time

Essentially whenever you flippin' like!
Flip and try out the invitation you land on.

These have been made to give you a mountain
of ways to take care of your mental health
and to keep the animals chatting.



Have you felt some positive emotions today?

WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY? MAKE IT HAPPEN AND BUILD RESILIENCE

Have you brushed your teeth today?

Drunk some water?

Have you felt joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe or love?

We need to look after our minds in the same way we look after our teeth. When we experience positive emotions, we are also making ourselves more resilient for when things don't go our way.

And guess what? When we do kind things for others, it is the easiest way to experience positive emotions.

Scientists have studied long-term happiness and being kind, thoughtful and considerate are key themes.



HAVE YOU FELT SOME POSITIVE EMOTIONS TODAY?

Go to: growyourmind.life/kitresearch

Look for: Dr. Barbara Fredrickson's studies on health benefits of positive emotions.

Action: K-2: Draw a picture of all the things that bring you joy.

3-6: Lightning writing! List five things that bring you joy.

Year 6: Discuss [Julia Baird's](#) quote "*Small amounts of joy can inoculate against the hard times*". What does this mean? How might joy help you during your next tough time?

On the back of each invitation you will find more information, an activity you could try and links to research. That way you know we haven't made it all up!



The **Flip to Flourish** invites you to try loads of things to help your mental health. One of those invitations is gratitude. Simply put, gratitude means you are aware of the good things in your life.

There are so many ways to practice gratitude. You could think about two things you are thankful for. You could look at one of your hands and touch each finger and thumb as you say someone or something you appreciate.

If you have one of our kits you will find a **gratitude journal** and if your class has a **digital subscription** you will find tonnes of ways to practice it.

As a class, you could write or draw one thing a day that you feel thankful for. Or you could turn the gratitude book into a **What Went Well Today** book. Did you have an interesting maths lesson? Perhaps you had an awesome play during the break. Record it!



GUESS WHO?

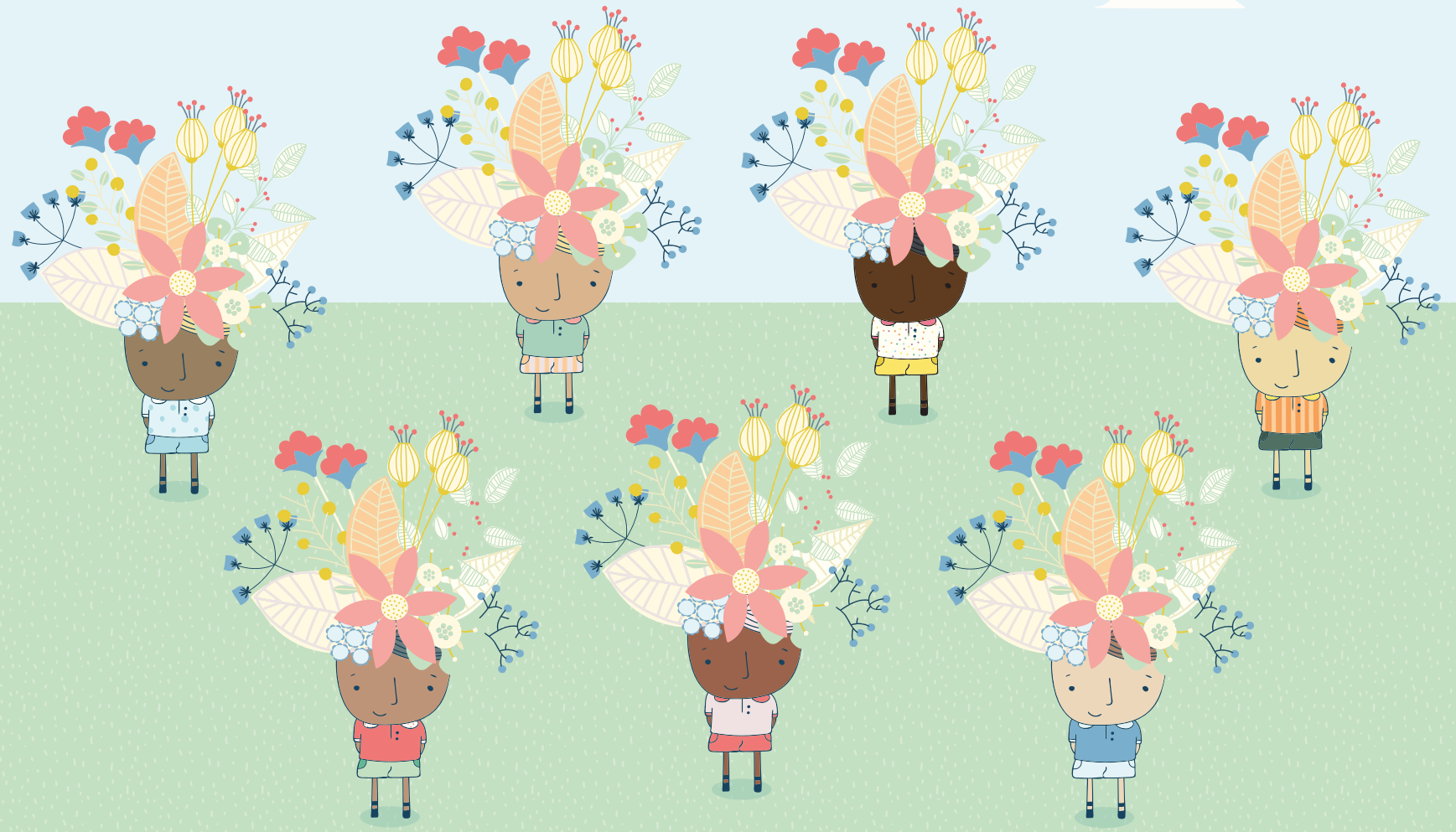
Watch one of our Guess Who videos to see a talented playdough artist in action as she creates plor-traits (playdough portraits) of incredible people. Hear our educator share their stories of setbacks, sadness and challenges.

See if you can pick their character strengths.

7 out of 7 kids

HAVE MENTAL HEALTH

Let's teach them how to look after it!



Remember there are MANY ways we can look after our mental health. We want to keep our animals chatting, here are some ideas for waking them up and calming the Guard Dog down. See which ones you already do or could practice this week

The Wise Owl (prefrontal cortex)

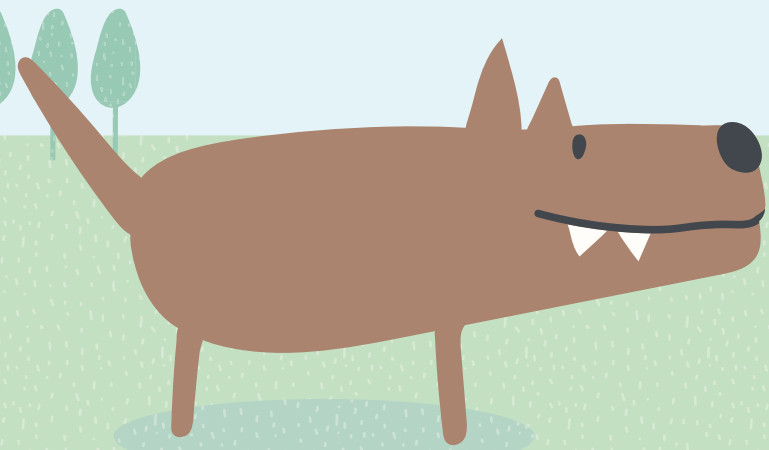


WAKE ME UP BY

- Getting a good night's sleep
- Sticking with tricky things
- Taking three mindful breaths
- Making a mistake and learning from it

The Guard Dog

(amygdala)



CALM ME BY

Practicing mindfulness -
eating, listening, breathing,
seeing - take YOUR pick!

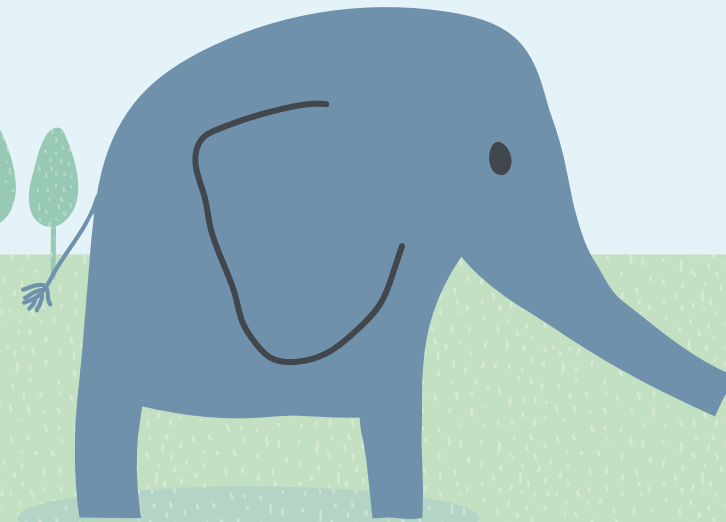
Doing something kind for
someone else

Writing three things you are
thankful for EVERY day

Changing a shark thought into
a dolphin one

The Elephant

who tries hard to remember
(hippocampus)



WAKE ME UP BY

Moving your body EVERY day

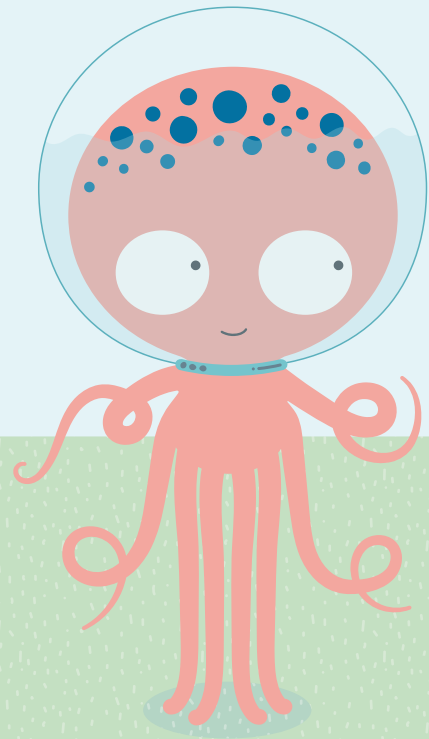
Learning one new thing a day

Meditating - even for a minute of
belly breathing or hand breathing

Eating healthy food

The Sensitive Octopus

(insular cortex)



WAKE ME UP BY

Imagining how someone else is feeling

Checking in with your internal weather. Are you feeling Sunny? Stormy? Cloudy?

Reading BOOKS!

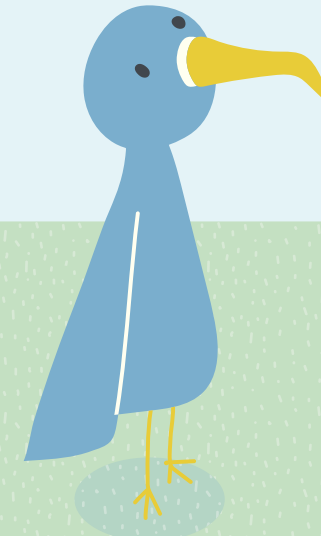
Reading BOOKS!

Naming your feelings

Staying curious

The Sifting Sooty

(reticular activating system, RAS)



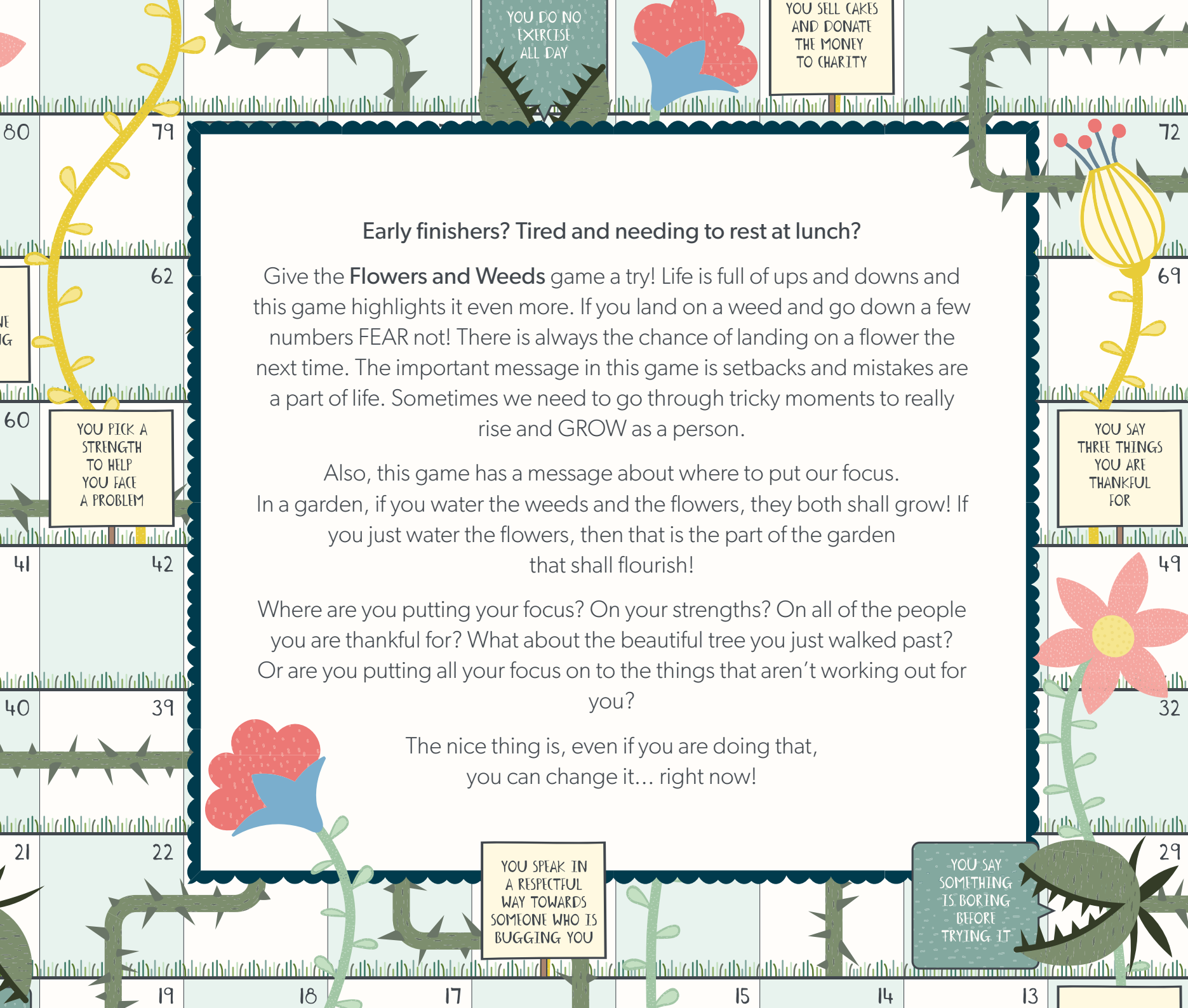
WAKE ME UP BY

Noticing when you are distracted: one thing you can touch, see, hear, smell and taste.

Doing one thing at a time

Setting a goal with a good plan on how to achieve it

Drawing a picture or taking a photo that reminds you of what your goal is



Early finishers? Tired and needing to rest at lunch?

Give the **Flowers and Weeds** game a try! Life is full of ups and downs and this game highlights it even more. If you land on a weed and go down a few numbers FEAR not! There is always the chance of landing on a flower the next time. The important message in this game is setbacks and mistakes are a part of life. Sometimes we need to go through tricky moments to really rise and GROW as a person.

Also, this game has a message about where to put our focus. In a garden, if you water the weeds and the flowers, they both shall grow! If you just water the flowers, then that is the part of the garden that shall flourish!

Where are you putting your focus? On your strengths? On all of the people you are thankful for? What about the beautiful tree you just walked past? Or are you putting all your focus on to the things that aren't working out for you?

The nice thing is, even if you are doing that, you can change it... right now!



Now you know about your brain and some of its helpers. Remember to always feel whatever you want to feel, but know that you have ways to calm yourself down when you need to.

You also have tools to strengthen your focus, your memory and your decision-making abilities. GROW YOUR MIND today and every day by learning new things, embracing mistakes and using your strengths to overcome the tricky things that life throws at you.

Start looking after your mind in the same way you look after your body. Do you brush your teeth every day? Well, what are you going to do today to look after that precious mind of yours?

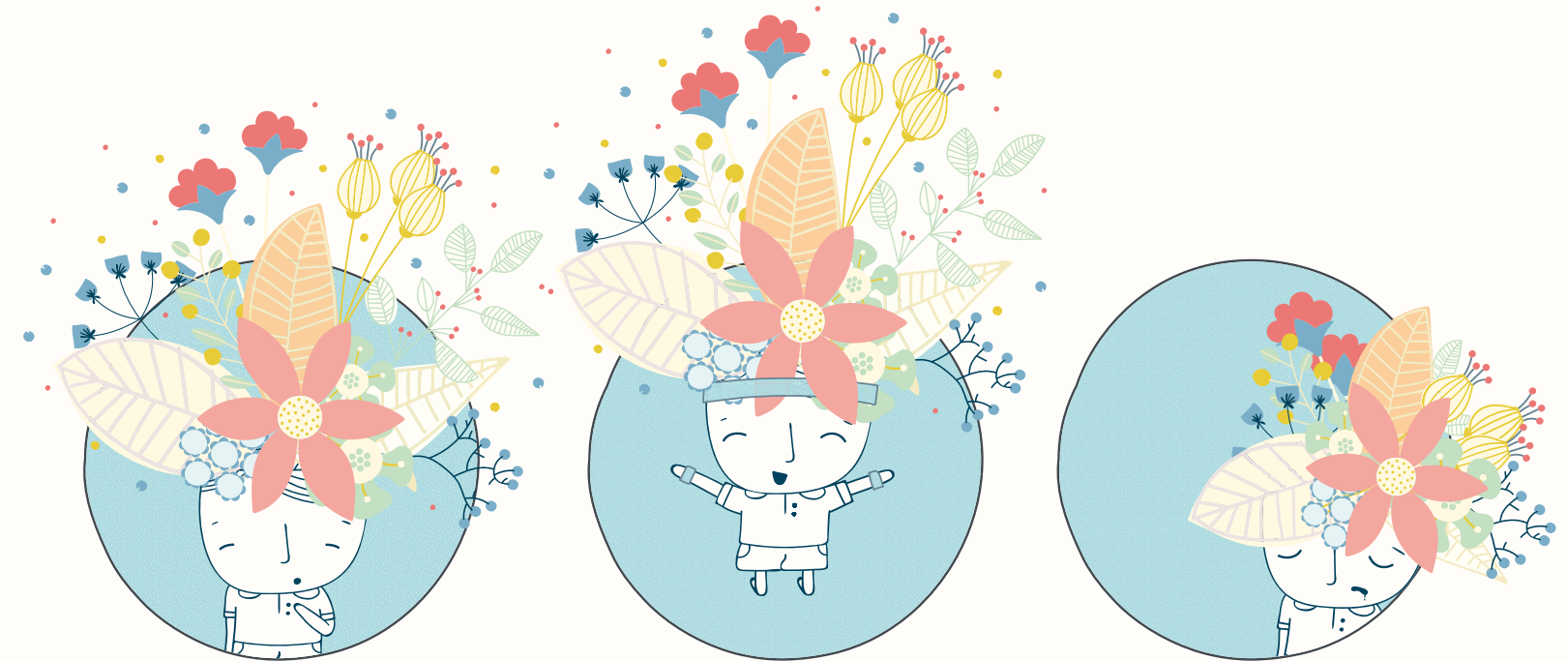


A note for educators!

For the Grow Your Mind wellbeing messages to stick and be sustainable you must look after your own mental health too. In fact, you cannot afford NOT to take care of yourself.

To learn more about how to boost and protect your mental health please visit our website, growyourmind.life

HERE ARE A FEW HINTS...





Grow Your Mind is a certified B Corp, which means we are part of a growing group of businesses that are working towards reducing inequality, lowering levels of poverty and creating a healthier environment and stronger communities.

An example of a way in which we live by these values is our children's mental health podcast. Each episode offers a way to either boost resilience or breaks down the things that test our resilience! E.g. we have episodes on gender equality, black lives matter, grief, climate change and more.

If you would like more information about Grow Your Mind, be it the professional development courses we run, our parent webinars or more details on the outstanding educational resources we have created, just head to growyourmind.life

Thanks for your support.

