

EXPLORING MS

A children's activity book
about multiple sclerosis



 **MSIreland**
THE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF IRELAND

This book belongs to:

WHAT IS MS?

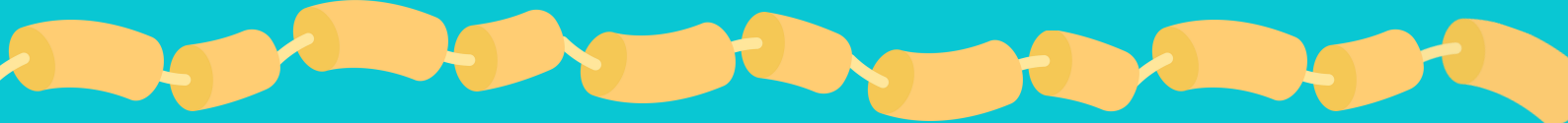
MS is a condition that affects the brain and spinal cord.

Our brains send messages to different parts of our bodies at such a high speed that we don't even realise it's happening.

These messages tell our bodies to do different things, like moving our fingers or toes.

It also receives messages from the body. For example, if we touch something that's too hot, our body tells our brain what it feels, and our brain then tells our bodies to move away.

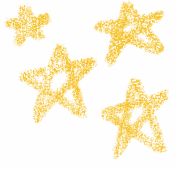
The nerves that these messages pass along have a protective outer coating called myelin. It's kind of like the outside of the lead of a phone charger - it protects what's on the inside.



In MS, the body's defence system accidentally attacks the myelin. So, the messages can find it difficult to get to where they need to go.



Each person who lives with MS experiences it differently.



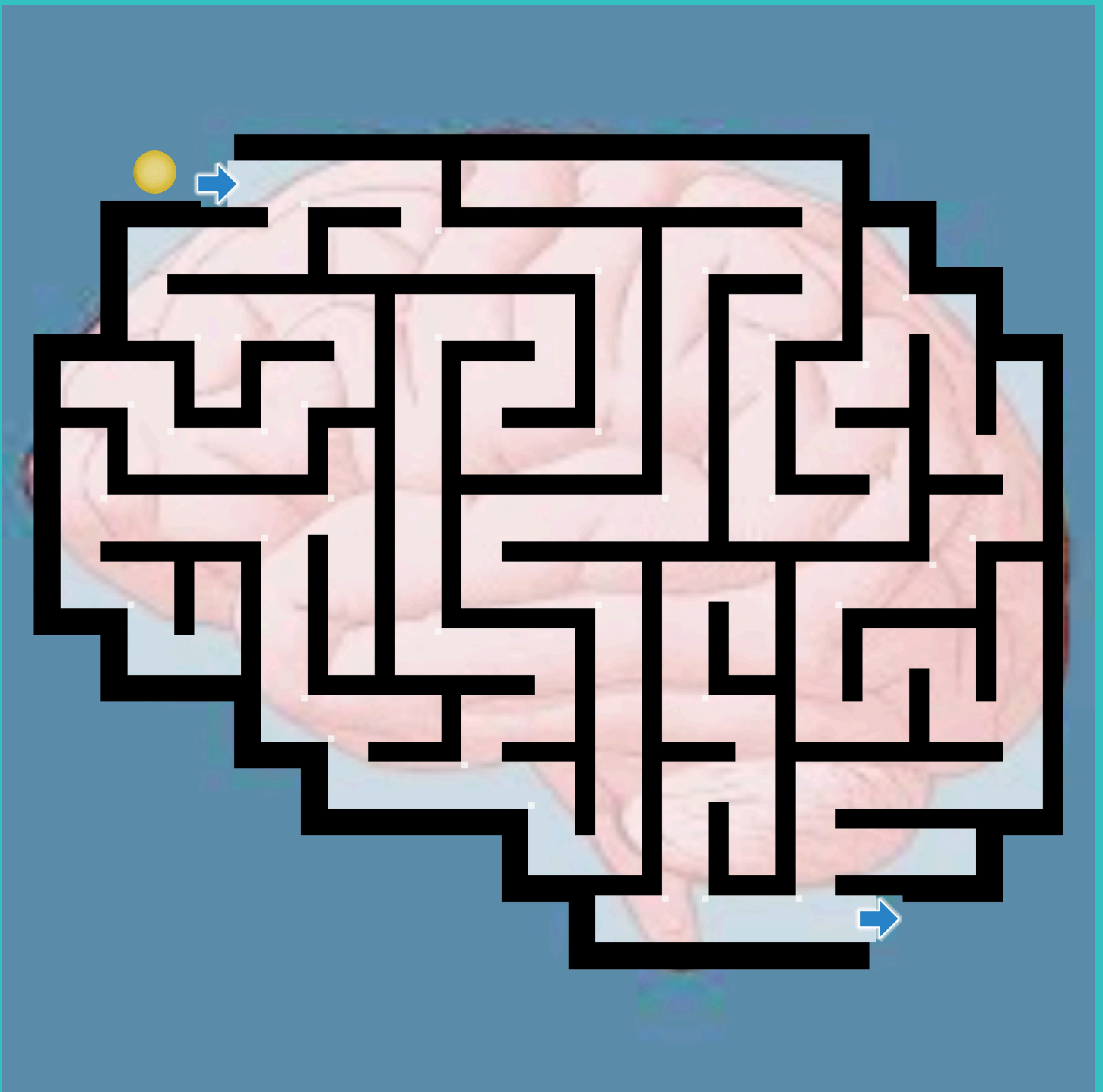
DRAW WHAT YOU THINK

MS LOOKS LIKE



GUIDE THE MESSAGE THROUGH THE BRAIN

MS can stop or delay messages travelling through the brain.
Help the message ● find it's way through the brain.



I'M SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT WORD

Axon
Community
Myelin

Balance
Doctor
Nerves

Brain
Health
Tiredness

Care
Muscles
Vision



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

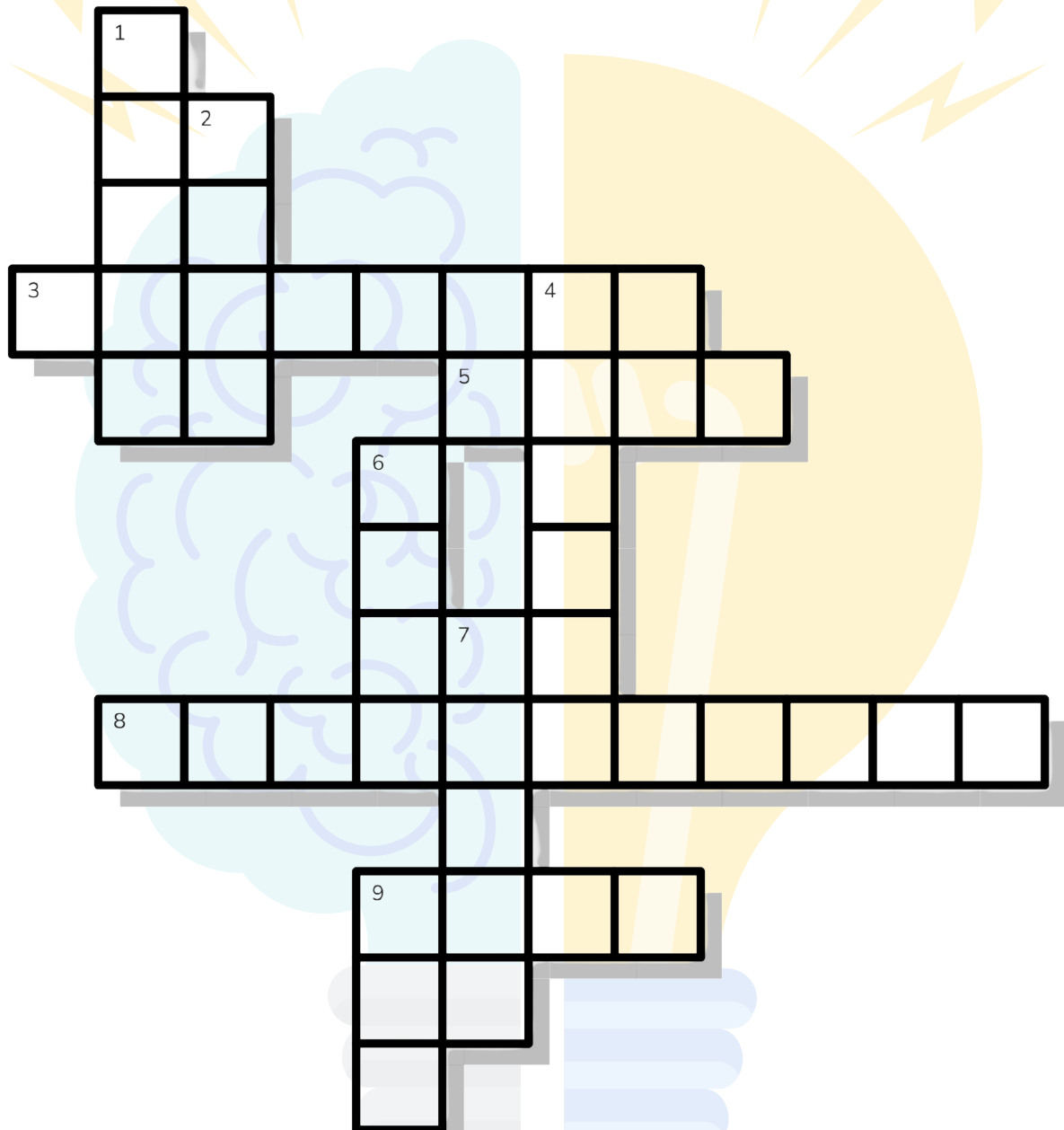
WHAT'S THAT WORD AGAIN?

Across

3. Something you take when you're sick to feel better
5. A check-up to see if you're okay
8. Where you sit before seeing the doctor
9. What you do for someone in need

Down

1. What you do at night
2. All of you from head to toe
4. A special cell in your brain
6. Taking a break to feel better
7. Feeling you get when you need sleep
9. A squeeze to show you care

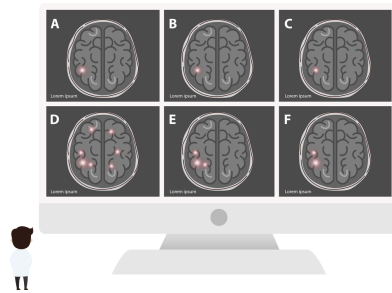


Spot the Difference

When people who have MS visit the hospital for tests, special pictures of their brain are taken using a big machine called an MRI.

These pictures help doctors see what's going on inside the brain!

The person who takes these pictures is called a radiographer.
They take the pictures and look at them closely.



Sometimes, they compare old and new pictures to see if anything has changed.

You can pretend to be a radiographer too!

See if you can find any differences in the pictures below.



How many did you find?

MATCH THAT SYMPTOM

Symptoms of MS can be different for each person living with it. How long the symptom lasts and how much it affects a person can be different too. On the left, you will see some of the symptoms of MS. Try to match the symptom to the correct description on the right.



Fatigue

Having trouble seeing things clearly, like things look blurry or you see double.

Pins and needles

When your body feels tight and it's hard to move your muscles.

Numbness

When your hands or other parts of your body shake without you trying to make them.

Vision issues

Feeling wobbly and having a hard time standing or walking without falling.

Loss of balance

It feels like tiny bugs are crawling or poking you on your skin.

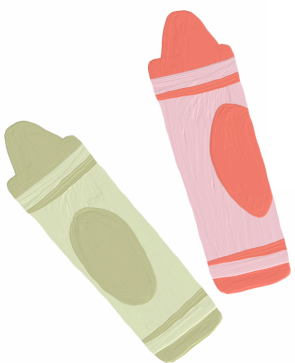
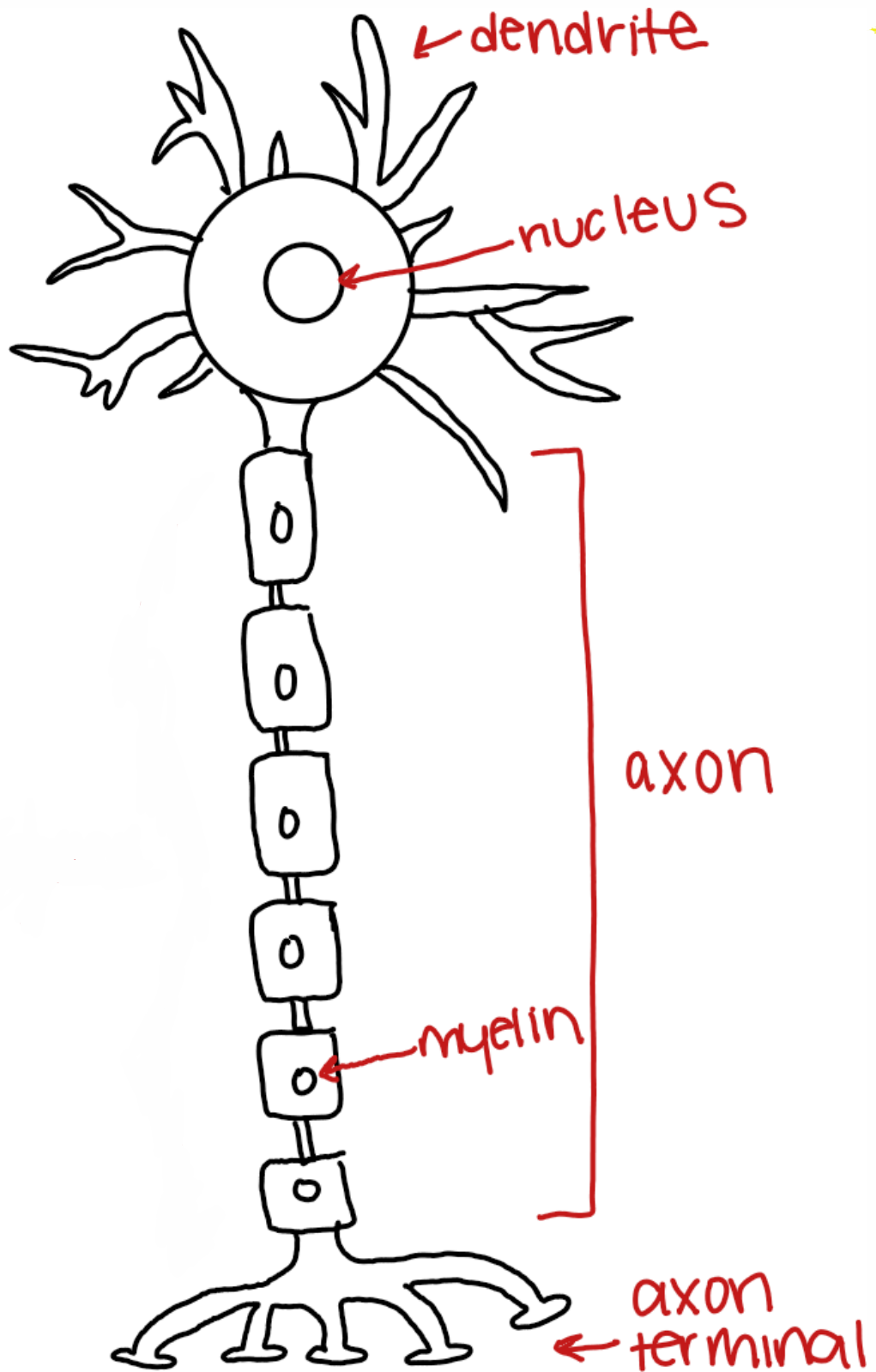
Stiffness

Feeling really, really tired even if you had enough sleep.

Tremor

When a part of your body feels like it's asleep and you can't feel it properly.

COLOUR IN THE NEURON



MAM AND AISLING

Aisling was very worried. Her mother had been in the hospital for three days now. She had heard her family whispering on the phone and closing the door for private 'grown up' conversations. Aisling felt that something was wrong. When she finally got to see her mam, she felt a big wave of relief.

Aisling's mam gave her a warm hug and said, "I have something to tell you, sweetie. The doctors found out I have something called MS. It stands for Multiple Sclerosis."

Aisling looked at her mam with wide eyes. "What does that mean?" Her mam smiled gently. "It means that sometimes, my body doesn't work the way it should. That's why I have been feeling tired and my fingers have felt numb. But now that we know what it is, we can get the right help."

Naturally, Aisling had lots of questions. "Will I catch MS from you?" Her mam shook her head. "No, darling, you can't catch MS from me. It's something my body has but it doesn't spread to other people."

"Why can't the doctors just get rid of your MS?" Aisling asked. "MS is something that stays with me," her mam explained. "But the doctors and nurses will help me manage it. There are treatments that can make me feel better and help me live a normal life."

"Will you get better?" Aisling asked. "I will have good days and sometimes I might have some not-so-good days," her mam explained. "But the doctors and nurses will help me, and I have you and the rest of our family to help too. We can still have fun and do lots of things together."

Aisling hugged her mam tightly. "I love you, Mam." she said. Her mum kissed the top of her head. "I love you too, darling".

From then on, Aisling and her mam enjoyed their time together even more. They played games, read stories, and laughed a lot. Even on the not-so-good days, they knew they had each other, and that made everything feel a little bit easier.



After reading Aisling's story, you might have some questions of your own. Asking questions is very important because it helps us get a better understanding of things which can help us to feel less worried.



The questions below might help you think about your own feelings and learn more about how to talk about things that might worry you.

- How do you think Aisling felt when she heard her family whispering on the phone? Why might she have felt that way?
- What do you think Aisling felt when she finally got to see her mam after she was in the hospital? How would you feel in that situation?
- What important questions would you have if someone in your family was diagnosed with MS? Why do you think it's important to ask these questions?
- How did Aisling's mam help her understand MS? Why do you think it's important to talk about things that worry us?
- Aisling and her mam decided to have fun and do lots of things together even though her mam has MS. What are some fun things you like to do with your family when you need to feel better?



Do you have any questions? Write them here so you can ask an adult.

A large rectangular area with a pink, hand-drawn border, intended for writing questions. The border is thick and has a textured, brush-stroke appearance.

BALLOON BREATHING

Sit or lie down in a cozy and quiet place where you won't be disturbed.

Close your eyes gently and imagine there's a big balloon in your belly.

Slowly take a deep breath in through your nose, imagining you are filling the balloon with air.

Feel your belly rise like the balloon is getting bigger.

Now, hold the breath for a moment — count to three in your head.

Slowly let the breath out through your mouth, imagining the balloon shrinking and the air flowing out.

Feel your belly go down as the balloon deflates.

Keep breathing in through your nose, filling up your balloon belly, holding it, and then letting the air out through your mouth.

Do this for a few more breaths.

After a few breaths, notice how your body feels.

Do you feel calmer?

Pay attention to the peaceful feeling in your body and mind.

When you're ready, slowly open your eyes and take a moment to stretch gently.

This exercise can help calm you down when you're feeling stressed or upset. Remember, you can do this anytime you need to relax and feel better.

CHECK IN TIME: HOW ARE YOU FEELING?



angry



anxious



sad



proud



confused



hopeful



scared



not sure

It is okay to feel one or more of these emotions.
The important thing is knowing who you can speak to if you need.

Think about who you can speak to about your emotions.



Your space!!

This is your space, you can use it to draw, write down questions you have or feelings that you might like to talk about with an adult.

QUIZ TIME!!!

Let's see how much you know about MS!

Circle the correct answer for each question.

1 What does MS stand for?

- a) Muscle Strength
- b) Multiple Sclerosis
- c) Mega Speed

2 What part of the body does MS affect most?

- a) The stomach
- b) The brain and spinal cord
- c) The heart

3 Does everyone with MS have the same symptoms?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4 Which of these is a common symptom of MS?

- a) Feeling very tired
- b) Breathing fire
- c) Having super speed

5 Can you catch MS from another person?

- a) Yes
- b) No

6 Who can help someone with MS manage their symptoms?

- a) A teacher
- b) A doctor
- c) A chef

7 How do doctors test for MS?

- a) By looking at your teeth
- b) By doing special tests like an MRI
- c) By asking your favorite color

8 True or false: MS can be completely cured

- a) True
- b) False

9 What is the coating that surrounds nerves in the brain?

- a) Myelin
- b) Skin
- c) Muscle

10 How can children like you help people with MS?

- a) By raising money through Readathon
- b) By making them do chores
- c) By building them a spaceship

Affirmations

Here are some things to remember.

You can say them out loud or in your mind as many times as you like,
whenever you feel like it!

