My Stress Bucket

Diagram & Worksheets for Children

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My Stress Bucket

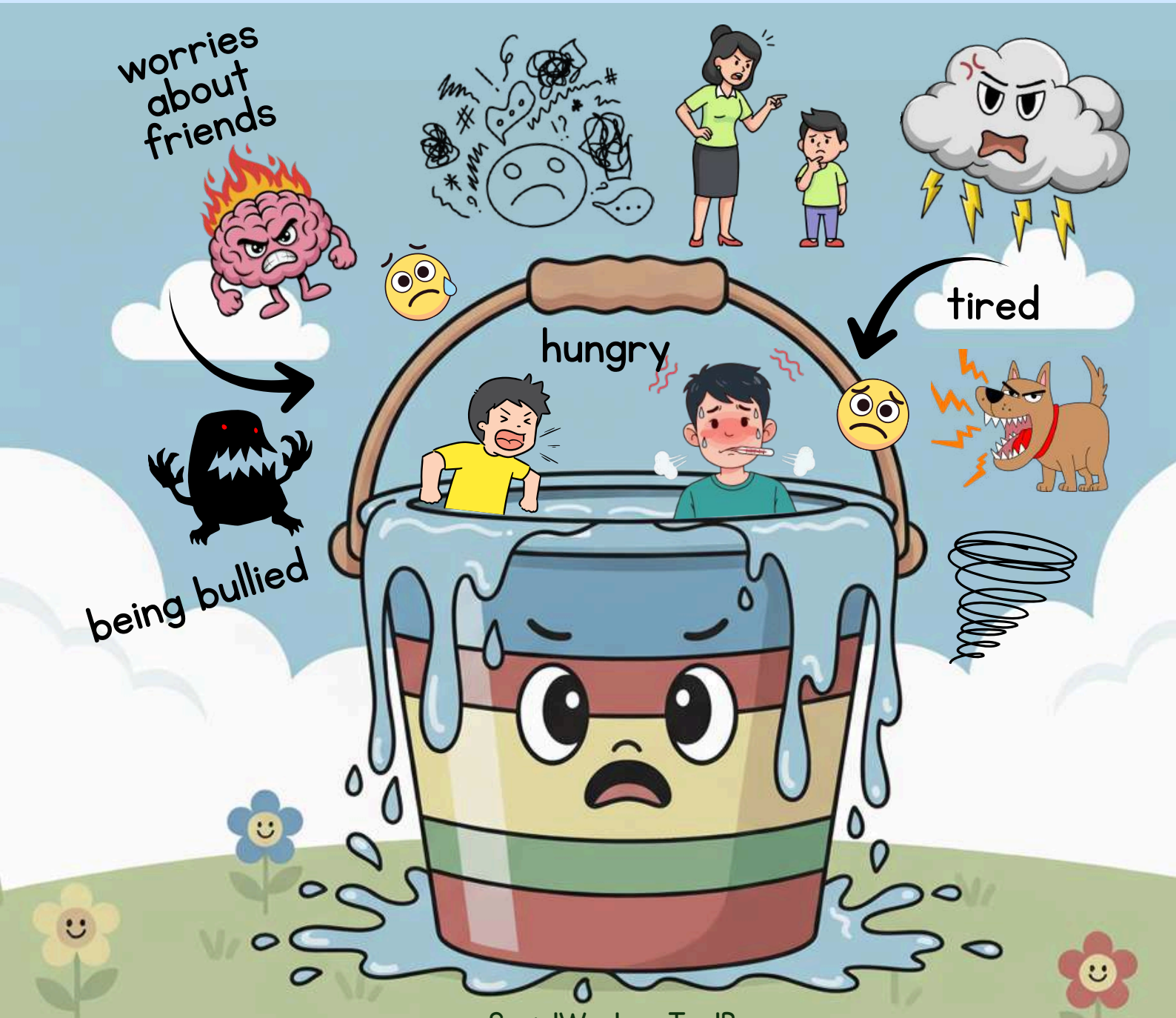
Imagine you have a bucket inside you.
You can't see it, but pretend it is there.
This bucket holds your feelings.
Every day different things happen, and these things can add feelings into your bucket.
Some feelings are easy. Some feelings are hard.
Your bucket changes as your day changes.

When the Bucket Is Filling Up

Your bucket starts to fill when things happen.
If something feels a bit worrying, a little goes into the bucket.
If something feels fun or exciting, a little goes into the bucket too.
A full bucket doesn't mean something is wrong.
It just means you are feeling many things at once.
You can still play, talk and get on with your day.

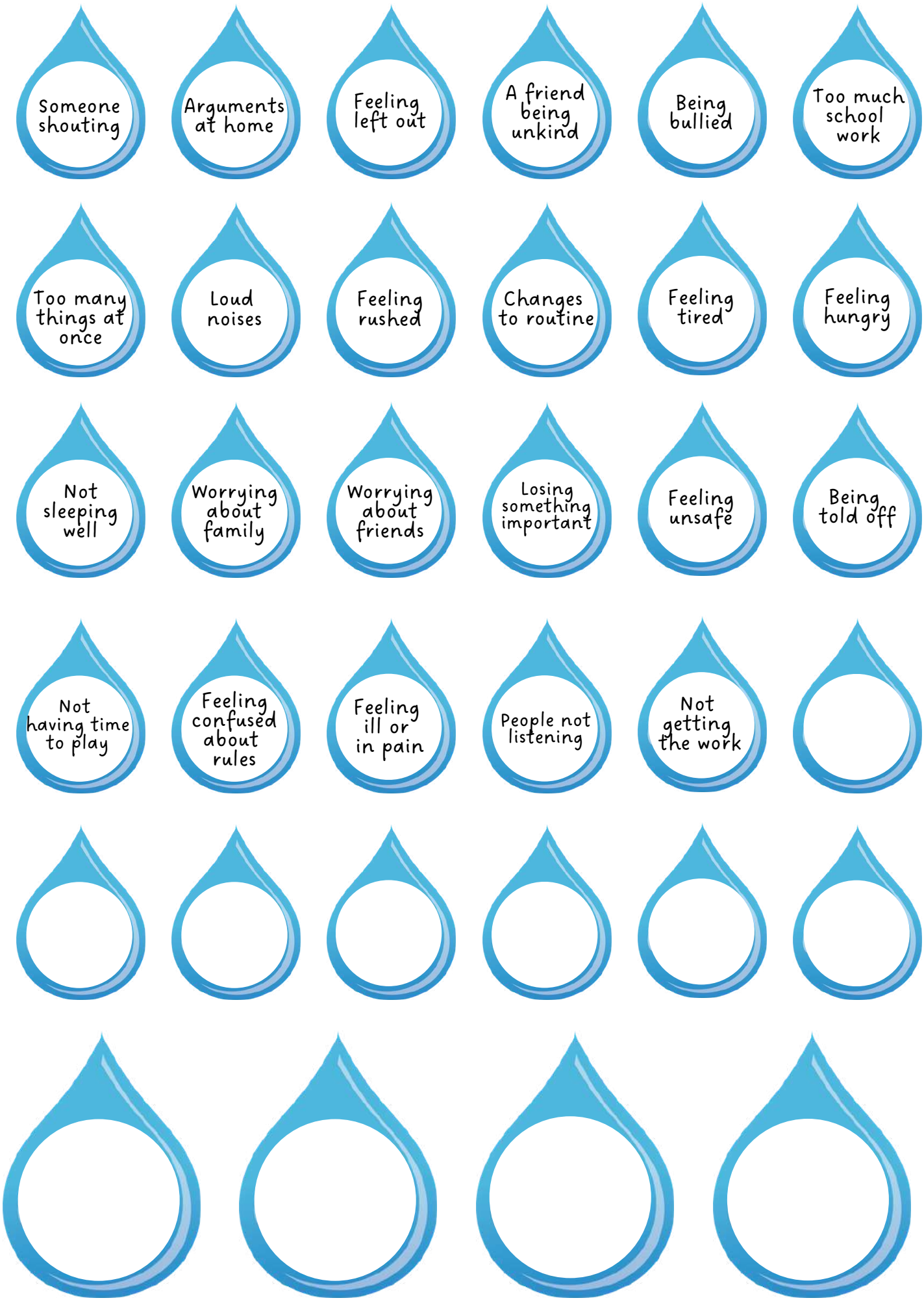
When the Bucket Spills

But sometimes your bucket fills
too fast or too much.
When this happens, it spills.
This can feel like stress.
You may cry, get angry, feel scared or feel confused.
You may find it hard to think or take part in things.
A spilling bucket means you need help or a break.



What Makes My Bucket Too Full

Put things that make your bucket fill up too fast. These can be things that feel hard, noisy, scary, tiring or confusing. You can draw, write or use the droplet ideas on the next page.

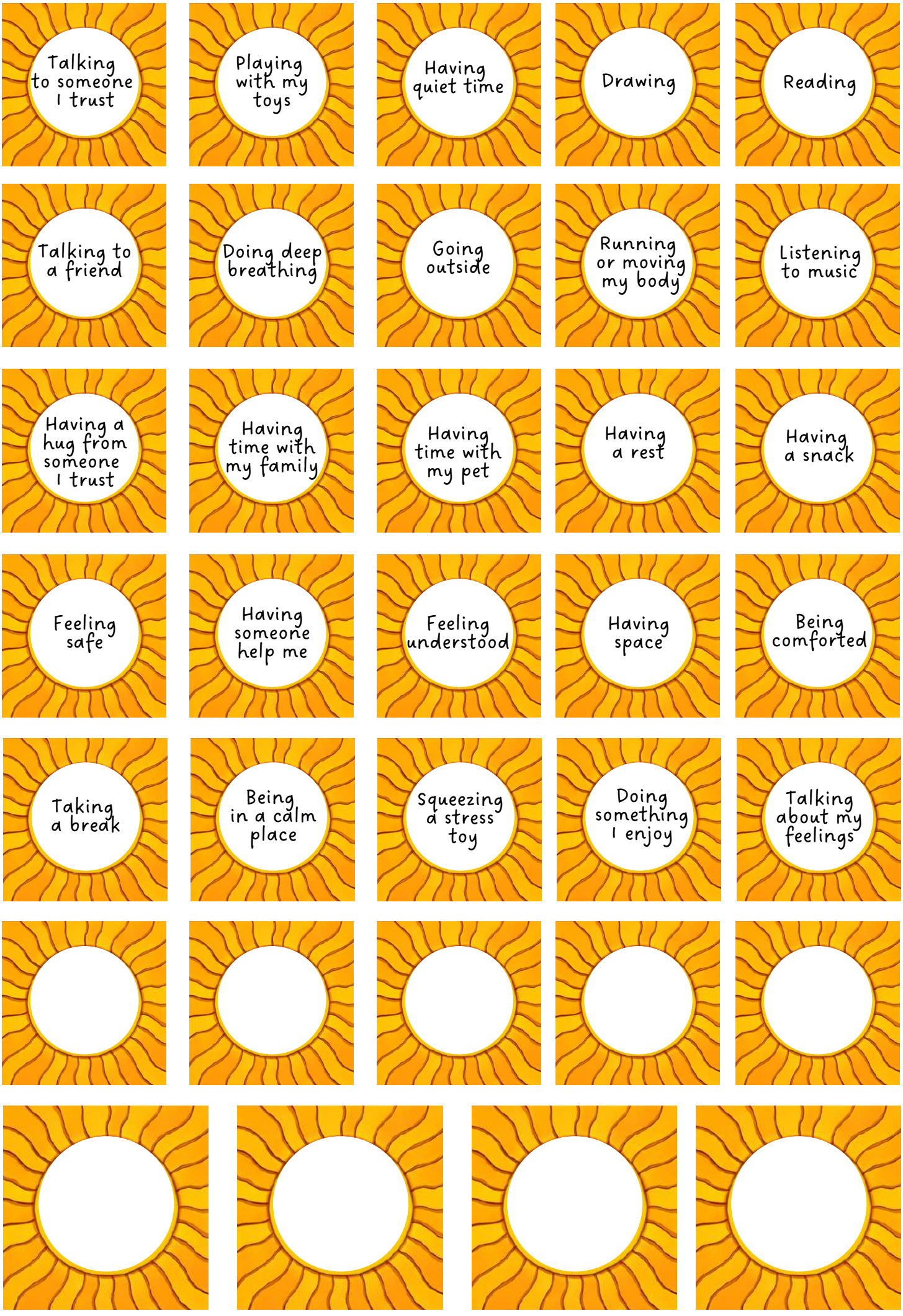

Someone shouting
Arguments at home
Feeling left out
A friend being unkind
Being bullied
Too much school work
Too many things at once
Loud noises
Feeling rushed
Changes to routine
Feeling tired
Feeling hungry
Not sleeping well
Worrying about family
Worrying about friends
Losing something important
Feeling unsafe
Being told off
Not having time to play
Feeling confused about rules
Feeling ill or in pain
People not listening
Not getting the work

How the Bucket Empties

Buckets can let water out through small holes.
You can let your feelings out in healthy ways too.
Talking to someone you trust can help.
Playing, resting, drawing or moving your body can help.
Breathing slowly can help.
These things make the bucket lighter so it doesn't spill.

What Makes My Bucket Empty

Show things that help you feel better. These are healthy ways to let feelings out of your bucket. You can use pictures, words or the sun cards on the next page.


Talking to someone I trust
Playing with my toys
Having quiet time
Drawing
Reading
Talking to a friend
Doing deep breathing
Going outside
Running or moving my body
Listening to music
Having a hug from someone I trust
Having time with my family
Having time with my pet
Having a rest
Having a snack
Feeling safe
Having someone help me
Feeling understood
Having space
Being comforted
Taking a break
Being in a calm place
Squeezing a stress toy
Doing something I enjoy
Talking about my feelings

About this Resource

My Stress Bucket – Diagram and Worksheets for Children is a free, printable PDF resource that helps children understand stress, emotions, and coping in a simple and visual way. Using the idea of an inner “bucket”, the diagram explains how different feelings and experiences fill the bucket, how it can spill when things get too much, and how healthy coping strategies can help empty it again.

The worksheets support emotional literacy, resilience, and self-regulation by encouraging kids to think about what fills their own bucket too fast, such as worries, loud noises, changes to routine, or feeling rushed. They can also explore what helps them feel better, including talking to someone they trust, having quiet time, drawing, resting, spending time with family, or using calm-down strategies.

This resource is ideal for social workers, teachers, counsellors, ELSA practitioners, and parents working with children who need support in recognising their stress triggers and learning healthy coping skills. It is suitable for use in SEL lessons, one-to-one sessions, group work, and therapeutic activities.

Easy to understand and child friendly, this free PDF helps children notice their feelings early, ask for help when they need it, and build their own toolkit of coping strategies. It encourages open conversations about stress and helps children understand that everyone’s bucket fills and empties in different ways, and that there are many things that can help them feel calm, safe, and supported.