



# Mikki's

HOW-TO  
SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TEENS



kidshelpline  
Anytime | Any Reason  
1800 55 1800 | [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)





## CONTENTS

<b>About the series</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Episode 1</b> When you feel all the feels – Crushes	<b>5</b>
<b>Episode 2</b> Risky business – why danger makes you feel soooo good	<b>10</b>
<b>Episode 3</b> Why does Sad Panda make you feel so blue anyway?	<b>14</b>
<b>Episode 4</b> What makes Worried Wayne so, well, worried?	<b>19</b>
<b>Episode 5</b> Trolling, oversharing and going viral – how to live your best online life	<b>23</b>
<b>Episode 6</b> Will the real Mo please stand up? How to be your one true self!	<b>28</b>
<b>Episode 7</b> My sister is a total alien!	<b>32</b>
<b>Episode 8</b> Surviving your most embarrassing moment ever!	<b>35</b>
<b>Episode 9</b> All About Autism	<b>39</b>
<b>Episode 10</b> When being cool means being... French. Huh?	<b>44</b>
<b>Episode 11</b> Friends till the end – how to be the best bestie	<b>48</b>
<b>Episode 12</b> Why is my family driving me crazy?	<b>52</b>
<b>Episode 13</b> How to tell IF a friendship is toxic	<b>55</b>
<b>Episode 14</b> Trying New Things	<b>59</b>
<b>Episode 15</b> True Grit* – How to bounce back and keep being awesome!	<b>63</b>
<b>Key creative &amp; cast</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>73</b>





## ABOUT THE SERIES



Produced by ABC Childrens, *Mikki vs the World* is a TV series all about pre-teen mental health. Whether it's crushes, anxiety or depression, it's all pretty full on when you are experiencing it for the first time. That's why ultra-keen psychologist Mikki, or Dr M as she is sometimes called, counts on a weird but wonderful team of expert (and not so expert) mates to help her figure out exactly what's going on in the adolescent 'old grey matter' and discover ways to keep those minds super healthy.

Fresh out of psychology school, Mikki is ready to do business. She's set up a very cool practice, hired a mostly cool assistant Mo and has ALL her new knowledge to share. On the downside, she's a little short on experience, so she can't seem to land a single client. That's not a problem though - Mikki's 'no shame' HQ is rarely short on drama giving her and Mo ample opportunity to test the odd theory, ask embarrassing questions and get to the bottom of some pretty tricky situations.

In every episode, our intrepid and fully qualified psychologist Dr M unpacks the mental health issues teenagers deal with every day, with a big dose of surreal comedy. Mikki calls on 'real life' input from local teenagers, musicians, sporting heroes, comedians and experts to help her solve whatever life puzzle she is facing.

Mikki vs The World is more than just a journey of discovery - it's a bizarre, surprising, hilarious, fact-finding rollercoaster. Are you ready to take the ride?

The production team collaborated with Kids Helpline, to develop the series' themes and ensure that the program is factually correct and showcasing best mental health practice. The "Mikki's How-To Survival Guide For Teens" was created in partnership with Kids Helpline.







## INTRODUCTION

## BEING A TEEN

Puberty doesn't just trigger physical changes; it triggers mental and emotional changes as well. The teen brain is hard at work developing, and helping you go from being a kid to an adult. This brings with it a lot of changes in different areas of your life, including:

- **Meaningful relationships** – When you're a child, your parents and siblings are the most important people in your life. As a teen, you start forming your own 'community', with different friendship groups and partners. This also means you are pushing boundaries, discovering your limits and developing your sense of independence.
- **Romantic and intimate relationships** – There's a lot happening here! Hormones are being released, and your body takes a long time to get used to these. You also might start dating, which can be a huge learning experience.
- **Problem-solving and decision-making skills** – In your early teens, you make most of your decisions with your amygdala (a part of your brain that plays an important role in emotions). But, as you get older, your prefrontal cortex is developing and you slowly start making less emotional decisions and more intellectual decisions.
- **Identity** – This is about who you are and how you fit into the world. You might start to question your gender identity or sexuality, explore your spirituality, or try new and different things to help figure out who you are.



## YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Your teen years are also a time when you might start becoming more aware of your mental health. **Fifty per cent of all mental health issues appear by age 15** and mental health difficulties are the number one reason why teens reach out to services like **Kids Helpline** for support.

There are many reasons why teens might struggle with mental health. There are lots of changes in your life when you're a teen – things like going to high school, making new friends, dating, learning to drive, getting your first job... there's a lot going on! **Our teen years are also the time when we are forming mental habits in how we think, feel and behave.**

That's why having good mental health is an important priority. **Learning more about your brain, understanding your emotions, knowing what supports you can access and how to do that, and figuring out your strengths and coping strategies can all help.**

## SELF-CARE

There are three important contributors to good mental health. The first part is self-care – and this means meeting your basic needs for nutrition, movement and sleep, because your physical health directly affects your mental health. Here's how:





## INTRODUCTION

- **Movement.** Exercise has social, emotional and health benefits, including reduced risk of diseases, increased concentration, increased confidence, and reduced aggression. Lack of exercise is also associated with increased feelings of depression. Teens need about 60 minutes of vigorous exercise every day.
- **Nutrition.** Food is important for brain health. Twenty percent of the nutrients we eat are used by our brain as energy, and 90% of serotonin is made in your digestive system. (Serotonin is an important brain chemical for regulating your mood.)
- **Sleep.** Teens need 8-10 hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep, or poor quality sleep, can have a big effect on your brain. When you're tired, your neocortex (responsible for all the important thinking you do) is downgraded, which means you are more likely to feel depressed, anxious or make emotional decisions.

## COPING STRATEGIES

Having good coping strategies is the second part of having good mental health. Coping strategies are things that help you deal when feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Here are some common ones that can be beneficial:

- **Breathing exercises.** You can use your breath to calm down your body, which can make your emotions feel calmer too. Try breathing in for four counts and out for four counts.
- **Mindfulness.** By connecting with your body in the present moment, you help your thoughts calm down. Some ways to be mindful include having a warm shower, eating yummy food, or doing exercise.
- **Creativity and flow.** Getting creative – for example by dancing, drawing, playing music or writing – can distract you, and help you create a different emotional state known as 'flow'.
- **Escapism, fantasy and imagination.** Playing online games, watching your favourite show or reading a good novel are great ways to de-stress by having a mental break.

## SUPPORTS

The third part of good mental health is having access to supports. Supports are people you trust to be there for you, listen to you and have your best interests at heart. It's great to have multiple supports. Your supports could include your parents/carers, other family members, friends, trusted adults such as a teacher at your school, and professionals like your GP or school counsellor.

There are a number of online supports for teens that you can access for free, like:

### KIDS HELPLINE

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free (even from a mobile), confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

<https://kidshelpline.com.au>

### HEADSPACE

headspace provides mental health support to people aged 12-25. They have face-to-face centres and also have an eheadspace (online) service.

<https://headspace.org.au/>

### REACH OUT

Reach Out provides self-help information, online peer support forum and referral information for young people aged under 25.

<https://au.reachout.com/>



# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## WHEN YOU FEEL ALL THE FEELS - CRUSHES

### EPISODE 1



When Mo hands Mikki her breakfast burrito, something unusual starts to happen... Mikki feels sweaty, her heart is racing, and she hears this mysterious singing whenever Mo's around.

Nope, it's not food poisoning – Mikki has a crush on Mo! She puts her detective hat on to learn more about crushes – the psychology behind them, how to let someone know you like them, and how to deal with a serious case of 'the ick'.





## EPISODE 1: WHEN YOU FEEL ALL THE FEELS - CRUSHES

### WHAT IS A CRUSH?



One role of puberty is to help us form intense emotional connections with people from outside of our family, including romantic partners. Sweaty palms, feeling giddy and liking someone (a lot) can all be signs you've got a crush on someone. When Mikki first realises she's seriously crushing on Mo, she turns to Internet Lady to learn more about the science of crushes, and comes face-to-face with 'The Feels', the musical trio who mysteriously appear the moment her feelings for Mo go from friend to something more.

**The Feels are made up of three 'neurotransmitters' (brain chemicals). Introducing...**

**Noradrenaline** - You have this neurotransmitter to thank for things like your sweaty palms, sleepless nights and loss of appetite, as well as that feeling of giddy excitement you have around your crush (or even just thinking about them).

**Dopamine** - This is a neurotransmitter that helps you feel good, which is why you might feel more energised and motivated around crush. It also makes you feel a bit 'addicted', like you miss your crush when they aren't around, and keep thinking up clever ways to 'bump into' them again (so you can get another feel-good hit!)

**Cortisol** - This plays an important role in stress. It helps keeps everything under control, but can also give you some of those body changes, like shaky hands and butterflies in your stomach. It makes you feel nervous around your crush, which is why you might say silly things. Because it's a stress hormone, it can also make you feel anxious about being rejected by your crush.





## EPISODE 1: WHEN YOU FEEL ALL THE FEELS - CRUSHES

### TYPES OF CRUSHES

As Mikki learns when playing the game show, “Name that Crush”, there is more than one type of crush. Three common types of crushes are:

#### The Celebrity Crush

When you get serious feels for someone famous, like a celebrity or influencer (or even a fictional character from your favourite Netflix show). These crushes are very one-sided, but that's ok, because it can make them feel quite 'safe' – there's no real chance of being rejected. Plus, it can be fun to imagine and fantasise about this kind of crush.

#### The Romantic Crush

When you get serious 'like-like' feels for someone. You're attracted to them and want to be with them or date them.



#### The Identity Crush

That feeling when you admire someone so much that you want to be just like them. You might find you're changing things about yourself to imitate them – in the same way Mikki changed what she was wearing in the game show. Identity crushes are a normal part of figuring out who you are.



**Did you know?** While it's very normal to have crushes and many people will experience them, some people may not – and that's normal and ok too. Your romantic feelings can fall on a spectrum, and some people identify as aromantic (they don't feel romantic attraction), grayromantic (they feel romantic attraction rarely) and demiromantic (they only feel romantic attraction when there's also an emotional bond).





## EPISODE 1: WHEN YOU FEEL ALL THE FEELS - CRUSHES

### ASKING SOMEONE OUT

First things first – not all crushes need to be acted on. It's perfectly acceptable to have a crush on someone and not ask them out. Some crushes are great just being crushes.

But, if you decide you want to take things further and see if you can be more than just friends, Mikki's teen pals had some great advice:

- **Be honest**
- **Just be yourself**
- **Be brave** – you might give yourself a pep talk before having a conversation with your crush
- **Try hanging out** in a bigger group and see if mutual feelings develop
- **Prepare for rejection** – know that it could happen and have a plan to behave respectfully if it does
- **Give the person time and space** (especially if they ask for it) – it could be a surprise or they might not know what to say. Don't press them for an answer straight away if they need time to think it over

### DEALING WITH REJECTION



Asking out a crush or letting them know how you feel does come with risks. There is always a chance they won't feel the same way and might reject you. Rejection can really hurt! Here's why:

- **Dopamine and noradrenaline** can play a role in intense feelings of frustration. These neurotransmitters can also make you feel hurt and depressed after being rejected (which can feel a bit like grief, too).
- **Cortisol** might make you feel panicked and impulsive, which can make it hard to draw a line between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours sometimes.

When Mikki spoke to Clinical Psychologist Jarred, he told her that there are no wrong feels and what matters most is what you do about those feels. You can't always control how you feel, but you **can control your behaviour**. If the other person isn't feeling it, they just aren't into you or they have rejected you, **you have to respect that**. "No," is always an acceptable answer to being asked out!





## EPISODE 1: WHEN YOU FEEL ALL THE FEELS - CRUSHES

Being on the receiving end of rejection is hard. Here are some things that help:

- Remember that your feelings are normal and they will pass with time
- Manage your behaviour so it's respectful
- Distractions can help you feel better (temporarily); this might look like hanging out with your best bud or doing something you enjoy
- Connect with your friends/supports – most people experience rejection in their life at some time or other, so chatting with people who care about you can really help
- Don't take rejection too personally – you can be the most awesome person in the world, but still not be compatible with someone and that's ok
- Know that you will likely feel the same way about someone else in the future again – and people will feel the same way about you, too

## WHEN YOU JUST DON'T FEEL IT



When Mikki realises she has to let Mo down, she thinks about how she would like someone to let her down if the situation was reversed. Here's how to let someone down with empathy:

- **Choose a private time/space to let them down** – there's nothing worse than having an audience!
- **Don't make it personal** – there's no need to criticise; rather, just let them know you don't feel the same way
- **Be honest** – pretending you care to avoid hurting someone's feelings can hurt more in the long run
- **Be kind** – being rejected can hurt; treat the person how you would want to be treated
- **Give them time and space** if they need it

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- Have you ever had a crush?
- Has anyone ever had a crush on you?
- What kind of crushes have you experienced out of the celebrity, romantic and identity crush categories?
- Have you ever asked someone out? What happened?
- How would you let someone know you just weren't into them?
- How would you cope (in a healthy way) if your crush didn't return your feelings?



# Mikki

vs  
THE WORLD

## RISKY BUSINESS - WHY DANGER MAKES YOU FEEL SOOOO GOOD

EPISODE 2



When Mikki gets a mini Godzilla pet for the office, Mo is not impressed and calls her out of her love of danger. Mikki decides to investigate risk taking, so she can learn for herself how to make the most of risk taking, while also staying safe.





## EPISODE 2: RISKY BUSINESS - WHY DANGER MAKES YOU FEEL SOOOO GOOD

### WHY DO TEENS TAKE MORE RISKS?



Taking risks is a normal part of adolescence and is a chance for you to explore your limits and abilities. As Mikki discovers with the help of Internet Lady, risk-taking serves an important evolutionary purpose. For most of human history, while we were hunter-gatherers, risks often had big rewards. For example, hunting bigger animals, like elephants was dangerous – but it also had the reward of giving you and your community more food to survive famine or drought.

Teens are generally the physically fittest and strongest in a community, so in traditional societies it made sense that you would take on more of the risks (especially if it involved being strong or fast).

Teens are often more open to trying new things, meeting new people, thinking differently and behaving differently, which can pave the way for social change which is beneficial for everyone!

### RISKS AND YOUR BRAIN

Our brain developed to balance safety and risk taking. The pre-frontal cortex hasn't fully finished developing until you're 25, which means that people in their teens are more likely to make emotional (impulsive) decisions and be driven by reward rather than fear, which helps explain why teens tend to take more risks than adults.

You've probably heard of the 'adrenaline rush' – that high that people get when they do something dangerous. When Mikki learns sword swallowing, fire walking and baby crocodile juggling, her anxiety levels (stress response) increases. For some people, this heightened response feels exciting. There are two neurotransmitters (brain chemicals) that play a different role in this:

#### ADRENALINE

This is released in threatening, dangerous, stressful and exciting situations. Adrenaline can last in your body up to an hour after you are safe, and can give you a huge energy boost.

#### DOPAMINE

This is a 'feel good' chemical. After taking on a stressful or dangerous situation, your brain calms you down and rewards you for surviving by making you feel good.





## EPISODE 2: RISKY BUSINESS - WHY DANGER MAKES YOU FEEL SOOOO GOOD

### WHY DO SOME PEOPLE LIKE RISKS MORE THAN OTHERS?

Some aspects of your 'risk appetite' (how much risk you are comfortable with) are genetic – meaning you inherit them biologically from your family in your DNA. Some of us, like Mikki, are happy living on the edge, while some of us (like Mo) think a mini Godzilla is not a very good office pet. It's good to have a mix of people in society. Those who prioritise safety help keep others safe, while those who favour taking risks sometimes bring big rewards.

### TAKING SAFE RISKS

Taking risks isn't necessarily a bad thing, but you have to be able to judge for yourself whether a risk is worth it or not. Risks have consequences and you can't always foresee all of them. Here are some ways you can take risks, but still be safe:

#### Learn emotional self-regulation.



Because teens often make impulsive and emotional decisions, learning to manage your emotions can help you make healthy and safe decisions.

#### Minimise risks by planning ahead

and taking safety precautions, e.g. wearing knee pads while skating.

#### Engage in 'safe' risk-taking



e.g. adrenaline charged sports like rock climbing.

#### Stop and think before you act

Is your experience worth the danger to you or others?

#### Check in with yourself

Are you taking a risk because you want to, or due to pressure?

#### Know your personal values

and have a plan for how to respond to peer pressure.







## EPISODE 2: RISKY BUSINESS - WHY DANGER MAKES YOU FEEL SOOOO GOOD

### PEER PRESSURE



Peer pressure plays a big role in risk. Research has shown that teens are more likely to take bigger risks when they are with friends or have an audience. (The same effect isn't seen in adults.)

Being able to make up your own mind about risks you are and aren't willing to take is important. If you find yourself being pressured to do something outside your risk comfort zone, these strategies might help:

- A confident “no thanks” or “not for me”
- Using humour to deflect pressure or attention
- Know what you're willing to let slide and what you're not ok with
- Move away from the situation
- Distract, delay or offer an alternative, e.g. “Maybe later”, or “How about we do something else instead?”
- Be direct and say you don't appreciate feeling pressured
- Get support and talk to someone you trust

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- When was the last time you took a risk? What happened?
- What risks do you think are safe/ok and why?
- What risks do you think are dangerous and why?
- Have you ever had an adrenaline high? What was it like?
- Has taking a risk ever gone wrong/badly for you? What happened?
- How do you make risk taking safer?
- Have you ever been peer pressured? What happened?
- What's your favourite peer pressure strategy and why?



# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## EPISODE 3

WHY DOES  
SAD PANDA MAKE  
YOU FEEL SO BLUE  
ANYWAY?



*Mo is grieving the death of his beloved fish, Margery, and finds himself with a total case of 'sad panda'. Mikki is coping well with the loss, until the memorial, when everything hits her all at once and she gets upset. But Mikki is determined to help Mo (and herself) cheer up, so she puts on her detective hat to learn all about sadness, including depression, in order to heal and move forward.*





## EPISODE 3: WHY DOES SAD PANDA MAKE YOU FEEL SO BLUE ANYWAY?

### EMOTIONS

Did you know that emotions actually **serve different purposes**? Emotions **give us information** about things we see, hear, smell, touch and taste. They give our experiences **meaning** and help us figure out how to best **respond** in different situations. They also help us **communicate and connect** with others.

Imagine you see a growling dog. The fact it's growling **communicates** with you that it might not be a friendly dog. Your emotion (fear) also lets you know things might not be safe. If you felt happy, or no emotion, you might respond in a way that's unsafe, like trying to pat the growling dog.

As Mikki learns from Internet Lady, different emotions mean different things. Here are some of the meanings behind everyday emotions you probably experience:



There are different types of sadness, including grief, heartbreak, loneliness and depression. It's important to know what kind of sad you are feeling, as this can help you figure out how to heal and feel good again.

### ABOUT GRIEF

The type of sadness Mikki and Mo are feeling is grief. Grief happens when you are dealing with a loss or change. A loss or change doesn't just mean mourning a death – you can grieve changing schools, moving house, your family going through a separation or divorce, or even going through puberty (which is a pretty big change where you say goodbye to childhood).

Grief is the flip side of love – it's the love we feel after a loss. Grief can feel very painful and overwhelming. It can also be complex and can bring up lots of other emotions, including guilt, anger and fear. Grief is very personal and there's no right or wrong way to experience it.





## EPISODE 3: WHY DOES SAD PANDA MAKE YOU FEEL SO BLUE ANYWAY?

### COPING WITH GRIEF

It can be helpful to think of grief a bit like a rollercoaster – there are big ups and downs. Grief also doesn't have a set timeframe – everyone grieves in their own time and way. Here are some things that can help if you are grieving:

- Allow yourself to experience your grief
- Look after yourself
- Express your feelings, e.g. write it down, listen to music
- Join in rituals – traditions can help you process your loss or find meaning in it (like the memorial Mo held for Margery)
- Preserve memories – you might create a tribute to honour their memory
- Get support from family and friends
- Take breaks from grieving – forgetting your grief for a while or feeling happy is normal and healthy (and nothing to feel guilty about)!
- Prepare for 'triggers' – things like anniversaries and milestones can make grief feel fresh again

**Did you know?** Crying is a way we comfort ourselves when we are emotionally distressed. When we cry, our brain releases chemicals (neurotransmitters) that help relieve physical and emotional pain.



## DEPRESSION

Depression is a constant feeling of sadness (more than five days a week). Mikki meets 'depression panda' when she imagines being down in the dumps. It takes her by surprise, and she isn't sure why she feels that way. That can be one of the hard things about depression – it can seem like you feel intensely sad, but there may not be an obvious reason why.

While talking with depression panda, Mikki feels really tired, which is also a common experience in depression. That's because sadness can affect your body, as well as your emotions.

As Mikki's mate, Clinical Psychologist Emerson tells her, it's important to keep an eye on your sads in case it starts to develop into depression. Grief and depression can seem similar and have a lot in common, but there are a few differences.





### What grief and depression have in common:

- Intense sadness
- Feeling tired
- Changes in behaviours, e.g. sleep and eating (like Mo eating all the printer fudge)
- Trouble concentrating

### Signs it might be depression:

- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Feeling worthless, powerless, and helpless
- Being emotionally 'numb' (i.e. don't feel emotions) or feeling empty
- Don't enjoy things you used to enjoy, e.g. Mo sharpening pencils
- It doesn't seem to have a cause or the cause is unknown
- It feels overwhelming or you are struggling to cope
- It causes you distress
- It interferes with your everyday life, e.g. you avoid seeing friends because you feel so down
- It's present all or most of the time (you don't have ups and downs or feel good some of the time)
- It lasts a long time
- You feel unsafe

### COPING WITH FEELING DEPRESSED

Depression can sometimes be a symptom of something else, like a medical condition. If you are feeling depressed and it's not getting better, it's important to see a GP, so they can run tests, diagnose you and refer you to professionals who can help.

Getting professional support for dealing with depression is important. Depression can be hard to deal with alone and often gets worse if left untreated.





## EPISODE 3: WHY DOES SAD PANDA MAKE YOU FEEL SO BLUE ANYWAY?

Here are some other things that may help if you have been feeling depressed:

- **Self-care** – looking after yourself by eating nutritious food and getting enough sleep is important
- **Exercise** – people who are depressed often don't feel like exercising, but it can have a lot of benefits
- **Spending time in nature/in the light** – being in nature is really calming and getting enough light (in a sun safe way) can reduce feelings of depression
- **Get support** – when people feel depressed, they withdraw from family and friends which can actually make things worse; connection and talking with people you care about can really help

**Interesting note:** Sometimes, people don't want to share when they're sad because they are worried about making others sad or they feel like it's hopeless. This is called help-negation. When Mikki and Mo are sad together, it actually has a beneficial effect, helping them both to feel connection, support and start to heal. Being down or depressed doesn't make you a burden on others – and it's a big privilege to be trusted and have a chance to support someone you care about who's struggling with depression. So if you ever start to struggle, tell as many people you feel can support you as you can and keep on talking with them until things are better.

### SUPPORTS FOR DEPRESSION

#### Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free (even from a mobile), confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

<https://kidshelpline.com.au>

#### headspace

headspace provides mental health support to people aged 12-25. They have face-to-face centres and an eheadspace (online) service.

<https://headspace.org.au/>

#### Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue specialises in depression, and other mental health issues related to depression. They provide information for young people aged 12-25.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/young-people>

#### Reach Out

Reach Out provides self-help information, online peer support forum and referral information for young people aged under 25.

<https://au.reachout.com/>

You can also speak to a trusted adult in your life, like your parents/carers, a teacher or your school counsellor, or even your GP.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Can you think of any other different types of sad?
- How have you coped with feeling sad in the past?
- Have you experienced grief before? How did you get through it?
- When you feel down, what things uplift and inspire you?
- Have you ever felt depressed?
- What do you do to cope if you are feeling down?
- How would you support a friend who was feeling down?
- Who would you go to for support if you were feeling sad?





# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## WHAT MAKES WORRIED WAYNE SO, WELL, WORRIED?

### EPISODE 4



*In this episode, Mikki experiences anxiety when her best bud, Mo, volunteers her for karaoke. Mikki has a bad case of stage fright at the thought of singing in front of other people, which triggers her body's stress response. She meets Worried Wayne, whose constant worrying makes her feel more and more anxious. As an intrepid psychologist, Mikki decides to learn all she can about anxiety and how to cope with it.*



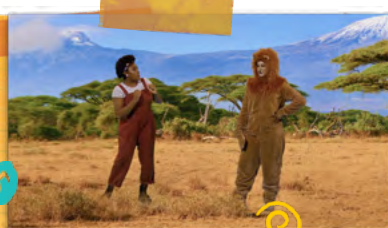


## EPISODE 4: WHAT MAKES WORRIED WAYNE SO, WELL, WORRIED?

### STRESS

The first part of anxiety Mikki learned about was stress. Stress is your **body's response** to an event.

Our brain can interpret stressful things as possibly being dangerous. It deals with danger in lots of different ways. Internet Lady teaches Mikki about three of the most common stress reactions we experience, known as the fight, flight and freeze responses.



#### FIGHT (ATTACK)

Mikki tells the lion she isn't scared

- Cranky/irritable
- Argumentative
- Aggressive or 'physical', e.g. kicking a tree

#### FLIGHT (RUN AWAY)

Mikki tries to run away from the lion

- Feel panicked
- Try and avoid things that cause stress
- Withdraw from family, friends or other activities



#### FREEZE (HIDE)

Your freeze response helps Mikki hide, so the lion can't see her

- Stop moving
- Can't think clearly or respond
- Feel stuck and not sure what to do

**Your fight/flight/freeze response is automatic.**  
(This means, you don't get to choose it).

#### BODY CLUES FOR STRESS

Stress causes changes in your body. These changes can be helpful clues that you are starting to feel anxious. Some common body clues include:

- Rapid breathing/feeling out of breath
- Heart racing
- Feeling shaky
- Butterflies in your stomach
- Tension/tight muscles

#### DEALING WITH STRESS

Because stress happens in your body, doing physical things can help your body feel calmer. Here are some helpful strategies you can try:

- Calm, controlled breathing, e.g. breathe in for four counts, hold for four counts, breathe out for four counts, hold for four counts
- Movement or exercise, e.g. going for a walk
- Self-care (looking after yourself), like eating nutritious foods and getting a good night's sleep
- Touch, like patting your pet or hugging someone you care about
- Physical comfort, like having a warm bath or shower





## EPISODE 4: WHAT MAKES WORRIED WAYNE SO, WELL, WORRIED?



## WORRY

Worry is **your mind's way of trying to prevent or deal with stress**. Our brain will try to help us prepare for things that might be new, different or unsafe by imagining those scenarios and mentally rehearsing what we might do if we ever find ourselves in that situation. This is exactly what Worried Wayne is experiencing. He kept imagining everything that could go wrong – from choking on a breadstick, to getting sick. The problem with worrying is that it can be cumulative. The more you do it, the more worried you feel; and the more worried you feel, the more you think worrying thoughts, and so on.

### THOUGHT CLUES FOR WORRY

Worry is a thinking pattern that focuses on things that might go wrong. Here are some examples of worried thought patterns:

- Imagining the worst that could happen
- Focusing on the negatives and ignoring the positives
- Jumping to conclusions, e.g. "They didn't respond to my message – they must hate me!"
- Blaming yourself for things that aren't a big deal or that weren't your fault
- Overgeneralising or exaggerating, which means using words like, "All", "Never", "Always", e.g. "Good things never happen to me"

### DEALING WITH WORRY

Because worry is in our mind, there are different ways of thinking that can be helpful. When we think the same kind of thoughts on repeat over time, these thoughts can become thinking patterns. Breaking the pattern by thinking in different ways can help. Here are some ideas:

- **Meditation** – this gives you a break from worrying and can help you learn to discipline your thoughts
- **Mindfulness** – our worries are often in the past and future, but our body is in the present moment. Focus your thoughts on the present moment by connecting with your five senses – things you can hear, smell, see, taste or touch
- **Challenging thoughts**, e.g. Ask yourself, "Is this thought helpful? Is this thought actually true?"
- **Self-talk** – finding examples of positives that have happened, or reword the thought so it's helpful, e.g. "I'm having a hard time making friends at school right now, but I made some great friends in my dance class!"





## EPISODE 4: WHAT MAKES WORRIED WAYNE SO, WELL, WORRIED?

### ANXIETY

Anxiety happens when your **stress** and **worry** occur at the same time. Anxiety is very treatable. If you think you have an anxiety disorder, it's important to get professional support.

Here are some services that can help!



#### Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free (even from a mobile), confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

<https://kidshelpline.com.au>

#### headspace

headspace provides mental health support to people aged 12-25. They have face-to-face centres and an eheadspace (online) service.

<https://headspace.org.au/>

#### Reach Out

Reach Out provides self-help information, online peer support forum and referral information for young people aged under 25.

<https://au.reachout.com/>

You can also speak to a trusted adult in your life, like your parents/carers, a teacher or your school counsellor, or even your GP.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are some of your main worries and why?
- What are your body clues when you start to feel stressed?
- What helps your body feel calm?
- What thought clues do you experience when you worry?
- What helps you cope with worrying thoughts?
- Who are your main supports?
- What professional supports could you use?



# Mikki

VS

THE WORLD

## TROLLING, OVERSHARING AND GOING VIRAL — HOW TO LIVE YOUR BEST ONLINE LIFE

EPISODE 5



*After Daphne's sandwich gets famous online, Mikki tries to go viral too. But while trying to become an influencer, Mikki starts feeling addicted to her phone. As a psychologist, she explores what's happening in your brain when you get all those social notifications. Mikki trolls one of Daphne's posts and receives a big response, but regrets it when she learns more about her 'digital footprint' – stuff shared online stays online.*





## EPISODE 5: TROLLING, OVERSHARING AND GOING VIRAL - HOW TO LIVE YOUR BEST ONLINE LIFE

### SOCIAL MEDIA ISN'T ALL BAD



It's true that social media use can have negative impacts on your mental health. But there are actually lots of benefits to using socials (in a healthy way of course!)

#### Social media can help you to...

- Develop your identity
- Develop your goals and aspirations
- Socialise with friends
- Access support people and services
- Stay updated with world events
- Join communities of people like you
- Take action to address issues of public concern

The difference between **healthy and unhealthy** social media use is the negative impact it is having on your life.

#### Some of the **unhealthy** ways social media can impact on your wellbeing include:

- Disrupting your sleep
- Focusing on appearance
- Fake/misleading images
- You can't help but compare yourself to others
- Cyberbullying, trolling, catfishing, doxxing, etc.
- FOMO (fear of missing out)
- You spend time scrolling instead of socialising or engaging in self-care
- It can be addictive





## EPISODE 5: TROLLING, OVERSHARING AND GOING VIRAL - HOW TO LIVE YOUR BEST ONLINE LIFE



### WHY DO SOCIALS FEEL SO ADDICTIVE?

When Mikki and Mo first meet up, they've both got their heads buried in their phones! And when Mikki's post starts getting lots of likes and comments, she can't tear herself away.

Internet Lady says it's easy to obsess over your phone and social media because phone apps & social media platforms are designed to tap into your **dopamine reward system**.

**Dopamine** is a feel-good brain chemical. It rewards you by making you feel awesome after you do certain things like exercising, eating something delicious or checking a notification on your phone.

Social media apps deliberately design the experience to tap into this reward system – because the more time you spend on the platform, the more money they can make.

And dopamine wears off really quickly, making you want more!

**Did you know?** The teenage brain picks up patterns way quicker than adults. So the teenage brain easily links 'feeling good' with social notifications.

**That's why it's so hard to put the phone down!**



### TROLLING AND BULLYING

When Mikki consults her teen team, Kiki makes the great observation that while Mikki isn't necessarily a troll, isn't necessarily a troll, she has definitely **done** some trolling.

**It's important to remember that behaviours like trolling and bullying are just behaviours and do not define who a person is.**





## EPISODE 5: TROLLING, OVERSHARING AND GOING VIRAL - HOW TO LIVE YOUR BEST ONLINE LIFE

Amanda from Kids Helpline is able to help Mikki understand the difference between trolling and bullying.

### Bullying is:

An **ongoing** or **repeated** misuse of power in relationships, with the intention to cause deliberate (on purpose) **psychological harm**. Bullying behaviours can be verbal, physical or social. Cyberbullying in particular can include:

- Sending/sharing nasty, hurtful or abusive messages or emails
- Humiliating others by posting/sharing embarrassing videos or images
- Spreading rumours or lies online
- Setting up fake online profiles
- Excluding others online
- Repeated harassment and threatening messages (cyberstalking)



### If you are experiencing cyberbullying, it's important to:

- **Keep the evidence** – take screenshots
- **Block it**
- **Report it to the game, site or app it's happening on**
- **Get support from a trusted adult or a service like Kids Helpline or headspace**

If it keeps happening, or you aren't happy with how the game, site or app responded to your report, you can also report it to [esafety.gov.au](https://www.esafety.gov.au)

### Trolling is:

When someone misuses social websites to cause conflict or harm to an individual or group. It's mean on purpose but is **often one-off** and is **not usually targeting a specific person** – it's often random. When people troll, they are seeking a reaction/response. The best way to respond to trolling is to ignore it.

## DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

When Mikki understands she's done the wrong things, she regrets past Mikki's online actions. But that doesn't mean she can just walk away from it.

What you post on the internet has the potential to stay there forever. This is called your 'digital footprint', and it can come back to haunt you in the future.

Whenever posting something online, it's important to remember that there **are real people behind the screen, with real feelings**, just like Mikki's sister Daphne.





## EPISODE 5: TROLLING, OVERSHARING AND GOING VIRAL - HOW TO LIVE YOUR BEST ONLINE LIFE

### Stop and think before you...

1. **Upload photos** – Make sure you only post photos that show you and your friends in a positive way. Once it's uploaded, it's no longer private and could be viewed by friends, family, teachers and strangers.
2. **Write to others** – Be mindful that you never know who will read these comments and how they might interpret them.
3. **Share about yourself** – Avoid sharing personal information online that could be misused by someone in real life. Check your privacy settings and make sure your account is secure.

## HOW TO MAKE SOCIALS BETTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

You don't have to avoid social media entirely! Here's what to do to make your socials work for you:

### FOLLOW

- Professional mental health pages for wellbeing info & inspiration
- Pages/people that promote and support diversity
- Pages/people who offer a balanced view on life, e.g. the good and the bad

### JOIN

- Groups where you feel safe and supported
- Causes you are passionate about
- Places where members are supported to share their stories

### REMEMBER

- Social media should enhance socialising with friends, not replace it
- You can take a tech break from time to time
- Keep some things just for you – pick and choose what you share online

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Have you ever felt like you struggled to 'switch off' from social media?
- How do you balance your tech time with offline time?
- Did you ever share/send/post something you regretted?
- What are your favourite ways to take a mental break from socials?
- Would you know how to report something that shouldn't be posted online?
- How do you stop and think before you hit send?
- Have you ever been trolled before? How did you respond?
- Have you ever acted in a way you regret online before? What did you learn?
- What would you do differently if it happened again?

*Kids Helpline and eSafety can help you figure things out online.*

*If you want to learn more about online safety or what to do if you're being bullied online, you can also visit the eSafety website at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids>*





# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

WILL THE REAL MO  
PLEASE STAND UP?  
HOW TO BE YOUR  
ONE TRUE SELF!

## EPISODE 6



*Feeling nervous about an upcoming date, Mo decides it's best to just be himself... only, he isn't entirely sure who he is.*

*Trying to 'find himself', he takes inspo from his favourite online celeb, Ice Cold Caroline and starts living 'the frosty life'. Mikki researches identity to understand why Mo is behaving so strangely.*





## EPISODE 6: WILL THE REAL MO PLEASE STAND UP? HOW TO BE YOUR ONE TRUE SELF!

### TRYING IT ON



Your teens are all about figuring out who you are. To figure out what works for you and what doesn't, sometimes you have to try different 'things' on – like outfits, but for your personality! There can be a lot of experimentation, trial and error.

**Some of the identity things you have to figure out for yourself include:**



#### WHY DO YOU HAVE TO FIGURE THIS OUT?

As Internet Lady teaches Mikki, knowing your identity can actually help increase your self-esteem and reduce your anxiety!

### FEELING NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Feeling judged for who you are, or feeling like you can't truly express who you are can have a negative effect on your mental health and wellbeing.

Our beliefs about ourselves are important as they shape our self-esteem (how we feel about ourselves). That voice in our head that tells us we aren't good enough is our 'inner critic'.





Here are some signs you may be letting your inner critic get the better of you:

- You're a perfectionist
- You find yourself procrastinating a lot
- You don't follow your passions (like Mo saving the koalas) because you think you aren't good enough, or you're afraid of failing
- You avoid things because you're worried about being judged
- You act in ways that aren't true to yourself, e.g. copying others – especially as a way to try and fit in
- You judge yourself harshly, more harshly than you would judge your friends for doing the same stuff

Here are some ways to deal with your inner critic:

**\* Name to tame your feelings** – if you know what your feelings are, you understand them better

**\* Challenge negative thoughts** – not every negative thought is true!

**\* Be encouraging** – just the way you would with a friend

**\* Know the difference between behaviour and identity** – what you 'do' isn't who you 'are'

**\* Accept others for who they are** – just like you'd want to be accepted for who you are

**\* Enjoy being your true self** – you are the only you!







## EPISODE 6: WILL THE REAL MO PLEASE STAND UP? HOW TO BE YOUR ONE TRUE SELF!

### THE BIG QUESTIONS

Some aspects of people's identities can be easy to figure out, but some identity questions are harder. Here are some of the big ones you might struggle with.

#### SEXUALITY

This is about how you see and express yourself sexually, like who you have a crush on, who you want to go out with and who you want to have sexual experiences with (if anyone!). You could be gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or some combination of these. For some people it takes a while to figure out their sexuality, while others know their identity from a young age.

#### SPIRITUALITY & BELIEFS

This could be about belief in a higher power or life after death, or a set of practices/rituals that give you meaning. Having a spiritual identity (regardless of what this looks like for you) can help you deal with stress, change, grief and life's ups and downs. It can also give you a greater sense of purpose, as well as connection with a community of people with likeminded beliefs. Some people may decide spirituality and religion isn't for them – and that's perfectly ok too!

#### GENDER IDENTITY

Gender refers to your sense of being a girl, a boy, neither of those, a bit of both, or a different combination that feels right to you. Our gender can be understood, experienced and shown through our identity (e.g. labels, pronouns), body (e.g. appearance) and expression (e.g. how you act, how you dress). Most children know what their gender identity is from a young age, but for some it can take a while to express it, or to feel safe expressing it.

### IDENTITY CHANGES

Identity can change throughout time. Even Ice Cold Caroline wasn't always frosty! Remember that you can always try new things, and you can even like things that contradict or seem like opposites, like when Mo realises he likes both action and romance movies.

We all grow and change with time and our identity evolves. People and things we experience in our lives influence and shape us, which can also change us.

We also change our identities when we play different roles in life. You probably act differently towards your parents/carers than you do towards your cousins, or when you're at school (a student) compared to when you play sport (a team mate).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do you like and why?
- What causes are you passionate about and why?
- Who are the most important people in your life and why?
- What are some experiences that have shaped who you are?
- What things do you like that seem like opposites?
- What do your friends like about you the most?
- What roles do you play?





# Mikki VS THE WORLD

## MY SISTER IS A\* TOTAL ALIEN!

### EPISODE 7



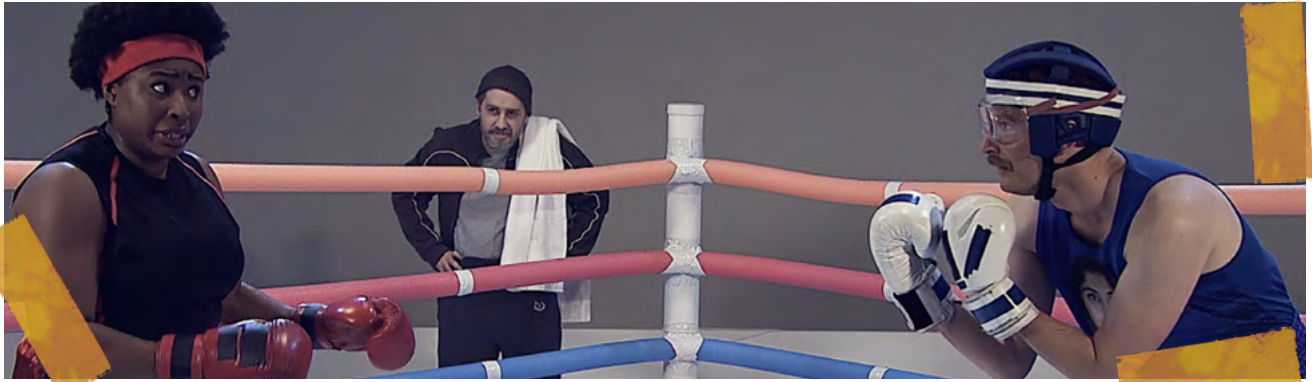
Mikki is furious when her 'perfect' step-sister Doc Daphne, a fellow psychologist and famous streamer, moves into the practice next door. They have a really competitive relationship, which goes from bad to worse when Mikki treats her sister like an alien and Daphne livestreams it. This prompts Mikki to do a deep dive into understanding the psychology of sibling rivalry to make peace with her sister and improve their relationship.





## EPISODE 7: MY SISTER IS A TOTAL ALIEN!

### SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS



Sibling relationships are really unique. Unlike our friends, we can't choose them – but we have to hang out with them a lot. Also unlike your friends, they are the only people who really get your family, because they live in it too. And because they share the same family, siblings can sometimes compare themselves to each other or compete with each other and often know how to really push each other's buttons (i.e. annoy each other).

As you enter adolescence, your relationship with your siblings can change. As Internet Lady explains to Mikki, our brain is constantly developing (until we are 25) and a lot of development happens when you're a teen. The thing is, if your siblings are a different age to you, their brain is also developing – but they are at a different stage depending on their age. Your teen years are also all about your identity – you are figuring out who you are. Your siblings are doing the same thing, which can cause tension.

### COMMUNICATION

It can be helpful to learn some basics about how we communicate, to help you become a better communicator with your siblings.

#### **PASSIVE:** **YOU WIN, I LOSE**

*You find yourself giving in, wanting to keep the peace, or not having a say.*

Mo giving in to all of Daphne's cupcake requirements is an example of passive communication.

#### **AGGRESSIVE:** **YOU LOSE, I WIN**

*You become competitive or even aggressive, and getting your way is the most important thing.*

Mikki and Daphne are very competitive and spend a lot of time communicating aggressively – especially when Mikki treats Daphne like an alien.

#### **PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE:** **I LOSE, YOU LOSE**

*One person shuts down the conversation and refuses to talk about it, or gives in but then sabotages.*

Daphne secretly filming Mikki and acting 'fake concerned' about her is an example of passive-aggressive communication, as she sabotages the conversation and makes Mikki seem crazy.

#### **ASSERTIVE:** **I WIN, YOU WIN**

*You are polite but firm, focus on solving the problem with empathy, and lead by example.*

When Mikki has a genuine conversation with Daphne, focusing on empathy and asking questions, she finds out Daphne moved next door because she idolises Mikki – and also wants to crush her as a competitor.





## EPISODE 7: MY SISTER IS A TOTAL ALIEN!

# RESOLVING CONFLICT: TRICKY CONVERSATIONS MADE EASY

Here are some communication strategies that can help you be an assertive communicator:

- **Get 'emotional consent'** – Find a time and place that suits the other person (don't just spring it on them when they're trying to watch their fave YouTube channel). You can do this by saying, "I want to talk about something that's been bothering me – is now a good time?"
- **Stay calm** – If you get emotional, you may trigger the other person's fight or flight response, and they may become passive, aggressive or passive-aggressive. Plus, sometimes your sibling will do stuff on purpose to make you emotional. If you are able to stay calm (on the outside at least), you reduce the chances of them doing it again
- **Share how you feel** – Expressing your emotions using "I" statements e.g. "I feel really upset" (like Mikki tries to practise while in the boxing ring), helps the other person have empathy for you and not feel attacked
- **Explain why you feel that way** – Be specific, and focus on the **behaviour**, e.g. "When I'm filmed without my permission..."
- **Be clear about what you want to happen**, e.g. "I would like it if you could ask my permission before sharing footage of me on socials."
- **Be empathetic** – Try to imagine how they feel
- **Ask questions**, e.g. "Maybe you saw it differently – what do you think about it?"
- **Try and find a win/win solution** – This is something where everyone is happy (but will also include some compromise)



There are a few **DON'TS** that can help as well:

- **Don't make the other person the problem**, e.g. "You're a horrible person!"
- **Don't accuse or blame**, e.g. "It's all your fault I got angry."
- **Don't be too general**, e.g. "You're rude to everyone."
- **Don't bring up irrelevant or past issues**, e.g. "And that time when I was four when you..."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What's the best thing about your relationship with your siblings?
- How do they bring out the best in you?
- What's the best conversation you've ever had with your brother/sister and why?
- What's important to your brother/sister?
- Do you ever compete? What happens?
- How do you normally make up after a fight?



# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## SURVIVING YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT EVER!

### EPISODE 8



When Mo accidentally gets water on his pants, it reminds him of his most shameful memory - when he peed his pants in front of his school class! Things get much worse when Mo's shame photographer shows up to capture it all on film. Mo starts to "shame spiral", reliving all his most embarrassing moments. When Mikki's own shame photographer shows up, she decides it's time to start psychologising to understand and beat shame once and for all!



## UNDERSTANDING SHAME



Shame is that self-conscious feeling you get when you're embarrassed, where you wish you could just run away or disappear. Everyone feels shame. As an emotion, it lets us know we've made a mistake and we might need to hide or escape. It also teaches us not to make that mistake again.

In fact, shame may have evolved as a way to help us stick to 'social norms'.

When the shame photographers whip up shame soup in the 'Shame Hungry' cooking show, they add three essential ingredients:

- **Secrecy** – Keeping it to yourself
- **Judgement** – Which makes you feel really bad about yourself
- **Self-blame** – Being hard on yourself for being human and making innocent mistakes

### IS IT SHAME OR GUILT?

Shame and guilt are similar, but different from each other.

#### GUILT

Guilt often makes you feel remorse and leads to you fixing the mistake you made, e.g. apologising or changing your behaviour.

#### SHAME

Shame is deeper and affects your sense of self. The big problem with shame is that it can result in us viewing our entire self in a negative way and feel like we are bad, disgusting or worthless.

**Did you know?** Teens feel more shame than adults do (in general).



### COPING WITH SHAME



We all respond differently to shame. Some people might become anxious or avoidant. Some people cope with shame by getting angry or aggressive, especially when they feel judged or criticised.

This is because feeling ashamed can make you feel vulnerable, i.e. open to being attacked or harmed, physically or emotionally. Being vulnerable can make you feel unsafe and powerless. And feeling this way over and over again can make you spiral and feel more and more ashamed!

Fortunately, there are good, healthy ways to deal with shame. Here are some things you can try:



- **Talk it out with someone you trust.** Mikki confesses to Mo that she farts while she pees. Because shame thrives on secrecy, she takes away its power by being honest. Sharing our shame also helps us connect with others – we realise it's normal and despite making mistakes, we are still loved and accepted.
- **Respond with laughter!** Often, when you laugh at yourself, other people laugh with you, not at you. It can make it easier to brush off embarrassment.
- **Keep it in perspective.** Remember that one mistake (or even two or three) doesn't make you a bad, disgusting or worthless person. Everyone makes mistakes – this is really normal.
- **Treat yourself like your best friend.** If your bestie made that mistake, would you judge them harshly? Probably not – you would support them and still see the good in them.
- **Move on from what's embarrassing you.** Don't keep replaying it in your head, or get overly fixated or stuck on it. Don't let it rule your life! Forgive yourself and let it go.
- **Have a plan to respond if it comes up again.** Often, our shameful moments have witnesses or an audience (which makes them extra embarrassing). If you think it might come up again in conversation, having a plan to shrug it off or turn it into a joke can help.



## EVERYBODY MAKES MISTAKES



Making mistakes is a part of life. It doesn't matter if you're a parent, a teacher, a police officer or even the Queen – there will be times when you make mistakes.

But just like Psychologist Emerson tells Mikki, the important thing is that you can use the opportunity to learn something.

### MISTAKES TEACH US MANY THINGS.

*There's always something to learn. Getting good at something like making new friends, doing homework or learning a new game means being ok with making mistakes. It's how we learn to do things better.*

### TRY TO WORK OUT HOW THE MISTAKE HAPPENED.

*This can help you know what to do differently next time. The important thing to remember is that we are always learning. Getting better at things takes practice.*

### IT CAN BE HARD TO ADMIT THAT YOU'RE WRONG OR MADE A MISTAKE.

*Try not to be hard on yourself. Just remember that nobody is perfect and it's ok to make mistakes!*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What was your most embarrassing moment? How did you overcome it?
- How do you normally react when you feel ashamed?
- Who do you trust/talk to when you feel shame?
- How can you make an embarrassing moment funny/humorous?
- What would you say/do if a friend told you they were feeling ashamed?
- How would you like people to support you when you feel ashamed?



# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## ALL ABOUT AUTISM

### EPISODE 9



The new drummer in Mikki's band, Jade, is great at playing music! But Mikki and Mo struggle to understand some of her behaviour... until Jade lets them know she's autistic. Mikki turns to Internet Lady to find out more about it and learns that autism affects people in a broad spectrum of ways. The Teen Team tell Mikki about their experiences of being neurodivergent. But Jade's musical innovations leave Mikki feeling unwanted in the band. Confused, Mikki realises she needs to know a lot more about what Jade thinks, feels, and how she experiences the world.





## EPISODE 9: ALL ABOUT AUTISM



## WHAT IS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)?

People who have autism are considered 'neurodivergent'. If a person is neurodivergent it means their brain is wired up a bit differently from most people's brains, which is called having a 'neurotypical' brain.



**'Neuro' = brain stuff**  
**'Divergent' = different**

Even though the official diagnosis, 'Autism Spectrum Disorder' (ASD), can make it sound like something is wrong, being autistic can mean having many different experiences both negative and positive. Autism is described as a 'spectrum' because there is a broad range of different ways it can affect people. Just like the light spectrum of a rainbow, it covers lots of different things.

Autism can affect how a person...

- **thinks**
- **feels**
- **interacts with others**
- **experiences their environment**

No two autistic people have the same experiences, but they may find that speaking to other autistic people can result in a lot of "OMG, me too!" moments.





## EPISODE 9: ALL ABOUT AUTISM

### WHAT IS HAVING AUTISM LIKE?



Autistic people are all individuals and everyone responds to situations and environments in different ways.

The Teen Team teaches Mikki that there is a diverse range of things that make them uncomfortable, such as physical contact or crowds of people. They also describe experiencing difficulties such as anxiety, heightened senses and social communication issues like misunderstanding facial expressions or taking jokes too literally.

Here are some typical things autistic people can experience differently or have difficulty with:

#### SOCIALISING

Just like Jade, some autistic people might dislike eye contact. Other people might have a different sense of humour. Others might be very direct and clear in how they say things, while some might prefer not to talk, or have a different way to communicate.

#### SENSATIONS

Autistic people can experience sensations differently, such as noticing things others don't, or having strong positive or negative responses to certain stimuli, e.g. being overwhelmed by crowds or loud noises, or feeling content and joyful when noticing different textures of plants while walking.

#### BEHAVIOURS

Some autistic people like routine and dislike change, or might have one or more topics they are extremely passionate about ('special interests').

Let's look at those behaviours in a bit more detail.





## EPISODE 9: ALL ABOUT AUTISM

### COMMON BEHAVIOURS

When Jade becomes a bit stressed at rehearsal, she starts jumping up and down. She tells Mo this is a form of 'stimming', which is a repetitive activity that helps her to cope when she's feeling overwhelmed.

Here are some common behaviours autistic people might have.

#### HYPERFIXATION

Neurotypical brains are often wired towards being able to focus a little attention to multiple things at a time. Autistic brains often struggle to split attention between topics but are really good at 'hyperfixating' – focusing deeply on one thing to the exclusion of everything else. This can be great for learning and getting stuff done, but can be a problem if it results in neglecting self-care.

#### SPECIAL INTERESTS

Often autistic people will have a few topics they are very passionate about. They deeply enjoy learning about, talking about or experiencing these 'special interests'.

#### MASKING

Changing behaviour, either consciously or subconsciously, to match neurotypical behaviours. This takes a lot of energy and can be very tiring.

#### MELTDOWNS AND SHUTDOWNS

These are uncontrollable responses to extreme distress or overload. A meltdown is an outward explosion of extreme distress (such as crying or screaming), whereas during a shutdown the autistic person may be silent and unresponsive. Having a calm and safe space to recover is important during and after meltdowns and shutdowns.

#### SENSORY OVERLOAD

This is when strong sounds, smells, sights, feelings or tastes become overwhelming. It can cause physical symptoms such as pain or nausea and extreme emotional distress. Autistic people are more prone to sensory overload. It can help to be aware of triggers (e.g. flashing lights, scratchy clothing) so these can be avoided or managed.

#### STIMMING

'Stimming' is short for 'self-stimulating'. Stims are different behaviours that can help regulate or express emotions, process information, communicate, soothe and stimulate. Everyone stims sometimes, but autistic people stim a lot more often than neurotypicals and are really good at it. Stims vary from person to person and might take the form of:

- Sound such as listening to the same sounds or making the same noises
- Vision such as watching repetitive movements that catch the eye
- Touch such as fingernail biting, squeezing things, twirling hair
- Verbal expression such as repeating words, sounds or noises
- Movement such as rocking, spinning, pacing, or jumping (like Jade!)





## EPISODE 9: ALL ABOUT AUTISM

### WHAT IF MY FRIEND HAS AUTISM?



Mikki learns that if she wants to understand Jade, not only does she need to understand autism a bit better, she has to ask Jade about herself.

The Teen Team tell Mikki that it's good to embrace differences, be curious, and be patient with autistic behaviours or traits she might not yet understand. And Psychologist Emerson cautions her not to assume that people with autism don't understand her just because they don't react the way she expects them to react.

#### Here are some ways to be a great friend to an autistic person:

- Treat them with respect
- Embrace differences
- Communicate openly
- Learn about autism
- Be an ally/advocate to help your friend access support
- Support them if they become overwhelmed by finding them a quiet place to calm down

And remember, autistic people are all individuals with different strengths and experiences!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If you are autistic, what would you like people to know about it?
- Do you have any autistic friends? How does it affect them?
- What are some ways you could respectfully ask how a person experiences the world?
- How do you show respect to others?
- What would you like to know or understand about autism? How could you find out more about this?
- What's something new you learned about autism from this episode of Mikki Vs. The World?





# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

WHEN BEING COOL  
MEANS BEING...  
FRENCH. HUH?

EPISODE 10



*When Mikki's popular sister Daphne shares the latest French craze, Mikki and Mo find themselves drinking mushroom brie lattes and wearing berets to fit in with the cool crowd. Things start to go too far when Mikki gives in to peer pressure and eats a croissant (with dire consequences for her digestive system). Mikki gets support from friends and an expert to try some peer pressure strategies to reinforce her personal boundaries and stand up to Daphne.*





## EPISODE 10: WHEN BEING COOL MEANS BEING... FRENCH. HUH?

### VALUES

Values are things you believe are important to who you are (your identity) and how you live. Values might include being honest or trustworthy. Our values shape our behaviour. Values aren't always easy or clear to live up to – they exist in a kind of 'grey area' and might differ in different circumstances, e.g. you might value privacy, but might think some things shouldn't be kept secret. Or you might value staying calm, but find it hard to live up to when you get angry on the hockey field.



### BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are the line between behaviours we are ok with and things we're not ok with. They are personal and different for everyone. Some examples of boundaries include what kind of humour you find funny or whether you're a hugger or not. We normally base our boundaries around our values. For example, if you value privacy, a boundary might be asking your little brother or sister to knock before they come into your room. If someone crosses your boundaries, say:

- \* **I feel** (emotions)
- \* **When** (describe the behaviour that crossed your boundary)
- \* **I would like it if** (tell them how to respect your boundary)
- \* **Otherwise, I'm going to** (be clear about the consequences)

E.g. "Daphne, I feel really anxious when I'm pressured to eat something I don't want to eat. I would like it if you could respect my choice to pass on that croissant. Otherwise I'm going to go and do some work in my office instead of hanging out here with you and Mo."





## EPISODE 10: WHEN BEING COOL MEANS BEING... FRENCH. HUH?

### PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure happens when people have different boundaries that clash or contradict. Because we use the people around us to determine what is and isn't acceptable behaviour, some people can try to pressure you into things they want to do for various reasons. Some pressure can actually be positive, e.g. a friend pressuring you to read your poem out in class because they think it's good. Positive pressure is encouraging and based on your best interests.

#### NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

Negative peer pressure is purposeful and is designed to make you do something you don't want to do. Here are some ways people pressure:

- **Insults**, e.g. Daphne tells Mikki and Mo they are "uncool"
- **Reason**, e.g. Mikki tries to convince Mo that all the cool kids are rolling in rubbish (ridiculous, right!)
- **Rejection**, e.g. Daphne tells Mikki all the cool kids are eating croissants when Mikki doesn't want to eat one
- **Threats**, e.g. Daphne tells Mikki she will tell all her friends Mikki isn't cool
- **Unspoken**, e.g. rolling eyes, ignoring you



#### WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE PEER PRESSURE?

Mikki learns from Internet Lady (with the help of some Vikings) that peer pressure evolved as a way to try and help us stay safe. Humans are social creatures, and through much of human history, being in a group/community was essential to our survival. If your community rejected or abandoned you and you had to try and survive in the wilds on your own, you most likely wouldn't have survived for very long. Because of this, our instincts make us want to fit in and be liked by others. This isn't always a bad thing – things like our laws, traditions and morals all benefit from positive peer pressure that encourages us to do the right thing and follow the rules.

#### RESPONDING TO PRESSURE

As Mikki learns in the (questionable) Game Show, 'Do I do it? Or do I not do it?' it's often easier said than done to stand up to peer pressure. When Mikki chats with her teen team, she discovers she's definitely not alone in finding it hard to stand up for herself.





## EPISODE 10: WHEN BEING COOL MEANS BEING... FRENCH. HUH?

There are many ways to respond to pressure that work. Here are some you can try:

- A confident “no thanks” or “not for me”
- Using humour to deflect pressure or attention
- Know what you’re willing to let slide and what you’re not ok with
- Move away from the situation
- Distract, delay or offer an alternative, e.g. “Maybe later”, or “How about we do something else instead?”
- Be direct and say you don’t appreciate feeling pressured
- Get support and talk to someone you trust

Responding to peer pressure takes practise. The great news is that you can try the strategies that best fit with who you are. And you don’t just have to try one strategy and give up – you can try as many as you need until you find one that works for you.

**Did you know?** When it comes to peer pressure, being the first person to ‘stand up’ can be tough. But, often other people in the group feel the same way. When you stand up, you role model being an ‘upstander’, and this often empowers other people to stand up as well. You might be surprised to find one or more of your friends back you up!

## DISRESPECTFUL FRIENDSHIPS



Sometimes we end up in friendship groups where we’re not respected. We might find that the people in the group don’t have the same values as us, keep crossing our boundaries or repeatedly pressure you to do things you’re not ok with. **True friends will always respect your values and boundaries, and will accept and celebrate differences of opinion. With true friends, “No” is always an acceptable answer!** If you think you’re in a friendship or group that’s disrespectful, it’s ok to seek out other friends who respect you and fit your values.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are your values and why?
- What are your boundaries?
- What can you do when someone crosses your boundaries?
- Have you experienced positive pressure before? What happened?
- What types of negative peer pressure have you experienced?
- What are your favourite strategies for standing up to peer pressure?
- Have you ever stood up to peer pressure in the past? What happened?
- Imagine a friend is pressuring you to tell them another friend’s secret. How could you re-state your boundary? Hint: I feel (emotion), when (situation). I would like it if (tell them how to respect your boundary).



# Mikki

VS

## THE WORLD

# FRIENDS TILL THE END — HOW TO BE THE BEST BESTIE

EPISODE 11



When Mo gets ghosted by his friends in the Wizard Robots of the Forest game, he isn't his normal happy go-lucky self. Trying to cheer him up, Mikki decides to take action and tells his friends to include him in the game. Her 'help' makes Mo furious and he accuses her of meddling, which leads Mikki to learn more about friendship in order to fix things with Mo.



### BEING A GOOD FRIEND



Everyone has the capacity to be a good friend! First, you have to make sure you aren't making any common friendship mistakes. Mikki learns about three of these behaviours in the Game Show, "Are you a lousy friend?" which are:

**Not listening**

This is when your friend doesn't listen to you, and is very egocentric (makes everything about them).

**Telling secrets**

This is when you feel you can't trust a friend, because they might gossip, start rumours or just let others know your deepest thoughts.

**Meddling**

When people meddle, it often goes beyond giving advice. They might start interfering (like Mikki does to Mo), which can feel like a bit of an invasion of privacy.

We are all capable of making these friendship mistakes, and sometimes we mean well when we stuff up, e.g. trying to help a friend.

You can avoid these mistakes by focusing on behaviours that make you a good friend, which includes things like:

**Being trustworthy**

You can be honest with each other and respect your friends' privacy.

**Being kind**

You treat each other (and other people) with respect.

**Support each other**

Support is all about truly listening and empathising with your friend. It's not about solving their problem, rather it's about being there for them when things are bad, they feel vulnerable or they aren't their best self.

**/be an ally**





## EPISODE 11: FRIENDS TILL THE END - HOW TO BE THE BEST BESTIE

### WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE



Everyone makes mistakes. Being a good friend isn't about being perfect – it's about caring for someone else's needs (as well as respecting your own). When Mikki betrays Mo's trust and meddles in his friendships, she makes a mistake. Mo doesn't need her to 'fix' things – he just needs her to support and be there for him.

All relationships will have hard times. Having a great relationship isn't about never disagreeing. A good friendship is one where you feel safe to make mistakes. And friendships can be even stronger after mistakes! If something has gone wrong, it's what you do next that counts.

And if you know you behaved in a way you regret, it's important to apologise, like Mikki does while going on a goblin wizarding raid with Mo. Here are a few tips/tricks to giving a great apology. Say:

**"I'm sorry for (describe what you did wrong). This is wrong because (explain why it was wrong, which this shows you understand it or have learned from it). In the future, I will (describe how you will change/do better). Can we talk about it now, or do you need some more time?"**

### WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND

Being left out and feeling lonely can really affect your mental health! Internet Lady explains to Mikki that the same part of your brain that processes physical pain, also processes the emotional pain around rejection and loneliness, which is why being left out or rejected can hurt so much.

If you are worried about a friend, the best thing you can do is check in with them. You can never go wrong by showing care and concern for someone!





## EPISODE 11: FRIENDS TILL THE END - HOW TO BE THE BEST BESTIE

Here are some things that can help with that conversation:

### Share what you've observed

e.g. "I notice you're not yourself lately, you seem down."

### Ask questions

e.g. "Has something been going on? Do you want to talk about it?"

### Actively listen

Don't interrupt or disagree. **Show empathy** (try to understand their feelings) and make sure you really understand what's going wrong. You can even check you are understanding things correctly, by summarising what your friend has said. E.g. "It sounds like you're really upset because your friends ghosted you on your favourite game - and that game means a lot to you. Is that right?"

### Don't jump straight to giving advice/solving the problem

Feeling like you have to have an answer can put a lot of pressure on you. Most of the time, people share their problems because they want emotional support - not because they expect you to know what to do.

If your friend doesn't want to talk, that's ok - you can always check in with them again in a few days. And if they do talk, make sure you keep checking in with them to see how things are going every couple of days. This will show them that you are there to support them.

Remember, it's a real privilege to be trusted by a friend when they are feeling weak or vulnerable!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- Have you ever felt lonely? What happened?
- What makes a good friend?
- What are some friendship behaviours you find challenging and why?
- What makes you a good friend?
- What are your favourite things about your best friend?
- How do you apologise when you make a mistake?
- How do you know if a friend is upset by something?



# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## WHY IS MY FAMILY DRIVING ME CRAZY?

### EPISODE 12



Mo loves his mummy. But sometimes... she drives him a little crazy (ok, more than just a little). When Mo's mum pops into the office, he's less than thrilled because he feels like his mum treats him like he's still a kid. His mum is none other than the actual Mayor, Pam Pammings – and she and Mikki hit it off instantly. Mo's reaction to his mum leads Mikki to do some investigating into family relationships, in order to find out why we can love our family so much, but still feel like they are driving us crazy.





## EPISODE 12: WHY IS MY FAMILY DRIVING ME CRAZY?

### CHANGING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

When you're a child, your family are the most important people in your life. They keep you safe, take care of you and teach you about the world.

When you go through puberty, it starts a chain of events to help you go from being a child to an adult. This isn't just a change your body goes through – it also changes your interpersonal relationships.

As Internet Lady's family simulation showed, adolescence can be a time of frustration for both teens and parents.

Some of the changes you might be experiencing in your brain as a teenager include:



**Your family becomes less important and your friends become more important –**

When you're an adult you leave your family and form your own family or 'community' with people you aren't related to, like friends and partners.

**You want more independence and start to push boundaries –**

This doesn't just help you learn more about standing on your own two feet, it also helps your parents to gradually 'let go' and accept you growing up.

**You become really focused on fitting in**

– For most of human history, your life would be at risk if your community rejected and abandoned you, which is why so many of us feel anxious about being judged (and might feel like our family is being embarrassing!)

**You become interested in romantic and intimate relationships –**

You might experience crushes, or even start dating.

**Interesting fact:** Adolescence is the time the brain is best at socialising! Teens have more empathy and pick up on more social queues than children or adults do (in general).

#### YOUR BRAIN

Your neocortex is the last part of your brain to develop. In fact, it doesn't fully develop until you're 25 years old! This part of your brain is important, because it allows you to assess risks, solve problems, communicate clearly, regulate your emotions, make good decisions and inhibit behaviours (i.e. not do certain behaviours). Because your neocortex is still developing, teens often make decisions with their limbic system ('emotional brain') – which is one of the reasons why you might find you get easily frustrated with your family. Or as it happened to Mo on the livestream, you know what you want to say (and it sounds great in your head) and what ends up coming out of your mouth is emotional gibberish!





## EPISODE 12: WHY IS MY FAMILY DRIVING ME CRAZY?

### TRICKY CONVERSATIONS

When you disagree, feel misunderstood, or have to be your mum's date to the Dinner Dance Disco (like Mo), it can be hard to know how to deal with it. The good news is, there are lots of great ways to communicate well with your family – and good communication is key to getting through tough issues:

- **Have empathy** – Ask yourself what the other person may be thinking or feeling. This is sometimes called “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes” (which is literally what Mo did to better understand his mum).
- **Choose when and where to have the conversation** – You don’t have to go as far as Mo did, pampering his mum for four hours! The most important thing is you choose a time and place where people feel safe and relaxed to have that important conversation.
- **Stay calm** – When you get angry or aggressive, it can trigger other people’s fight or flight response, which means they might ‘mirror’ you and also get angry or disengage. This can turn a conversation into an argument and can leave everyone upset.
- **Pick your battles** – Some things are worth having an emotional disagreement about and some things aren’t worth the energy.
- **Learn how to negotiate** – Make an effort to really understand the other person – once you know what’s important to them you can work together to try and find a solution everyone is happy with.
- **Find common ground** – Find stuff you both agree on and work from there, e.g. your safety, your education, etc.
- **Be gracious in defeat** – It’s easy to get upset when things don’t go your way, but acting emotional can affect other’s judgements of your maturity levels. It could also sabotage things you want in the future.
- **Be willing to compromise** – Knowing what you can be flexible on and what you really want can make it easier to find an outcome you are happy with. Mo found a win/win solution by agreeing to go the Dinner Dance Disco (which was important to his mum), but letting her know he’d take his own date (which was important to him).



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- Who are the most important people in your life right now and why?
- What would you like more independence with?
- What’s the best conversation you’ve ever had with your parent/carers?
- What’s the worst disagreement you ever had? What did you learn from it? What would you do differently?
- How might your family member see the situation?
- What would you most like to say to your family?
- What things are important to your family member?
- What do you both agree on?
- What are you willing to compromise on and why?
- What does compromise look like for you?
- What aren’t you willing to compromise on and why?
- How can you respond if the conversation doesn’t go well or you don’t get your way?



# Mikki vs THE WORLD

## HOW TO TELL IF\* A FRIENDSHIP IS TOXIC

### EPISODE 13



When Mikki's old frenemy Scarlet visits the office and announces she's moved back to town, Mikki is not thrilled. Before long Scarlet starts bullying Mikki – the same way she did when they were in high school. The toxic behaviour escalates when Mo starts to join in on the 'fun', helping install a 'Dr Butts' sign across the road. Mikki decides to upskill in bullying management so she can stand up to Scarlet once and for all.





## EPISODE 13: HOW TO TELL IF A FRIENDSHIP IS TOXIC

### WHAT IS TOXIC BEHAVIOUR?

Toxic behaviour is an umbrella term that covers a lot of different, serious, antisocial behaviours that can occur in friendships. One of the most common experiences of this for teens is bullying.

**Bullying is: an ongoing or repeated misuse of power in relationships, with the intention to cause deliberate (on purpose) psychological harm. Bullying behaviours can be verbal, physical or social**

Bullying is different from rude behaviour, conflict, or even mean behaviour.



#### RUDE

SAYING OR DOING SOMETHING HURTFUL THAT WASN'T PLANNED OR MEANT TO UPSET SOMEONE.

#### CONFLICT

SAYING HURTFUL THINGS ON PURPOSE DUE TO HEIGHTENED EMOTIONS AS PART OF A FIGHT OR DISAGREEMENT.

#### MEAN

SOMETHING HURTFUL TO SOMEONE ON PURPOSE, RARELY/ON OCCASION. MEAN BEHAVIOUR DOESN'T USUALLY HAVE A POWER IMBALANCE/MISUSE OF POWER.

### WHY DO PEOPLE BULLY?

Toxic behaviours happen for complex reasons. It is **not the fault of the person** being targeted. We know that people who use toxic behaviours on others:

- May have difficulties managing their emotions
- May face challenges socialising and empathising with others
- Are usually trying to have power or control over others

While this doesn't excuse their behaviours, it can help people being bullied understand that it's not their fault. If not addressed, people who act in toxic ways tend to repeat this behaviour in social situations throughout their lives, and need support to change their behaviour for their own good and the good of others.





### RESPONDING TO TOXIC BEHAVIOURS



When Mikki is practising her bullying responses with the Bullying Bot, she finds ignoring it doesn't help – the bullying just continues and gets worse. There are some things you can do if you are experiencing bullying, like:

- **Stay calm** – Often, people bullying want you to get emotional – it's important to respond from a place of calm rather than react (reactions are normally emotional).
- **Don't tell them how you feel** – If they want you to feel embarrassed or upset, telling them your emotions could make things worse.
- **Use humour** (if you can and it's appropriate) – This is a great way to deflect bullying and change the interaction.
- **Ask a witness/bystander explicitly for their help** (by name) – This can increase the likelihood that they will assist rather than ignore, e.g. "Mo, back me up here – a big Dr Butts sign is bad for business and isn't funny."
- **Get support**, like Mikki does when she turns to her friends – Tell more than one person and keep telling them until the bullying has stopped. When Mikki tells the security guard what happened, it isn't helpful (unfortunately!) But Mikki doesn't give up. She tries again and keeps chatting to Internet Lady and other friends until she's able to stop the bullying for good. It's important to tell all the adults you can what's happening and keep them informed (it might take time and more than one attempt to stop it).
- **If something doesn't work the first time, don't give up!** As Mikki discovers, different things work differently for different people – and not everything works all time.

**Did you know?** Reporting isn't 'dobbing'. While dobbing is about getting someone in trouble, reporting is about getting help for a person who is behaving in an inappropriate way, as well as protecting people who might be victims of their behaviour.





## EPISODE 13: HOW TO TELL IF A FRIENDSHIP IS TOXIC



### BEING AN UPSTANDER

When Mikki speaks to Leo from Kids Helpline, she learns about **'upstanding'**. When people witness bullying and say/ do nothing to stop it, they are being a bystander. Some bystanders, like Mo and the security guard, even make bullying worse as they laugh or join in. The good news is that anyone can be an **upstander** by respectfully **challenging** the bullying. You could say, "We don't do that here", or use a great line Mo tries, "Can you explain what you mean by that?" (as it calls the bullying out).

Not everyone can directly challenge bullying. You still have a responsibility to be an **upstander** by:

- **Showing disapproval**, e.g. frowning at a mean joke.
- **Interrupting the bullying** and giving the person being bullied an excuse to leave, e.g. "Scarlet doesn't have to go with you if she doesn't want to. She can stay here."
- **Offering support** – do this once the person is safe from the situation, e.g. "I saw what was happening – that's not okay. How are you?"
- **Reporting it. If possible, report it together** – being bullied is a lonely experience. Having someone who backs up your version of what happened can make a big difference to someone who is feeling hopeless or worthless.

**Did you know?** When one person is an **upstander**, other people feel empowered and are more likely to back them up! protecting people who might be victims of their behaviour.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- Have you ever experience toxic behaviours in a friendship? What happened?
- Have you ever witnessed bullying?
- Have you ever been mean to someone before? What happened?
- Have you ever been bullied? What did you say/do to stop it?
- Have you been an upstander? What did you say/do?
- Do you know someone who has been bullied before? How did they cope with it?



# Mikki VS THE WORLD

## TRYING NEW THINGS

EPISODE 14



*As an intrepid psychologist, Mikki loves trying new things and is constantly encouraging Mo to get out of his comfort zone. When Mo decides that 'firsts' can go suck on a mung bean, Mikki decides to delve deep into why people might prefer to stick with the familiar, in order to help Mo overcome his aversion to trying new things.*



### WHY FIRSTS CAN BE NERVE-WRACKING

There's a reason why we can feel nervous when we try something new. For our ancestors, a new food could have been poisonous, a new animal could have been dangerous and a new place may have unknown threats. As far as our brains are concerned, new things are unknowns – they are strange and different, which could also mean dangerous.

But there's actually science behind why, it's quite common to experience butterflies in your stomach – or even an upset stomach (like Mo) when doing something new. Internet lady – Mikki's go-to for finding out more about the brain – introduces Mikki to the Enteric Nervous System (ENS) or the 'gut brain' (with the help of a group of Vikings).

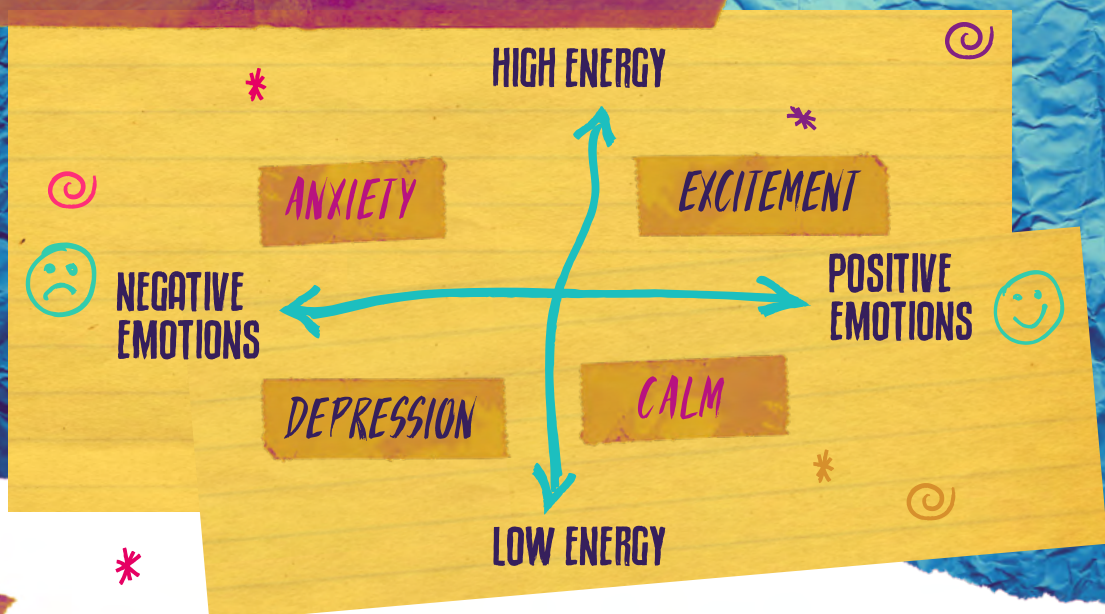


This 'second brain' connects your gut and your Central Nervous System ('CNS' or the brain in your skull). Your ENS controls all things digestive related, but your ENS and CNS 'talk' to each other, which is why your mental states and emotions can affect your digestive system (which leads to Mo's 'code brown' accident at his synchronised swimming event). New research even suggests that your digestive system may be linked to your mental health, thinking style and memory too!

### WHY FIRSTS CAN BE EXCITING

Some people, like Mikki, find firsts exciting. There are a few reasons why some people are jumping for joy at the thought of pilates parachuting, while that sounds like someone else's worst nightmare.

#### Reason #1: Excitement & anxiety are similar







## EPISODE 14: TRYING NEW THINGS

Excitement and anxiety can feel really similar in your body. They are both part of your stress response – but sometimes we interpret those body sensations as anxiety and sometimes as excitement, depending on our thoughts/perspective on the situation. For example, if you think rollercoasters are fun, you are excited about going on one, but if you think they are dangerous, then the same bodily sensations are interpreted by your brain as anxiety.

### Reason #2: Personality differences

Some people love new things. These people are generally high in 'sensation seeking' (a personality trait), which put simply, means that their brain craves newness and finds it stimulating (like Mikki).

## TRYING NEW THINGS IS GOOD FOR YOU

Trying new things is good for your brain. The brain learns through new experiences. The brain makes learning rewarding, which is why you might struggle with a dance move for ages and then get a 'high' when you actually get it right (let's call this the 'Yes Factor'). Once Mo tried Salsa dancing, he went from *muy* bad to *muy bueno* by learning and practising.



## NEUROPLASTICITY – HOW YOUR BRAIN LEARNS

Brains don't just like newness – they need it. The opposite of newness is boredom, and the brain doesn't do too well with being bored. When things are the same and there's nothing new, brains find it hard to grow and change. This growth/change is called 'neuroplasticity'.

Neuroplasticity is how the brain learns new things, and includes:

- Growing new brain cells (this is called 'neurogenesis' and happens in our sleep)
- Creating pathways in our brains (this is us learning something new)
- Consolidating our new learnings into our memory (happens through repetition and sleep)
- Using these pathways until things become automatic (when we practise and get good at things)

When things are automatic, they feel easy and we are ready to learn something new.

**Interesting fact:** Our brains continue growing, changing and learning for our entire lives. No matter how old you get, your brain can still change and learn new things! It does learn more slowly though (children have way more new brain cells than older adults do!)





## EPISODE 14: TRYING NEW THINGS

### HOW TO TRY SOMETHING NEW



Mikki puts a lot of pressure on Mo to do something new, which stresses him out and makes him avoidant. Once Mikki gives Mo time and space, he finally feels able to try something different, like Salsa dancing or a new cafe, and discovers he loves it.

If you want to try new things, here are some things that can help:

- **Take the pressure off.** If you're trying something new for the first time, you're probably going to be bad at it – and that's ok. That's just how we learn!
- **Go at your own pace.** Learning takes time and practise. Remember neuroplasticity – your brain needs time to grow the brain cells and get them all working together!
- **Remember it's meant to be fun!** Our brains like to learn and we learn best when we're having fun. Trying something new for fun can help you feel great about getting out of your comfort zone.
- **Try to turn anxiety into excitement.** If you're feeling anxious about a 'first', you might be able to pump yourself up and turn it into excitement. You could try this through 'self-talk' by focusing on what might be good about it, or what you're going to get out of doing it.
- **Just do it!** Like Mo and Mikki's mate Christopher the Psychologist said, sometimes you just have to stop thinking (and overthinking) about it and start. Doing it anyway – even if you're nervous – is the definition of being brave and can help you become more resilient too.
- **Keep trying** – don't give up! If you don't succeed, try again. It's ok if things take time, or you have to do them a lot of times.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What was your most recent 'first'?
- What kinds of new things make you feel excited?
- When was the last time you learned something new? What happened?
- What milestones are you looking forward to in life?
- What's one thing you always wanted to try?
- Do you like trying new things? What's good about them?
- What makes you nervous about trying new things?
- How do you push through and do something new, even if you're nervous?
- How do you feel after trying something new?



# Mikki

VS  
THE WORLD

## TRUE GRIT\*

## HOW TO BOUNCE BACK AND KEEP BEING AWESOME!

EPISODE 15



After another day of no clients, Mikki feels like giving up on her psychology practice. She organises a removalist to pack up her office. Mikki realises she has forgotten her 'why' (the reason she became a psychologist in the first place), which is helping people and making a difference. Recognising that she isn't feeling particularly resilient right now, Mikki explores what resilience is and how it could help her.

\*Explanation in the footnotes





## EPISODE 15: TRUE GRIT\* – HOW TO BOUNCE BACK AND KEEP BEING AWESOME!

### RESILIENCE

Resilience is emotional strength. It's your ability to 'bounce back' when things are hard, and to keep trying and not give up. Just like being physically strong requires working out your body (e.g. going to the gym, eating healthy, etc.), emotional strength also requires practise. Think of resilience as being a bit like a muscle – you need to use it regularly in order to make it strong.



#### DEVELOPING RESILIENCE

There are lots of ways to practice resilience, and different things work for different people. The '5Ps of Resilience' are five different ways of thinking about a challenge, which help you become more resilient.

### THE 5Ps:

#### 1. POSITIVE:

This doesn't mean being fake positive when things are hard. It's ok to be honest about negative feelings (just like Mikki is). Rather, being positive is about being realistic. Sometimes we get stuck in negative thinking. In reality, most challenges we face aren't all bad (or all good).

#### 2. PERSPECTIVE:

Having perspective means thinking about things in new, different, and flexible ways. When we feel stuck, our thinking becomes very 'concrete' or 'all or nothing'. Looking at different perspectives can help you see other options.

#### 3. PROBLEM SOLVE

Mikki does some problem solving around getting more clients through the door, by offering a free can of beans with every session in some new ads. Our brain really, really likes to solve problems. When we solve a problem, our brain releases dopamine, which is a neurotransmitter (brain chemical) that makes us feel good about ourselves.

#### 4. PURPOSE:

Purpose is about finding meaning, or finding your 'why'. Mikki remembers that her 'why' for her psychology practice is to help people and make a difference – and that helps her get through the tough times when she has no clients.

#### 5. PERSEVERE:

This is all about not giving up. We all get tempted to give up sometimes. Perseverance helps you to find ways of motivating and inspiring yourself to stay focused when things get hard. It's about setting yourself up for success by putting things in place that help you do what needs to be done, even when you really don't feel like it (because no one feels like it 100% of the time!).





## EPISODE 15: TRUE GRIT\* - HOW TO BOUNCE BACK AND KEEP BEING AWESOME!



Now that you know what they are, let's put the **5Ps** into practise! Think of a situation you are finding challenging, and ask yourself the following questions:

### POSITIVE

What are some of the positives about this situation?

### PERSPECTIVE

What are some different ways of looking at this?

### PROBLEM SOLVE

What are my options?  
What are some things I could do that might help?

### PURPOSE

What's my 'why'? How am I making a difference? How has this made me a bit stronger or wiser?

### PERSEVERE

What motivates and inspires me?  
How will I encourage myself to keep moving forward?



**Did you know?** Lots of very famous and successful people go through hard times, but stay resilient. Jessica Mauboy is coping with severe anxiety that makes it hard for her to sing/perform, Delta Goodrem has overcome Hodgkin's lymphoma blood cancer, and online bullying as a The Voice judge, and Lin Jong dealing with depression while playing AFL for the Western Bulldogs. The one thing all these people had in common is that they aren't giving up! Resilience is all about the power of turning a setback into a comeback.





## EPISODE 15: TRUE GRIT\* - HOW TO BOUNCE BACK AND KEEP BEING AWESOME!

### NEUROPLASTICITY

The great thing about resilience is that it changes our brain in positive ways. Our brain is constantly growing and changing. This is called 'neuroplasticity'. When you try something new, your brain creates 'new pathways' that help you learn the new skill. When you keep practising the skill, those pathways become stronger and stronger. With enough practise, they can become automatic, which means that your new skill is now a habit, a part of your identity or something you have 'mastered' (and find easy). Not only that, but learning a new skill can help you unlearn unhelpful skills - and if you stop doing things like bad habits, eventually (with a lot of time), those pathways in your brain become weaker and die off.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What's a new skill you found hard, but learned with time, practise and dedication? How did it feel to get good at that skill?
- What things stop you from doing something new, or putting yourself 'out there'? What are you worried might happen or go wrong?
- Who do you admire and why? What's one challenge you faced in the past and how did you get through it?
- Give an example of a time you were resilient. What helped you to keep trying and not give up?
- What's your best motivational slogan?

***\*The word grit means courage/resolve, but it also has another meaning. When an oyster gets an ultra-annoying grain of sand in its shell (called 'grit'), it covers it in shell and creates a pearl. Your challenges are a bit like that grain of sand (a setback), waiting for you to turn them into something amazing, like a pearl (a comeback!)***







## KEY CREATIVES

The show was commissioned and produced by the ABC Children's Factual team for ABC ME & ABC iview.

**Mary-Ellen Mullane**

Executive Producer

**Sandra Welkerling**

Supervising Producer

**Kim Steblina**

Production Manager

**Harry Lloyd**

Lead Producer

**Jack Yabsley**

Headwriter/Producer

**Matt Gibb**

Senior Producer

**Samantha De Alwis**

Producer

## KEY CAST



### Chika Ikogwe

Chika Ikogwe is a Nigerian-Australian Actor, Writer and graduate of NIDA (Bachelor of Fine Arts - Acting 2018). Her theatre credits include *Fangirls National Tour*, *Dance Nation* (Belvoir/STCSA) *Good People/Blue Christmas* (KXT/Ignite), *Fangirls* (Belvoir/QTC), *Normal* (The Old 505) & *The Wolves* (Belvoir).

*Mikki Vs The World* is Chika's debut appearance on television and the ABC.

As a Writer, Chika co-wrote *The House at Boundary Road Liverpool* (The Old 505) which she also performed in and has a number of works in development. Chika was included in the shortlist for the Equity Foundation Home and Away Internship in 2018, was the recipient of both the BBM Youth Support Award for Performing Arts and the Leslie Walford AM Award in 2018, winner of Best Newcomer at the 2019 Sydney Theatre Awards and the 2020 recipient of the Rose Byrne Scholarship for Emerging Female Leader in the Arts.



### Carlo Ritchie

Carlo Ritchie is an improviser, comedian and actor, one half of acclaimed improv duo "The Bear Pack". Originally from the misty hills of Glen Innes, NSW, he somehow ended up as one of the last speakers of Polish minority language, Wymysorys, for which he published the first children's book in 2013. Much to the delight of friends and family back home, he'll often pop up on the tele or radio, in such programmes as the ABC's *Home Alone Together*, *Kiki and Kitty* and 702s *Thank God It's Friday* as well as *The Feed* on SBS. He is the Artistic Director of Improv Theatre Sydney and currently lives in Katoomba where he is very proud of his vegetable garden and apple tree.





## RESOURCES BY EPISODE

### 1. When you feel all the feels – Crushes

Dating: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/dating>

Coping with a break up: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-break>

Sexual identity: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/sexual-identity>

What is consent: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/what-consent>

Romantic relationships: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/romantic-relationships>

Building healthy romantic relationships:

<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/building-healthy-romantic-relationships/>

Dealing with breakups:

<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/how-to-get-over-a-relationship-breakup/>

How to deal with a broken heart:

<https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/group-chat/how-to-deal-with-a-broken-heart>

Sexual consent: <https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/group-chat/sexual-consent>

### 2. Risky business – why dangers makes you feel soooo good

Taking risks: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/taking-risks>

Alcohol and drugs: <https://au.reachout.com/challenges-and-coping/alcohol-and-drugs>

### 3. Why does Sad Panda make you feel so blue anyway?

Kids Helpline's ultimate guide to depression: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/depression>

Feeling sad and depression: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/feeling-sad-and-depression>

All about depression: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/all-about-depression>

Depression and your brain: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/depression-and-your-brain>

Depressive disorders: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/depressive-disorders>

Coping with depression: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-depression>

What is this big thing called grief:

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/what-big-thing-called-grief>

How to cope with losing a loved one:

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/how-cope-losing-loved-one>

Coping strategies: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-strategies>

Self-care: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/self-care>

Depression: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-health-issues/depression>

Dealing with grief and loss: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/dealing-with-grief-and-loss-and-the-effects-on-mental-health/>

Understanding grief and loss:

<https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/group-chat/understanding-greif-and-loss>

What are mental health difficulties and when to seek help:

<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-mental-health/>





## RESOURCES BY EPISODE

What is depression: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/understanding-and-dealing-with-depression-for-young-people/>

All about depression: <https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/group-chat/all-about-depression>

Beyond Blue – young people: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/young-people>

### 4. What makes Worried Wayne so, well, worried?

Kids Helpline's ultimate guide to anxiety: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/anxiety>

The basics of anxiety: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/anxiety>

Your stress response: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/why-do-i-freak-out>

Your brain when you're anxious: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/your-brain-when-youre-anxious>

Why do people experience anxiety: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/why-am-i-anxious>

Anxiety disorders: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/anxiety-disorders>

How to manage anxiety: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/how-manage-anxiety>

Coping strategies: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-strategies>

Self-care: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/self-care>

Anxiety: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-health-issues/anxiety>

What are mental health difficulties and when to seek help:  
<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-mental-health/>

All about feeling anxious:  
<https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/group-chat/all-about-feeling-anxious>

How to tell what's worry and what's anxiety:  
<https://www.wethedifferents.qld.edu.au/how-to-tell-whats-worry-and-whats-anxiety/>

### 5. Trolling, oversharing and going viral – how to live your best online life

Social media and mental health: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/social-media-and-mental-health>

Kids Helpline's ultimate guide to cyberbullying: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/cyberbullying>

My friend is being cyberbullied: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/my-friend-being-cyberbullied>

Could I be a cyberbully: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/could-i-be-cyberbully>

Online harassment: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/online-harassment>

Online gaming – am I being bullied: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/online-gaming-am-i-being-bullied>

When online gaming takes over your life: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/when-online-gaming-takes-over-your-life>

Cyberbullying: <https://au.reachout.com/bullying/cyberbullying>

What is trolling and how should you respond to it:  
<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-trolling-and-how-should-you-respond-to-it/>

How to spot and avoid cyberbullying:  
<https://www.wethedifferents.qld.edu.au/how-to-spot-and-avoid-cyberbullying/>

eSafety young people – for information and to report cyberbullying and inappropriate content:  
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people>





## RESOURCES BY EPISODE

### 6. Will the real Mo please stand up? How to be your one true self!

Who am I? What's my identity? <https://www.youtube.com/embed/mLcVLOuUg4s?t=111s>

Sexual identity: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/sexual-identity>

Gender identity: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/gender-identity>

LGBTIQ+: The Ultimate Dictionary: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/lgbtiq-ultimate-dictionary>

Cultural identity: <https://au.reachout.com/identity/cultural-identity>

Gender identity: <https://au.reachout.com/identity/gender>

Sexuality: <https://au.reachout.com/identity/sexuality>

Spirituality: <https://au.reachout.com/identity/spirituality>

Understanding sexuality and sexual identity: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/understanding-sexuality-and-sexual-identity/>

What is my gender identity: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/gender-identity-and-mental-health/>

### 7. My sister is a total alien!

Conflict at home: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/conflict-home>

Being assertive and setting boundaries: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>

Ways to deal with conflict: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/ways-deal-conflict>

Families: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/families>

Supporting family: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/supporting-family>

### 8. Surviving your most embarrassing moment ever!

Coping with emotions: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-emotions>

Expressing your feelings: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/expressing-your-feelings>

Anger: <https://au.reachout.com/challenges-and-coping/anger>

### 9. All about autism

Understanding autism: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/understanding-autism>

What is autism spectrum disorder: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-autism-spectrum-disorder/>

### 10. When being cool means being... French. Huh?

Being assertive and setting boundaries: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>

Peer pressure and fitting in: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/peer-pressure-and-fitting>

Communication skills: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/communication-skills>

Friendships: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/friendships>





## RESOURCES BY EPISODE

### 11. Friends till the end – how to be the best bestie

Ways to deal with conflict: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/ways-deal-conflict>

Making friends: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/making-friends>

Fights with friends: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/fights-friends>

Friendship: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/friendships>

Helping friends: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/helping-friends>

### 12. Why is my family driving me crazy?

Conflict at home: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/conflict-home>

Talking to your parents: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/talking-your-parents>

Dealing with family rules: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/dealing-family-rules>

Families: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/families>

Supporting family: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/supporting-family>

Responding to a family conflict: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/responding-to-family-conflict-yp/>

### 13. How to tell a friendship is toxic

Bullying: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying>

Kids Helpline's ultimate guide to cyberbullying: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/cyberbullying>

How to tell if it's bullying: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/how-tell-if-its-bullying>

Being assertive and setting boundaries: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>

Ways to deal with conflict: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/ways-deal-conflict>

About bullying: <https://au.reachout.com/bullying/about-bullying>

Cyberbullying: <https://au.reachout.com/bullying/cyberbullying>

I've been called a bully: <https://au.reachout.com/bullying/ive-been-called-a-bully>

I've witnessed bullying: <https://au.reachout.com/bullying/ive-witnessed-bullying>

Understanding bullying: <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/what-is-bullying-and-the-effects-on-mental-health/>

Bullying, No Way! <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

### 14. Trying new things

Kids Helpline's ultimate guide to anxiety: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/anxiety>

Making friends: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/making-friends>

Meeting new people: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/meeting-new-people>





## RESOURCES BY EPISODE

### 15. True Grit \_ How to bounce back and keep being awesome!

Building resilience: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/building-resilience>

Developing resilience info for parents, teachers and student worksheets: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschooling/sessions/developing-resilience>

Looking after yourself: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/looking-after-yourself>

Coping strategies: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-strategies>

Self-care: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/self-care>

What is self-help: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/what-self-help>

Positive mindsets: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-wellbeing/positive-mindsets>

Self-care: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-wellbeing/self-care>

Healthy habits: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-wellbeing/healthy-habits>

Exercise and eating well: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-wellbeing/exercise-and-eating-well>

Boosting your resilience: <https://www.wethedifferents.qld.edu.au/boosting-your-resilience/>

### Other resources

Services for parents: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/how-parentline-can-help-you>

Resources for parents: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents>

To find digital mental health services from trusted providers: <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

Helpful apps: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/tools/apps>

For online peer support: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/my-circle>

Kids Helpline Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/kidshelplineau/>

headspace Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/headspace\\_au/](https://www.instagram.com/headspace_au/)

ReachOut Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/reachout\\_au/](https://www.instagram.com/reachout_au/)





## REFERENCES BY EPISODE

### References (by episode)

All episode guides were created by tertiary qualified, professional counsellors, and involved collaboration with other professionals, subject matter experts and young people with relevant lived experience where possible. All episode guides are based on the therapeutic evidence-base for [Kids Helpline website articles](#) and [Kids Helpline @ School educational sessions](#) and come from a wide variety of best-practice resources. Full reference lists can be accessed by request. Please email [content@youtown.com.au](mailto:content@youtown.com.au) for further details.

#### 1. When you feel all the feels – Crushes

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Respectful relationships' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/respectful-relationships>

#### 2. Risky business – why dangers makes you feel soooo good

This episode is based on the evidence-base for the Kids Helpline articles on, 'Conflict at home': <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/conflict-home>

#### 3. Why does Sad Panda make you feel so blue anyway?

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Emotional intelligence' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/emotional-intelligence> and the Kids Helpline website topics on, 'Depression': <https://kidshelpline.com.au/depression>

#### 4. What makes Worried Wayne so, well, worried?

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Emotional intelligence' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/emotional-intelligence> and the Kids Helpline website topics on, 'Anxiety': <https://kidshelpline.com.au/anxiety>

#### 5. Trolling, oversharing and going viral – how to live your best online life

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the digital topics –

- Your online wellbeing: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/your-online-wellbeing>

- Cyberbullying and mental health: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/cyberbullying-and-mental-health>

It is also based on the Kids Helpline website topics on –

- Social media and mental health: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/social-media-and-mental-health>
- Cyberbullying: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/cyberbullying>

#### 6. Will the real Mo please stand up? How to be your one true self!

This episode is based on the following Kids Helpline website evidence-base for the following articles:

- Sexual identity: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/sexual-identity>
- Gender identity: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/gender-identity>
- LGBTIQ+: The Ultimate Dictionary: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/lgbtiq-ultimate-dictionary>





## REFERENCES BY EPISODE

### 7. My sister is a total alien!

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Respectful relationships' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/respectful-relationships>

It is also based on the evidence-base for the, 'Being assertive and setting boundaries' Kids Helpline website article: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>

### 8. Surviving your most embarrassing moment ever!

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Emotional intelligence' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/emotional-intelligence> and the Kids Helpline website topics on, 'Anxiety': <https://kidshelpline.com.au/anxiety>

### 9. All about autism

This episode is based on the evidence-base for the Kids Helpline article on, 'Understanding Autism': <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/understanding-autism>

### 10. When being cool means being... French. Huh?

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Respectful relationships' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/respectful-relationships>

It is also based on the evidence-base for the, 'Being assertive and setting boundaries' Kids Helpline website article: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>

### 11. Friends till the end \_ how to be the best bestie

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Respectful relationships' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/respectful-relationships>

It is also based on the evidence-base for the, 'Being assertive and setting boundaries' Kids Helpline website article: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>

### 12. Why is my family driving me crazy?

This episode is based on the evidence-base for the following Kids Helpline website articles:

- Being assertive and setting boundaries: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/being-assertive-and-setting-boundaries>
- Conflict at home: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/conflict-home>

### 13. How to tell a friendship is toxic

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Respectful relationships' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/respectful-relationships>

### 14. Trying new things

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Emotional intelligence' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/emotional-intelligence> and the Kids Helpline website topics on, 'Anxiety': <https://kidshelpline.com.au/anxiety>

### 15. True Grit \_ How to bounce back and keep being awesome!

This episode is based on the Kids Helpline @ High School evidence-base for the, 'Fostering resilience' topic: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/highschoolnq/sessions/developing-resilience>