



INSIDE MY HEAD

A gentle guide for
understanding food,
feelings, energy & self-care



A CALM COMPANION FOR THE WAITING TIME

This workbook was put together by a mum who was worried, waiting, and trying to make the in-between time feel safer for her daughter. It was created to bridge the gap between hearing the words “eating disorder,” getting a GP appointment, and waiting for specialist support. Those weeks can feel long, confusing, and frightening — and young people deserve something gentle to hold onto while the system catches up.

Although the daughter in question didn't have a formal diagnosis of autism or ADHD at the time of writing, it was clear that neurodivergence might be part of the picture. Many autistic and ADHD traits — sensory sensitivities, interoception differences, anxiety, overwhelm, and a need for predictability — can make eating feel complicated or frightening.

Restriction can become a way to cope, to feel safe, or to manage emotions that feel too big. None of this is a choice, and none of it is a failure.

Everything in these pages is based on, inspired by, or adapted from the brilliant research and clinical guidance developed by the PEACE Pathway team at King's College London. Their work focuses on the overlap between autism and eating disorders, and how traditional approaches often miss the sensory, cognitive, and emotional needs of autistic young people. This workbook simply reshapes their insights into something softer, more personal, and easier to use at home.

This workbook isn't treatment. It isn't a plan. It isn't pressure. It's simply a safe space — a way to understand what's going on, reduce fear, and help the days feel a little steadier while waiting for the right support.



How to Use This Workbook

THIS WORKBOOK IS DESIGNED FOR ANY AUTISTIC OR NEURODIVERGENT PERSON — WHETHER YOU'RE A YOUNG PERSON, AN ADULT, OR SOMEONE WHO SIMPLY FEELS THAT NEURODIVERSITY MIGHT BE PART OF THE PICTURE. YOU DO NOT NEED AN OFFICIAL DIAGNOSIS TO USE IT.

You can work through it on your own or with someone you trust — a parent, carer, partner, friend, or supportive professional.

It can also be shared with GPs, CAMHS teams, or school or workplace staff to help them understand what's going on in a clearer, more autism-friendly way.

This workbook isn't medical advice, treatment, or a plan. It's simply a gentle tool to help make sense of a difficult waiting period. You can use it in any order, at any pace, and you don't need to complete every page.

Some pages are for writing. Some are for talking through together. Some are there to help express things that are hard to say out loud.

There's no right way to use it — only the way that feels safest and most helpful for the person using it.



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INTRODUCTION



GETTING STARTED

This workbook is simply a place to slow down, understand what's going on, and make things feel a little easier. It isn't treatment, and it isn't about fixing you. It's not about forcing food, pushing you to talk, or making you do anything before you're ready.

You can use this workbook on your own or with someone you trust — a parent, carer, partner, friend, or supportive professional. Either way is completely okay.

This is a gentle space to explore things at your own pace. A place where you can write, draw, think, talk, or skip pages entirely. A place where you choose what feels manageable.

You don't have to have everything figured out. You don't have to explain everything perfectly. You don't have to be "ready" — you just have to be here.

You deserve support that feels calm, safe, and yours.

WHY WE'RE DOING THIS TOGETHER (OR INDEPENDENTLY)

This workbook is here to help you understand yourself with kindness — whether you're working through it alone or sitting beside someone who cares about you.

If you're completing it with someone else, they can use this space too — adding their own gentle notes, hopes, or thoughts alongside yours. This can help you both understand what you each want from the workbook and how you'd like to use it together.

“What I want from this workbook...”
“What we want from this workbook...”



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is designed to feel safe. That means:

- No weighing
- No calorie talk
- No food rules
- No forcing you to eat
- No pushing you to talk about things you don't want to
- No deadlines
- No "shoulds" or "musts"

What will happen here:

- You get to choose what pages you want to do
- You get to choose how much you want to write
- You get to choose when to stop
- You get to say "not today"
- You get to be honest, even if it's messy or confusing
- You get to be listened to without judgement - whether that's by yourself or someone supporting you.

What Will Happen Here:

- This workbook is a tool for understanding yourself — not a test, not a challenge, not something you can get wrong.
- Whether you're using it alone or with someone:
- You can change how you use it at any time
- You can do a little at a time
- You can stop if it feels too much
- You don't need to "finish" anything
- Every page is optional
- Breaks are welcome
- Comfort comes first
- Calm moments matter more than productivity



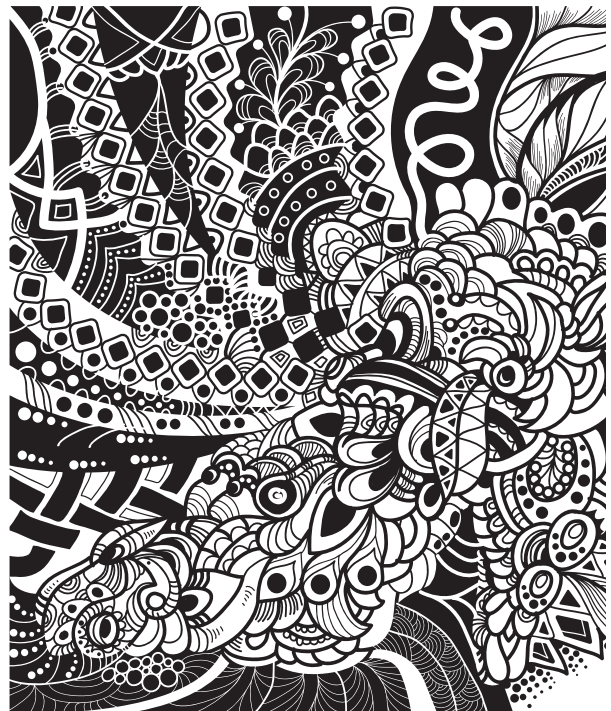
HOW YOU'LL USE THIS WORKBOOK

**We'll keep things simple. Short.
Manageable. Flexible.**

Some days you might want to write a lot. Some days you might want to talk instead. Some days you might want to think quietly. Some days you might want to skip it entirely.

All of that is okay.

This workbook is here to support you — not overwhelm you.



CHOOSE YOUR PACE

Today I Feel Like...

- A tiny bit — just dipping in
- One page — short and simple
- Five minutes — no pressure
- Just talking — or thinking quietly
- Sitting together quietly — being in the same space counts
- Skipping today — some days aren't workbook days
- Coming back later — whenever feels right
- Doing something different instead — a walk, a show, music, drawing, rest

This workbook is yours. Use it in the way that feels safest and most helpful — alone or with someone beside you.

C H A P T E R

01

UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S
GOING ON



UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S GOING ON

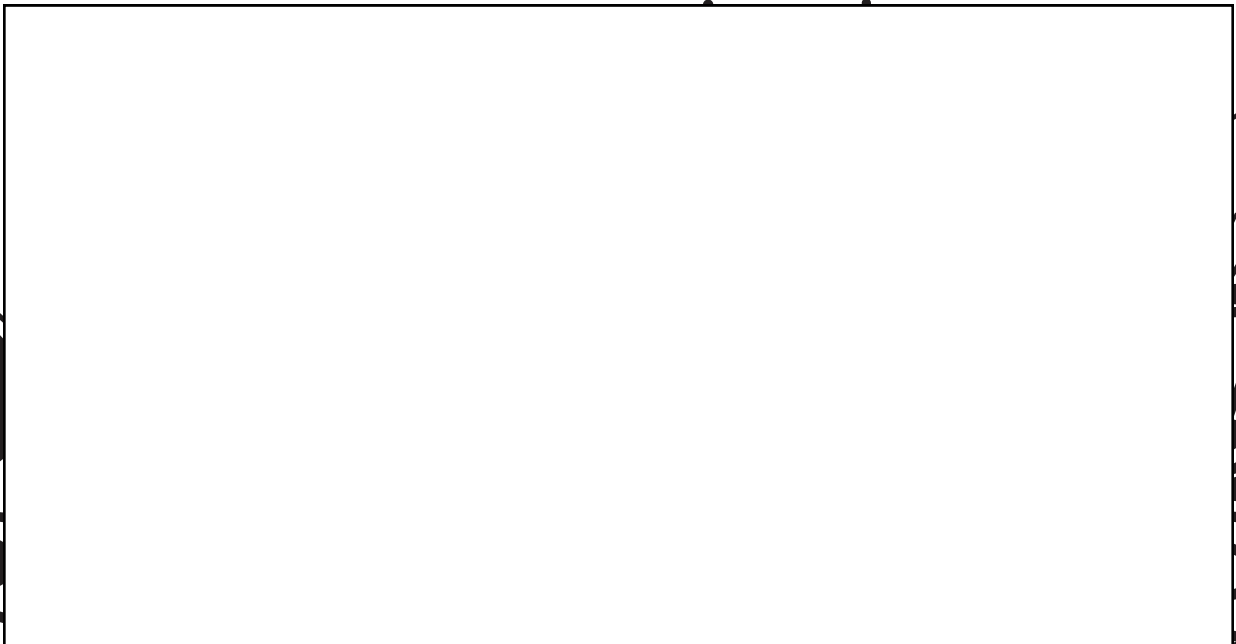
Eating isn't just "eating." It can be a whole mix of feelings, sensations, thoughts, and worries happening at the same time. This page is a place to notice what makes things harder — without judgement, without pressure, and without needing to explain everything perfectly.

Some things that can make eating difficult:

- Sensory things (textures, smells, temperatures, colours)
- Feeling too full too quickly
- Feeling guilty before or after eating
- Worrying about what other people think
- Feeling watched
- Not knowing what or when you'll be eating
- Feeling overwhelmed or stressed
- Feeling like eating is "too much" or "too hard"
- Wanting control when everything feels chaotic
- Not feeling hungry even when you haven't eaten
- Feeling scared of eating "too much"
- Feeling like eating will make uncomfortable emotions louder

Prompt: Circle, tick, or write anything that feels true for you. You don't need to explain it.

"For me, eating feels hard because..."



What My Brain Does When I'm Stressed

Everyone's brain reacts differently to stress. Some people get loud inside. Some people shut down. Some people feel everything at once. Some people feel nothing at all.

This page helps you notice your patterns — not to change them, just to understand them.



My Thoughts

Examples:

- "I can't cope."
- "I need to get away."
- "I'm doing something wrong."
- "Everyone is judging me."
- "I need to be perfect."
- "I don't know what to do."

Space to write your own.

My Body

Examples:

- Tight chest
- Fast heartbeat
- Shaky
- Dizzy
- Numb
- Stomach knots
- No hunger signals

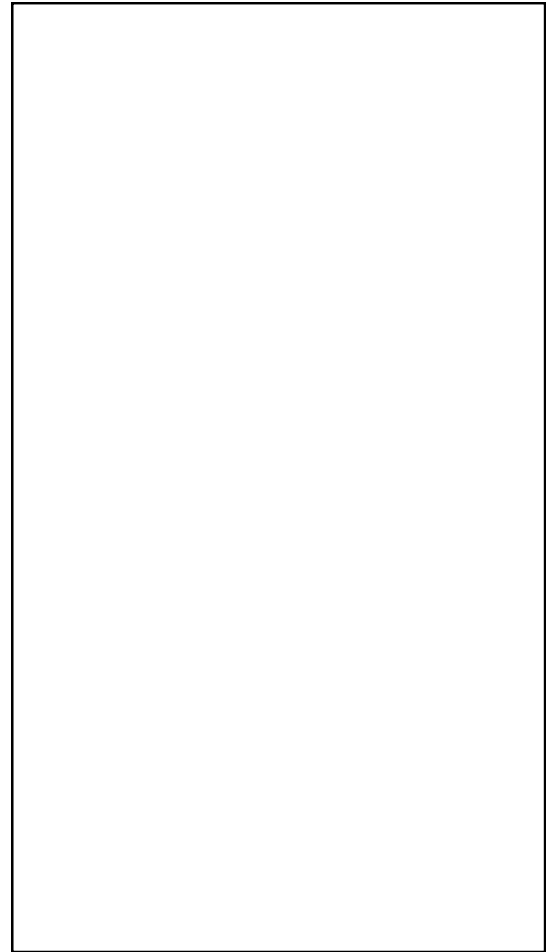
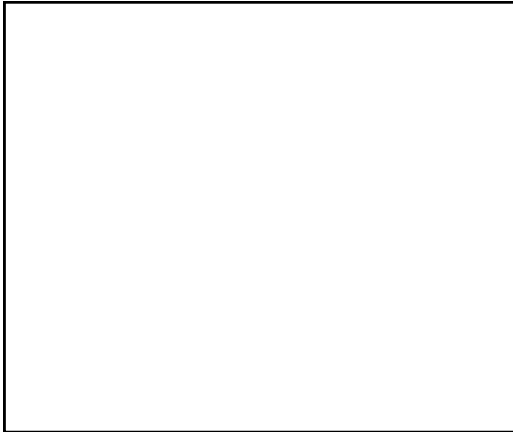
Space to write your own.

My Behaviour

Examples:

- Avoiding food
- Going quiet
- Masking
- Snapping
- Overthinking
- Needing control
- Wanting to hide

Space to write your own.



How Autism/ADHD Might Fit In

You don't need a diagnosis for this page. It's just a way of exploring whether some of your experiences might make more sense through an autism/ADHD lens.



Some autistic/ADHD traits that can affect eating:

- Sensory sensitivity (textures, smells, temperatures)
- Feeling overwhelmed by choice
- Needing predictability
- Struggling with sudden changes
- Difficulty noticing hunger/fullness
- Feeling watched or judged
- Masking and getting exhausted
- Perfectionism
- Black-and-white thinking
- Executive function challenges (planning, starting, organising food)
- Feeling emotions very intensely
- Needing control when things feel chaotic

Prompt

Tick anything that feels familiar.
Leave anything that doesn't.

“This is how autism/ADHD might show up for me...”

In My Own Words

Everyone's brain reacts differently to stress. Some people get loud inside. Some people shut down. Some people feel everything at once. Some people feel nothing at all.

This page helps you notice your patterns — not to change them, just to understand them.



Writing Prompts (optional)

You can use these if you want, or ignore them completely:

- "If I could explain what's going on inside me..."
- "What I wish people understood..."
- "What I find hardest to say out loud..."
- "What I want help with..."
- "What I don't want help with..."
- "What feels overwhelming right now..."
- "What feels safe right now..."



Doodle Options (choose any)

These are simple shapes you can fill however you like — words, colours, patterns, scribbles, symbols.

- A big cloud — "What's floating around in my head"
- A heart — "Things I care about or want to protect"
- A lightning bolt — "Things that feel intense or stressful"
- A circle — "What feels steady or safe"
- A wave — "Ups and downs I've been feeling"
- A box — "Things I want to keep private but still express"
- A star — "Things I'm proud of or things that help me shine"
- A path — "Where I feel I am right now"

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S GOING ON

You can use this space however you want — words, drawings, colours, or nothing at all.



C H A P T E R

02

SENSORY & ENVIRONMENT MAPPING

This whole section is about helping you understand the sensory and environmental parts of eating — the things that often get missed but matter hugely for autistic/ADHD young people. It's not about changing anything. It's about noticing what feels safe, what feels hard, and what helps.



My Sensory Profile Around Food

Everyone's senses work differently. Some people love crunchy things. Some people can't stand certain smells. Some people get overwhelmed by too many textures at once. None of this is "fussy" — it's just how your brain and body work.

This page is a place to notice what your senses like and don't like.

Textures

Tick, circle, or write:

- Crunchy
- Soft
- Smooth
- Chewy
- Mixed textures
- Crispy
- Mushy
- Dry
- Wet
- "It depends"

My own notes:



Smells

Tick, circle, or write:

- Strong smells
- Mild smells
- No smell
- Sweet
- Savoury
- "Smells make it harder for me"

My own notes:

Temperatures

Tick, circle, or write:

- Hot
- Warm
- Room temperature
- Cold
- "I like knowing the temperature before I eat"

Colours / Appearance

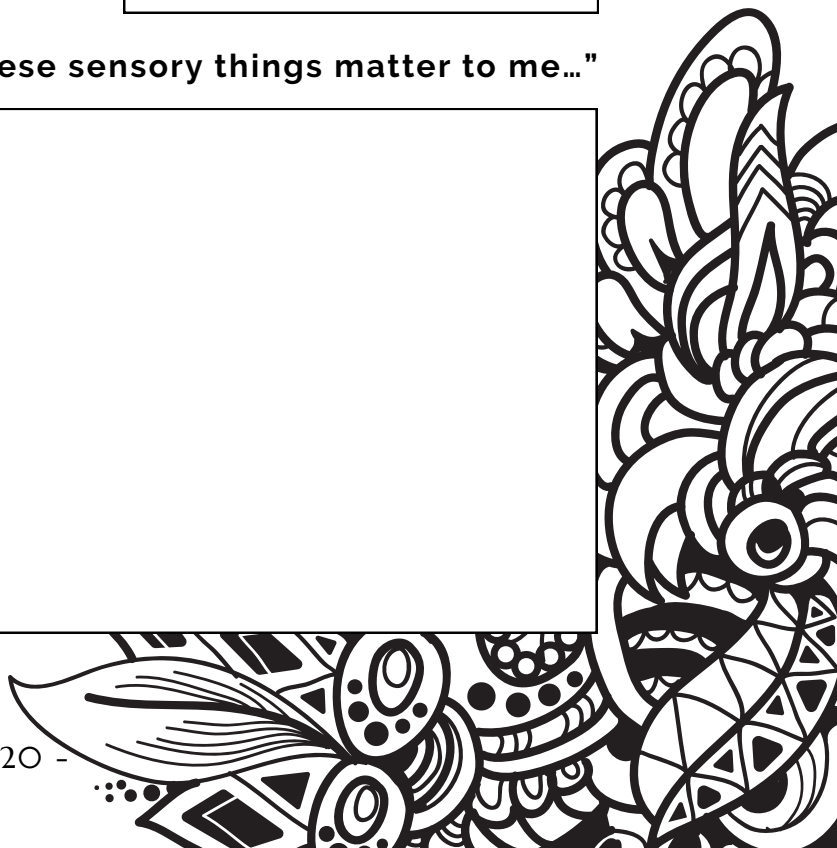
Tick, circle, or write:

- Light colours
- Bright colours
- Plain foods
- Foods that look predictable
- Foods that look "busy"

My own notes:

My own notes:

"When I think about food, these sensory things matter to me..."



Foods That Feel Safe Right Now

Safe foods are foods that feel predictable, familiar, and not overwhelming. They're not "good" or "bad" — they're just safe. This list can change over time, and that's okay.



Always Safe

Foods that almost always feel okay.
Examples: toast, noodles, cereal, pizza, fruit, yoghurt — but you fill this in.

Sometimes Safe

Foods that depend on the day, mood, or sensory stuff.
Examples: pasta, rice, certain snacks, certain drinks.

"These foods feel safe for me right now..."

A large empty rectangular box intended for users to write down their personal list of safe foods.

Foods That Feel Hard

This page is completely optional. You don't have to fill it in. You don't have to explain why. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to.

Some foods feel hard because of texture, smell, memories, guilt, overwhelm, or just because your brain says "nope."

"These foods feel hard for me right now..."



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to draw or write their response to the prompt "These foods feel hard for me right now..."

MY IDEAL EATING ENVIRONMENT

Where and how you eat can make a huge difference. This page helps you notice what makes eating feel safer and calmer.

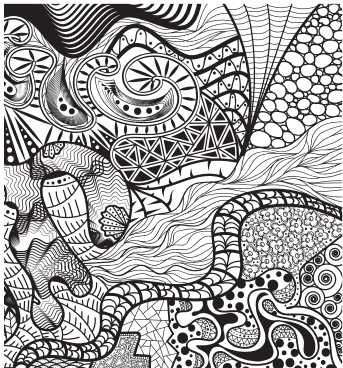


WHERE I LIKE TO EAT:

Tick, circle, or write:

- .Sofa
- Bed
- At a table
- On the floor
- In my room
- With TV on
- With music
- In quiet
- With someone nearby
- Alone

Other things that help me:

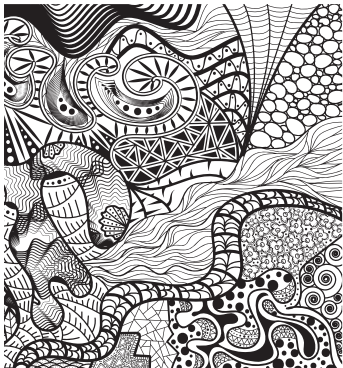


LIGHTING:

Tick, circle, or write:

- Bright
- Soft
- Natural light
- Lamps
- Fairy lights
- "I don't mind"

Other things that help me:

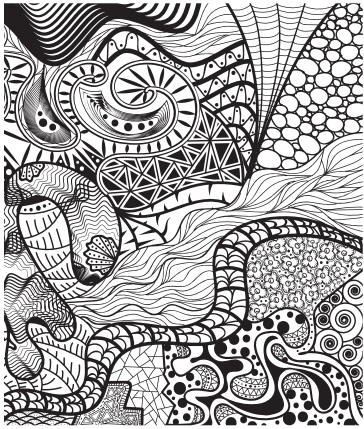


TALKING:

Tick, circle, or write:

- No talking
- A little talking
- Talking about something distracting
- Talking only after eating

Other things that help me:



PREDICTABILITY:

Tick, circle, or write:

- I like to know what I'm eating
- I like to know when I'm eating
- I like to know who's around
- I like to know how long it will take

"My ideal eating environment looks like..."

THINGS THAT HELP BEFORE I EAT

Sensory / Regulation Options

Tick, circle, or write:

- Weighted blanket
- Warm hoodie
- Fidget toy
- Deep pressure (hug, pillow squeeze)
- Quiet time
- Music
- Watching something comforting
- A short walk
- A few minutes alone
- Breathing exercises
- Sitting somewhere cosy

Other things that help me:

"Before I eat, it helps when..."





C H A P T E R

03

ROUTINES THAT REDUCE PRESSURE

This section is all about predictability, comfort, and reducing overwhelm. Not rules. Not schedules. Not "shoulds." Just noticing what helps you feel safer before and after eating, and what makes the day feel steadier.

ROUTINES THAT REDUCE PRESSURE

Eating can feel easier when your body and brain feel settled first. This page is a menu of things that might help you feel calmer, more grounded, or more in control before food.

Things that might help me before eating:

You can tick, circle, colour, or write your own.

- Sitting somewhere cosy
- Watching something comforting
- Listening to music
- A warm hoodie or blanket
- Deep pressure (hug, pillow squeeze, weighted blanket)
- A few minutes of quiet
- A short walk
- Time alone
- Knowing what I'm going to eat
- Knowing when I'm going to eat
- Knowing who will be around
- Having a drink first
- A fidget toy
- Talking about something distracting
- Not talking at all

Other things that might help me:

"Before I eat, it helps when..."



What Helps Me Feel Okay After Eating

Sometimes the hardest part isn't eating — it's the feelings that come afterwards. This page helps you notice what makes the after-eating moments feel calmer and safer.

Things that might help me after eating:

You can tick, circle, colour, or write your own.

- Watching a show
- Sitting somewhere comfortable
- Being with someone quietly
- Being alone for a bit
- A warm drink
- A cosy blanket
- A distraction (game, video, drawing)
- Going for a gentle walk
- Talking about something unrelated
- Not talking at all
- Breathing exercises
- A shower or bath

Other things that might help me:



"After I eat, it helps when..."


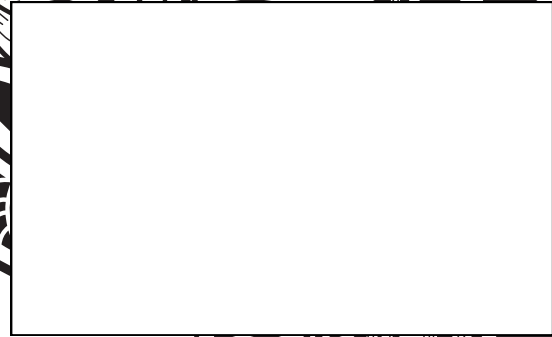
MY DAILY RHYTHM

This isn't about planning your day or sticking to times. It's just about noticing what helps your day feel steadier and less overwhelming.

Morning

Prompts:

- "What helps me start the day gently..."
- "Things that make mornings easier..."
- "What I need in the morning..."



Afternoon

Prompts:

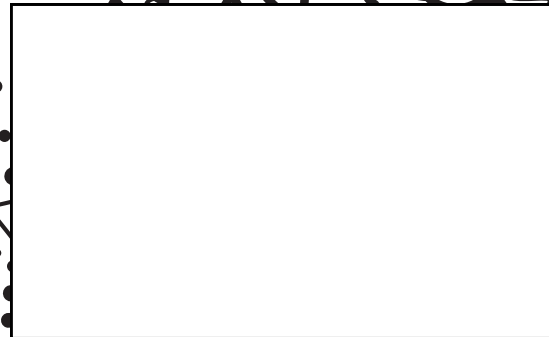
- "What helps me keep going..."
- "What usually feels hard around this time..."
- "What helps me feel calmer..."



Evening

Prompts:

- "What helps me wind down..."
- "What makes evenings feel safe..."
- "What helps me sleep better..."

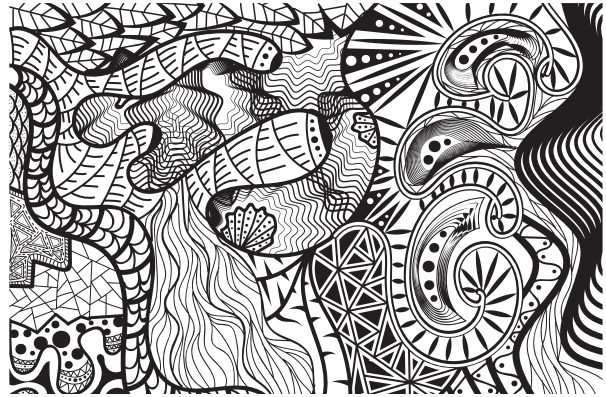


"My day feels steadier when..."



LOW-DEMAND MEAL IDEAS

**This page is for foods that feel easy, predictable, and low-pressure.
Not “healthy.”
Not “balanced.”
Not “shoulds.”
Just foods that feel doable.**



You can add pictures, doodles, or words.

“These foods feel easiest for me right now...”

C H A P T E R

04

FEELINGS, ENERGY & SHUTDOWNS

This section helps you understand how your energy, emotions, and shutdowns work — without judgement, without pressure, and without needing to “fix” anything. It’s about noticing patterns so you can feel safer and more understood.



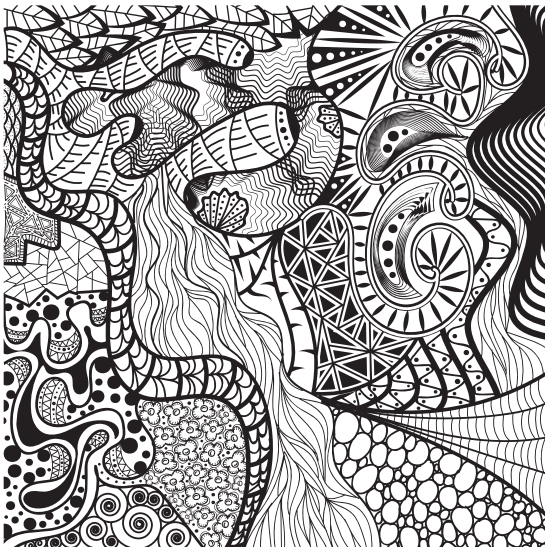
HOW MY ENERGY WORKS

Everyone's energy goes up and down during the day. For autistic and ADHD brains, those changes can feel bigger, faster, or more unpredictable. This page helps you notice what your energy feels like — not to change it, just to understand it.

Energy Levels

Battery:

- Full
- Half
- Low
- Flashing red
- Charging
- Drained but still going
- "I don't know — it changes fast"



Prompts:

"My energy usually drops when..."

"My energy usually rises when..."

"Things that drain my energy..."

"Things that recharge me..."

What Overwhelm Feels Like in My Body

Overwhelm isn't "being dramatic." It's your brain and body hitting their limit. This page helps you notice what overwhelm feels like physically, so you can recognise it earlier.

Common signs of overwhelm (tick anything that fits):

- Tight chest
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling shaky
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling sick
- Stomach knots
- Feeling hot or cold
- Feeling numb
- Feeling like you can't think
- Feeling frozen
- Feeling like you need to escape
- Feeling like everything is too loud
- Feeling like everything is too bright
- Feeling like you're "not in your body"

My own signs:



"When I'm overwhelmed, my body feels..."

WHAT HELPS WHEN I'M SHUTTING DOWN

Shutdowns aren't bad. They're your brain protecting itself when things get too much. This page helps you figure out what makes shutdowns easier, safer, and less scary.

Other things that help me:

Things that might help during a shutdown:

- Quiet
- Low lights
- Being alone
- Being with someone silently
- A blanket
- A hoodie
- Deep pressure
- A dark room
- A familiar show
- A fidget toy
- A warm drink
- Not being asked questions
- Not being touched unless you ask
- Time

Prompts:

- "When I'm shutting down, I need..."
- "Things that make shutdowns worse..."
- "Things that make shutdowns easier..."



FEELINGS MENU

**Sometimes feelings are hard to name.
Sometimes they're mixed.
Sometimes they're too big.
Sometimes they're too quiet.
This page gives you a menu of feelings
you can circle, colour, or add to.**



Feelings Menu (circle any):

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Tired | Frustrated |
| Overwhelmed | Lonely |
| Sad | Worried |
| Flat | Hopeful |
| Anxious | Calm |
| Guilty | Curious |
| Confused | Relieved |
| Numb | Proud |
| Stressed | "I don't know" |

"Something else..."

Prompts:

"Today I feel mostly..."

"Underneath that, I also feel..."

"I wish people knew that I feel..."

C H A P T E R

05



FOOD, GUILT & CONTROL

This section helps you explore the emotional side of eating — gently, safely, and without pressure. It's not about challenging you or pushing you. It's about giving you language for things that are often hard to say out loud.

WHY MY BRAIN FEELS GUILTY ABOUT FOOD

Feeling guilty about food doesn't mean you've done anything wrong. It often means your brain is trying to protect you — from overwhelm, from fear, from feeling out of control, or from expectations that feel too big.

This page is a place to notice where that guilt comes from, without judging yourself.

Things that can make food feel guilty (tick anything that fits):

- Feeling like you ate “too much”
- Feeling like you didn't “deserve” food
- Feeling like you should have eaten less
- Feeling like you should have eaten differently
- Feeling like you're being watched
- Feeling like people will judge you
- Feeling like you're not in control
- Feeling like eating makes emotions louder
- Feeling like you're letting someone down
- Feeling like you're wasting food
- Feeling like you're “not hungry enough”
- Feeling like you're “not allowed” certain foods
- Feeling like eating will make your body change

My own reasons

“Food makes me feel guilty when...”



CONTROL AND SAFETY

Sometimes eating (or not eating) becomes tied to control — not because you're trying to lose weight, but because your brain is trying to feel safe.

This page helps you explore that connection in a calm, non-judgemental way.

Prompts (choose any):

"When everything feels overwhelming, controlling food can feel like..."

"Not eating sometimes feels like a way to..."

"Eating can feel scary because..."

"I feel safer when..."

"I feel less safe when..."

"I feel more in control when..."

"I feel out of control when..."

Optional reflection:

"If my brain could talk, it would say it's trying to protect me by..."



WHAT I WISH PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD

This page is for the things that are hard to say out loud — the things you wish people just got without you having to explain. You can write, draw, or leave it blank.

Prompts (optional):

- "I wish people knew that eating is not simple for me because..."
- "I wish people understood that I'm not doing this on purpose..."
- "I wish people didn't say..."
- "I wish people would say..."
- "I wish people could see that I'm trying when..."
- "I wish people knew how much guilt I feel when..."
- "I wish people understood that I'm scared of..."
- "I wish people knew that I'm proud of myself when..."



THINGS I WANT TO SAY BUT FIND HARD

This page is a safe place for the things that feel stuck in your throat — the things you want to say but can't, or don't want to say out loud yet.

You can write, draw, scribble, colour, or leave it blank.

Optional prompts:

- "I want to say..."
- "I'm scared to say..."
- "I don't know how to say..."
- "I wish I could tell someone..."
- "I don't want to talk about this yet, but I want it written down..."



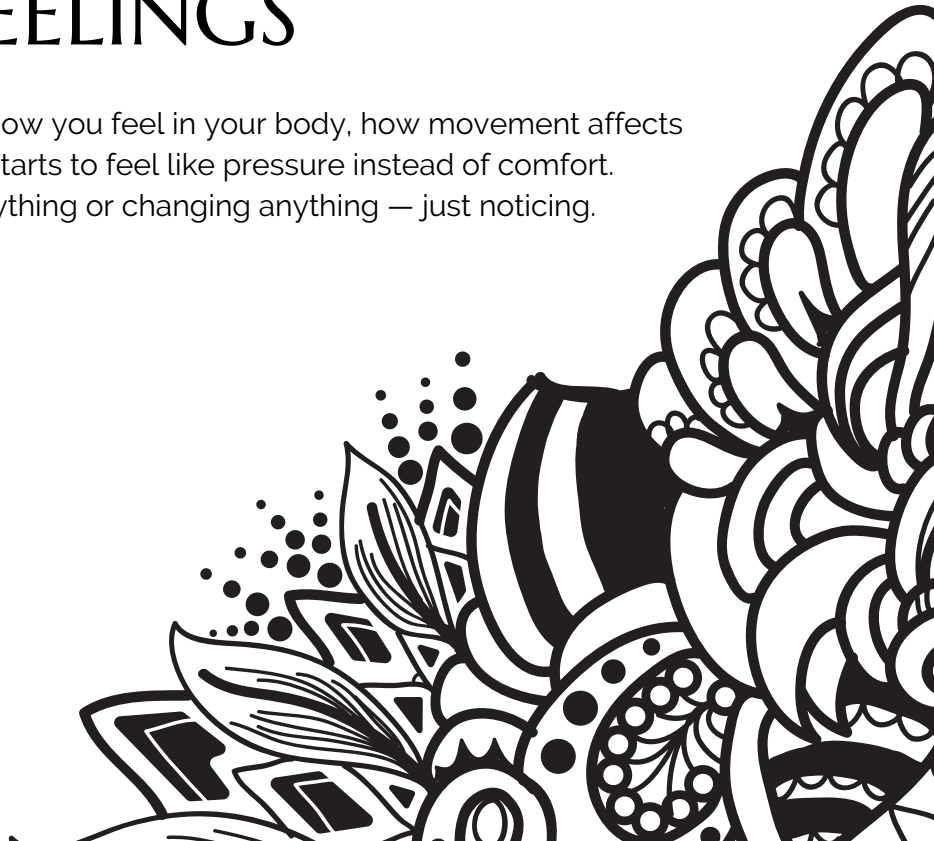
C H A P T E R

06

MOVEMENT & BODY FEELINGS

This section helps you explore how you feel in your body, how movement affects you, and when movement starts to feel like pressure instead of comfort.

It's not about stopping anything or changing anything — just noticing.



HOW I FEEL ABOUT MY BODY

How you feel about your body can change from day to day — or even hour to hour.

This page is a place to explore those feelings gently, without judgement, and without needing to “fix” anything.

Prompts (use any or none):

- “My body feels like...”
- “Things I like about my body...”

- “Things I find hard about my body...”
- “How I feel when I look in the mirror...”
- “How I feel when other people look at me...”
- “How I feel in clothes...”
- “How I feel in my body when I’m stressed...”

Optional doodle shapes:

- A body outline to colour or annotate
- A mirror shape
- A heart for things she appreciates
- A cloud for things that feel confusing or heavy



WHAT MOVEMENT FEELS LIKE FOR ME

Movement can feel different depending on the day, your energy, your emotions, and what's going on around you. This page helps you notice what movement feels like in your body — not what it "should" feel like.

Prompts (use any or none):

- "Movement feels good when..."
- "Movement feels hard when..."

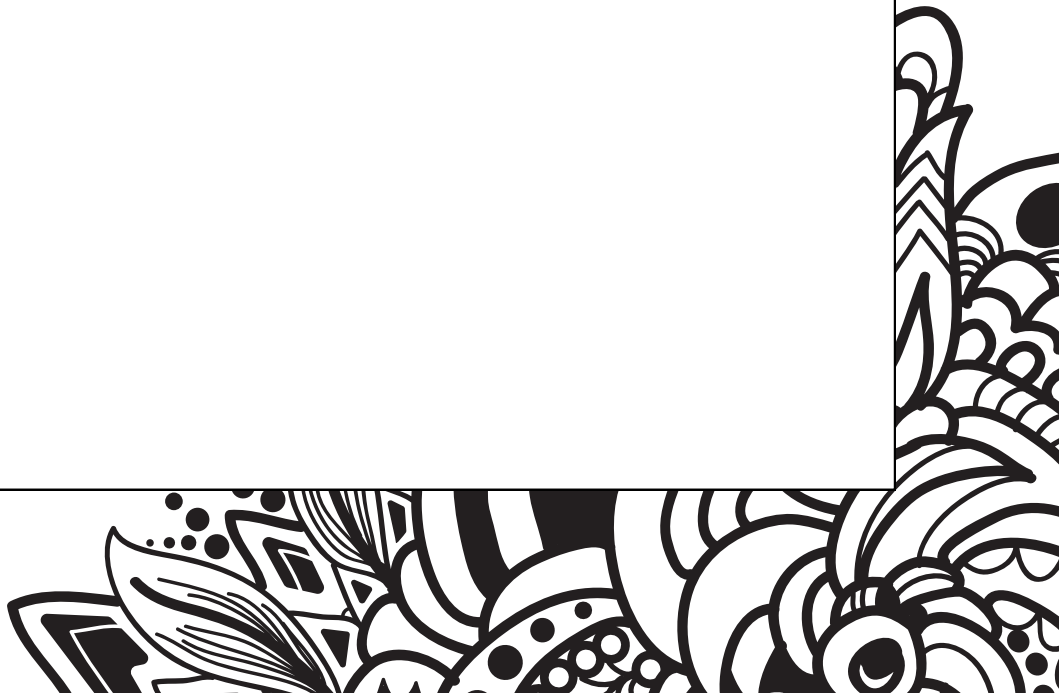
- "My body feels calm when I..."
- "My body feels stressed when I..."
- "I enjoy movement that is..." (slow, fast, gentle, predictable, rhythmic, quiet, etc.)
- "Movement helps me when..."
- "Movement overwhelms me when..."

Optional list to circle or add to:

- Walking
- Stretching
- Dancing
- Yoga
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Strength exercises
- Fidgeting
- Pacing
- Jumping

"Other movement I like..."

"Movement I'm not sure about..."



WHEN MOVEMENT BECOMES PRESSURE

Sometimes movement stops feeling like something you choose and starts feeling like something you have to do.

This can happen when you feel guilty after eating, when you feel out of control, or when your brain is trying to manage big feelings.

This page is a safe place to explore that — gently, without judgement.

Prompts (use any):

- “Movement feels like pressure when...”
- “I feel like I have to move when...”
- “After I eat, I sometimes feel like I need to...”
- “My brain tells me to move because...”
- “Movement becomes stressful when...”
- “I wish people understood that...”



“If my body could talk, it would say...”

MOVEMENT THAT FEELS GOOD (NOT PUNISHING)

This page is about movement that feels comforting, grounding, fun, or freeing — movement that helps your body feel like your body again.

Prompts:

“Movement that feels good to me...”

“Movement that helps me relax...”

“Movement that helps me feel strong in a good way...”

“Movement that helps me feel connected to my body...”

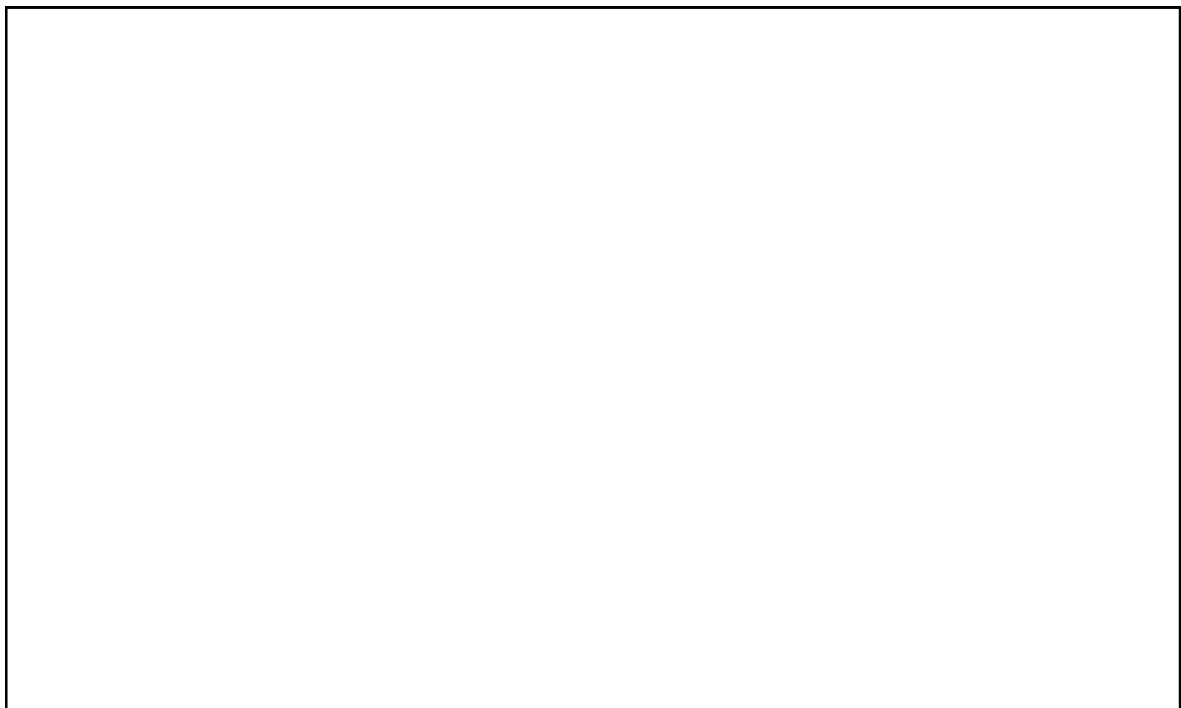
Examples (you can change all of these):

- Stretching

- Slow yoga
- Walking with someone
- Dancing in your room
- Swimming
- Gentle cycling
- Rolling around on the floor
- Shaking out your arms and legs
- Jumping on the spot
- Anything that feels fun, silly, or calming

Optional doodle shapes:

- A star for “movement that makes me feel good”
- A wave for “movement that helps me reset”
- A circle for “movement that feels safe”



C H A P T E R

07

UNDERSTANDING MY BRAIN

This section helps you explore how your brain works — the sensory bits, the pattern-spotting bits, the fast-moving bits, and the strengths that come with all of it. It's not about labels. It's about understanding yourself in a way that feels safe and empowering.



MY SENSORY BRAIN

Your brain takes in the world in a way that's uniquely yours. Some things feel really intense. Some things feel barely there. Some things feel comforting. Some things feel overwhelming. This page helps you notice how your sensory brain works — not to change it, just to understand it.

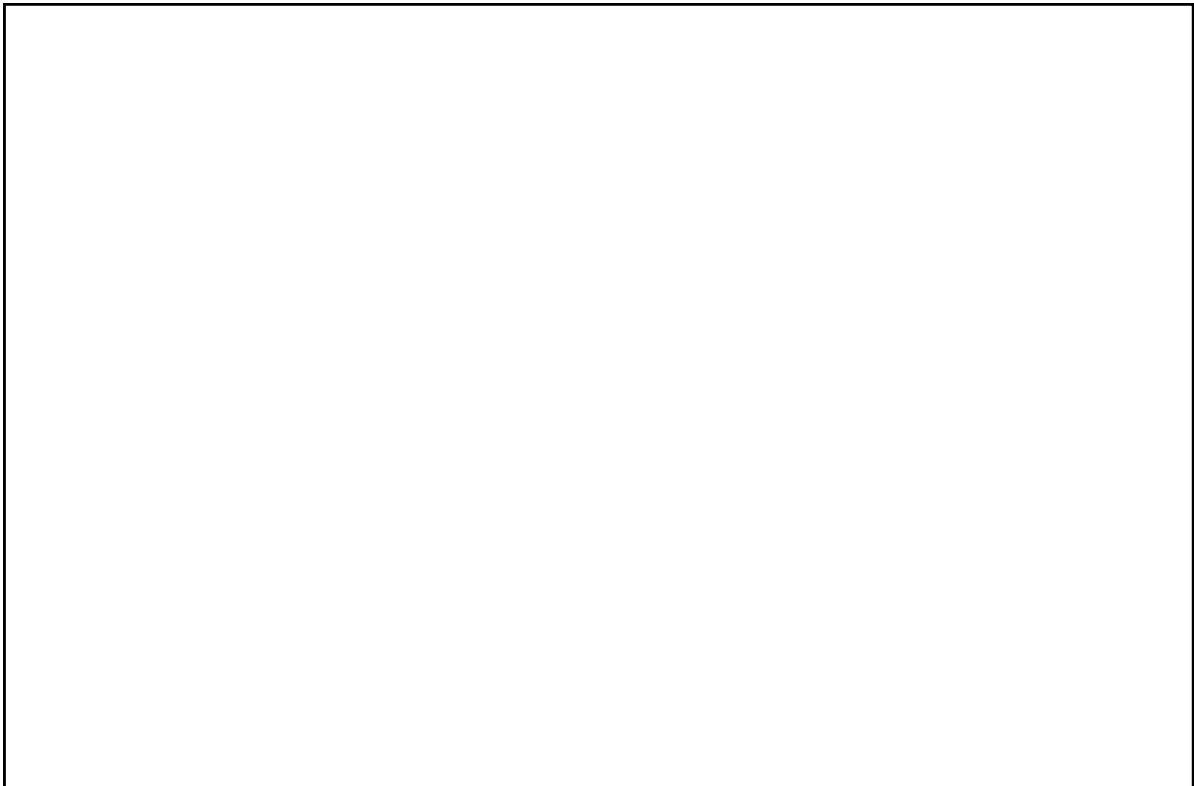
Prompts (use any):

- "My senses feel strongest when..."
- "Things that overwhelm my senses..."
- "Things that calm my senses..."
- "I notice small details like..."
- "I get overloaded when..."
- "My sensory brain helps me by..."



Optional doodle shapes:

- A swirl for "too much"
- A star for "things I notice that others miss"
- A wave for "sensory ups and downs"
- A circle for "things that feel soothing"



MY PATTERN-SPOTTING BRAIN

Some brains are brilliant at noticing patterns — in people, in routines, in conversations, in tiny details other people miss. This can be a superpower, especially when things feel confusing or unpredictable. This page helps you explore how your brain connects dots.

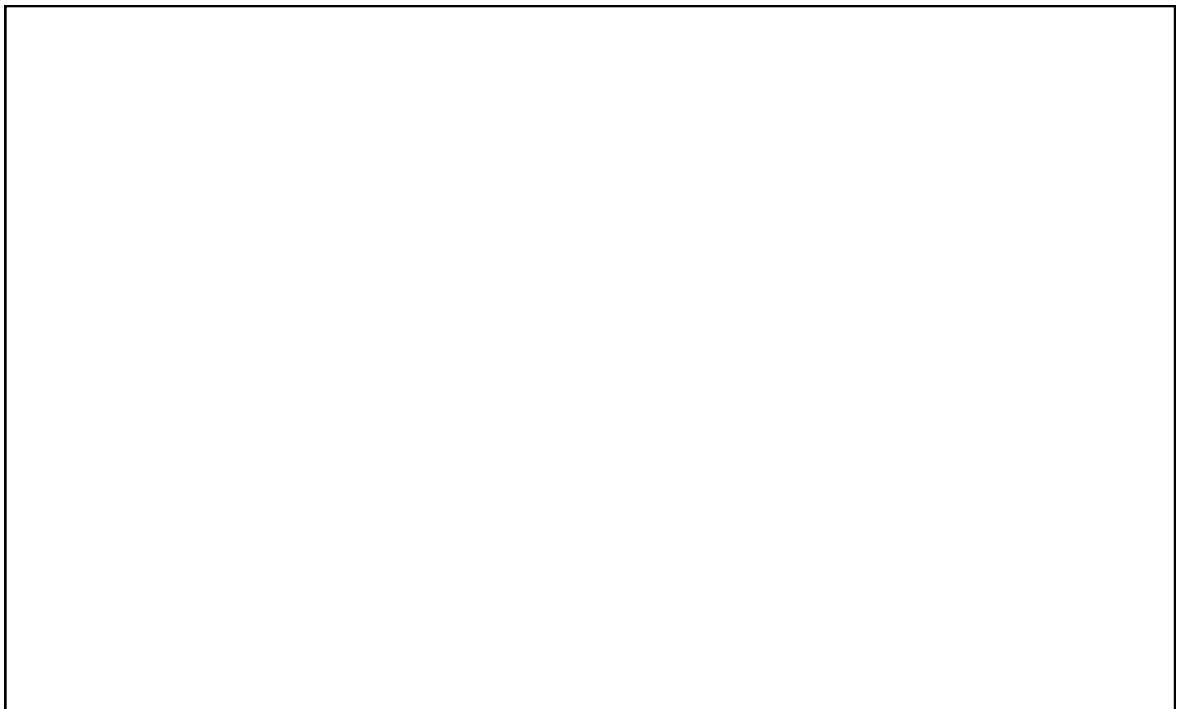
Prompts (choose any):

- "I notice patterns in..."
- "I spot changes quickly when..."
- "I like things to be predictable because..."
- "My brain feels calmer when..."

- "My brain gets stressed when things change suddenly because..."
- "My pattern-spotting brain helps me by..."

Optional doodles:

- A grid
- A repeating pattern
- A path with stepping stones
- A puzzle piece



MY FAST-MOVING BRAIN

**Some brains move fast.
Thoughts jump. Ideas spark.
Feelings arrive all at once. Focus
comes in bursts. This isn't a flaw
— it's a different rhythm.**

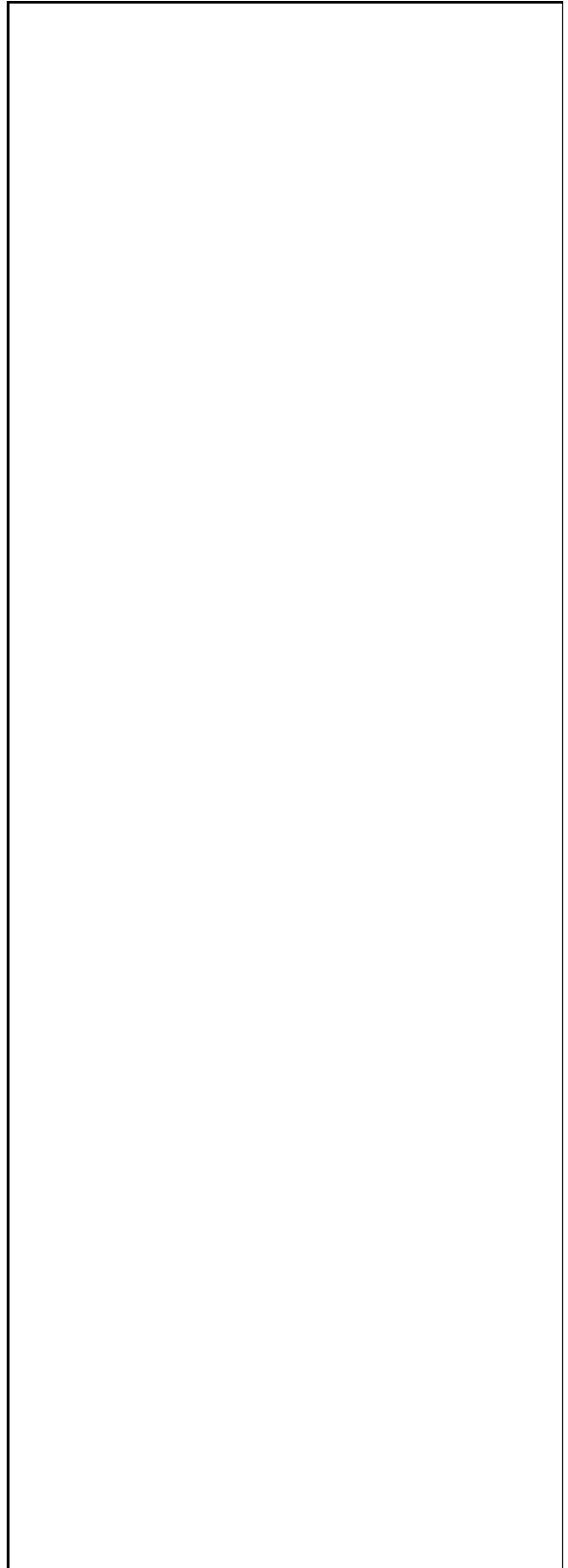
**This page helps you explore
what your fast brain feels like.**

Prompts (use any):

- "My brain goes fast when..."
- "My thoughts jump to..."
- "I get excited about..."
- "I lose focus when..."
- "I hyperfocus when..."
- "My fast brain helps me by..."
- "My fast brain makes things harder when..."

Optional doodles:

- Lightning bolts
- Shooting stars
- Spirals
- A cluster of tiny ideas
- A rocket



MY STRENGTHS

Your brain comes with strengths — real ones. Not the cheesy “everyone has strengths” kind, but the actual things that make you you.

This page is a place to name them, celebrate them, and recognise the things you’re good at (even if you don’t always feel it).

Prompts (choose any):

- “I’m good at noticing...”
- “People say I’m great at...”
- “I’m proud of myself for...”



- “I care deeply about...”
- “I’m creative when...”
- “I’m thoughtful when...”
- “I’m strong because...”
- “I’m resilient because...”

Optional doodles:

- A trophy
- A starburst
- A crown
- A sun
- A shield
- A vine growing upwards

WHAT I NEED FROM PEOPLE AROUND ME

Everyone needs different things — space, quiet, predictability, kindness, patience, explanations, or just someone nearby. This page helps you think about what makes you feel supported.



Prompts (use any):

- "I feel safest when people..."
- "I feel overwhelmed when people..."
- "I need people to understand that..."
- "It helps me when someone..."
- "It doesn't help me when someone..."
- "I feel cared for when..."
- "I need space when..."
- "I need company when..."

Optional doodles:

- A heart
- Two hands
- A speech bubble
- A quiet symbol
- A comfort object

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or writing based on the prompts and doodle suggestions provided.



C H A P T E R

08

GETTING READY FOR GP & SPECIALIST SERVICES

This section helps you understand what might happen at appointments, what you can expect, and what you don't have to talk about. It's all about safety, predictability, and choice.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE GP

GP appointments can feel uncertain when you don't know what to expect. This page is here to make things clearer and calmer for any autistic or neurodivergent person — whether you're a young person or an adult, with or without a diagnosis.

A GP appointment usually includes:

- Someone listening to what's been going on
- Talking about how you've been feeling
- Asking gentle questions to understand things better
- Thinking together about what support you might need
- Deciding whether to refer you to a specialist team (mental health, neurodevelopmental, eating-disorder, or other services)

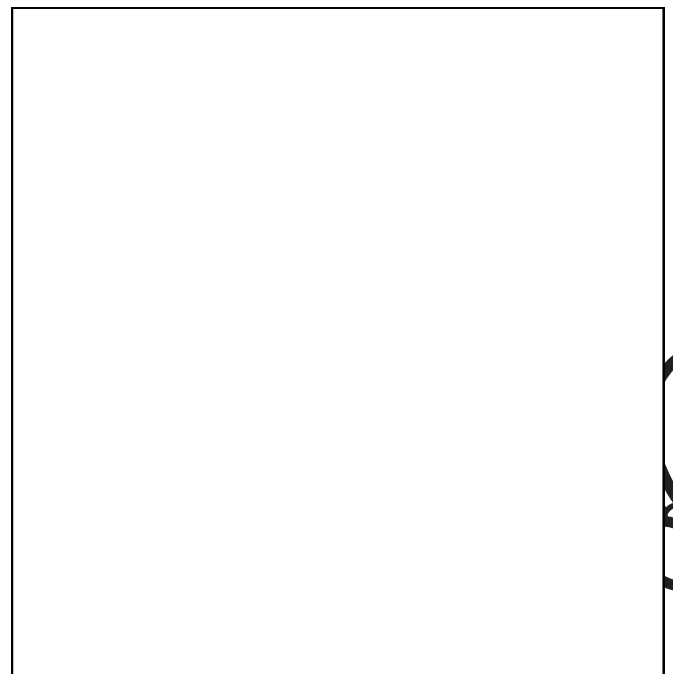
You don't have to:

- Explain everything perfectly
- Talk about anything you're not ready for
- Answer every question
- Know what you want
- Be "brave" or "strong"
- Pretend you're okay

You can:

- Let a trusted person do most of the talking
- Write things down instead of saying them
- Bring this workbook
- Say "I don't know how to explain it"
- Say "I don't want to talk about that today"
- Ask for a break
- Ask for things to be written down instead of spoken

"Things I want the GP to know..."

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write down things they want the GP to know. The box is positioned to the right of the text and above a decorative floral illustration.

WHAT SPECIALIST SERVICES MIGHT LOOK LIKE

Specialist services (such as CAMHS, adult mental health teams, neurodevelopmental services, or eating-disorder teams) are there to help people understand what's going on and find the right support. This section works for young people and adults.

Every service is different, but here are things that often happen:

- A first appointment where they get to know you
- Talking about what's been hard
- Asking questions about eating, feelings, energy, and stress
- Helping you understand what's going on
- Offering support, therapy, or specialist help
- Checking in with you regularly
- Sometimes working with family, partners, or carers if you want that

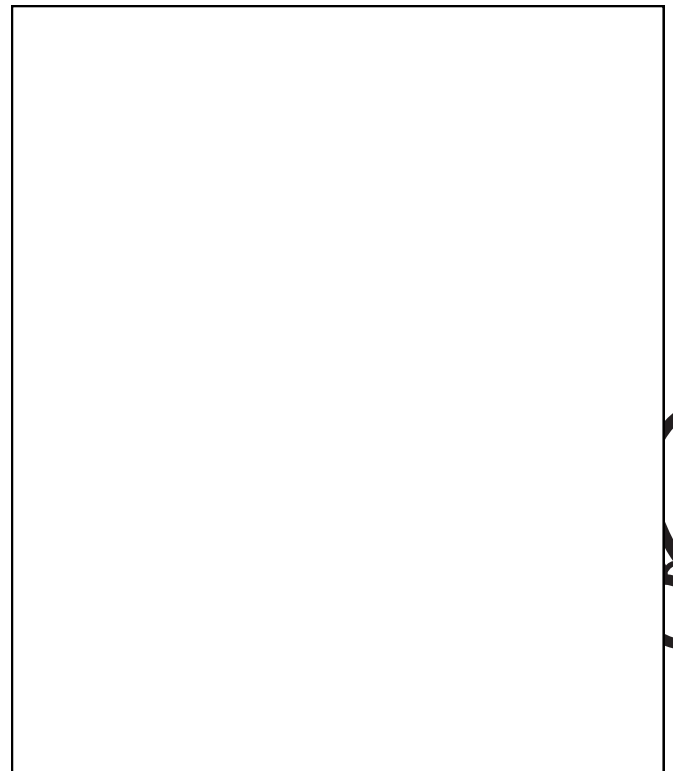
You don't have to:

- Tell them everything at once
- Have the "right words"
- Be confident
- Sit still
- Make eye contact
- Pretend you're fine

You can:

- Bring this workbook
- Let a trusted person talk for you
- Write things down
- Ask for breaks
- Ask for things to be explained slowly
- Say "I don't know"
- Say "I'm not ready to talk about that yet"

"What I hope specialist services will help with..."



QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK

You don't have to ask any questions — but if you want to, this page gives you space to think about them.



Examples (you can use any or none):

- "What support is available for someone like me?"
- "How long might we have to wait?"
- "What should I do if things get harder?"
- "Is there someone I can talk to in the meantime?"
- "What happens at the first appointment?"
- "Can I bring someone with me?"
- "Can I write things down instead of talking?"
- "What if I don't know how to explain things?"

"Questions I want to ask..."

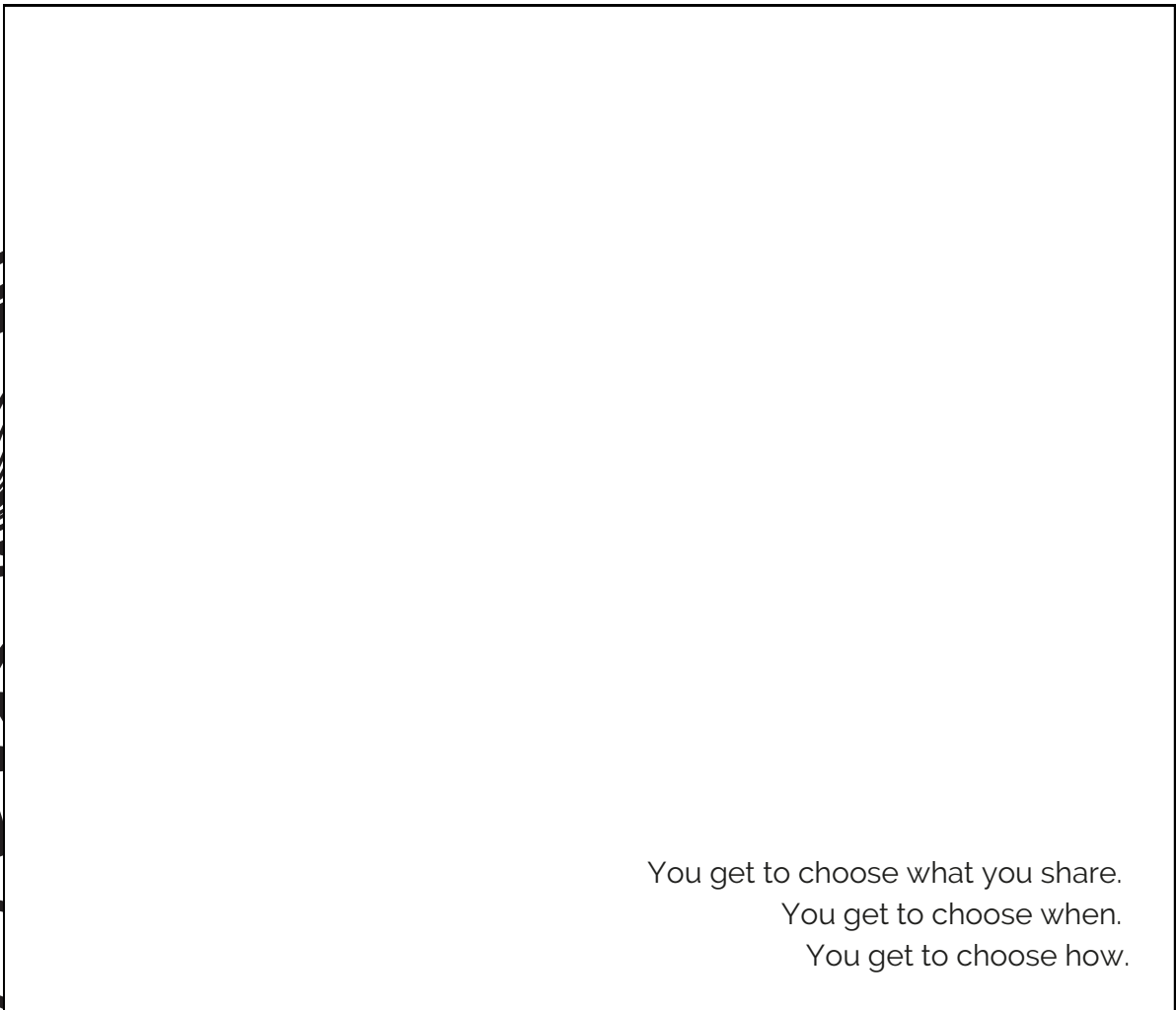
THINGS I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT YET

You don't have to talk about everything. You don't have to talk about anything you're not ready for. This page is a safe place to name the things you want to keep private for now.

You can write, draw, scribble, or leave it blank.

Optional prompts:

- "I don't want to talk about..."
- "I'm not ready to explain..."
- "I want someone else to talk about this instead..."
- "I want to talk about this later, not now..."
- "I don't ever want to talk about..."



You get to choose what you share.
You get to choose when.
You get to choose how.



C H A P T E R

09

PLANNING FOR UNSTRUCTURED TIME

Unstructured time — days without routine, holidays, weekends, sick days, exam breaks, or quiet stretches — can feel confusing or overwhelming. This chapter helps you create a gentle plan that makes things feel calmer, safer, and more predictable.

It's not about schedules or productivity. It's about grounding, choice, and low-pressure support.



WHAT HELPS ME FEEL GROUNDED

Unstructured time can feel floaty, chaotic, or too open. This page helps you notice what brings you back to yourself.

You can write, draw, list, or circle things like:

- Small routines that make the day feel anchored
- Sensory comforts (warmth, quiet, familiar clothes, safe foods)
- People who help me feel steady
- Activities that calm my brain
- Signals that I'm starting to feel wobbly



“Things that help me feel grounded...”



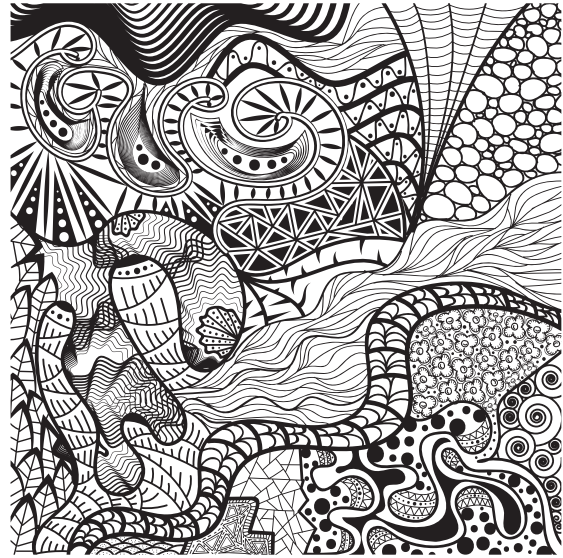
WHAT MAKES UNSTRUCTURED TIME HARD

This page helps you name the tricky parts so they feel less confusing and more manageable.

You might include:

- Too many choices
- Not knowing what to do next
- Changes in routine
- Pressure to 'use the time well'
- Social expectations
- Energy crashes

You can write as much or as little as you want.



"Things that make unstructured time hard..."

ACTIVITIES THAT FEEL SAFE AND MANAGEABLE

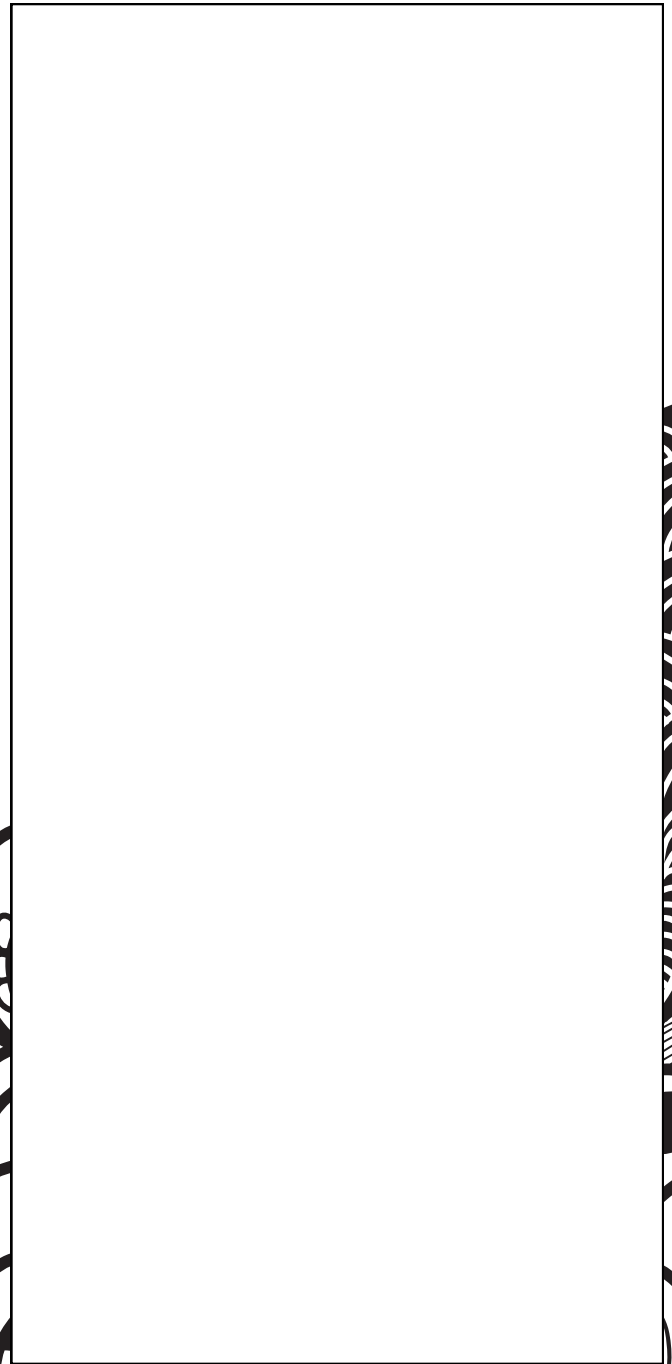
This page is for low-demand activities that feel gentle, predictable, or comforting. They don't need to be "fun" or "productive" — just safe.

Ideas you can include:

- Quiet sensory activities
- Low-demand hobbies
- Movement that feels good
- Safe foods or drinks
- Comfort shows or games
- Being with someone without talking

This list can be long, short, or blank — whatever feels right.

"Low-demand activities I enjoy..."

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to list their low-demand activities. The box is positioned to the right of the introductory text and above the decorative floral pattern at the bottom of the page.

MY “GOOD DAY” RECIPE

A “good day” doesn’t mean a perfect day. It means a day that feels manageable, gentle, and safe. This page helps you notice the ingredients that make your days feel better.

Ingredients that help me feel okay:

- A slow morning
- A predictable plan
- Time alone
- Time with someone I trust
- Something cosy
- Something fun
- Something calming
- Something familiar
- Something that makes me smile
- Something that helps my senses

Things that make the day harder:

- Too many plans
- Loud places
- Feeling rushed
- Feeling watched
- Unexpected changes
- Pressure around food

My recipe for a good day:

“A good day for me usually includes...”

“A good day for me avoids...”

“A good day feels like...”





C H A P T E R

10



REFLECTION

This section is all about looking back with kindness. Not measuring progress. Not judging. Not comparing. Just noticing what felt helpful, what felt hard, and what you want to carry forward.

It's a soft landing.



WHAT I'VE LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

This page is for gentle reflections — tiny things, big things, or things you're only just starting to understand.

Prompts (use any or none):

- "I've learned that I feel safer when..."
- "I've learned that my brain works best when..."
- "I've learned that eating feels easier when..."
- "I've learned that I need..."
- "I've learned that I don't need..."
- "I've learned that my feelings make sense because..."
- "I've learned that I'm stronger than I thought when..."

Optional doodles:

- A lightbulb
- A small plant growing
- A star
- A gentle wave



WHAT HELPED THE MOST

This page helps you notice what actually supported you — not what you “should” say, but what genuinely made things feel easier.


Prompts (choose any):

- “The things that helped me most were...”
- “I felt supported when...”
- “I felt calmer when...”
- “I felt understood when...”
- “The pages that helped me were...”
- “The things Mum did that helped were...”
- “The things I did that helped myself were...”

Examples you can circle or add to:

- Having a predictable plan
- Writing things down
- Talking instead of writing
- Not talking at all
- Using sensory tools
- Having quiet time
- Doing things slowly
- Knowing what to expect
- Being listened to
- Feeling safe

“Something else...”



WHAT I WANT TO TAKE FORWARD

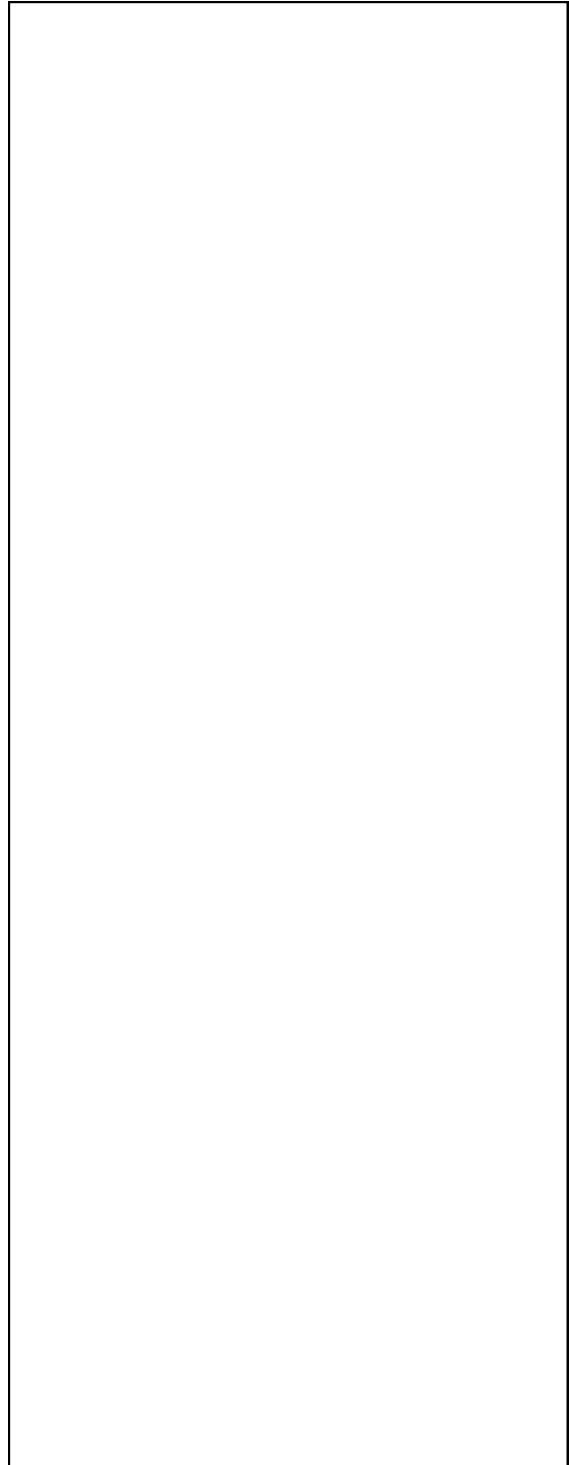
This page is about carrying the helpful things into the next part of the year — gently, without pressure.

Prompts (use any):

- “Going forward, I want to remember that...”
- “I want to keep doing...”
- “I want to try...”
- “I want to ask for...”
- “I want to protect my energy by...”
- “I want to feel...”
- “I want to let go of...”

Optional doodles:

- A suitcase (“things I’m taking with me”)
- A feather (“things I’m letting go of”)
- A path (“where I want to go next”)
- A sun (“things that help me feel warm and safe”)



A MESSAGE TO MY FUTURE SELF

This is a soft, open page for you to write something to the version of yourself who will read this later — in a week, a month, or a year. You can write, draw, or leave it blank.

Prompts (optional):

- "Dear future me..."
- "I hope you remember..."
- "I hope you're feeling..."
- "I want you to know that..."
- "I'm proud of you for..."
- "If things feel hard again, please remember..."
- "You deserve..."



Whatever you write here is enough.



