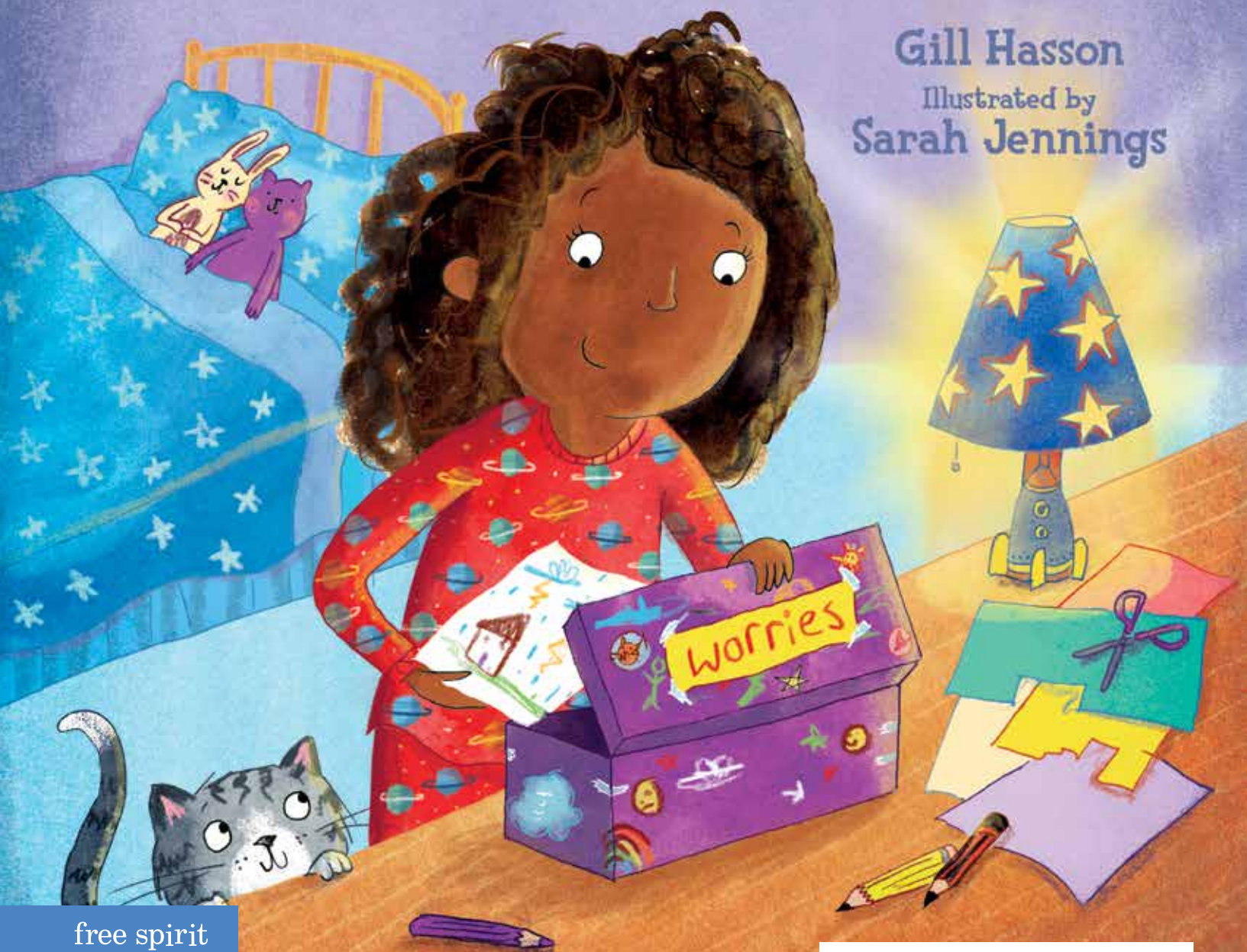


KIDS CAN COPE

Put Your Worries Away

Gill Hasson

Illustrated by
Sarah Jennings



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free spirit
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What are worry and anxiety?

Worry and anxiety are thoughts and feelings that can upset you and make you feel bad inside. When you worry, you think something sad or bad might happen and you don't know what to do about it.

Sometimes the things that worry us are real. Sometimes they are things we imagine.

What if nobody comes to pick me up?



What if my friends won't play with me?



What if our cat runs away again?



What if there's a monster at the door?

If someone comes to pick you up and if your cat doesn't run away, you'll probably stop worrying about those things. But until then, you might think a lot about whatever is worrying you.

How do you feel when you're worried?

Worry and anxiety are not "just in your head."
You can feel worries in your body too. Your heart may
thump. You might feel butterflies in your tummy.
Or your head might hurt.



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When you worry, you may feel hot and cold or
funny and faint or need to use the bathroom a lot.

Perhaps you tell your mom or dad
that your head or stomach hurts.



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Put Your Worries Away

Now you know what worry and anxiety are. They're thoughts and feelings that upset you and distract you. You can feel them in your body too. But you *can* do things to cope with them. Here are some reminders:

- Get the helpful part of your brain to start working again so that you do something about what's worrying you.
- Make a plan to deal with what's worrying you.
- Put your worry away or give it away.
- Give yourself a break from worrying by doing something you enjoy.
- If the worry comes back while you're doing something else, tell it to "go away!"

When a worry feels too big to handle, ask a grown-up for help. If you do not feel you can ask anyone you know, you can call **1-800-448-3000**, text **CONNECT** to **741741**, or go to **yourlifeyourvoice.org** to talk with a counselor. This person will listen to you and give you some help and advice about what to do if you're worried about something.



Activities

These drawing and writing activities can help you think more about how to handle your worries. You could keep your pictures and writing with this book so that you have your own ideas about how to cope when you're worried.

- Draw or write about something you're worried about.
- Draw a picture of yourself. Color in the parts of your body that don't feel good when you're worried.
- Micah is worried about a spelling test next week. He's worried there will be lots of words that he doesn't know how to spell. What do you think Micah could do about it? Write a letter to Micah with some advice and some kind words.
- Nadia is worried that when she and her sister go to the park tomorrow, their friends won't let them join in and play with them. Can you think of a plan for Nadia and her sister? Draw them a picture with ideas for what they could do.
- Write out a plan to deal with something you are worried about. Draw some pictures of yourself in each part of your plan.
- Draw a picture of things you like doing that can give you a break from your worries.
- Write down the sort of things you can tell yourself if, while you're doing something else, a worry does pop up in your mind. Draw a picture of yourself telling yourself these things.
- Write down happy thoughts you could focus on instead of worrying. Draw pictures of some happy times you've had. For each happy time, remember as much as you can: What did you do? Who was with you? What did you talk about? What was the weather like? What did you wear?

Notes for teachers, parents, and other adults

If you care for a child who worries—whether it’s about one thing or lots of things—you’ll know that simply telling children “don’t worry” or trying to reassure them by saying “there’s nothing to worry about” just doesn’t work.

When you are worried or anxious, your worries feel very real to you. It’s the same for children—their worries exist as fact. Even if they’re worrying about something that does not exist—like monsters or other imaginary creatures—their worry is still real.

Put Your Worries Away starts by acknowledging this. The first few pages describe the kinds of worries children might have, how worrying can feel, and the sorts of things children might do in response to their worries.

Although children can read this book by themselves, it will be more helpful for both of you if you read it together. Talk with children about the sort of worries they might have. Ask them how they feel and what they do when they’re worried. You might have stories to share from your own childhood about something you worried about.

Children need effective techniques and strategies to help them take control and feel in charge of worry and anxiety. *Put Your Worries Away* explains ways children can manage their worries, providing a range of strategies you can help them with: making a plan to deal with what’s worrying them, ideas for taking a break from worrying, suggestions for how to put their worries away, and ways to tell their worries to go away.

Some children might want to read this book all at once. Others will find it easier to manage and understand a few pages at a time. Either way, you’ll find plenty to talk about with children. Ask them questions and provide prompts such as: “Have you ever tried that?” “What do you think of that idea?” “How could that work for you?” Talk about the characters in the illustrations.

After reading the book and helping children identify strategies that could work for them, you can come back to the book often to remind yourselves of ways to handle any future worries.

With time, patience, support, and encouragement from you, children will learn to cope with and overcome their worries. But if their anxiety is frequently causing them distress and leading them to avoid everyday situations and miss out, it’s worth seeking more advice. Reach out to a healthcare provider, counselor, or other expert and ask for help.