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Dear _____

(insert your name here)

Being in foster care can be confusing and filled with uncertainty.

We hope this handbook will answer some of the questions you may have about your foster care journey, and help you to adjust to the changes happening in your life.

Besides information about foster care and personal stories from other current and former foster teens, this handbook will also provide you with useful ways to look after yourself, and let you to share your feelings safely by writing down your thoughts.

This handbook guides you through the 3 main stages in your fostering journey. Simply choose to refer to the chapters that apply to you at any point in time.

If you have questions after reading this handbook, feel free to speak about them to an adult you trust!

1. Entering Foster Care

- i. Transition into Foster Care
- ii. Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Parents
- iii. Identifying Feelings
- iv. Safety

2. Growing up in Foster Care

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- ii. Managing Relationships
- iii. Coping Skills

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- i. Reflecting on My Fostering Journey
- ii. Saying Goodbye
- iii. Post-Care Services
- iv. Dear Future Me





What are foster families?

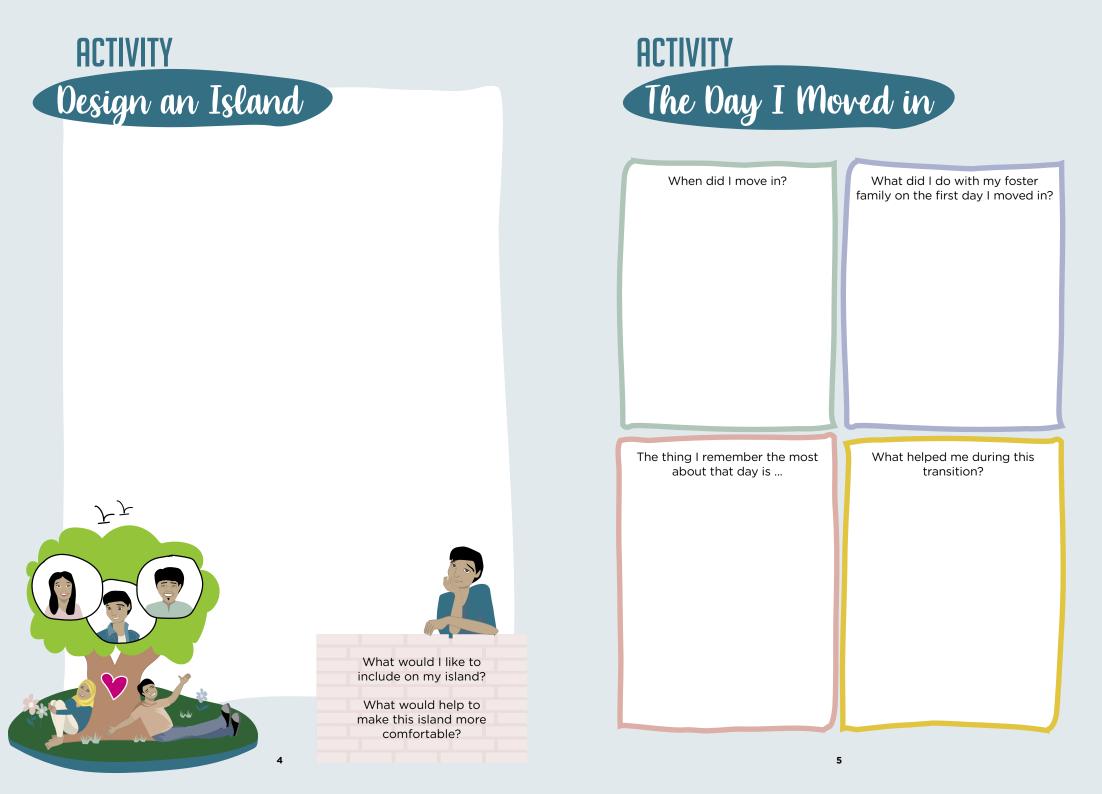
Foster families provide a family home for children and teens whose family members are unable to care for them for the time being.

Teens will be under the temporary care of their foster families until their family is ready to welcome them back.

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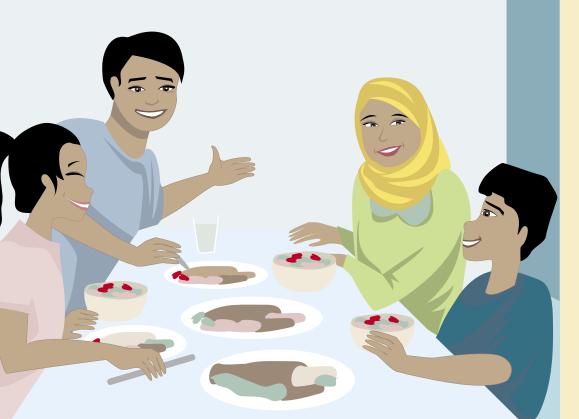
Foster parents are the Aunty and Uncle in the foster family who will be responsible for ensuring the safety and care of children. If foster parents have children, they are your foster brothers and sisters.



Why Do I Have to Live with A Foster Family?

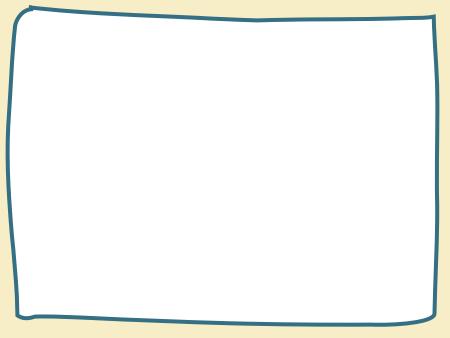
There are many reasons why children are placed in foster care, but it is never your fault as you need to be placed in a safe place.

While family reintegration plans are being worked out with your Child Protection Officer, foster families can provide a safe, secure and nurturing home for you so that you will not feel alone and can continue to grow and develop in a caring family environment.



When Will I See My Family Again?

You might miss your family, or even worry about them. They could be your parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, siblings and cousins! Write the names of those you miss here:



Tell your Child Protection Officer or Foster Care Officer if there is someone you would like to see.

Your Child Protection Officer will let you know when, where or how often you can see your family again. This will only be arranged when it is safe for you.

Sometimes you may also not be ready to see your family. You can talk to your officer about how you feel about seeing your family again.

ROLES OF FOSTER PARENTS

What Will My Foster Parents Do for Me?

The main responsibility of your foster parents is to provide a secure, loving and nurturing home environment to help you heal and grow.

Below are ways your foster parents will look after you.



What Is It Like Living with Foster Families?

Everybody plays a part in the home.

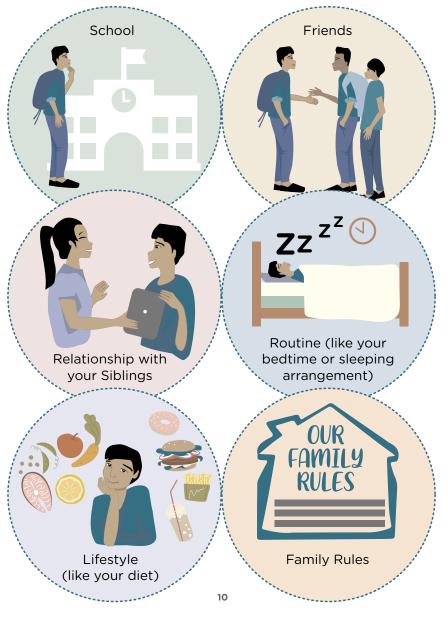
For example, some foster mothers cook delicious meals for their foster children, while some foster fathers drive them to school!

What About My Foster Family?

Use this worksheet to share about a family member!				
	Name:			
	Words I	would use to describ	be this person:	
I would rate ou	r relationsł	nip:		
1	2	3	4	5
Not good What I like mos	st about ou	ır relationship is:		Great
Something tha	t needs to	happen to improve o	our relationship) is:
What I like about other foster family members:				
Each of them has a different strength. They are:				
Name: Strength:				
Name:		Strength:		
Name:		Strength:		

Transitioning into foster care is not only about physically staying apart from your parents and moving in with a set of foster parents whom you have not met before.

The transition process might also involve changing your:



HEAR FROM OTHERS!

Sarah's Story

When I first met my foster parents, I thought they looked very strict and stern. Little did I know that I would warm up to them fairly easily as they were gracious in opening up their home and family to me.

Sharing was a foreign concept to me when I first entered the household. As the only child in my natural family, I never had the need to share anything with anyone. However, being in a household filled with other children around my age, changed my perspective on sharing. It was with a lot of reluctance that I learnt to share my toys, food and clothes, but having experienced the patience and generosity of my foster siblings, I gradually found joy in sharing.



Sarah*, now 24 years old (Sarah was 10 years old when she entered foster care.)

*Note: All names of foster children have been changed to protect their privacy and maintain confidentiality

What are some of the changes that I have gone through after moving in with my foster family?

What are some of the things I have learnt after moving in with my foster family?



IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

Some foster teens do not take a long time to get used to living with their foster parents, while others may need more time to adjust to their new home.

It's Okay to Feel...





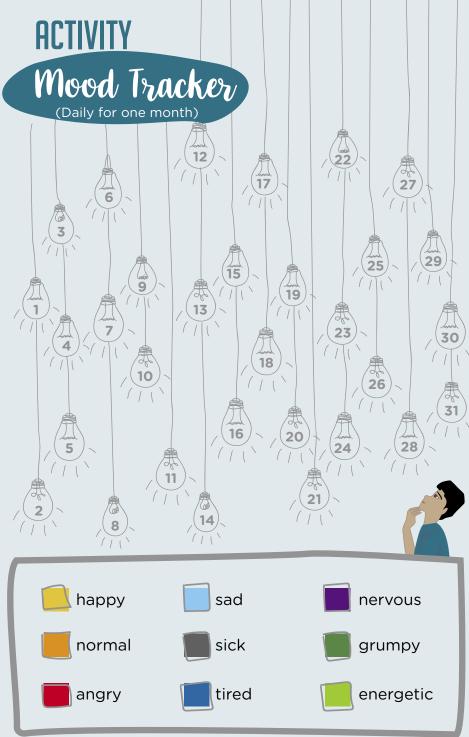
What are the feelings that I have experienced due to these changes? Pick and circle a face below!





Some foster teens may feel happy about their foster parents, but some may have other kinds of feelings such as sadness, or being afraid or unsure. It is okay to have more than one feeling at the same time.

It can be difficult to be away from your parents, and to stay with a family you do not know. You may feel relieved one day and angry the next day, or both relieved and angry at the same time. This can be a confusing time for you.



HEAR FROM OTHERS LIKE YOU!

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Charlotte's Story: Being Close Takes Trust

Charlotte's Diary

Diary Entry 1 / 4

Mood Nervous but excited!!

Dear Diary,

I will be joining my foster family, TODAY! I am happy to have a safe family now, but I am nervous because I don't know what they will be like. Will I have a sister to hang out with? I really hope they like me.

Diary Entry 3 / 4

Mood Sad and lonely . . .

Dear Diary,

Today was not a good day. I thought about my family, and that made me cry at school. I did not tell anyone when I came home, but aunty and uncle seemed to know. They tried talking to me about my feelings, but I still don't feel safe telling them how I feel. I feel so alone sometimes, even though I know they care.

Diary Entry 2 / 4

Mood Feeling happy?

Dear Diary,

My foster family is great! Besides aunty and uncle, I have 2 foster siblings, Alex and Sara, which is cool! Everyone has been really kind and accepting of me and I can feel they really mean well when I talk to them.

Diary Entry 4 / 4

Moot Safe and warm



APR

30

Dear Diary,

It's been awhile! I'm happy to report that all is well! It took a bit of time, but I've learnt to share my thoughts and feelings with my foster family... It was strange at first, but now I feel more comfortable with and closer to them. It feels like we are a family.

Charlotte*, 18 years old. She was 1 year old when she entered foster care.

*Note: All names of foster children have been changed to protect their privacy and maintain confidentiality

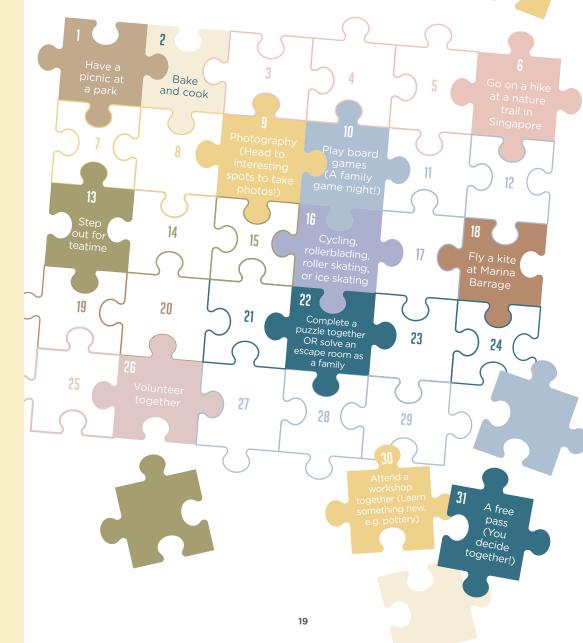
ACTIVITY What Can I Do to Feel Better?

Draw/write about a happy memory, or things that make you happy!				

Although moving into a new environment can be confusing and intimidating, you deserve a safe home and meaningful relationships that can make you feel cared for.

It may take a while to get used to living with your foster family but give yourself and your foster family some time to adjust.

ACTIVITIES FOR FOSTER TEENS AND FOSTER PARENTS TO DO TOGETHER



What else do I hope my	y foster parents will do	o together with me?	
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How Long Do I Need to Stay with My Foster Family?

Some children stay with their foster families for a few months. Others stay longer, for several years.

Children go back to their own families when their parents can keep them safe and take good care of them.



SAFETY

No matter how you feel about your foster family, you can always talk to an adult you trust! They can be your safe adults.

Who Are Your Safe Adults?
Safe adults are adults around you that you know and trust.
You should feel safe with them, and they should be able to listen to you when you need to talk to them.
Can you think of some safe adults in your life?

Some Examples of Safe Adults are:

In Internet	Name:	
	Role:	Foster Parents
	Name:	
	Role:	Teacher in School
	Name:	
	Role:	Counsellor in School
	Name: Role:	CPO in MSF
	Name:	
	Role:	FCO in MSF
	Name:	
		Psychologist in MSF

There may be times when you just need someone to talk to but feel too overwhelmed to reach out to your safe adults.

You may also consider calling the following helplines to help you get through these difficult moments:

Organisation	Contact Number	Operating Hours
Samaritans of Singapore	1800 221 4444	24 hours
IMH Helpline	6389 2222	24 hours
Tinkle Friend Helpline	1800 274 4788	Mon – Fri: 2.30pm – 5pm
TOUCHline [By TOUCH Community Services]	1800 377 2252	Mon - Fri: 9am - 6pm
EC2 (e-Counselling Centre)	https://ec2.sg/	[Live chat] Mon - Fri: 10am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm (Closed on Public Holidays)

Even though foster parents and your safe adults can help to keep you safe, it is also important for you to keep yourself safe!

How do I keep myself safe?



My Safe Zone

Your safe zone is the space that surrounds you. It is the **distance between** you and another person that you are comfortable with.

Everyone's safe zone is different. No one has the right to enter your safe zone without permission.

Your safe zone is different with different people. You may be more comfortable with your family, compared to school friends or strangers.

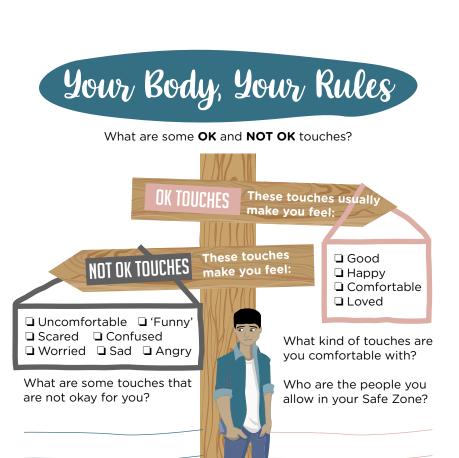
Your safe zone is different at different times. You may be comfortable with your classmate when you are sitting together in class, but you might not be comfortable when you are alone with them during recess.

OK and Not OK Touches

UNSAFE TOUCHES

Your body belongs to you and no one should be able to touch you without your permission, especially your private areas. Everyone should respect your boundaries and it is important to keep yourself safe.

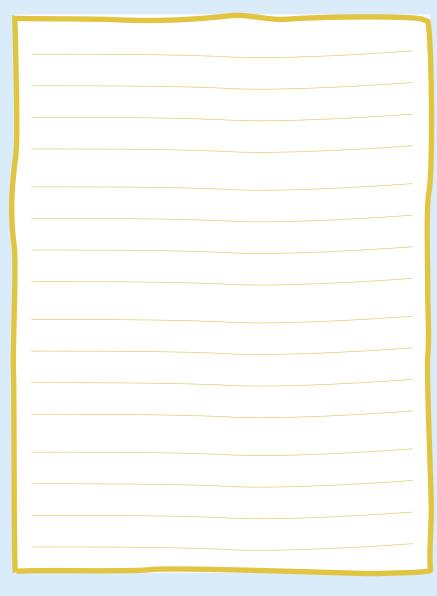




Setting Appropriate Boundaries

What do I say when I feel like someone is not respecting my personal space?

How do I respect the personal space of others?



Protecting Yourself

You have a right to be protected from all forms of harm.

Examples of Verbal/	Examples of Physical
Emotional Harm	Harm
 Threats and intimidation Name-calling Constant criticism Belittling comments and insults Personal offensive jokes Inappropriate sexual comments Ignoring feelings 	 Slapping Hitting with/without objects Choking Kicking Locking you outside the home

What would I do if any of the above happens to me?





Even though you live with a foster family, you are still you!

Things that make you who you are - such as your name, religion, and beliefs - will not change. You will also continue to be the legal child of your natural parents.





Learn about yourself and let your foster parents get to know you better too! Rate the following statements from 0 to 10.

Not at all	Kinda like me	So me!
0	3	5
🔵 l ge	et bored easily and I like to try new things	
🔵 l tru	ust most people	
🔵 I lik	e to spend time with family and friends	
🔵 l ma	ake friends with others easily	
🔵 I lik	e to be neat and organised	
🔵 l wa	ant to be well-liked by others around me	
	n usually able to stay calm and collected even in str ations	essful
🔵 I an	n optimistic and look forward to what the future bri	ngs
🔵 I am	n competitive and take pride in my achievements	
Bei	ng kind and thoughtful is important to me	
🔵 l en	joy challenges and I do not give up easily	
🔵 I lik	e to plan things ahead of time	
🔵 l rea	ally enjoy receiving gifts from others	
	el loved when someone praises me and offers word couragement	s of
	el close to someone when we are talking or doing sol ether	mething
l lik	e it when people do things to help me	
I fee	el valued when I receive high-fives, pats on the bac	k or hugs

ACTIVITY Learning About My Personality https://knowandlove.com/ Discover more about yourself with the Know & Love Personality Test.

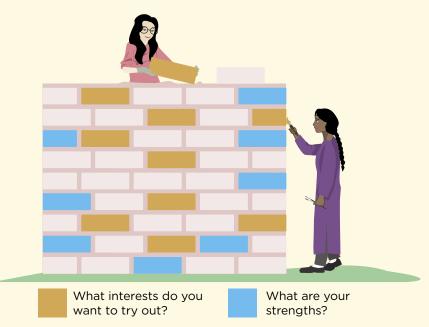


Scan this QR code or visit **knowandlove.com** to take the test!

ACTIVITY My Strengths and Interests

What interests do you think you would enjoy, and which would you like to try out?

What personality type are you?



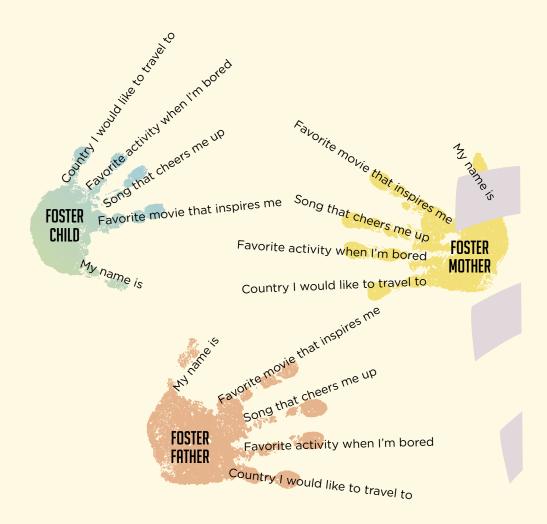
All of us have different hobbies and interests. Some people like to play sports, while others prefer to read or watch movies.

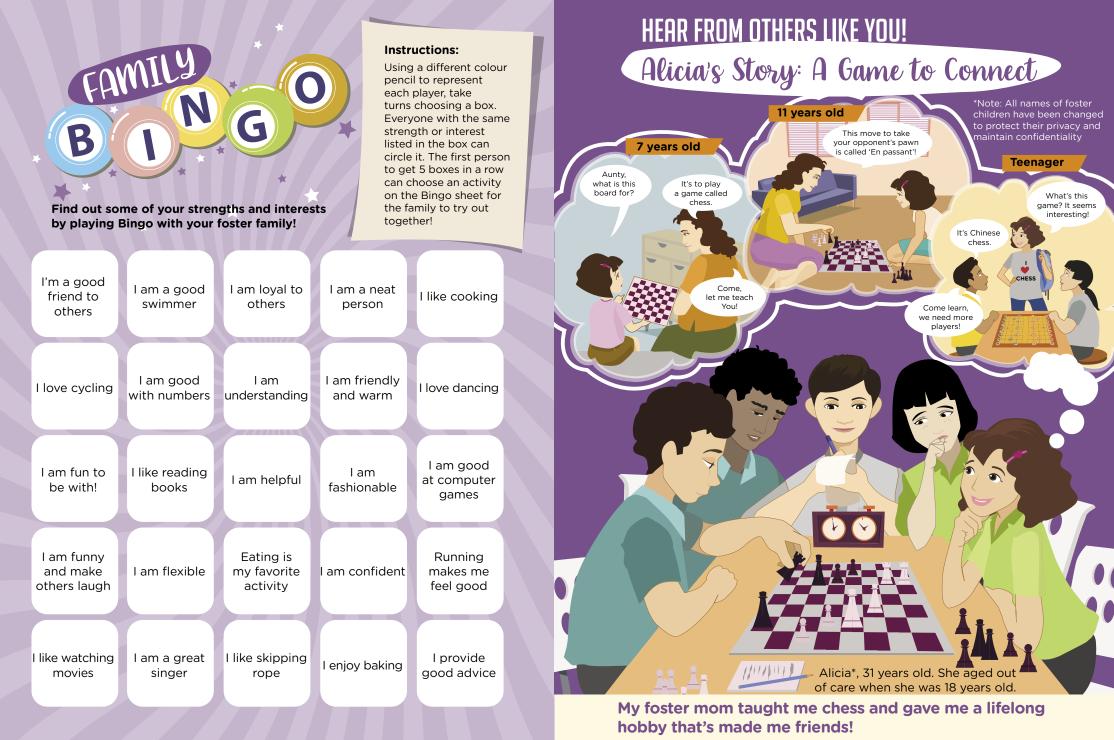
You can share with your foster family what you like to do, and perhaps you can also do it together with them! You might also want to ask your foster family members what they like to do.

You can try out different activities with your foster family. This will allow you to get to know your foster family better and for them to get to know you.

ACTIVITY All About Me

Work on this together with your foster parents to learn more about each other! Use drawings or words to identify things about yourselves, such as your family and friends, or favourite foods and activities.







What are the things that I enjoy doing with my foster family?

What do I wish to do more of with my foster family?

What are some family traditions that we have?



Social Support System

There are **3 core groups** that **make up a strong support system**: **family**, **friends**, and **professionals** like your teachers and social workers.

It is important to have a strong support system as it has many positive benefits for you. For example, studies have shown that social support can reduce depression and anxiety.



Draw or paste pictures of people who are important to you.

Who are the top 3 people supporting me at this point in my life? How can I show that I appreciate them? Ο

Benefits of good social support:

Provides Emotional Support

All of us go through difficult moments sometimes and these moments can be stressful, negatively affecting your mood. It is always helpful when you have someone by your side to help you through these moments. Having good and positive company can make these moments less difficult to deal with. It can help to improve how you feel and make you feel less stressed.

Improves your Lifestyle Habits

Your support system can influence your lifestyle. For example, if your social support consists of family and friends who like to engage in sports, it is likely that you will also lead an active lifestyle! Hence, having a good support system can help you make lifestyle changes, and this will improve your well-being and encourage healthy behaviours.

Builds Self-Confidence

Having good social support can help you to feel confident, especially during times when you may have doubts about yourself and your capabilities. Having strong social support can provide you with affirmation, praise, and encouragement that will boost your selfesteem and make you feel good about yourself.

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS AS A FAMILY

Sometimes, we don't get along with the people we love, or we disagree with something they say or do.



Every family has their own lifestyle which you may find difficult getting used to.

Look for what you have in common with your foster family

There may be certain house rules and family practices that you may be unfamiliar with or do not agree with.

Talk to your foster parents about it and find out how you can all agree on the house rules. It is also important to understand that sometimes these house rules are necessary to keep you safe.

How To Connect with Foster Parents

Sometimes you may find it easier talking to your friends than your foster parents, especially when it comes to topics where sharing with adults can seem difficult or intimidating.

It is helpful to remember that communication is important in building your relationship with your foster parents. Having their help, advice, and support can be especially useful.

In what ways can you stay close, get along with, and build a strong relationship with your foster parents? Here are some ways to grow your relationship with your foster parents:

Small Acts Matter

You may not realise this, but sometimes our small acts of kindness and gratitude can have a huge impact on others. Sharing a joke, helping around the house, or even just showing your foster parents your beautiful smile, may brighten their day!

Quality Time for Bonding



It is good to engage in bonding activities with your foster family. These activities can be as simple as playing games together or watching television programmes. If you enjoy nature or engaging in adventurous activities, you can also go cycling or take a hike! This will create opportunities for both you and your foster family to enjoy each other's company.



At times, you may feel upset and need some help from others to get through the difficult moments. Although foster children share that they would like their foster parents to help them during these times, many do not share with their foster parents that they are upset. It will be difficult for your foster parents to help you if they do not know that you are having a tough time. Have more conversations with your foster parents about your feelings or simply ask them for help when you need it. It may be easier than you think!

This week . . .

What was 1 kind thing that my foster family did for me? What was 1 kind thing that I did for my foster family?



Show You Care

Just like how you would like your foster parents to show their care for you, it's important to show your care and concern for them as well.

You can show your care for your foster parents by being respectful and polite, and by being thoughtful about their needs. This can be as simple as making your own bed without being asked, so your foster parents can have some rest.

What are some ways that I usually show care to others?
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o.

Communication is a two-way street, which means the way you talk can influence how well your foster parent listens and understands you. How can you express yourself better?

Be Clear and Direct

Be as clear as you can about what you think, feel, and want. Give details that can help them understand your situation, so your foster parents are better able to understand what is happening, from your point of view.

Try Not to Raise Your Voice or Be Unreasonable

Using a lighter and more respectful tone helps your foster parents to listen to and consider your opinions seriously.

Here are some tips to communicate better:

Talk to your foster parents more frequently

The more you talk to your foster parents about everyday life, the stronger the bond you build. Sharing trivial everyday details helps build a relationship that can make it easier for you to approach your foster parents to discuss something serious. When foster parents feel connected to your daily life, they can understand you and better support you in times of difficulty.

Try to see the situation from their point of view If a disagreement with your foster parents arises, try to see things from their point of view. Expressing that you understand their view and telling them how their point of view differs from yours helps them be more willing and able to see yours too. What are some challenges I face in communicating with my foster parents? What do I wish my foster parents What do I hope can be improved? What do I wish my foster parents would do to improve our communication?

What can I do to communicate better with my foster parents?

Loving both my Natural and Foster Families

What if I like living with my foster family, but also miss living with my natural family?

Understanding Loyalty Binds

It is natural to feel conflicted when you wish to be with your natural parents again but also enjoy the company of your foster family, or vice versa. It may even feel like you are betraying one family when you choose the other. Don't worry about feeling stuck between both families.



Here are some tips on what you can do:

Acknowledge that how you feel about the situation is natural.

It is important to first understand and recognise how you feel towards your natural and foster family.

Sometimes you may not feel so good after access because you really enjoyed your time with your natural family. This would be a sign of feeling conflicted. It is entirely natural to feel this way and many foster children share this feeling.



Be open and share with someone about how you feel.

You can approach any safe adult like your foster parents, your Foster Care Officer, teacher, or counsellor to talk about how you are feeling.

Remember that they are all here to guide you along the way.

You Are Never Alone

Remember that it is never your problem to deal with alone, and that you have every right to live in an environment that you are most comfortable with.

If you are struggling to get along with your foster family or miss your natural family, please speak to your safe adults such as your Foster Care Officer, Child Protection Officer, and school teachers.

HEAR FROM OTHERS LIKE YOU!

Henry's Story: Part of Me

My foster family will always support my decisions. Yes, they can be strict at times, but I know it is their way of showing that they care. I wouldn't trade them for anything in the world. They are my second family and are very important to me.

> My natural mother and my foster family are the reason why I am the person I've become today. Thank you isn't enough to show how much I appreciate them.

Henry^{*}, 17 years old. He reintegrated with his natural mother when he was 4 years old.

*Note: All names of foster children have been changed to protect their privacy and maintain confidentiality

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS

Friends are important to us. They are the people we spend a lot of time with, so we should always choose our friends wisely. Friendships should help you, not hurt you.



As you grow older, your peers will start to make up a bigger part of your life as the people you spend a lot of time with. Your friends may knowingly or unknowingly have a large influence on the way you act, in everything from your fashion sense to how you speak. Sometimes, in order to fit in, youths can be eager to do what their peers tell them to. This is known as peer pressure.

It is important to remember that your choice of action can have a great impact on you, and that some decisions may land you in unpleasant situations.

What are things that I value most in friends?	What are some worries I have about managing friendships?	
-		

Do I have to tell my friends in school?

It is entirely up to you to decide if you would like to share with your friends about living with a foster family. If you do not feel comfortable letting your friends know, you do not have to share it with

them! Do note that your teachers and school counsellor would be aware that you are currently living with your foster family. If you have any problems or you are being bullied in school, tell a trusted adult such as your teacher, foster care officer or foster parent so that they can help you

Can I still hang out with my friends?

Some

Questions

You May

Have:

When you wish to go out with your friends and visit them at their homes, ask for permission from your foster parents. Your foster parents are responsible for your safety and need to know where you are and what you are doing to help keep you safe.

They may want to meet your friends and talk to their parents to ensure that they have a positive influence on you. While they might choose to restrict your activities, it is done out of concern for your wellbeing.

Can I call my friends or message them?

You should follow the rules set by your foster parents on the usage of your handphone, telephone or computer. Some foster parents might decide to set aside time for you to get calls or restrict your phone or computer usage timing.

If you disagree with any of the rules set by your foster parents, try to discuss with them why you should have more time for such devices, and come up with new rules together. You have the right to privacy during phone calls.

HEAR FROM OTHERS LIKE YOU!



Nicole*, 19 years old. She has aged out of care.

*Note: All names of foster children have been changed to protect their privacy and maintain confidentiality

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MANAGING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

While it is normal to want a relationship, it is important that you are safe and that your foster parents are aware that you are in a relationship.



What Are Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships?

Signs of Healthy Relationships

- 1. There is mutual respect and trust between you and your partner.
- 2. You and your partner are honest with one another.
- 3. Even though you are together with your partner, you are still able to maintain your individuality!
- 4. Mutual compromise is made by both you and your partner in the relationship.
- 5. You and your partner make each other happy.

Signs of Unhealthy Relationships

- 1. Either you or your partner is controlling of the other's actions.
- 2. There is dishonesty and manipulation in the relationship.
- Being in the relationship results in you or your partner staying away from your family and friends.
- 4. Your or your partner often dismiss one another's feelings.
- 5. The relationship does not make you and your partner happy.

It is important to be able to identify red flags and understand the concept of consent when you are in a relationship. Even if it feels awkward or difficult, it is important to communicate with the safe adults in your life so that you can manage your relationships in a safe and positive manner.

What does being in a relationship mean to me? Why do I have to tell a safe adult when I am in a relationship?

ACTIVITY

Identifying Relationship Red Flags

What are some behaviours that you consider red flags? (i.e. warning signs)

Someone not trusting you and not respecting your boundaries

WHAT IS "CONSENT"?

Consent is when one party agrees or gives permission to another to do something.

- It involves agreeing to an action based on your full knowledge of what it entails, the possible consequences and your awareness of the option of saying no.
- Consent should be a part of a healthy relationship.

ACTIVITY WHAT WOULD I DO?

Write down what you would do in each of these scenarios.



A classmate is pressuring you to share more about your natural family or foster family

Check this out for more differences between healthy and unhealthy love.





Having a disagreement with foster parents about screen time or curfew.

You care for both your natural parents and foster parents. Your foster parents bought a gift that you like for your birthday, but your natural parents also bought you the same gift.





Identifying signs of anger and stress

Knowing my emotions and feelings

Stress is a feeling that you get when you feel overwhelmed or anxious about something happening in your life.

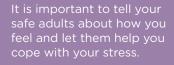
It is natural for everyone to feel stressed sometimes. You may feel stressed because you are worried about being in foster care and unsure about how your friends may react.

Stress can be positive when it helps us to overcome our fears and try new things. If you are feeling stressed for a long time and the feeling does not go away, it may affect your health.



You have someone you like and you want to get into a relationship with that person, but you are not sure if you should tell your foster parents and natural parents.



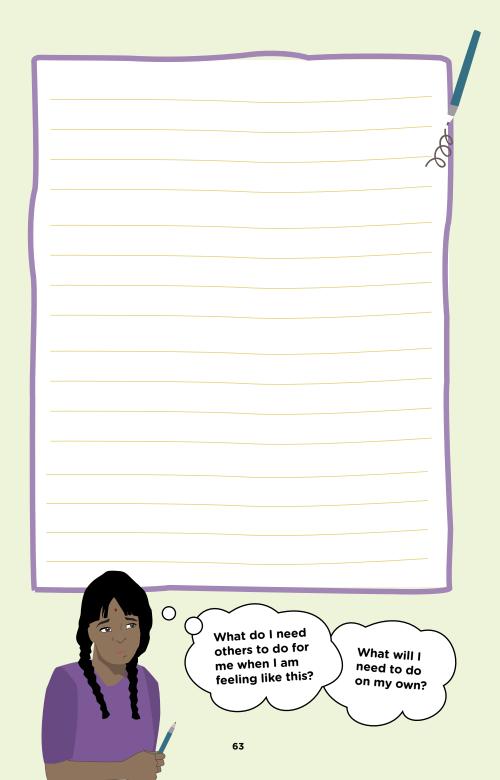




What do I do when I know I am feeling angry?

When you start feeling angry, you may show all or some of these tell-tale signs:





WHAT IS FEELING STRESSED LIKE?

What is stress?

Stress is a feeling that you get when you feel overwhelmed or anxious about a situation in your life. Stress can be positive when it helps us to step out of our comfort zone or motivates us to achieve our goals. For example, it could help you try something new for the first time, or motivate you to study when you have an examination the next day.



You may be stressed because you are worried about how you are doing in foster care, or uncomfortable about how others may react after knowing you are in foster care.

While stress is a normal response to events and changes that occur in our lives, feeling stressed for a prolonged period of time will negatively affect your health. It is important to seek help and speak to a trusted adult when you feel like you are not able to cope with your stress.

How do I know that I am stressed?¹⁰

When you are feeling stressed, you may show some of these telltale signs:

Some physical/behavioural signs of stress include:

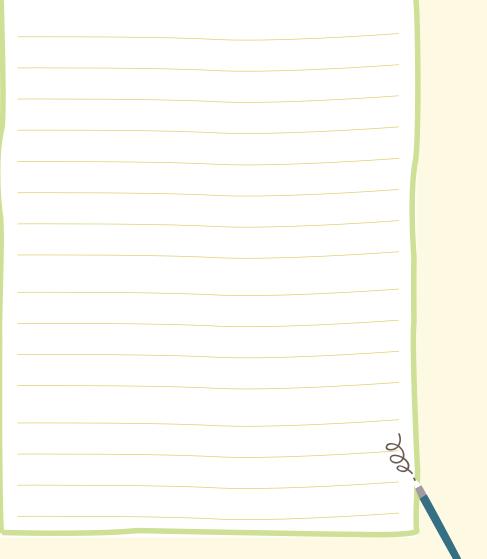
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Chest pains, faster heartbeat
- Greater appetite or loss of appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from your friends and foster family
- Procrastinating or neglecting your responsibilities

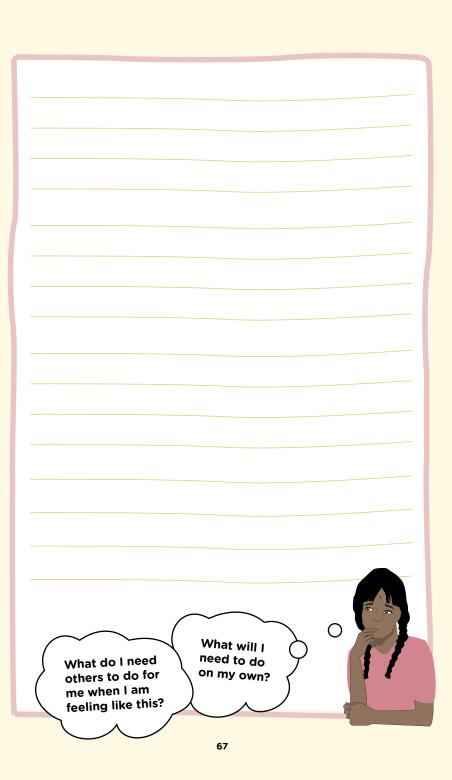
Emotionally you may feel:

- Moody and overwhelmed as you overthink
- Irritated, resulting in more sudden outbursts of anger
- Agitated or hard to relax
- Sense of loneliness or isolation

What are 3 things that make me feel stressed?











Go out for a walk with friends or familyTry out a new activity

Fill the wheel with activities so you can choose where to go/what to do with your family.

INSPIRATION

Oh, yes the

past can hurt.

But, you can

learn from it.

either run

from it or

ACTIVITY FAVOURITE QUOTES

What are some of my favourite quotes or mantras that keep me going and inspire me?

. .

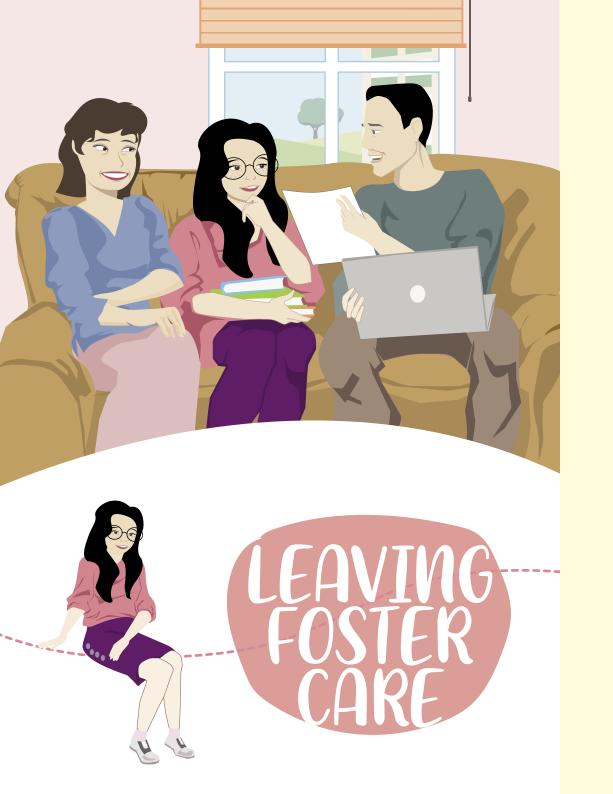
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FILL THIS PAGE WITH YOUR FAVOURITE QUOTES!

Rafiki, The Lion King

All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.

-Walt Disney



REFLECTING ON MY FOSTERING JOURNEY

02

03

04

your favourite memories or moments from your fostering journey?

01

05





What Can I Do When I Am Saying Goodbye?

Saying goodbye to your foster family might not be easy. Before leaving, you might want to do something to show your gratitude towards them or do one last activity together to remember the good times.

In case you are at a loss as to what to do, here are some suggestions for activities that you can do together, ahead of your last day in foster care!

1. Write appreciation cards/thank you notes to your foster family

There are also many other craft ideas online. You and your

to sources such as YouTube or Pinterest 2. Share your favourite memories with your foster family



card for each member of your foster family and share your appreciation, as well as your best memory with them, in the card.

You can handmake a

3. Pack items you want to bring along with you

You might want to think about what you wish to leave behind in your foster home, and what you would like to bring with you to your next home, such as a diary or your favourite items.

Here's a bag to draw or list the items you want to pack!

4. Show your foster family that you care

Show affection towards your foster family in whatever way feels comfortable for you! Otherwise, you could simply help out more at home in the days leading up to your last day in foster care to show your concern for your foster parents.

5. For a farewell with your foster family, you can also do activities like:

81

Having a meal together

the story

Creating a scrapbook or photo album of your time together

inic bu th



Write a letter to your foster parents here.

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177

ACTIVITY

My Feelings Chart

How do you feel?



Anxious

Brave



Happy

Lonely

۲





Playful

Hopeful



Calm

Overwhelmed





Sad

Fearful





82

83

Bored





Valued

Angry





POST-CARE SERVICES

When Do I Leave Foster Care?

You can be discharged from foster care from the age of 18. To remain in foster care after turning 18, you must be enrolled in school or vocational/technical programmes.

You will be discharged from foster care when you turn 21 years old, and you may or may not continue living with your foster families after that.

Male foster children who enlist into National Service before the age of 21 years old will be discharged from foster care.

What Comes After Foster Care?

Independent living is the process where foster children are discharged from foster care to live independently in the community.

It is an exciting time of growth and self-determination, and when you will be able to make independent decisions about your life.



What Would I Need When I Am Discharged from Foster Care?

A suitable adult contact whom you can reach out to for emotional support, advice, and guidance A STATIST

Here is a list of what you need to have ready when you are dischargedi

(This can be a relative, foster parent, teacher/professor, community worker, or other trusted adults in your life.)

- Sufficient financial resources to pay for rent and other living expenses
- Knowledge of your personal health conditions and how to access health services
- (e.g. dental care, health insurance, mental health)
- Important personal documents
 (e.g. your birth certificate, passport, IC, health/education records)

Where Can I Go After Getting Discharged?

Getting discharged from foster care means you get to decide where you live. You have different options, such as:

- Returning home to your natural family
- $\hfill\square$ Living with a relative or friend
- □ Living independently in boarding schools or commercial hostels

How Can I Prepare Myself for Independence?

Your Education, Employment, Finances, and Accommodation are 4 key areas of responsibility that you will take on as an independent individual.

Consider your goals in each of these 4 areas, as well as the potential challenges that you might face in each. You can prepare yourself by working on developing the skills needed to meet those challenges.



Education

What career paths interest you? Scan the following QR codes to learn more about yourself, and your choices!

 For Secondary School Students
 For Pre-University Students

 Image: Secondary School Students
 Image: Secondary School Students

 Image: Secondary School Students
 Image: Secondary Sch

Who can you seek help from? You can seek support from the school's Education and Career Guidance (ECG) services, or talk to your foster parents or social workers.

Employment

Do you know how to write a resume or prepare for job interviews? Refer to page 6 of your Pathway Resource Kit for tips.

Sources of support for career guidance, work skills training and job placement include:

- Workforce Singapore (WSG)
- RPG-OSCa Employment Support Programmes
- Vocational Training Programme
- Community Case Manager

You can talk to your caseworkers for more information.

Finances

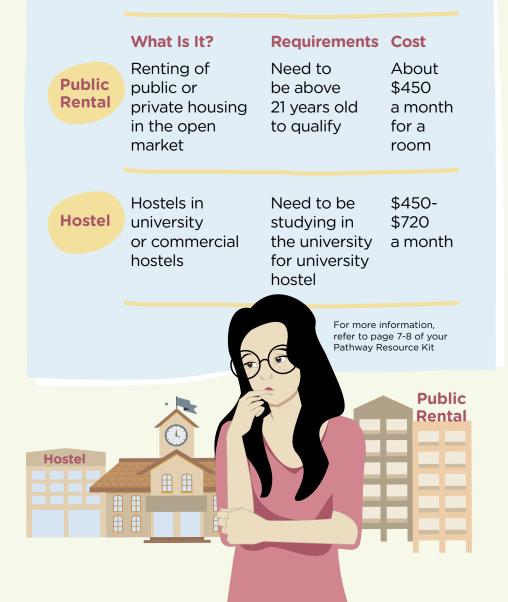
Part of leaving foster care means learning to manage your finances. Below are some tips on managing your money well.

	N de de d	
	Have a Budget	List your expenses in each month and ensure that the sum lies within your allowance or monthly pay.
	Track Your Spending	Categorise your areas of spending so that you can easily keep track of where you overspend.
		Useful apps for budgeting and tracking your expenses: Money Manager, Weple Money, HinakkoExpense, Seedly
	Save Up	Start a savings account to save up whatever excess money you have each month.
	Insurance	Having good insurance coverage is important in case of emergencies. This could be insurance for your health,
		house, or any other possessions.
	Investments	Familiarise yourself with different investment options to ensure both your present, and future financial security.
		Financial planning and investment apps for beginners: StashAway (No entry fee or minimum investment), Kristal.AI
		Learn about investment and trading: Investmate, Syfe, Seedly

Accommodation

Independent living also means you will need to consider where you will live if you leave your foster parent's house.

Types of accommodation available:





Your fostering journey is coming to an end, but your life is just beginning. You have a whole new adventure ahead of you, so go ahead and write the rest of the chapters in the book of your life!



HEAR FROM OTHERS LIKE YOU!

Cass's Story: To My Future Self

Dear Future Cass,

I hope that you have achieved our dream of becoming a healthcare worker!

Our younger self always wanted to be able to help grandma when she was sick. I've also learned the value of helping others through our foster parents, especially our foster mom who is always nice and friendly to everyone.

Because they've taught me that kindness can be spread to others, I want to start a chain of kindness through my good deeds by being a healthcare professional. Being able to help others and save lives is very admirable and noble.

To fulfil this dream, I plan to take a healthcarerelated course at polytechnic, and then study at university to become a healthcare worker. I need to work hard and try my best to achieve this dream.

Cass*, 16 years old. She was recently adopted by her foster parents.

Write about someone who inspires you and the qualities you admire about them. What has this role model taught you?

 $^{^{*}\}mbox{Note:}$ All names of foster children have been changed to protect their privacy and maintain confidentiality



Write a letter to your future self you can include drawings or photographs and get creative! Think about what you would like in your future, such as your ambitions, what you would like to be, and what success would mean to you.



You can also include topics like activities you would like to do in the future, and places you would like to visit.

Congratulations on completing your foster care journey! Celebrate your journey and growth by filling in this certificate with your name and decorate it how you like!



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*Names have been changed to protect the privacy and maintain confidentiality of our foster children



Call 63548799 or visit www.msf.gov.sg/fostering