

GHOSTS AND HOW TO HELP THEM

by

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HONORS THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Ghosts and How to Help Them is a comic book that is intended to model self-compassion and coping skills to the reader in a quick and accessible format. The main character, Ghost, explores a spectrum of emotions that are usually thought of as bad. Some examples are jealousy and anger. Ghost models to the reader how these emotions can be processed constructively and healthily by doing so in the comic. Through this modeling process, the reader may find it easier to apply the practices in their own life. Ghosts and How to Help Them also teaches the reader coping skills for anxiety and depression. A comic book is an ideal format to model self-compassion and coping skills because the stories are short and easily digested. The reader does not need to sift through pages of writing, instead they can absorb the message in a few short minutes. The inspiration for these comics come from the author's life, they are pursuing their Bachelor's in Psychology and currently working at a drug rehabilitation center. They encounter quite a few people through school and their profession who would find comfort from a comic like this. Ghosts and How to Help Them aims to help each person who comes into contact with it by showing them that they deserve self-love and that coping with hard emotions is possible.

GHOSTS AND HOW TO HELP THEM

A GUIDE TO SELF-
COMPASSION AND HOW TO
COPE WITH BEING HUMAN.





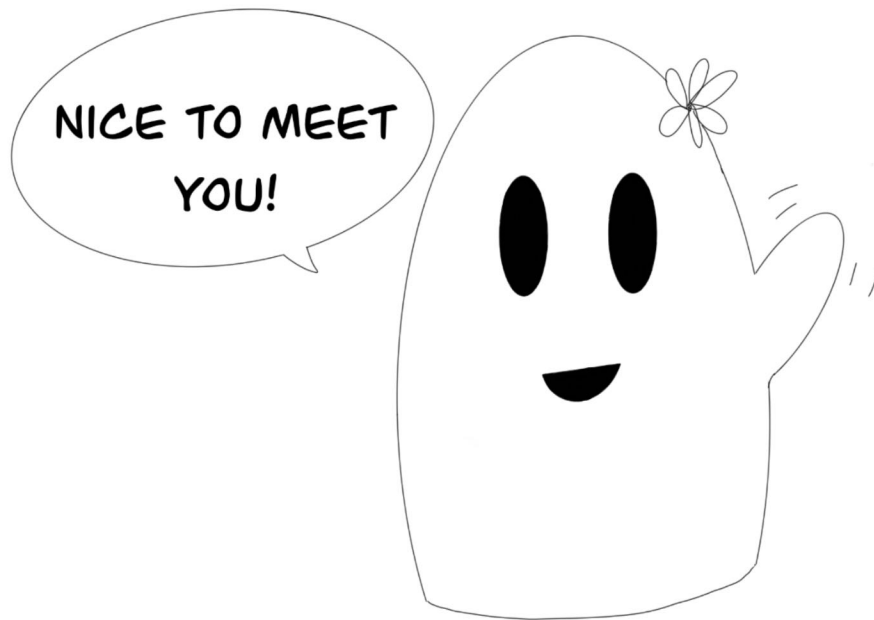
MEET GHOST

FAVORITE FOOD: STRAWBERRIES AND CHOCOLATE
BUBBLE WAFFLES.

FAVORITE COLOR: TOMBSTONE GREY

FAVORITE HOLIDAY: HALLOWEEN

HE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT SELF-CARE AND SELF-
LOVE AND GENUINELY BELIEVES THAT YOU, YES YOU,
DESERVE GOOD THINGS.



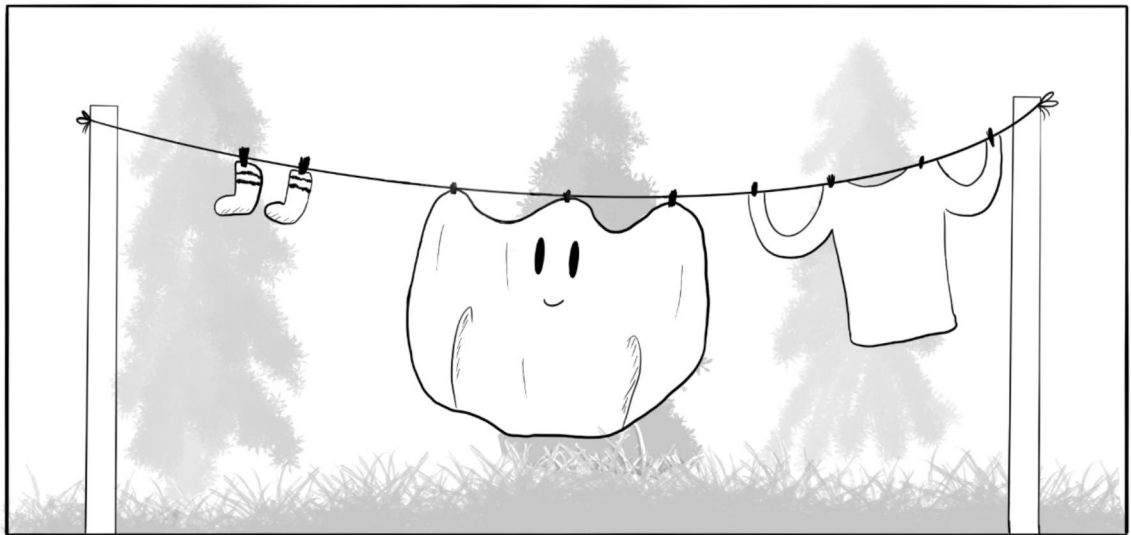
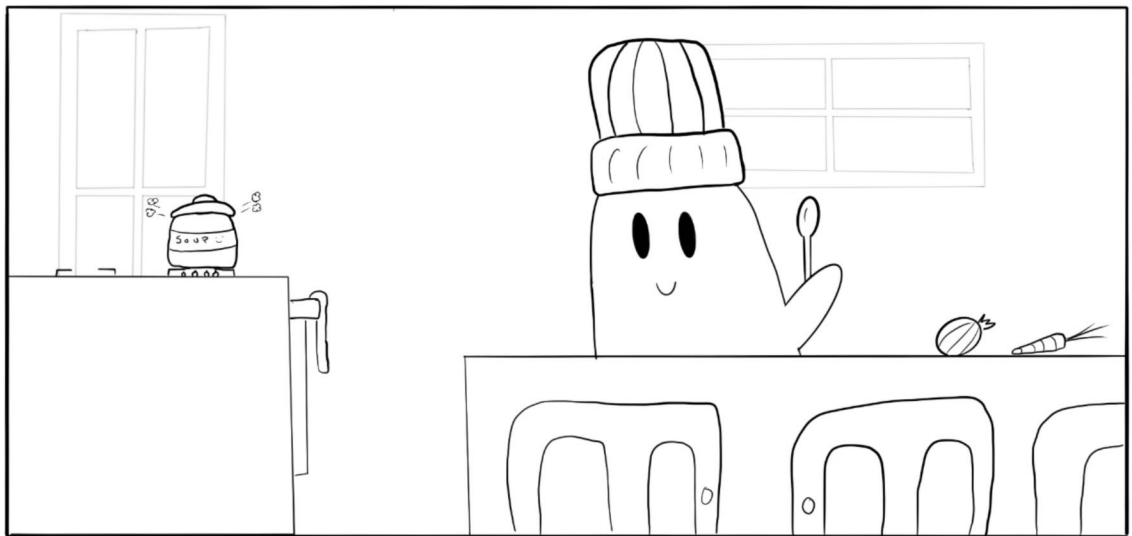
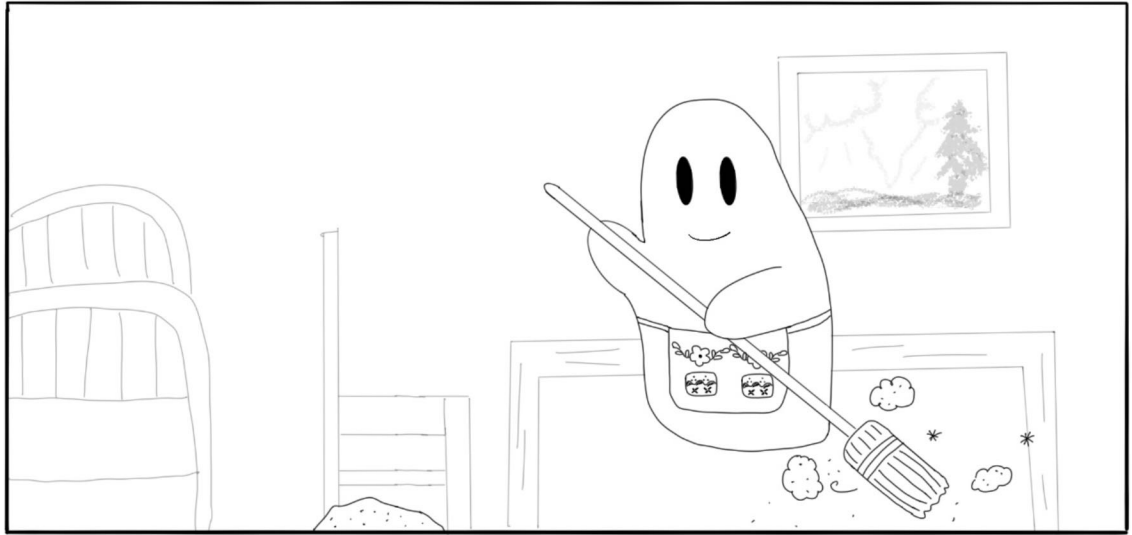
MEET LILY

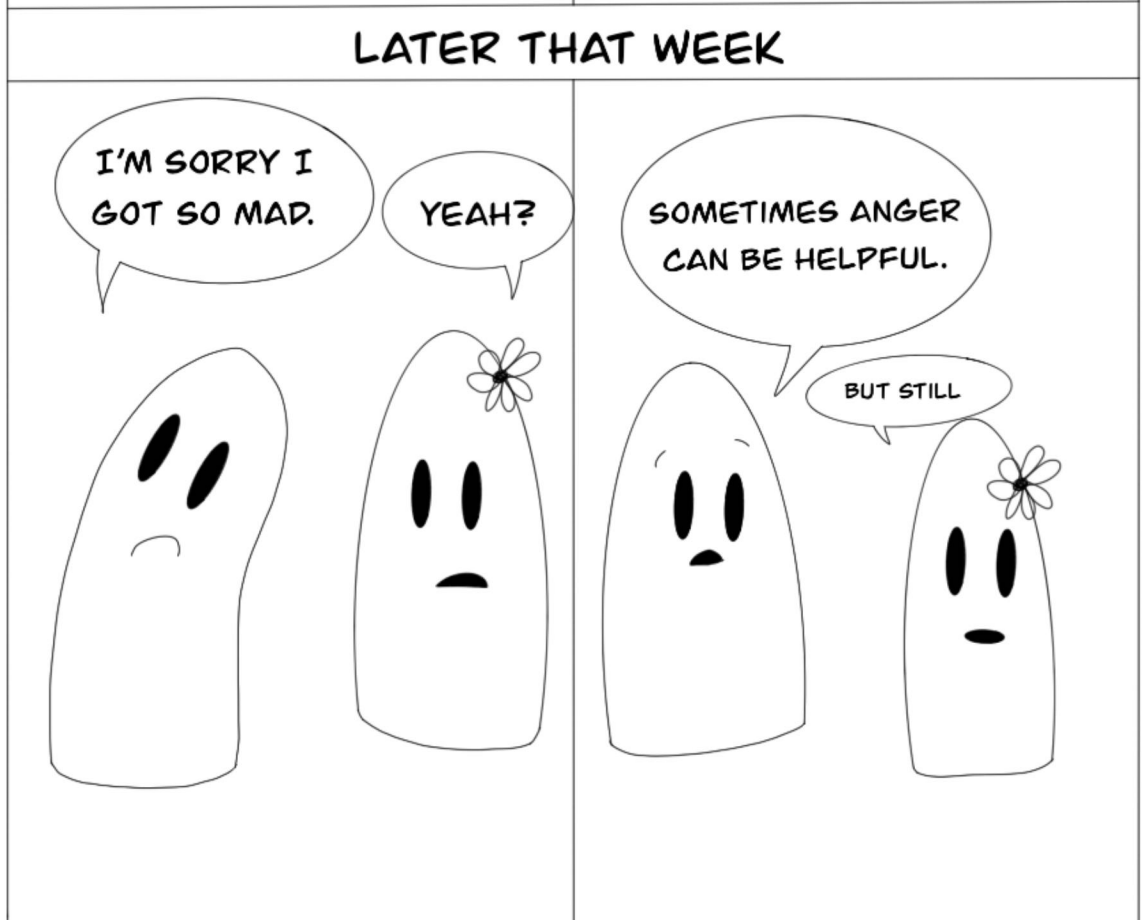
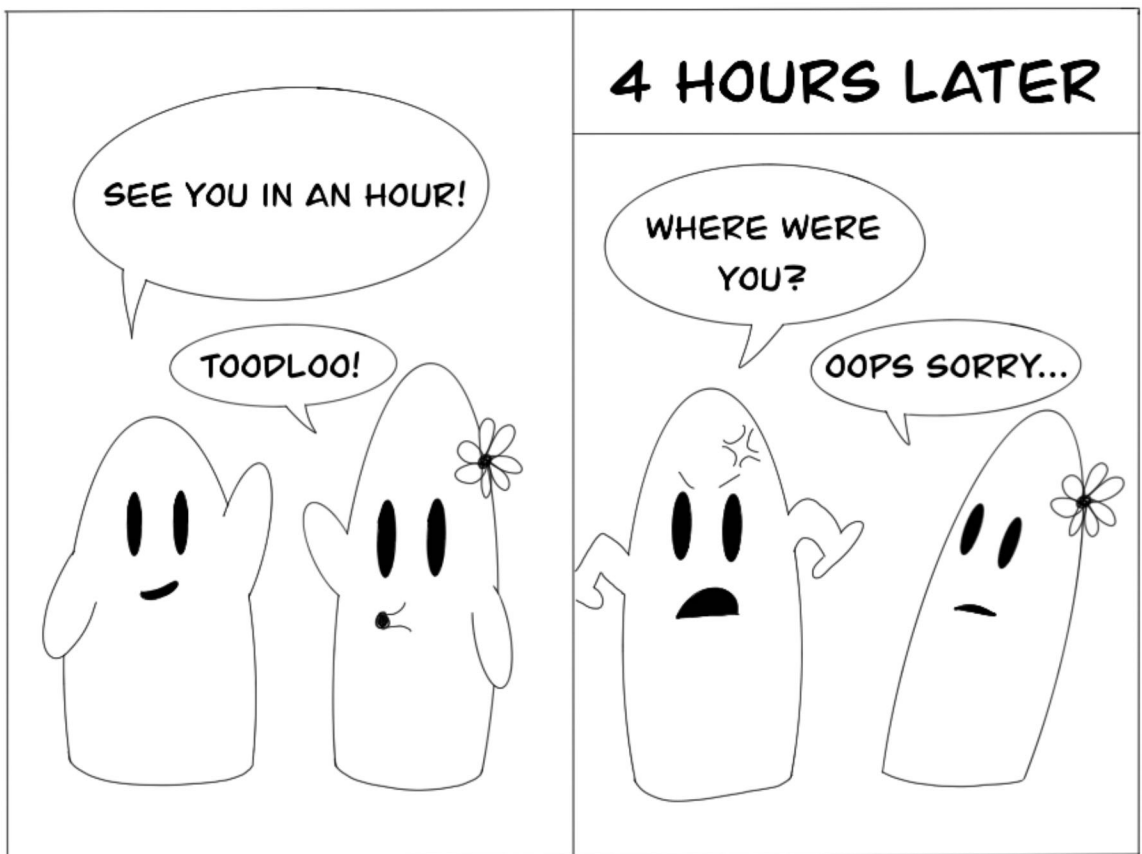
FAVORITE FOOD: HIBISCUS TEA CAKES

FAVORITE COLOR: ROSE RED

FAVORITE HOLIDAY: NEW YEAR'S EVE

LILY OWNS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FLOWER SHOP IN TOWN. ONCE, WHEN ASKED HOW SHE MADE HER BOUQUETS SO BEAUTIFUL, SHE REPLIED "PATIENCE."





ANGER IS A SECONDARY
EMOTION, I WAS WORRIED
FOR YOU.

ANGER CAN TELL YOU
IF SOMETHING IS
WRONG.



HOWEVER, I REALLY LET MY
ANGER GET TO ME.

IT SCARED ME.



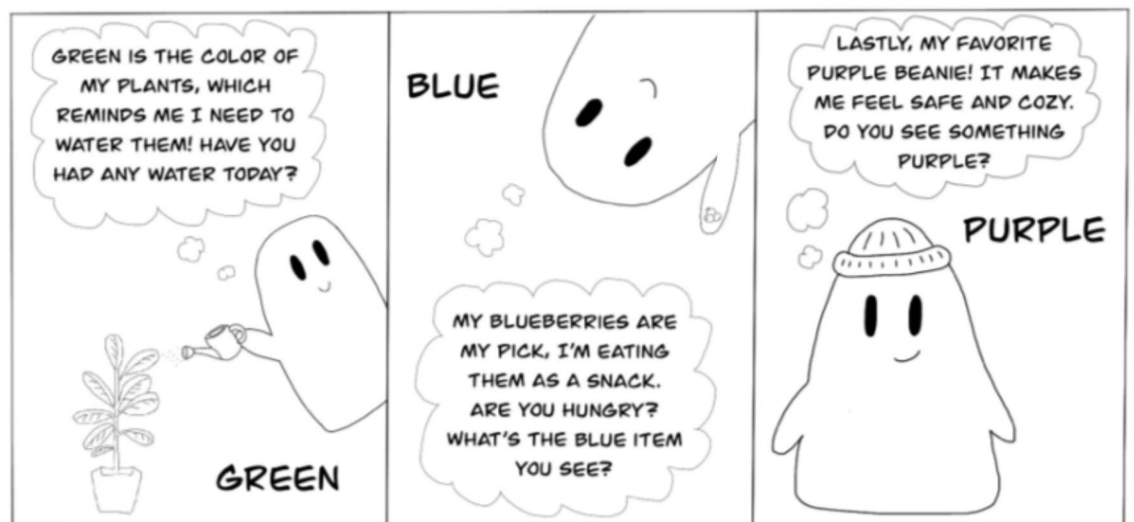
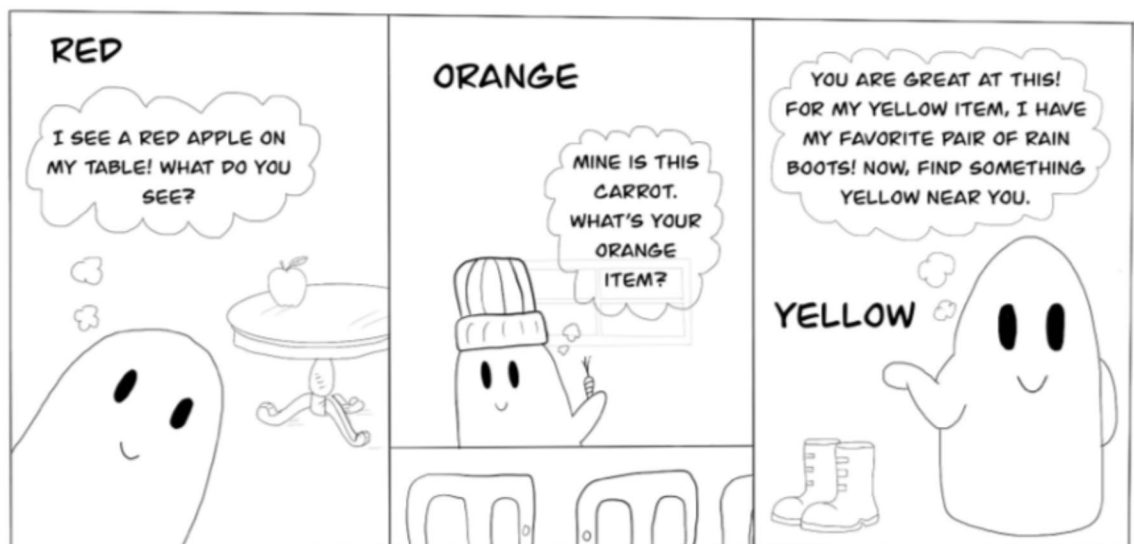
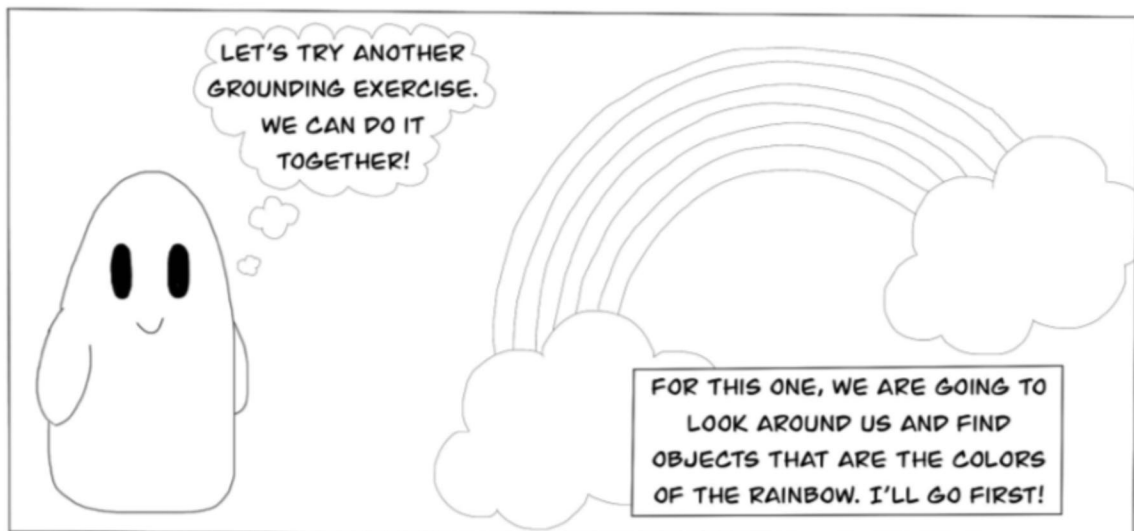
I'M SORRY, I SHOULD HAVE
TAKEN TIME TO PROCESS.



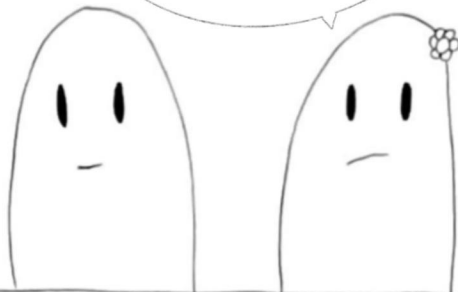
I FORGIVE YOU.

THANK YOU, LILY.

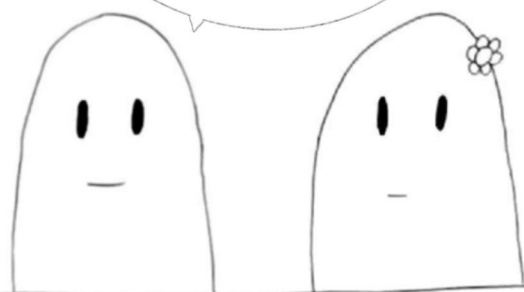




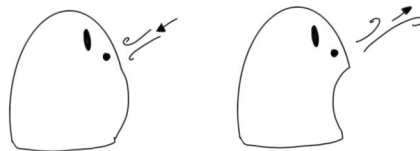
HEY, GHOST. WHAT DO YOU
DO WHEN YOU ARE
FEELING ANXIOUS?



THERE ARE SEVERAL COPING
MECHANISMS I FIND HELPFUL,
LILY.



SOMETHING THAT HELPS ME WHEN I FEEL ANXIOUS IS
TAKING DEEP BREATHS IN MY BELLY.



AFTER I HAVE DONE THAT A FEW TIMES MY HEAD IS
USUALLY CLEAR ENOUGH FOR ANOTHER, MORE
INVOLVED, METHOD.



ONE OF MY FAVORITE COPING
METHODS IS THE 54321
METHOD.



FIRST, I FIND 5 THINGS I CAN SEE.
AN EXAMPLE OF THIS COULD BE A
PRETTY TREE,



A BIRD

OR SOME COOL
CLOUDS.

NEXT, I LOOK FOR 4 THINGS I
CAN TOUCH.

THIS COULD BE MY JEANS,



COLD
WATER,

OR A FIDGET TOY.



AFTER THAT, I LOOK FOR 3
THINGS I CAN HEAR.

MAYBE I HEAR WIND RUSTLING
THE LEAVES OF A TREE,



OR I FIND LEAVES TO



CRUNCH UNDER MY
SHOES.

MY FAVORITE STEP IS
LOOKING FOR 2 THINGS TO
SMELL.

I LIKE OLD BOOKS,



OR CANDLES.



LASTLY, I LOOK FOR 1 THING TO
TASTE.

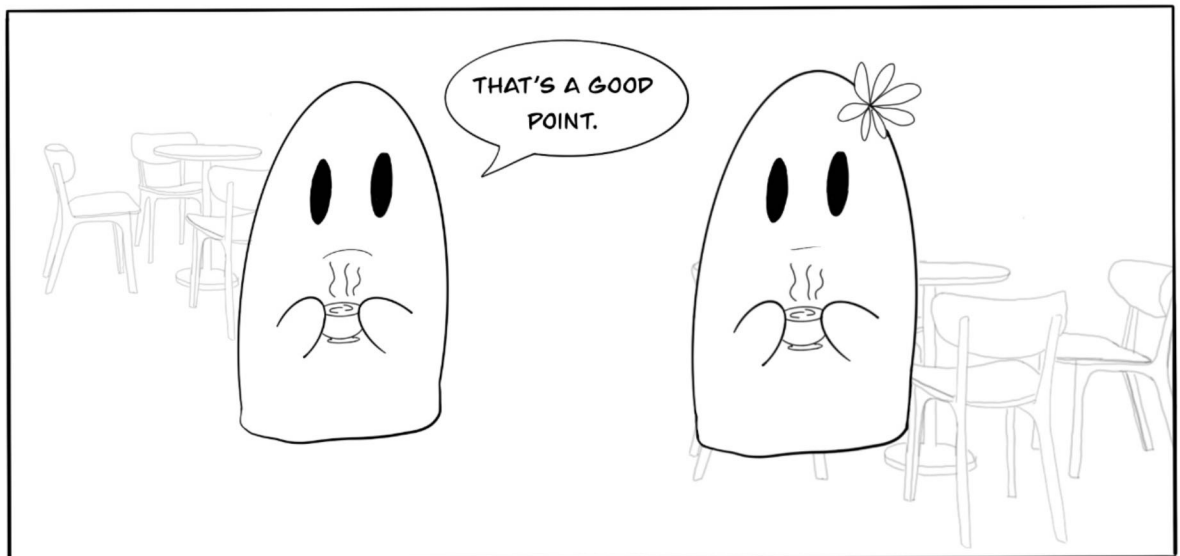
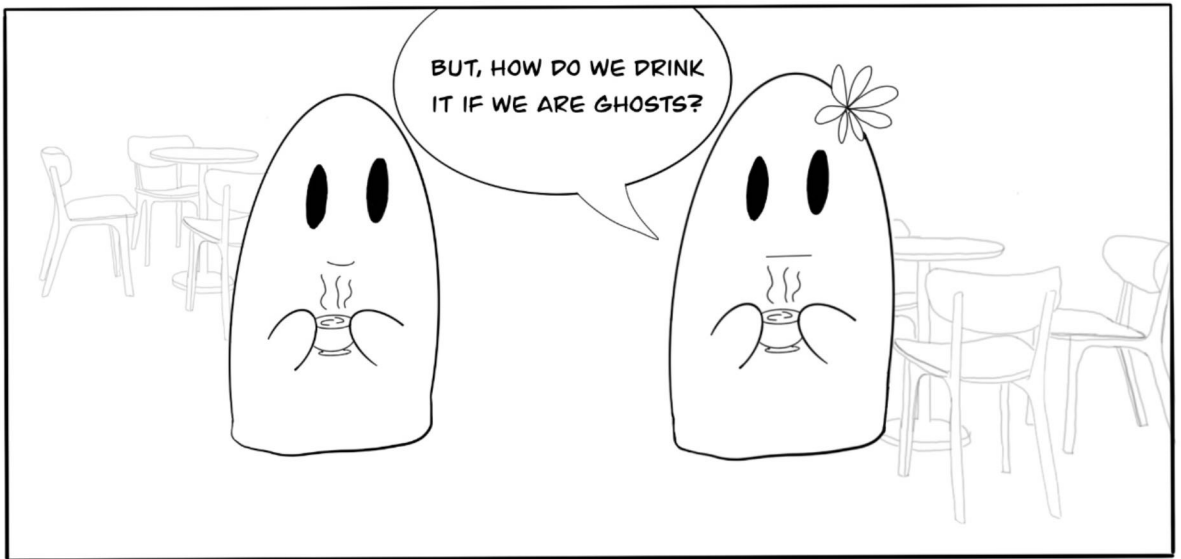
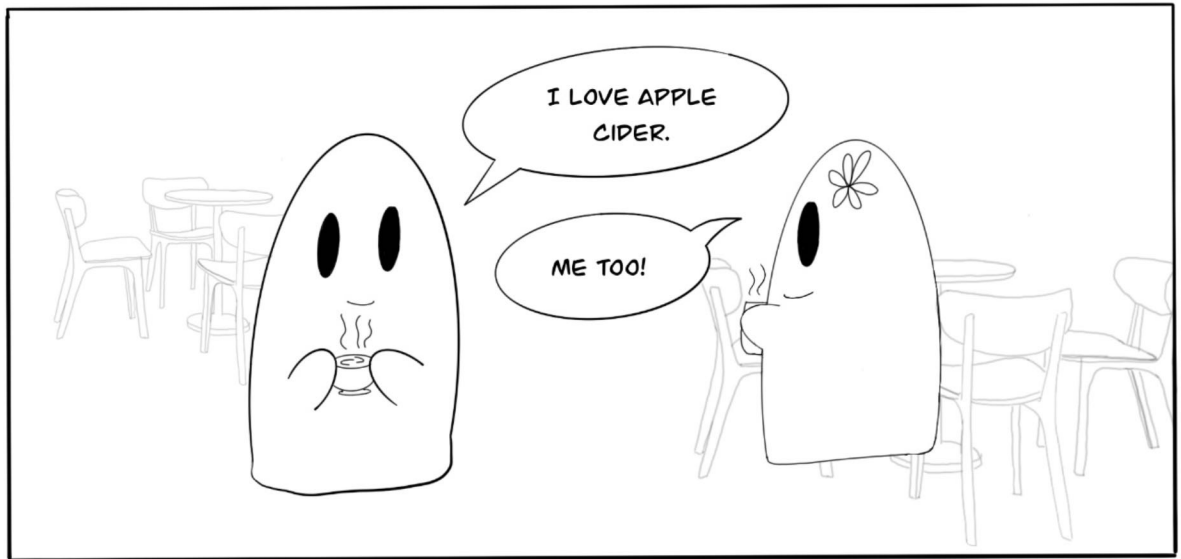
THIS CAN BE DONE BY IMAGINING
YOUR FAVORITE FOOD OR LITERALLY.



I LIKE TO



EAT A PIECE OF
CANDY.



SOMETIMES I'M ACCIDENTALLY MEAN.

INNOCENT STRANGER

ME

!?!*!?!*!?!*



TIME PASSES, AND I FEEL GUILTY.

I AM CONFRONTED WITH THE IDEA THAT I AM NOT A PERFECTLY GOOD PERSON.



THAT
PERFECTION
MAY NOT BE A
REQUIREMENT
OF BEING A
"GOOD
PERSON"



THAT MY WORTH
IS NOT DEFINED
BY MY
STRUGGLES.

I FORGET IMPORTANT THINGS OFTEN.



HYPERAROUSAL ZONE: FIGHT OR FLIGHT

SYMPTOMS:

- ANXIETY
- SENSITIVITY
- PANIC ATTACKS
- IRRITABILITY OR AGGRESSION
- PHYSICAL RESPONSES LIKE SWEATING OR RACING PULSE

WHAT CAN HELP?

- MINDFULNESS BREATHING OR SENSORY COPING
- INTERACTING WITH A PET
- EAT A PIECE OF CANDY
- TAKE A WALK
- JUST BE

NORMAL NERVOUS SYSTEM FLUCTUATION

HYPOROUSAL: FREEZE OR FAWN

SYMPTOMS:

- ZONING OUT OR DISSOCIATION
- FEELING APATHETIC, OR NO EMOTIONS
- FEELING OVERWHELMED
- GUILT OR SHAME
- FEELING UNSAFE, POWERLESS, OR HELPLESS

WHAT CAN HELP?

- YOGA
- DEEP BELLY BREATHING
- RAINBOW SENSORY TOOL
- BEING GENTLE WITH YOURSELF

SOMETIMES BREATHING
NEEDS TO BE INTENTIONAL
WHEN WE ARE COPING WITH
BIG EMOTIONS



TIPS FOR BELLY BREATHING

- IMAGINE YOUR TUMMY INFLATING AND DEFLATING LIKE A BALLOON
- IN THROUGH YOUR NOSE
- OUT THROUGH YOUR MOUTH
- COUNT TO FOUR AS YOU BREATHE IN AND BREATHE OUT
- RELAX YOUR BODY
- REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOUR EMOTIONS ARE VALID AND THAT YOU ARE SAFE

WATCH YOUR TUMMY MOVE IN...



...AND THEN BACK OUTWARD




COUNT 1, 2, 3, 4...




...AND OUT 1, 2, 3, 4



TIPS FOR MEDITATING





FIND A QUIET PLACE



PICK A TIME TO PRACTICE EACH DAY

FIND SOMEWHERE TO SIT OR LAY DOWN WHERE YOU CAN BE COMFORTABLE





START OUT PRACTICING FOR SMALL AMOUNTS OF TIME AND BUILD UP TO BIGGER TIMES



IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH MEDITATION, BE KIND TO YOURSELF, DRINK SOME HOT TEA, AND TRY AGAIN ANOTHER TIME

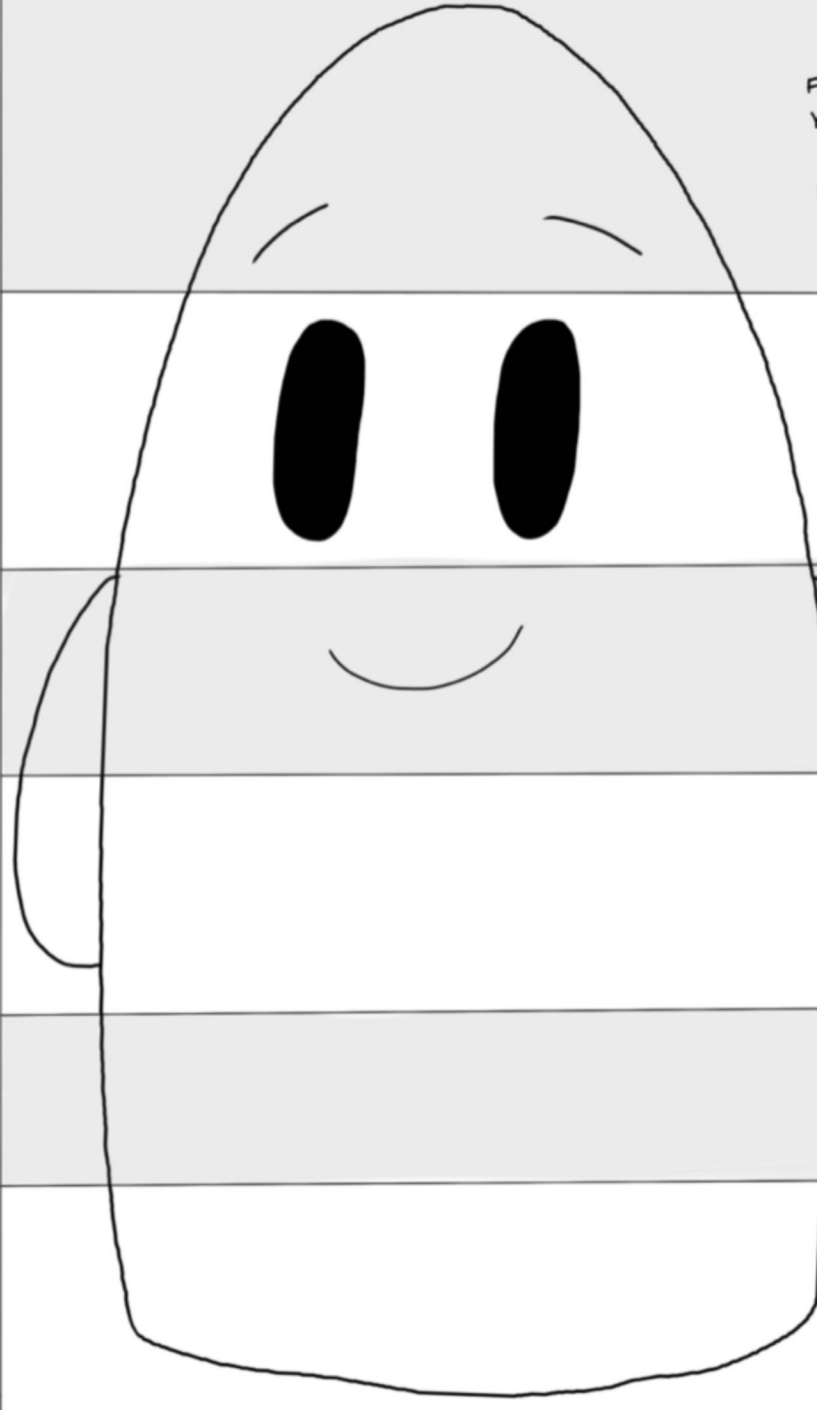


REMEMBER IT'S OKAY TO BE A BEGINNER AND IT'S OKAY TO HAVE HARD DAYS

TECHNIQUE: BODY SCANNING

PURPOSE: INCREASE AWARENESS OF SELF, OF BODY, OF NEEDS, AND ANY TENSION THAT NEEDS TO BE RELEASED.

HOW TO DO IT: IMAGINE SCANNING YOUR BODY FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO HOW YOU ARE FEELING.

	<p>FIRST, FOCUS ON YOUR FOREHEAD. IS IT TENSE? ARE YOUR EYEBROWS FURROWED? RELAX THIS PART OF YOUR BODY. HOW DOES YOUR HEAD FEEL?</p>
	<p>NEXT, YOUR EYES. ARE THEY FEELING TIRED? DRY? ARE YOU FEELING WELL RESTED? BLINK YOUR EYES AND FEEL THEM WAKE UP.</p>
	<p>BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO YOUR MOUTH. WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE AND FEEL LIKE? HAVE YOU HAD ANY WATER TODAY?</p>
	<p>NEXT, RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS. WIGGLE YOUR ARMS AND FINGERS. SQUEEZE YOUR HANDS INTO FISTS AND THEN RELAX THEM.</p>
	<p>THINK ABOUT YOUR TUMMY. ARE YOU HUNGRY? HAVE YOU EATEN LATELY?</p>
	<p>LAST, WIGGLE YOUR LEGS AND TOES, ARE THEY TIRED? HOW CAN YOU REST YOUR BODY TODAY?</p>

ANOTHER TECHNIQUE TO TRY FOR WHEN YOU ARE FEELING ANXIOUS IS THE 3-3-3 RULE



I SEE MY BROOM,
A POSTER,
AND A PLANT

YOU ARE
DOING
BETTER
THAN YOU
THINK



FIRST, PICK OUT THREE THINGS YOU CAN SEE



I HEAR THE RAIN, MY
RADIO, AND MY BREATH

YOU ARE
DOING
BETTER
THAN YOU
THINK



NEXT, LISTEN FOR THREE THINGS YOU CAN HEAR

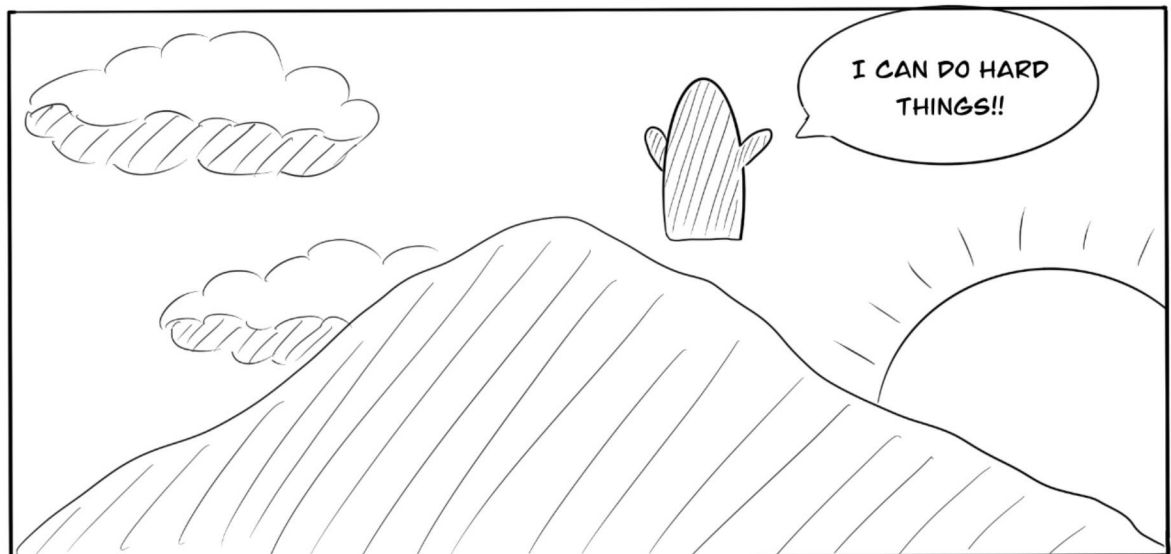
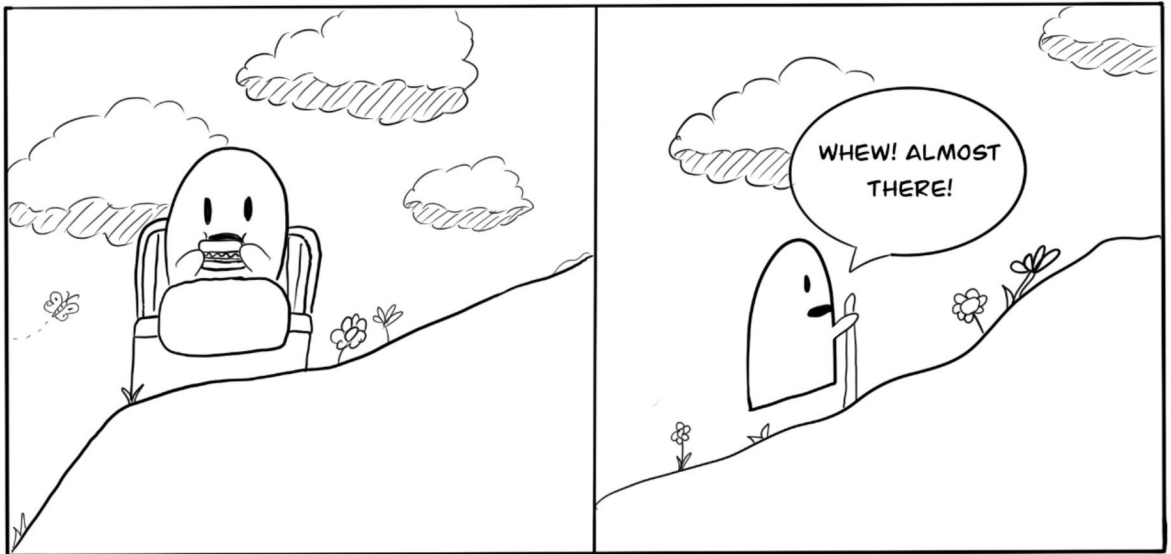
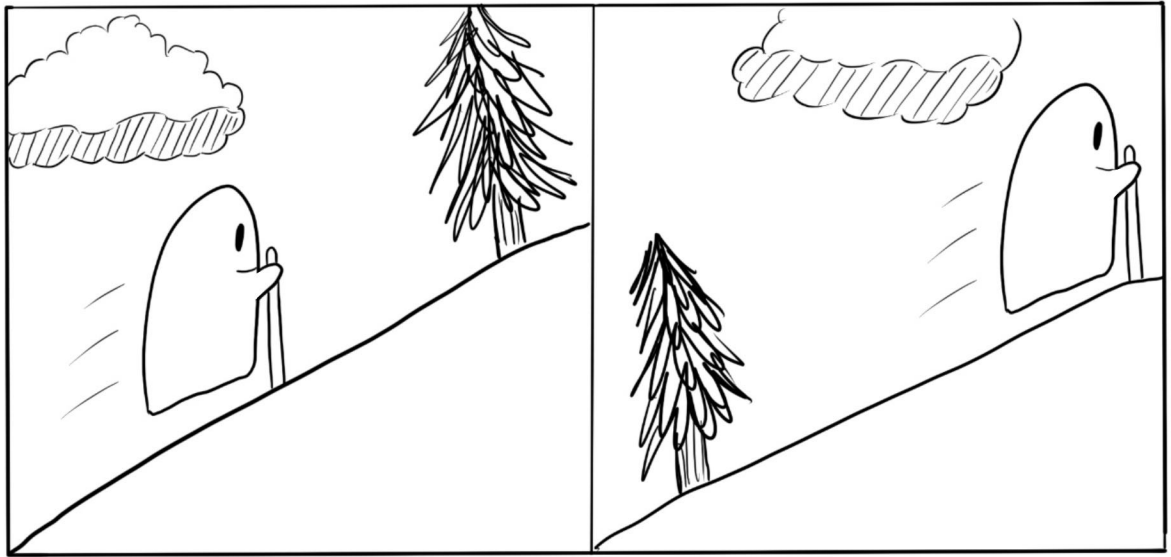


LAST, MOVE THREE DIFFERENT BODY PARTS
LIKE YOUR ARMS, YOUR TOES, AND YOUR NOSE!

YOU ARE
DOING
BETTER
THAN YOU
THINK



THIS WILL HELP TO EASE YOUR MIND AND BRING YOU BACK TO THE
PRESENT MOMENT. YOU ARE DOING GREAT!





HALT IS AN ACRONYM THAT STANDS FOR HUNGRY, ANGRY, LONELY, TIRED.

HALT CAN BE USED WHEN YOU ARE FEELING REALLY INTENSE EMOTIONS TO HELP YOU REGULATE THOSE FEELINGS.

ARE YOU HUNGRY?

HAVE YOU EATEN IN THE LAST 3 HOURS?

IF YES, COULD YOU GO ON A WALK?

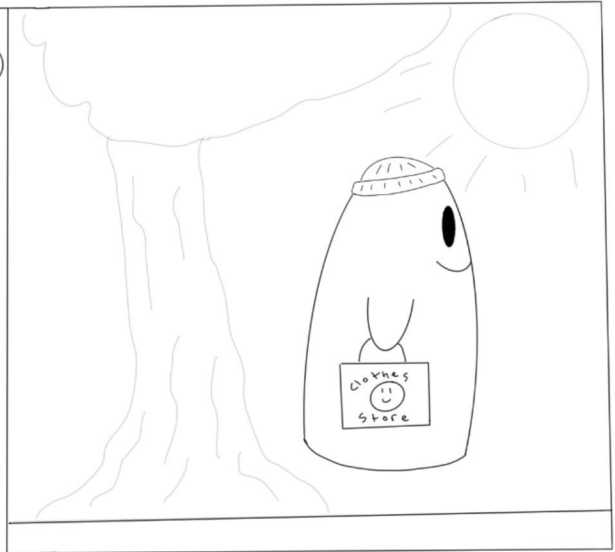
ARE YOU ANGRY?

ARE YOU LONELY?

IS THERE A TRUSTED PERSON YOU COULD CALL?

COULD YOU MEDITATE OR NAP?

ARE YOU TIRED?



EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE CAN LOOK LIKE:

SETTING BOUNDARIES.

COULD YOU NOT?

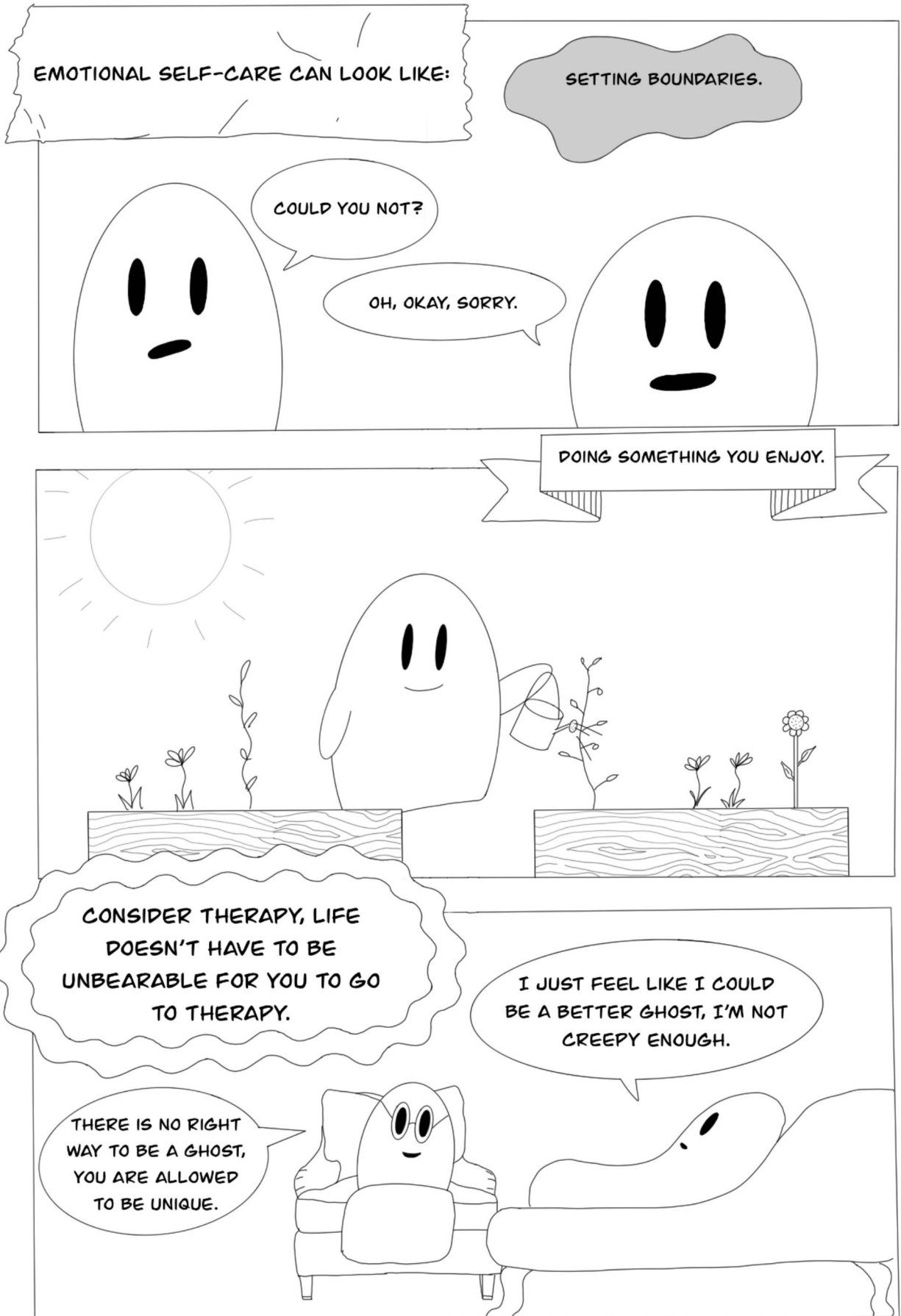
OH, OKAY, SORRY.

DOING SOMETHING YOU ENJOY.

CONSIDER THERAPY, LIFE
DOESN'T HAVE TO BE
UNBEARABLE FOR YOU TO GO
TO THERAPY.

I JUST FEEL LIKE I COULD
BE A BETTER GHOST, I'M NOT
CREEPY ENOUGH.

THERE IS NO RIGHT
WAY TO BE A GHOST,
YOU ARE ALLOWED
TO BE UNIQUE.



HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES ARE CLEARLY DEFINED LIMITS ON HOW OTHERS CAN TREAT YOU, AND HOW YOU TREAT YOURSELF.

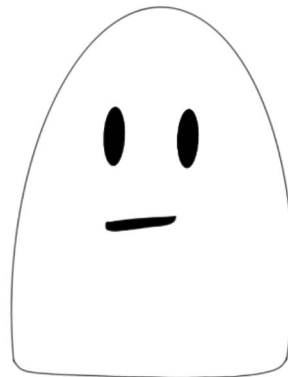
HEALTHY BOUNDARIES PROTECT YOUR EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL SAFETY.



UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES

UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES ARE UNCLEAR TO OTHERS OR TO YOURSELF. THEY MAY BE EASILY COMPROMISED ON, EVEN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.

UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES MAY PRIORITIZE OTHER'S COMFORT OVER YOUR EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL SAFETY.



NO BOUNDARIES

HAVING NO BOUNDARIES MAY MEAN THAT YOU HAVE NOT THOUGHT OF, OR COMMUNICATED LIMITS ON WHAT IS OKAY.

THIS MAY MEAN THAT YOU USUALLY PRIORITIZE OTHER PEOPLE'S NEEDS OR WANTS OVER YOUR OWN EMOTIONAL OR PHYSICAL SAFETY.





EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY BOUNDARIES:

TELLING OTHERS:

"WHEN I SAY NO, I WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU WOULD ACCEPT MY ANSWER INSTEAD OF PRESSURING ME TO SAY YES"

"IF YOU WANT TO MAKE PLANS WITH ME, PLEASE GIVE ME SEVERAL DAYS NOTICE"

"I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, BUT THIS IS MY CHOICE"

"COMMENTING ON MY WEIGHT/APPEARANCE IS NOT OKAY, STOP."

"IF YOU CONTINUE TO COMMENT ON MY LIFESTYLE, I WILL END THIS CONVERSATION"

TELLING YOURSELF:

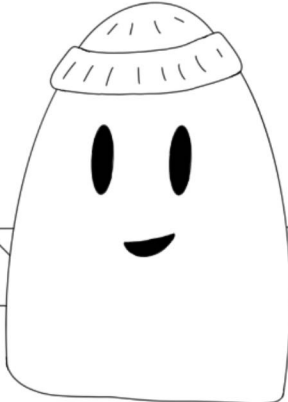
"I WILL GO TO BED AT (INSERT TIME)"

"I WILL NOT DRINK ALCOHOL TONIGHT"

"I WILL STICK TO MY PLANNED BUDGET"

"I WILL ASK FOR HELP BEFORE I AM IN CRISIS"

"WHEN I AM FEELING LONELY, I WILL CALL A TRUSTED FRIEND"

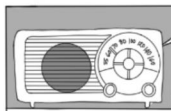
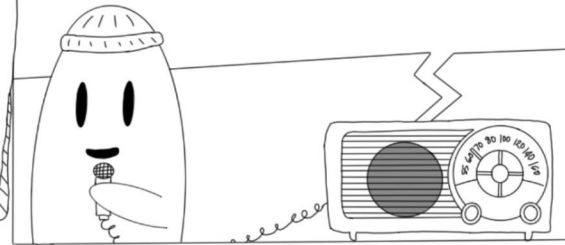


THESE ARE SOME IDEAS TO
HELP YOU ESTABLISH
HEALTHIER BOUNDARIES.

Note to you:

Self compassion is the practice of caring for yourself unconditionally.

EVEN IF YOU FIND SELF-LOVE HARD, SELF-COMPASSION ENCOURAGES YOU TO FEED, CLOTHE, AND TREAT YOURSELF KINDLY. EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.



THIS MAY MEAN EATING, EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO.



IT'S BEEN A FEW HOURS SINCE I ATE...MAYBE I COULD STOMACH A SANDWICH.

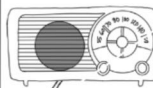


CLEAN CLOTHES CAN BE A FRESH START.



...OR SETTING REALISTIC SELF CARE GOALS, LIKE PUTTING ON CLEAN CLOTHES EVERY DAY.

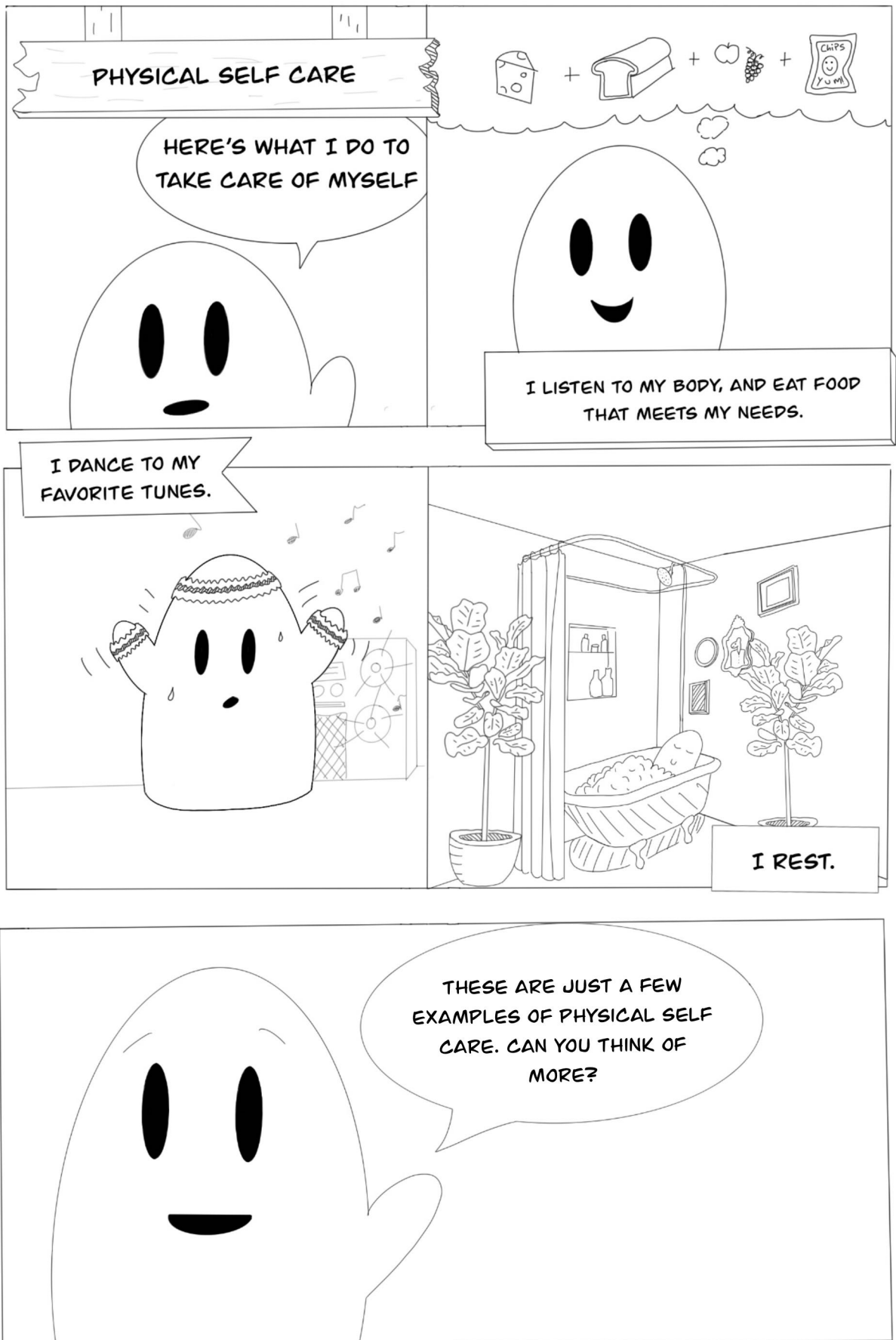
IT CAN ALSO MEAN PRACTICING POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS, EVEN IF IT FEELS SILLY.



I AM STRONG.
I AM LOVABLE.
I AM SMART.
I AM WORTHY.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMIND YOURSELF THAT SELF-COMPASSION IS A SKILL THAT YOU WILL GET BETTER AT WITH PRACTICE. A VITAL ASPECT OF SELF-COMPASSION IS NOT EXPECTING PERFECTION.

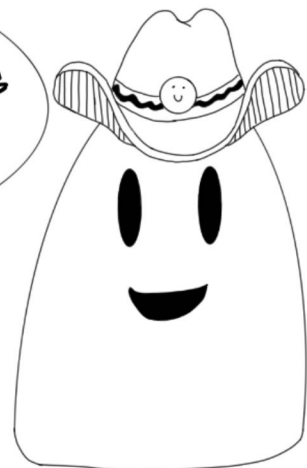




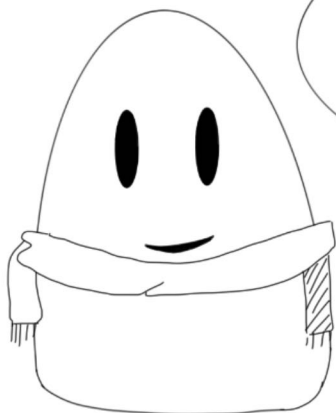


MENTAL HEALTH IS THE STATE OF
SOMEONE'S EMOTIONAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING.

IT IS NORMAL FOR EMOTIONS TO
FLUCTUATE, BUT IF THINGS START FEELING
IMPOSSIBLE IT MAY BE TIME TO ASK FOR
HELP OR ENGAGE IN SELF CARE.



IT'S ALSO NORMAL TO HAVE DIFFERENT
LEVELS OF ENERGY FOR SELF CARE
EACH DAY. SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR
EXAMPLES.





IT'S NORMAL FOR ENERGY TO FLUCTUATE,
MOODS IMPACT OUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE
TASKS, AND THAT'S OKAY.

LOW ENERGY



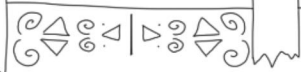
- EAT EASY FOOD
- DRINK WATER
- STAND FOR 10 SECONDS
- GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO REST

MEDIUM ENERGY



- CHANGE CLOTHES
- GENTLE JOURNALING
- TAKE A SHORT WALK
- MEDITATE
- CALL A TRUSTED FRIEND
- MAKE A SIMPLE MEAL

HIGH ENERGY



- ENGAGE IN A HOBBY
- GET SOME WORK DONE
- SHOWER
- DO A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF WORK
- READ A BOOK
- GO ON AN ADVENTURE

YOUR WORTH IS NOT DEFINED BY WHAT
YOU DO IN A DAY. EVEN IF YOU WERE NOT
ABLE TO DO ANYTHING, YOU ARE
WORTHY OF GOOD THINGS.



WHEN I START
REACHING FOR
COFFEE OFTEN...



I REVISIT THE
CONCEPT OF
QUALITY REST



WHAT IS QUALITY REST?

-Quality rest is
time spent
intentionally
relaxing.
-This can look
different for
everybody.

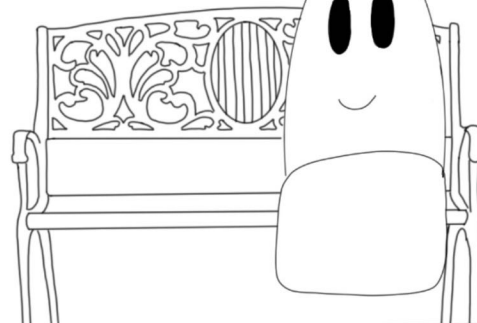
THIS CAN LOOK LIKE
GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP



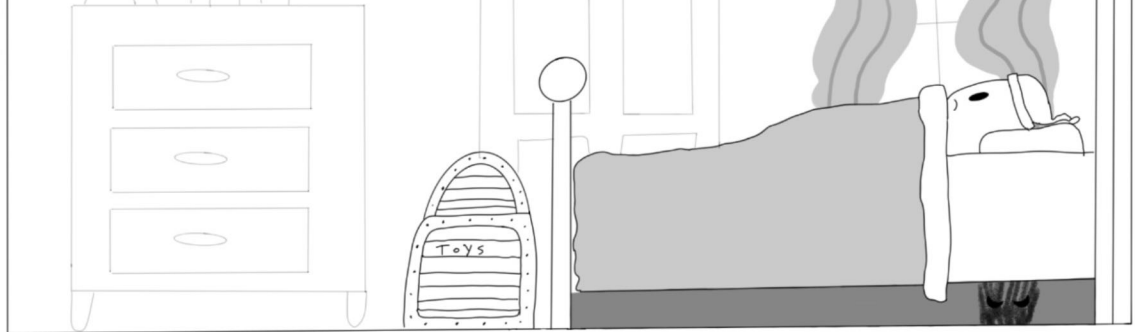
MEDITATING AND HANGING
OUT WITH PLANTS



OR JUST SPENDING
TIME WITH YOUR
THOUGHTS.



SOMETIMES I GET WORRIED
THAT THERE IS A MONSTER
UNDER MY BED.

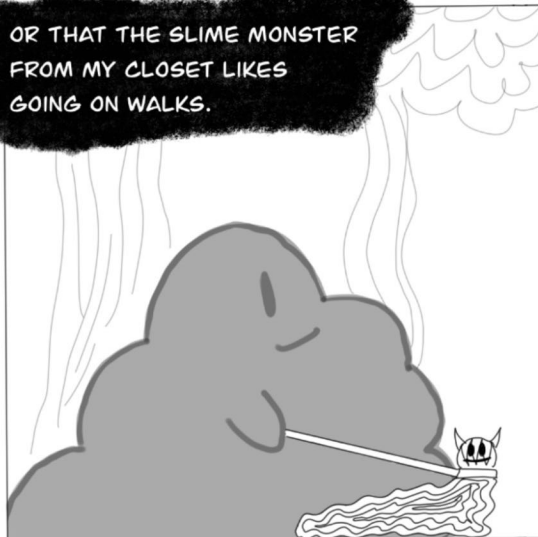


SO I IMAGINE THEM COMPLETING
SELF-CARE TASKS.

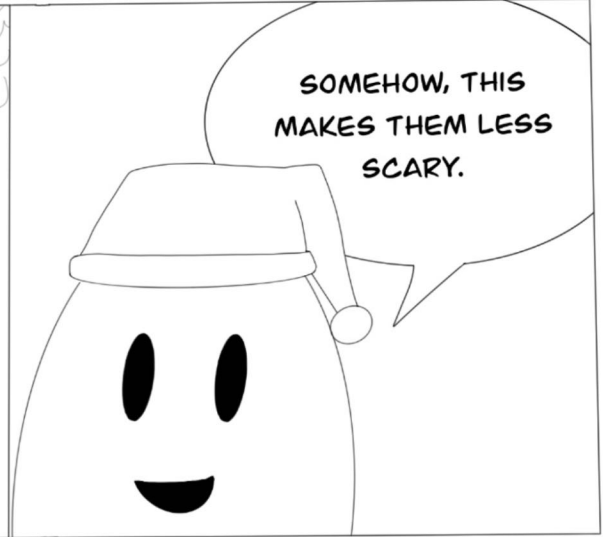
I LIKE TO THINK
THE SHADOW
MONSTER UNDER
MY BED LOVES TO
MEDITATE.



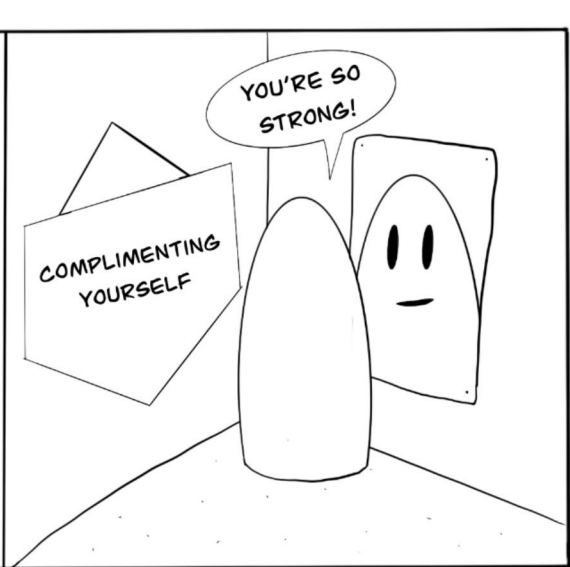
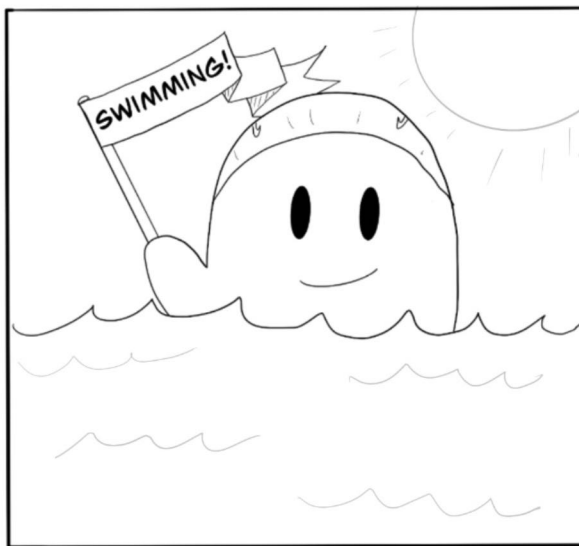
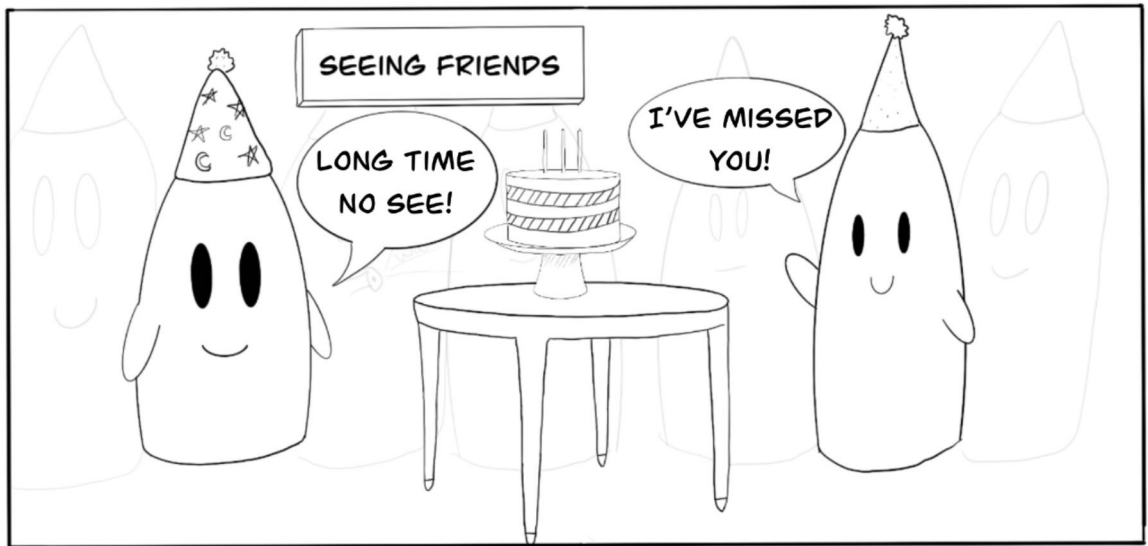
OR THAT THE SLIME MONSTER
FROM MY CLOSET LIKES
GOING ON WALKS.



SOMEHOW, THIS
MAKES THEM LESS
SCARY.



SELF CARE CAN LOOK LIKE:





THINGS IN MY CONTROL:

- MY ACTIONS
- WHO I SPEND TIME WITH
- THE EFFORT I PUT IN
- THE BOUNDARIES I SET
- MY VALUES
- GOALS I SET FOR MYSELF
- THE MEDIA I CONSUME
- SELF-CARE
- HOW I REACT TO EMOTIONS
- SELF-TALK
- WHAT I SAY TO OTHERS
- FORGIVING MYSELF
- FORGIVING OTHERS
- WHEN I ASK FOR HELP
- WHO I ASK FOR HELP

THINGS OUTSIDE OF MY CONTROL:

- OTHER PEOPLE'S ACTIONS
- OTHER PEOPLE'S OPINIONS
- OTHER PEOPLE'S BOUNDARIES
- MY PAST MISTAKES
- WHO LIKES ME
- OTHERS APOLOGIZING TO ME
- IF OTHERS SEEK HELP
- THE EFFORT THAT SOMEONE ELSE PUTS IN
- DEATH
- WHO LOVES ME
- IF LOVED ONES TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES

