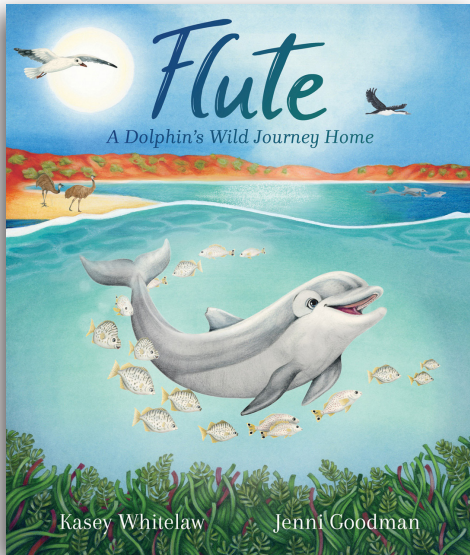

Teachers' Notes



FLUTE

Kasey Whitelaw / Jenni Goodman

ISBN: 9781761112294

Recommended retail: \$29.99

Reading level: 5 to 8

BOOK SUMMARY

Flute, a playful dolphin, is separated from her dolphin party.

Alone and in danger, she begins a wild journey back to the safety of her family and friends.

Will she make it home?

Inspired by true events and real friendships, *Flute* is a story of determination and triumph set in one of Australia's most vibrant landscapes.

THEMES

Friendship • Togetherness • Determination & Resilience

Conservation • Natural World • Dolphin Biology & Science

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**Kasey Whitelaw is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

Flute Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kasey is a marine biologist, educator and children's author with a passion for connecting children to science and nature through storytelling and education.

Growing up on the coast of Victoria, Kasey spent her days beachcombing, surfing and exploring the rocky shores. As a child (and still as an adult), she was fascinated by the rock pools teeming with life, eagerly learning the names of all the creatures she discovered.

Her passion for the ocean led her to the World Heritage listed Shark Bay Marine Park in Western Australia, where she had the incredible opportunity to work with the famous Monkey Mia dolphins and loggerhead sea turtles.

Inspired by her work and dedicated to nurturing the next generation of ocean warriors, she's turned her enthusiasm into pages by diving into the colourful world of picture books.

Follow her on her socials for more fun information: SEA Kids alliance [Website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

AUTHOR NOTE

Working with Flute and other wild dolphins was like watching an underwater tv drama series - full of excitement, humour, conflicts and some crazy moments.

Whilst working at Monkey Mia, I had the incredible opportunity to share my knowledge about their fascinating, fast-paced, and unique lives. Watching visitors, especially kids, light up with curiosity was one of the best parts.

The more they got to know the dolphins - understanding their personalities, tight-knit family bonds, and fascinating behaviours - the more their interest grew into a passion for protecting them. It was amazing to see both kids and adults become beachside ambassadors, teaching others about their behaviours.

This sparked the idea of writing a picture book about these dolphins. Not just any fact book, though. I wanted to write a nonfiction narrative to ignite a sense of empathy and curiosity about their lives.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jenni first dove into the wonderful world of children's book illustration in 2018, when she

was honoured with the opportunity to illustrate a series of board books based on the

Australian classic, *Storm Boy*. She now has nine books to her name, including *Snuffy*, which was Shortlisted for the 2022 Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards. Jenni loves that her recent illustration work has been used to champion wildlife conservation with titles such as *Have You Seen A Tree For Me?* (2020) and *Little Horses* (2024) bringing attention and awareness into homes and classrooms. Her tenth book, *Flute*, will be released in August 2025.

Jenni uses different mediums to create her artworks including watercolour paints and pencils, both coloured and graphite, as well as digital media. She loves capturing the beauty of nature and expressive characters in her illustrations.

ILLUSTRATOR NOTE



Illustrating *Flute* was a huge project that took me around ten full months to complete. It was a lot of work, but also a lot of fun!

When I received the manuscript for *Flute*, I was very excited. I had seen pictures of Monkey Mia when I was a little girl and had always been fascinated by the place, and amazed by the coastal dolphins that lived there. I immediately started dreaming up ideas for this book. I pictured a glorious book cover with dolphins jumping out of waves. As I researched further, however, I discovered that Monkey Mia does not in fact have any waves at all – well, that could have been embarrassing! I joyfully decided to take a trip. I had always wanted to go, and I knew it would help me to do a better job capturing the book setting as it really is.

I loved everything about my time in Monkey Mia. I loved the remoteness, and the way the red desert comes all the way down to the very edge of the coast. I loved the emus walking everywhere and found it very entertaining to see them sitting in the water. Beautiful orange-patterned shells covered the beaches, and the bird life was incredible.

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Flute's author, Kasey, got me in touch with the team at Monkey Mia, and the dolphin researchers too. They were all helpful and lovely, and even took me out on their research boat! I saw Flute (and her calf Toot) and many of her dolphin party and got to observe some of their behaviours, like 'snacking' where they swim belly-up at the surface to catch fish. I also saw turtles, sea snakes, flying fish, and even a dugong. It was magical!

I spent most of my time there taking notes on different species, sketching dolphins and photographing the area. I went to the dolphin experience every morning and learnt a lot from what the rangers had to say. As an extra bonus, a new baby dolphin was born about five days before I arrived. It came close to shore a few times with mum. It was so cute and tiny – like a little plush toy!

This trip gave me what I needed to get to work. The researchers had told me about how they identify the dolphins by their dorsal fins, so I designed my characters for Flute and her mum Piccolo with dorsal fins to be similar to what they have in real life. I gave each member of the dolphin party characters distinct fins – not exactly based on individual real-life dolphins, but on various markings and shapes I had observed. The kids can have a go at finding the same dolphin on different pages by looking at their fins just like the researchers do!

Making the artworks takes many steps, and I usually had about four artworks on the go at any time. This is the way I made the artworks:

Research and character design – I visited Monkey Mia and studied bottlenose dolphins. I also decided that I wanted to use watercolours and coloured pencil to make my artworks as I felt this style would suit.

Design the page and print – Next, I divided up the manuscript to fit a 32 page book. I looked at where the words would go and what emotions/actions I wanted to include on each page. I did this on my iPad, and did a few rounds of revisions. Once my page designs were finished, I printed them out on large paper – each double page artwork is around 59cm x 36cm.

Trace onto my special watercolour paper using a lightbox – I used a mechanical pencil to trace my illustration designs onto special watercolour paper. I have a lightbox at home and this really helps!

Stretch my paper – Have you ever done a painting only to have it wrecked when the paper becomes all wrinkly from the wet paint? I stop this from happening by soaking my special paper in bath, or by running under the shower. Once it's completely wet, I smooth it out on a board and tape it down with gum tape.

Apply Masking fluid – Masking fluid is a substance that can be painted onto dry watercolour paper so that the area beneath stays white and doesn't get touched by the paint. It can be tricky to do!

Paint & Colouring – I used watercolour paints on every page of this book – lots of blue for the ocean. Most pages required multiple coats and lots of drying time in between. When it's finished and dry, I remove the masking fluid. Colouring in is my absolute favourite part! I get a lot of joy seeing the it all come together.

Illustrating Flute was really special as it allowed me to capture a beautiful place and some of its incredible wildlife. As a child, my family and I drove from one side of Australia to the other and back numerous times. I've seen a lot of the wild outback of Australia and as a result feel a love and connection with the remote, red-dirt areas of our country. It's wonderful to share one of these stunning landscapes through my illustration, and I hope that children who see my images and read this book are inspired to love and protect not only those precious dolphins, but our incredible country and all the wildlife it has to offer.

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REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Flute is a beautifully illustrated and emotionally rich picture book that follows the journey of a young dolphin navigating the challenges of life in the ocean. Teachers can use *Flute* as a valuable resource to explore themes of resilience, curiosity, and environmental awareness with elementary students.

At its core, *Flute* highlights important personal and social lessons. The story offers opportunities to discuss perseverance, problem-solving, and emotional strength as students follow the dolphin's response to setbacks and obstacles. It gently encourages children to think about how they respond to challenges and how determination can help them grow stronger, both personally and in group settings.

Flute also fosters a deep connection to the natural world. Through the dolphin's experiences, students can learn about the basic biological and social needs of animals—such as food, oxygen, shelter, and safety—and how the ocean environment meets these needs. The book provides an accessible introduction to ecosystems and helps children understand how creatures like dolphins interact with and depend on their surroundings.

One of *Flute*'s key messages is about ocean conservation. The story introduces real-world issues like boating and noise pollution in a way that is age-appropriate and meaningful, encouraging students to think critically about how human actions affect marine life. Teachers can use the book to spark collaborative discussions and problem-solving activities about how we can help protect ocean habitats and the animals that live in them.

With its engaging illustrations, thoughtful message, and connections to science, social-emotional learning, and storytelling, *Flute* is an excellent choice for cross-curricular teaching in early elementary classrooms.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

YEAR ONE

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

AC9E1LE02 - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences

AC9E1LY02 - use interaction skills including turn-taking, speaking clearly, using active listening behaviours and responding to the contributions of others, and contributing ideas and questions

AC9E1LA07 - understand that words can represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs)

ACELT1584 - Discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts

AC9E1LA03 - explore how texts are organised according to their purpose, such as to recount, narrate, express opinion, inform, report and explain

AC9E1LY11 - use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant blends and digraphs to write words, and blend these to read one- and two-syllable words

AC9E1LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures

AC9E1LA10 - understand that written language uses punctuation such as full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, and uses capital letters for familiar proper nouns

AC9E1LE01 - discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E1LA09 - recognise the vocabulary of learning area topics

AC9HS1S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9E1LE05 - orally retell or adapt a familiar story using plot and characters, language features including vocabulary, and structure of a familiar text, through role-play, writing, drawing or digital tools

AC9S1U01 - identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs

AC9S1H01 - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

YEAR TWO

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

AC9E2LA01 - investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions

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AC9E2LA03 - identify how texts across the curriculum are organised differently and use language features depending on purposes

AC9E2LE05 - create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools

AC9E2LA02 - explore how language can be used for appreciating texts and providing reasons for preferences

AC9E2LE03 - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

AC9E2LY01 - identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts

AC9HS2S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

AC9S2H01 - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

AC9S2U02 - explore different actions to make sounds and how to make a variety of sounds, and recognise that sound energy causes objects to vibrate

YEAR THREE

English, Humanities and Social Science, Science, Health

AC9E3LE01 - discuss characters, events and settings in different contexts in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9E3LY02 - use interaction skills to contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas

AC9E3LY01 - recognise how texts can be created for similar purposes but different audiences

AC9E3LE02 - discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences

AC9HS3S07 - present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms

AC9HS3S05 - draw conclusions based on analysis of information

AC9S3U01 - compare characteristics of living and non-living things and examine the differences between the life cycles of plants and animals

AC9HP4P10 - investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing

AC9HP4P05 - describe how valuing diversity influences wellbeing and identify actions that promote inclusion in their communities

AC9HP4P01 - investigate how success, challenge, setbacks and failure strengthen resilience and identities in a range of contexts

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TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students, as well.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
2. Ask the students what they think might happen to Flute in the book.
3. Ask the students what creatures we might see in the book.
4. Ask the students where they think the story might be set.

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. What was Flute doing at the beginning of the story?
2. Who are Flute's best friends?
3. Why did Flute nudge her way into the middle of the group of dolphins?
4. What happened to Flute when the speed-boat ran over the top of her?
5. Flute calls out to her dolphin party, why didn't her family and friends hear her calls?
6. The boat disappears and the bay is calm again. Is Flute now safe?
7. What do you think would happen if Flute didn't free herself from the sandbar?
8. Flute makes it back to safety. Why do you think Flute snuggles in extra close this time?
9. What do you think home means to Flute? How would you describe home?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE NATURAL WORLD

- Dolphins live in many different habitats around the world. For example, Flute lives in seagrass habitat. What is a habitat?
- Australia has the largest seagrass meadows in the world. They can even be seen from space! Find out where they are located on a map.
- What type of creatures would you find in seagrass habitat?
- Why is seagrass important?

FRIENDSHIP

- What makes someone a good friend?
- Flute likes to play games with her friends. Is she playing any games similar to what you like? What games do you like to play with your friends?
- Bottlenose dolphins are very social and are constantly making new friends. What could you say or do to make a new friend?
- A great way to get to know someone is to ask them a question. Today, ask one of your classmates what their favourite animal is. Make sure to tell them in return what your favourite animal is and why.

CONSERVATION

- The speed-boat separates Flute from her party. How else could the boat cause harm?
- The boat was too loud for Flute to call out to her party. Look up why sound pollution can be harmful to dolphins and write about it in your own words.
- What might have happened to Flute if she didn't find her way home?
- Dolphins have lots of scratches, nicks, missing parts and marks all over their body. What do you think caused these? Hint: it is both natural and human causes.
- What other dangers do dolphins face?
- What do dolphins need to survive in their ocean home?
- How can we protect Flute and other dolphin species?

SUPPORT NETWORK

- What is a support network?
- Flute has a big support network of friends and family which take care of each other. Draw out your own support network to show the class.
- How can you care for your family and friends?
- How can you show someone you care without using words?

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- If you were feeling sad, scared or worried who could you talk to?

DETERMINATION & RESILIENCE

- What obstacles does Flute overcome to get back to her dolphin party?
- How does Flute overcome these obstacles?
- Flute ended up going the wrong way and became stuck on a sandbar. What should you do if you discover you are heading in the wrong direction?
- Flute faces many challenges trying to get back to her dolphin party. What is something hard you have overcome. How did it make you feel?
- What can you say to yourself when you are having a tough time? Do you have a motto or saying?

DOLPHIN BIOLOGY & SCIENCE

- Dolphins breathe through their blowhole (not their mouth), why do you think it is located on the top of their heads?
- Flute becomes tired and needs to rest. Why do you think dolphins sleep with one eye open?
- Where is a dolphin's dorsal fin and what is it used for?
- How do dolphins communicate (talk) to each other?
- Bottlenose dolphins have a signature whistle which is like their very own 'name'. Why do you think they have this whistle?
- Bottlenose dolphins produce whistles, clicks and chirps when communicating and foraging. When angry they make clapping and popping sounds with their jaws to say "back off". What are 3 different ways you can make sounds?
- Look up and compare how fast sound travels underwater versus on land.
- Why do you think dolphins use sound to communicate with their friends and family?
- What is echolocation? Why do dolphins echolocate?

ACTIVITIES

DOLPHIN CONSERVATION POSTER

Individual or group project - Create a conservation poster teaching people to 'slow down' when boating. Research other threats to dolphins and how humans can protect them.

DOLPHIN TAG

Outdoor class activity - Two-four players are the taggers (speed boats) and the rest of the class are dolphins. The speed boats are positioned in the middle of the play area and the dolphin's line up on one side. The dolphins must try to make it to the safety of the other side without being tagged. If tagged they must remain frozen with their hands in the air. In order for the frozen dolphin to join back in, another dolphin must give them a high five. The game ends when all players are tagged. Or another option is to use a timer to end the game.

MOVE LIKE AN ANIMAL

Class activity – Act out the way animals move in their environment. Animals can include dolphins (playing, resting or foraging) turtles, dugongs, sharks and pelicans.

Now act out or role play a scene from the story.

DIORAMA

Create a seagrass habitat with all the things bottlenose dolphins need to survive and thrive. Including friends and family, a variety of food, air to breathe and even games they play.

SUPPORT NETWORK HAND

Individual activity - Identify 5 people in your support network that make you feel safe and secure. On the worksheet write one name on each finger of the hand.

Further resources can always be found on our website.

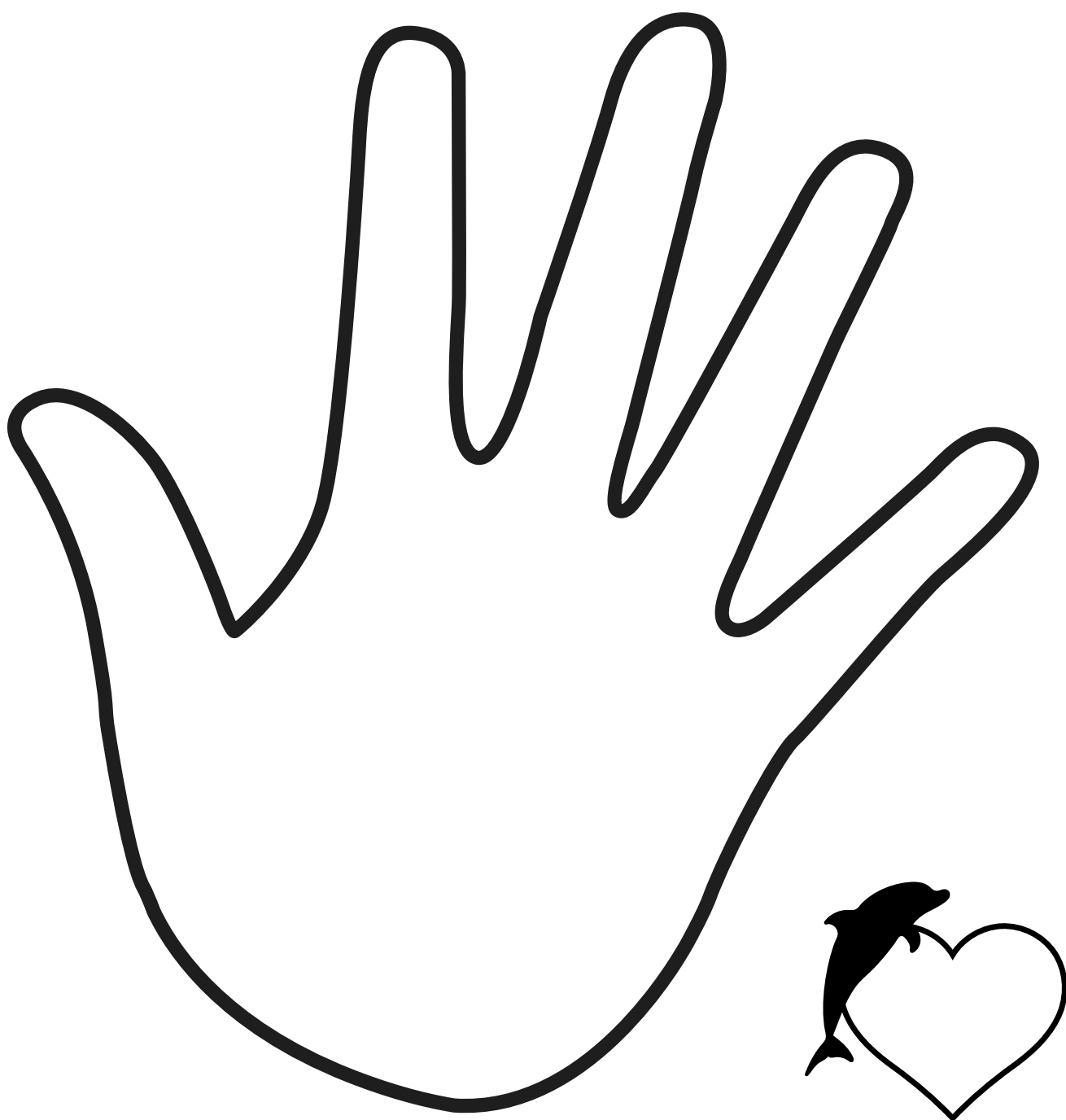
Other worksheets are included on the next two pages.

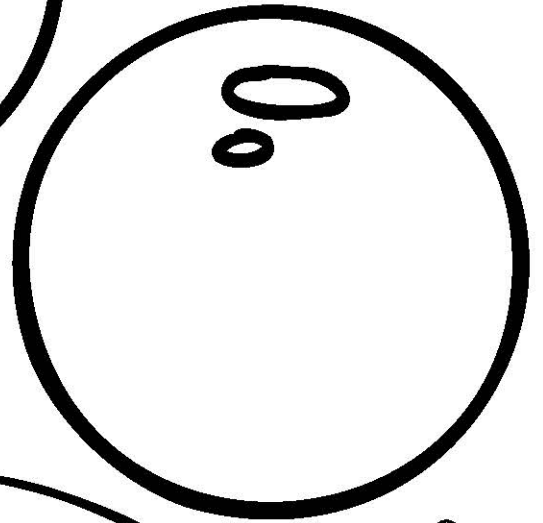
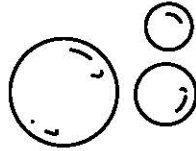
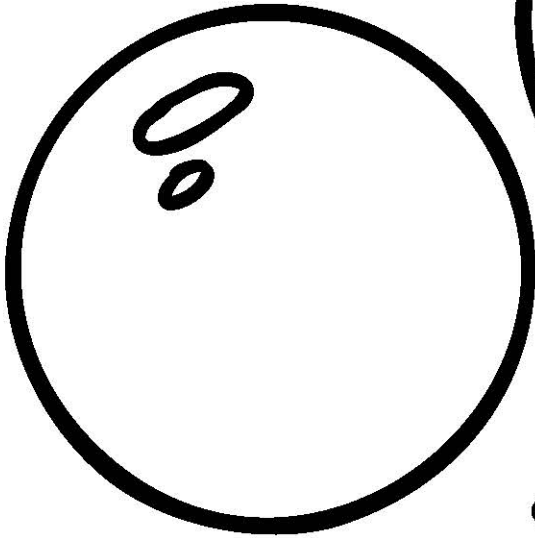
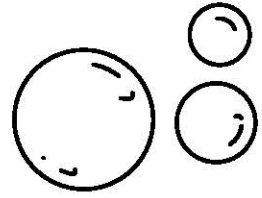
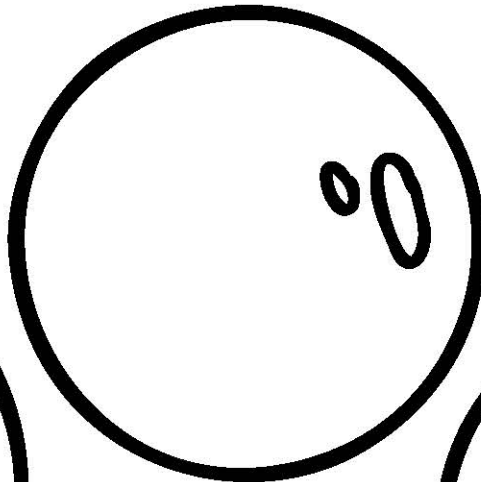
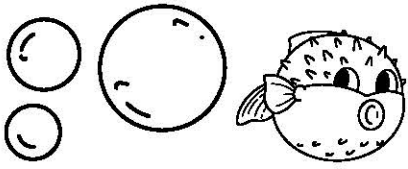
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My Support Network

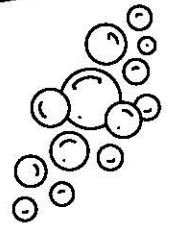
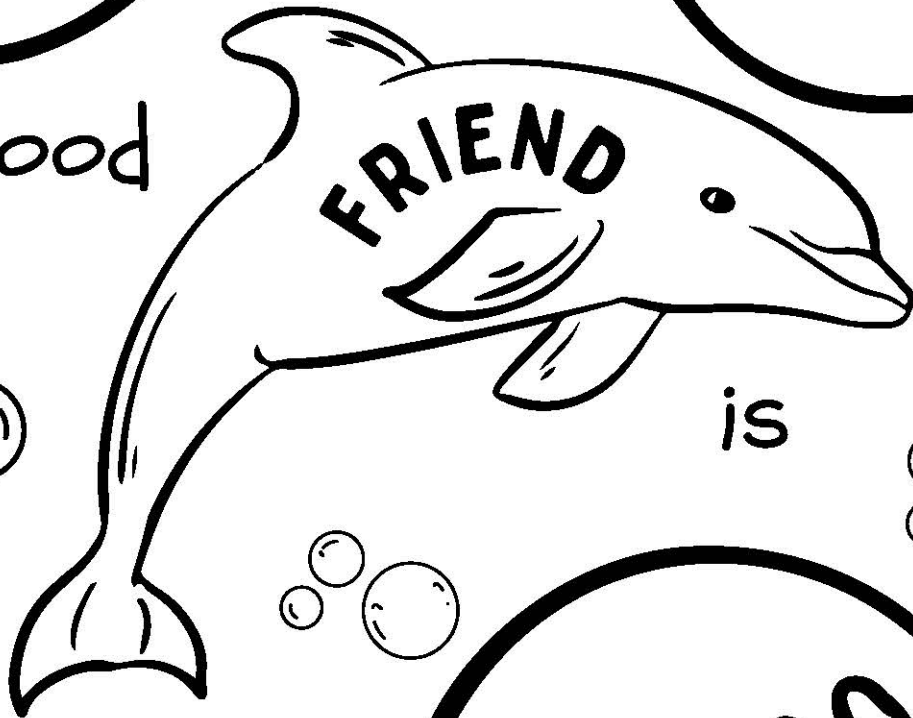
Think of 5 adults you can go to when you feel unsafe, need help, or just want someone to talk to. One should not be a family member.

Write one name on each finger of the hand.

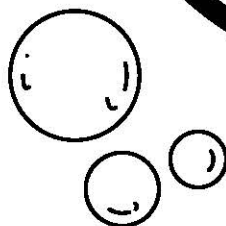
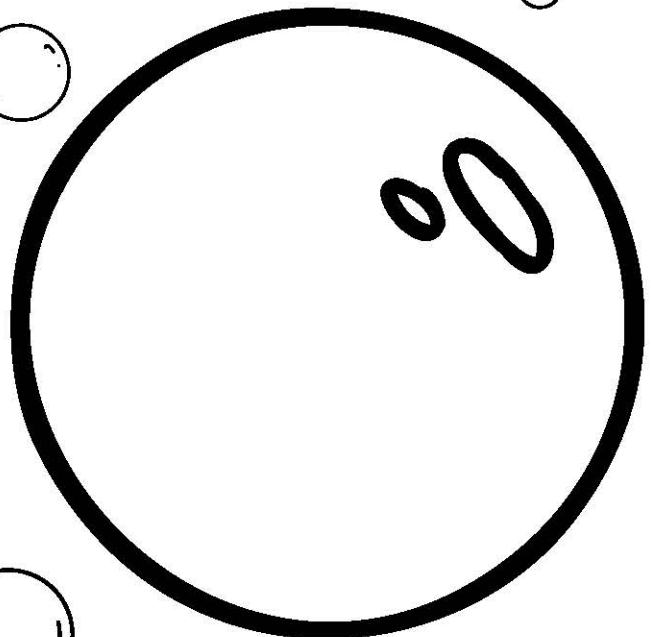
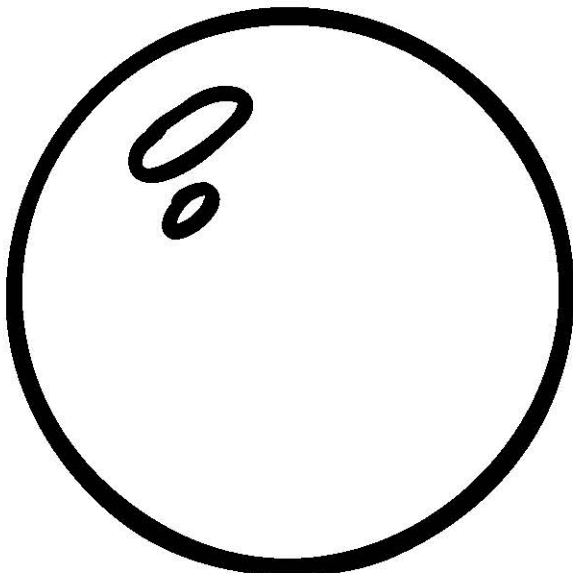
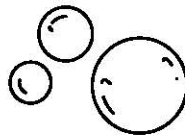
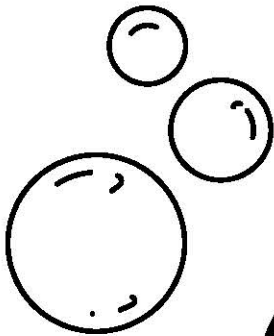
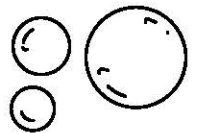




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