

POCSO Act: Know it to Use It



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Acknowledgements

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This book belongs to  !

Hello friends! My name is Sonu, and I want to help you understand your safety and rights!

The POCSO Act is like a shield made to protect you in case you face any harm or violence.



The power of POCSO shield can be used by anyone below the age of 18 years.

The POCSO shield is not just mine, it's ours!

The violence and harm the
POCSO speaks about is called
'Child Sexual Abuse'.



If someone hurts you or tries
to hurt you in the ways talked
about in this guide, you may
feel some uncomfortable
emotions like being scared
or feeling ashamed.

There's nothing wrong with feeling
that way. Abuse is never your fault
and all your emotions are valid.



You can tell someone you trust or
call the numbers given on page
25, and they will help you use the
power of the POCSO shield.

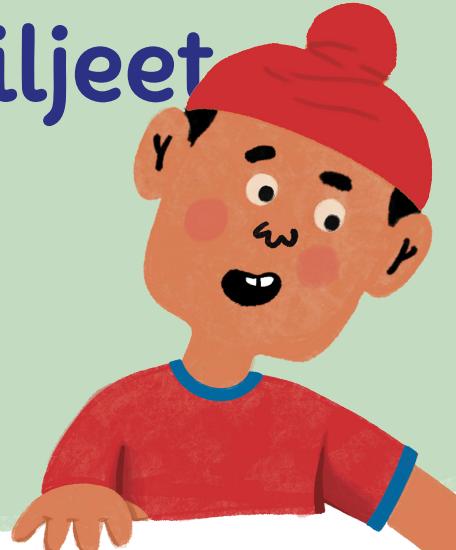
Let's go!

We will understand more
about the POCSO shield and how
it works!



But first, let's meet some new friends who will help us on this journey!

Diljeet



Grace



Vikas



Alisha



Nakul



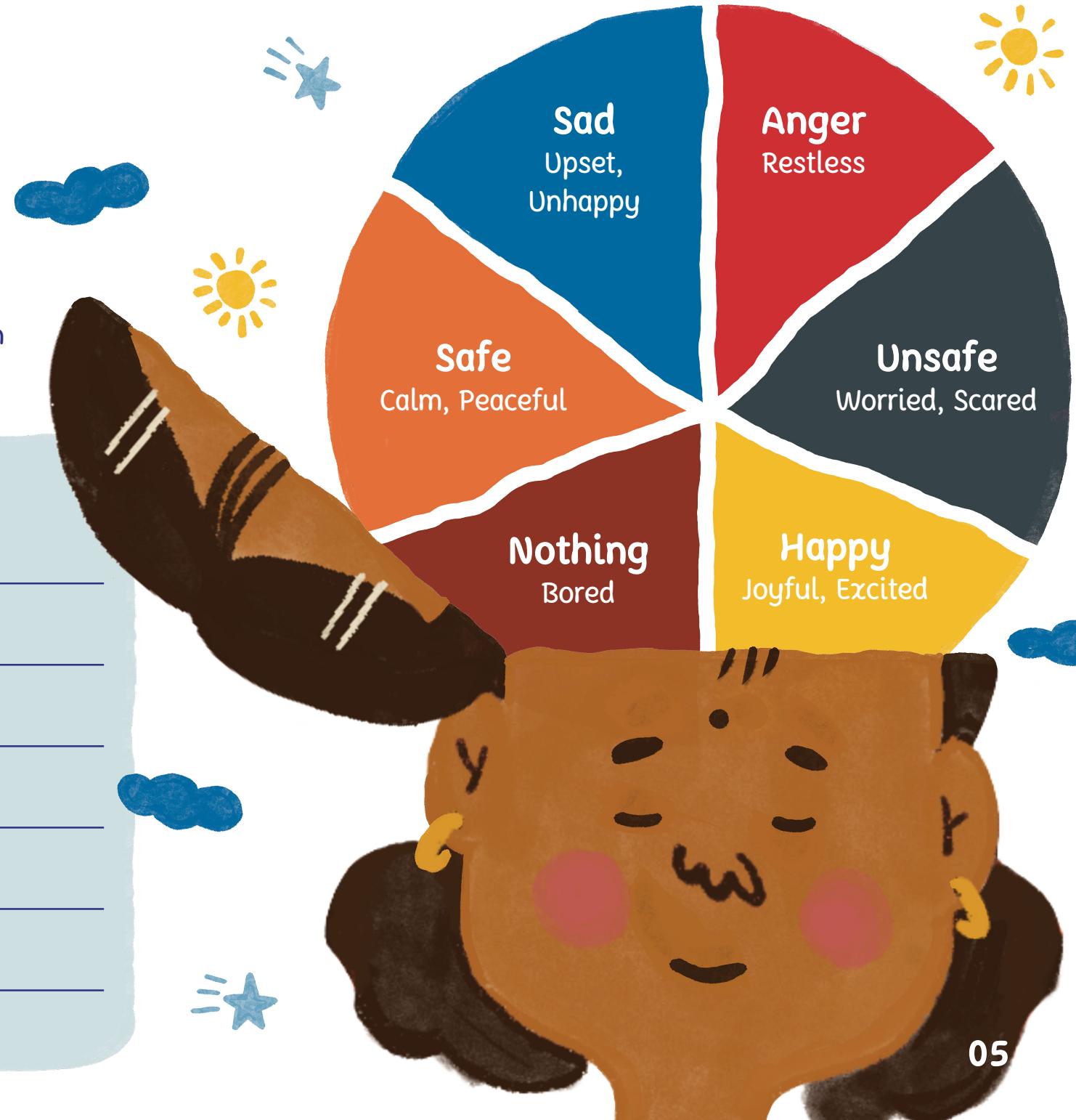
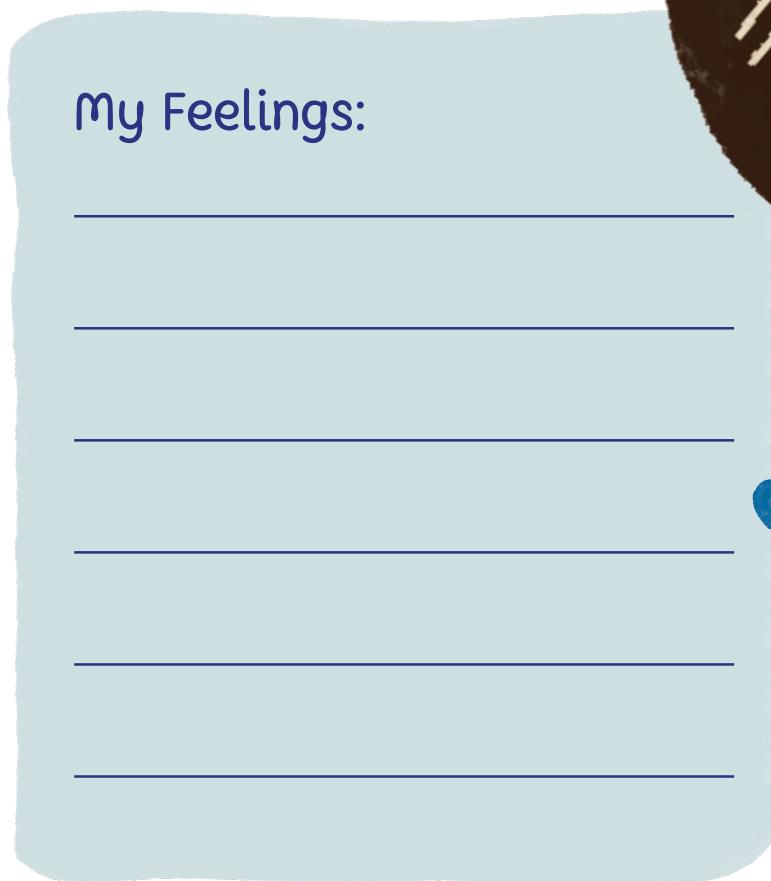
Mirza



- How are you
- feeling now?

Write how you are feeling below, you can think about it on your own or look at the 'Feelings Wheel' to explore your emotions.

My Feelings:



My Circle of Trust

Take a minute and think of the people you trust. It can be anyone you feel comfortable sharing your feelings with and who helps you when you need it! They could be your friends or trusted adults, too! Together, these people make your Circle of Trust!

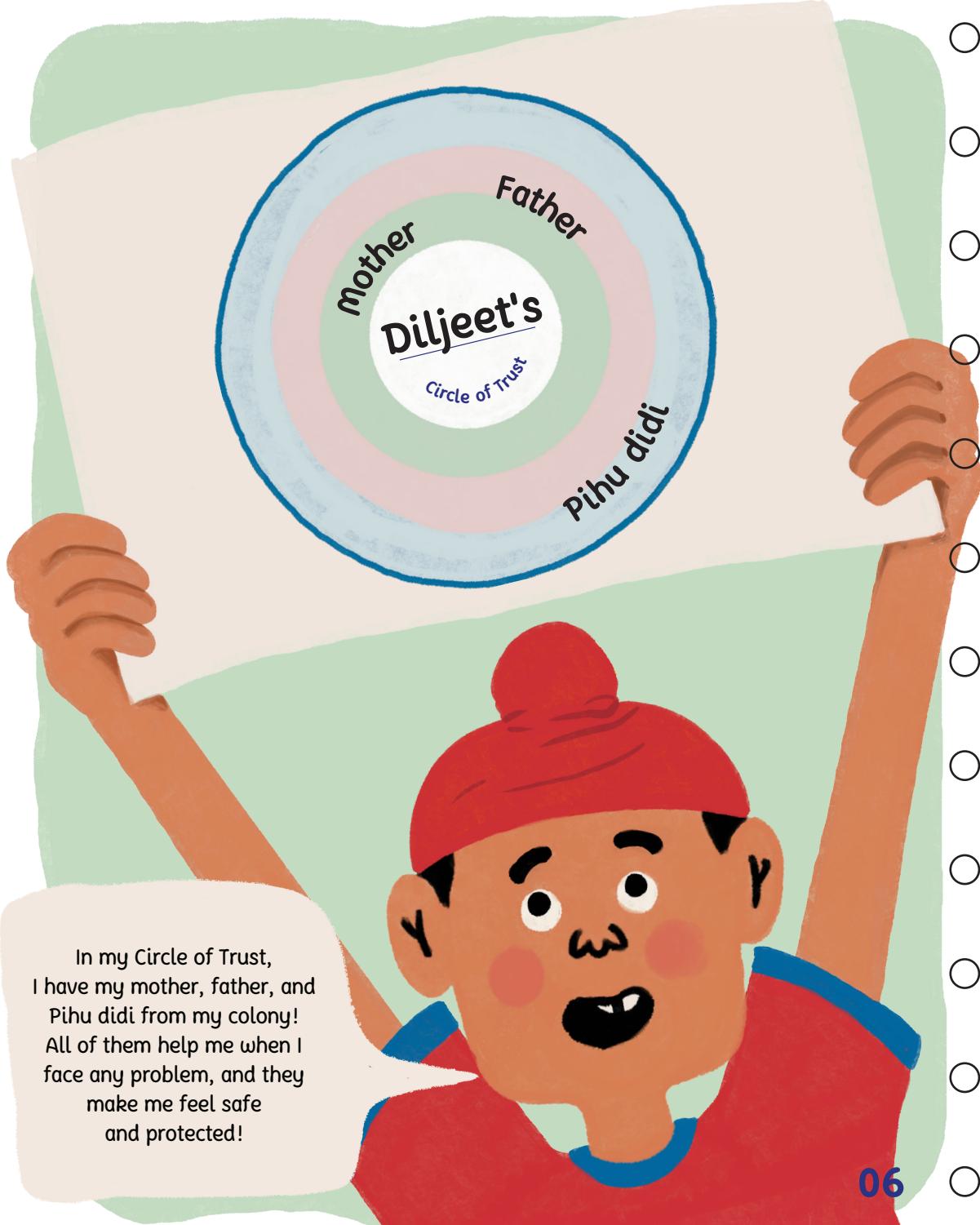
Let's see who all are there in Diljeet and Alisha's Circle of Trust!

In my Circle of Trust,
I have my friends Grace
and Vikas because I can
talk to them comfortably
without feeling scared.

Who is in your
Circle of Trust, Diljeet?



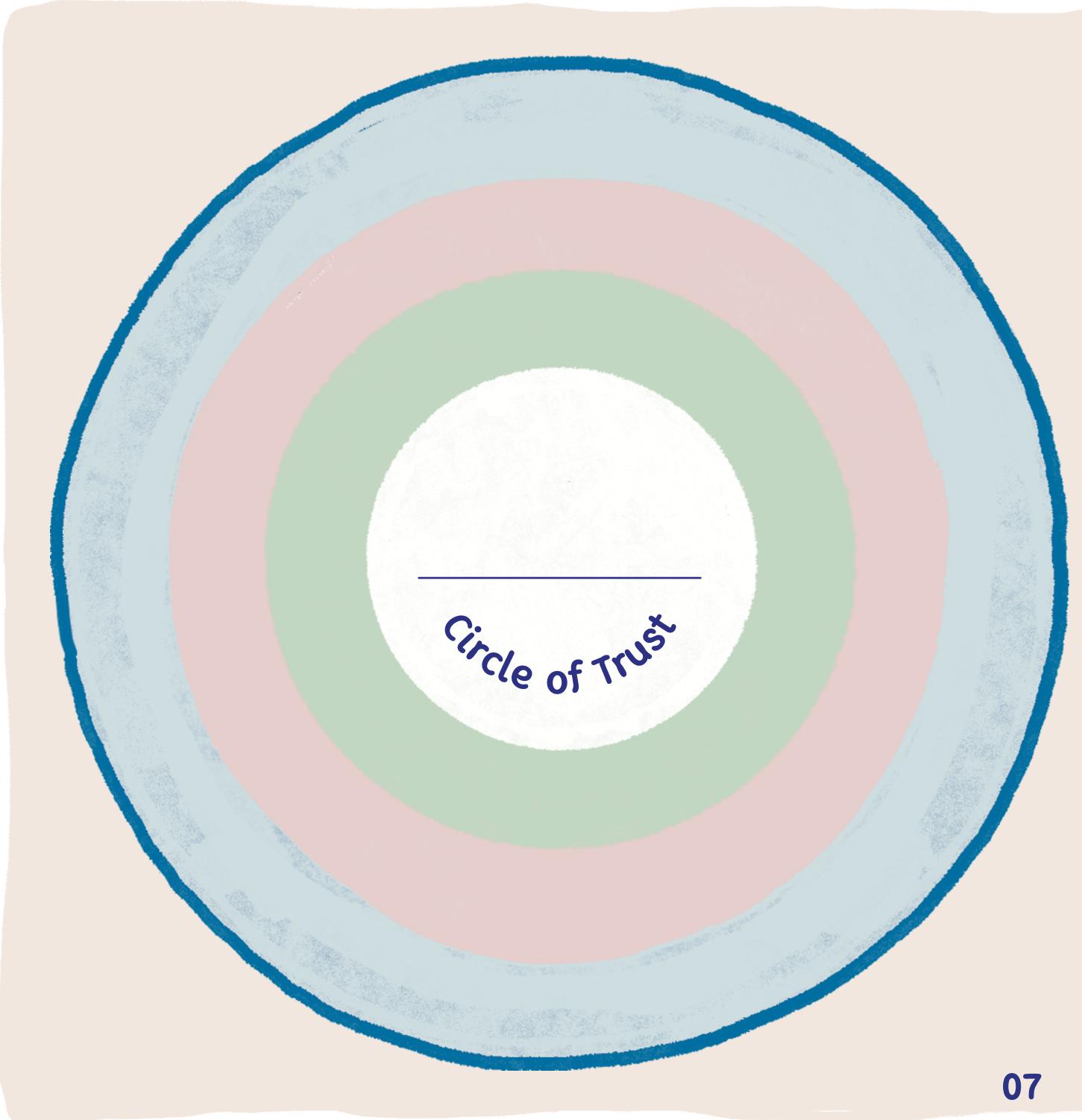
In my Circle of Trust,
I have my mother, father, and
Pihu didi from my colony!
All of them help me when I
face any problem, and they
make me feel safe
and protected!



- Just like Diljeet and Alisha, write down the names of the people you trust and create your Circle of Trust!



- You can tear this page and keep it with you, if you want! You can also show us who is in your Circle of Trust.



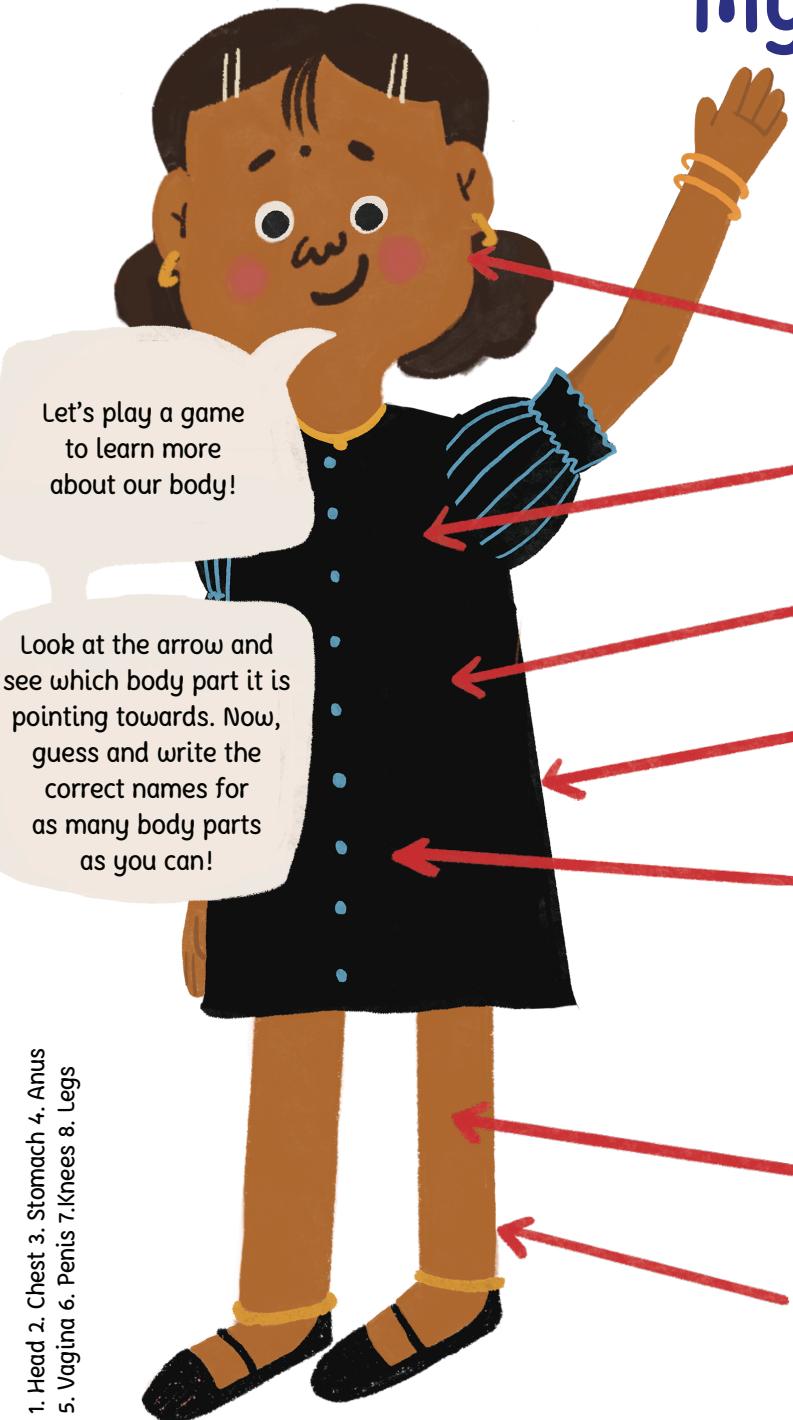


Color this picture with
your friends using your
favorite colors.

(Remember to use only
colored pencils or crayons!)

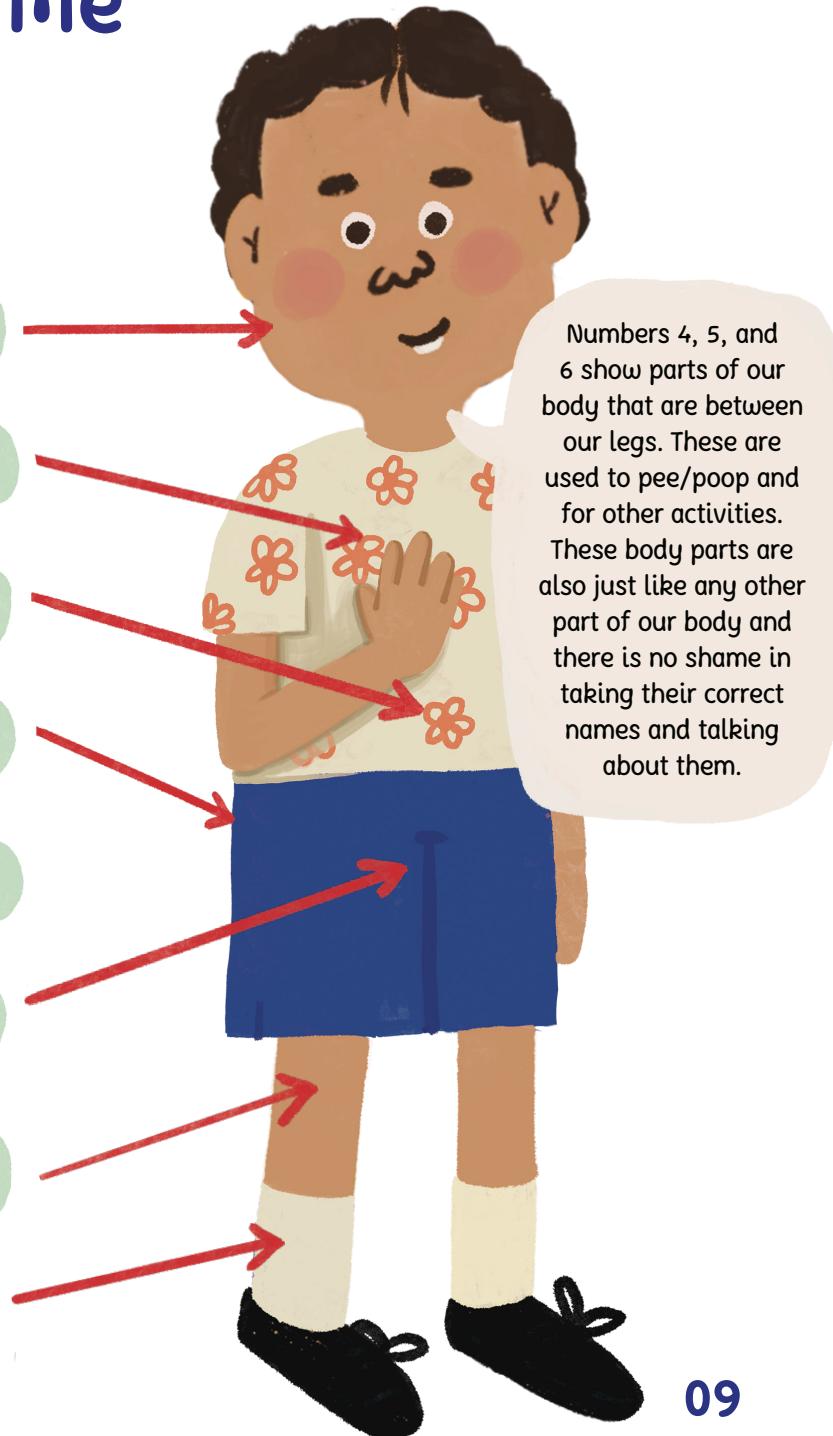
You can also draw anything
you like in the space above
and color it in.

My Body and Me



1. Head 2. Chest 3. Stomach 4. Anus
5. Vagina 6. Penis 7. Knees 8. Legs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.



My Body, My Choice!

We may have heard the word choice before, but today let's understand what 'choice' means in connection to our bodies! Using our 'choice' is also called 'consent'.



Consent with FREE WILL!

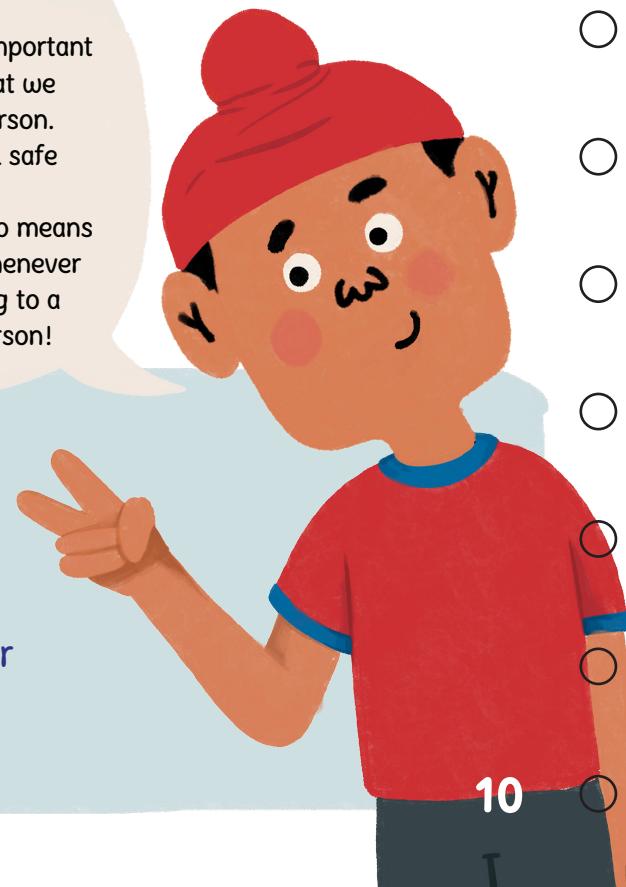
Consent means you have free choice and the power to decide what you are comfortable with. For example, if you want to hug someone or not.

Asking for consent is important because it shows that we respect the other person. This helps them feel safe around us.

Remember, consent also means that we can say NO whenever we want to, including to a friend or trusted person!

Consent is REVERSIBLE!

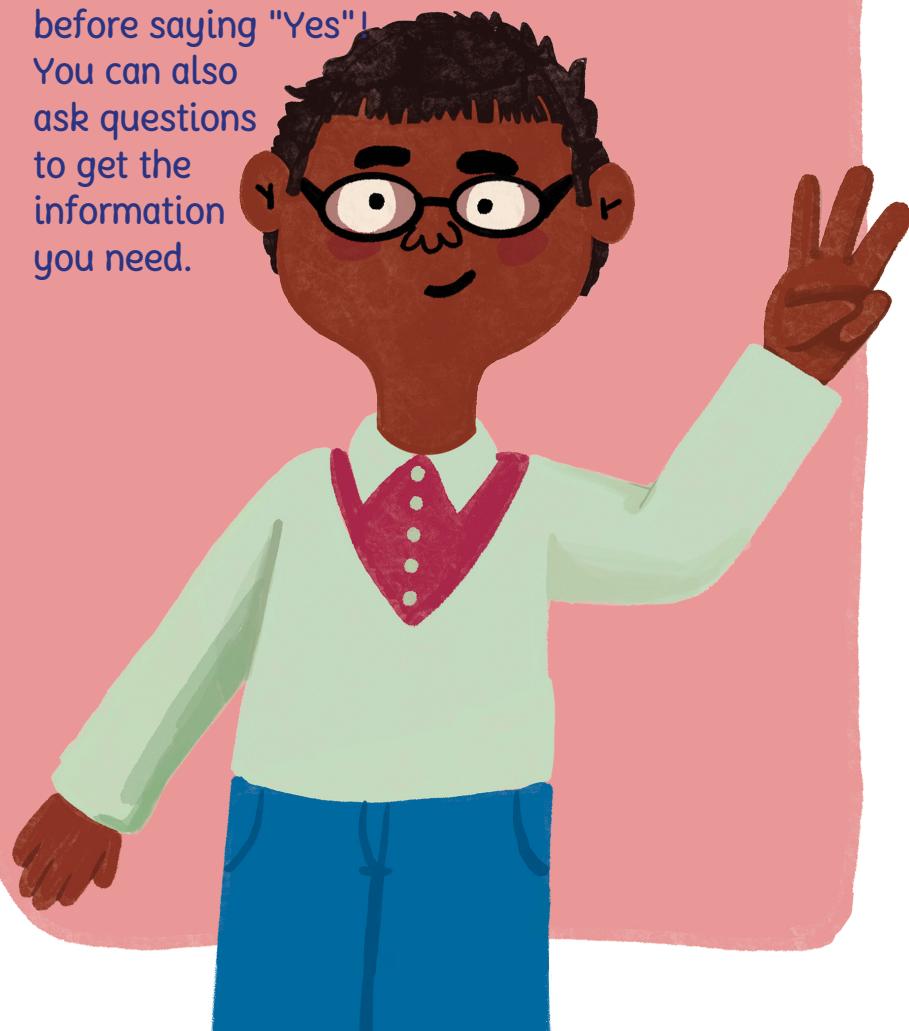
You can change your mind whenever you want. For example, even if you said "yes" to a hug before, you can still say "no" later if you don't feel like hugging anymore.



Give consent after receiving SPECIFIC and COMPLETE information!

It is important to know exactly what you are consenting to when you say "Yes" to an act. For example, if someone asks you for a hug, make sure you understand what a hug is before saying "Yes"!

You can also ask questions to get the information you need.



Consent should be INFORMED!

Only the act(s) you consented to should take place.

For example, if you have said "Yes" to a hug, then someone can't kiss you.

Remember, consent for different acts is also different.

Consent only when you are ENTHUSIASTIC!

You should only consent when you want to, not because others are also saying yes or because someone is convincing/pressuring you to say "Yes".

If you don't want the hug, then consenting to it under pressure, will not make you feel safe or good.



Let's understand choice and consent with an example!

I'm feeling sad because my exam didn't go well.

Would a hug make you feel better?

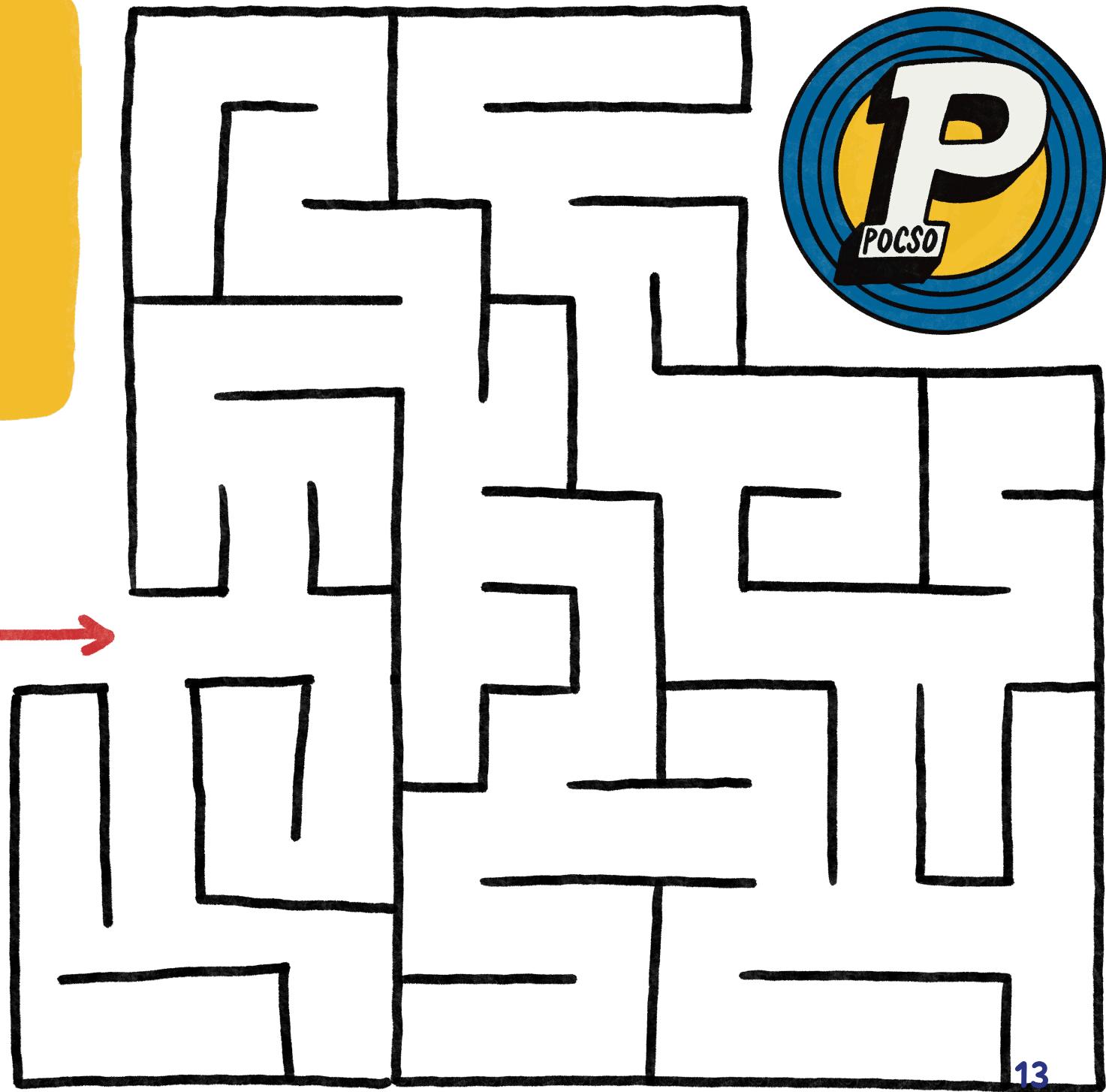
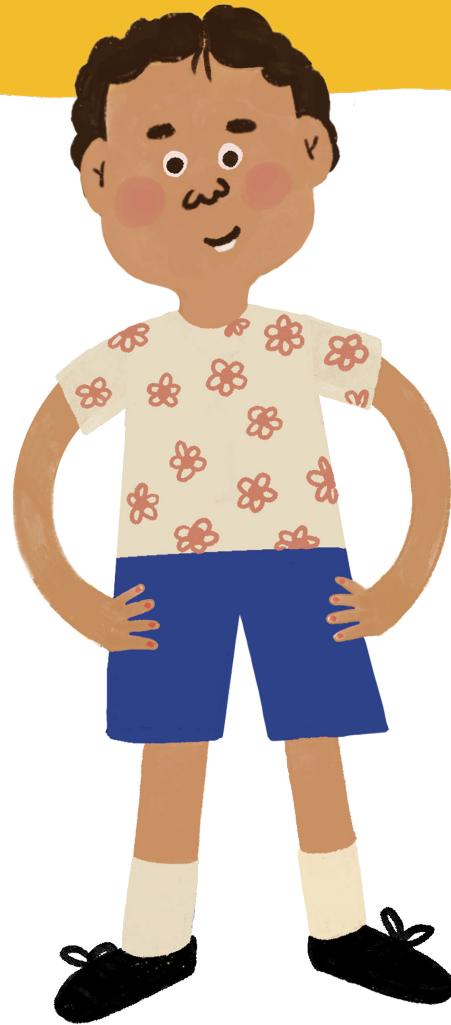
Saying "Yes" once to an act does not mean that it's always going to be a "Yes" for that act.

Thank you for explaining this to me! I would want you to feel safe around me.

Thank you for asking, but I don't feel comfortable being touched.

But why not? You said yes to a hug just two days ago.

Help Mirza
reach the
POCSO
shield!



Friends, touch can be either
safe or unsafe!

Based on what you have learnt about choice and consent, mark for safe touch and for unsafe touch.

1. Vikas has a stomachache. The doctor asked him to lift up his shirt to check his stomach.



2. Sonu was having trouble unbuttoning his clothes, so he asked his aunt for help.



3. Nakul's aunty who lives in the same colony, offered him his favourite chocolate, but in return, she wanted to touch him everywhere on his body.

This is a touch.



5.

Diljeet's tuition teacher asked Diljeet to sit on his lap so he can teach him properly. Diljeet agreed but it didn't make him feel good/comfortable.

This is a touch.

STOP

4. Grace wanted to kiss Alisha on the cheek like she always does. One day, Alisha was not feeling comfortable and she moved her face away. Grace still kissed her.

6.

Mirza's pants got dirty while playing in the mud. He asked Vikas to help him clean his pants.

This is a touch.



Safe Touch: 1, 2, 6
Unsafe Touch: 3, 4, 5

Safe and Unsafe friendships!

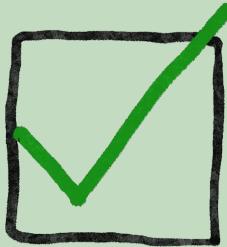
Unsafe acts don't always happen suddenly or only once. We can feel unsafe even in friendships that we have had for a long time. This can happen with anyone.

Sometimes, people can lie to gain our trust to force us to do act(s) we don't want to.

They can also lie to make us feel like we are agreeing to the act(s). We may feel like we consented to the act(s) so we can't do anything about it. But WE CAN!

You can always tell a trusted adult, or contact the numbers on Page 25, about the unsafe act and they will help you use the power of the POCSO shield!





In safe friendships, we talk openly with our friends. Our friends never ask us to keep secrets that make us feel uncomfortable, scared or unsafe.



In unsafe friendships, we might be asked to keep secrets that make us uncomfortable or scared. Safe friendships never put us in that position.



Safe friendships will always respect our choices and consent. They do not pressure us to do things that we don't like or don't want to do.



Unsafe friendships do not respect our choice and consent. They put pressure on us or try to forcefully convince us to do things that we don't want to do, don't like or that make us feel scared or uncomfortable.



There is no harm in keeping secrets, but some secrets can be unsafe.

Identify which secret is safe or unsafe !

Alisha got together with Sonu's friends without telling him for a surprise party for him.

1

This is a secret

Diljit's uncle shows him pictures and movies on his phone (porn) that make him feel uncomfortable. He asks Diljit to keep it a secret from his parents.

3

This is a secret

An uncle from the park became friends with Nakul and hugged him. Nakul felt good about the hug at first but then started feeling unsafe. He asked Nakul to not tell anyone about these hugs.

2

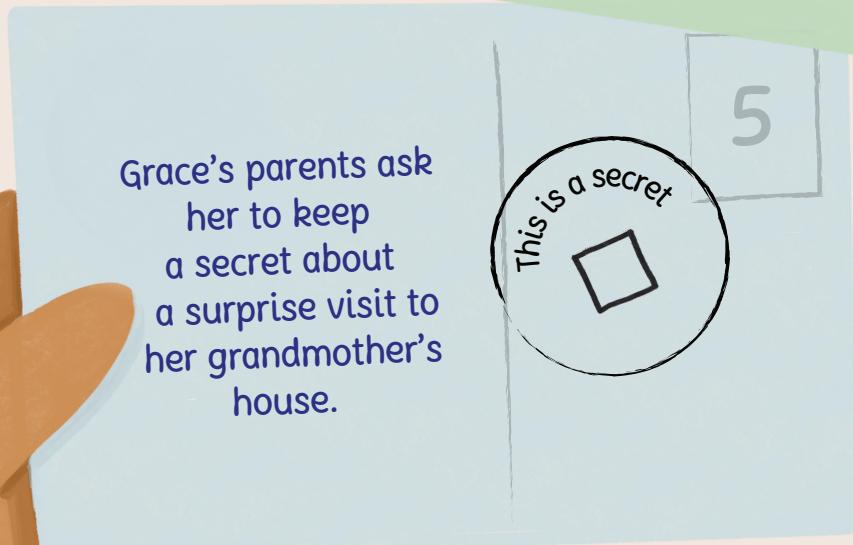
This is a secret



Vikas's neighbor gives him sweets and asks for kisses in return.

This is a secret

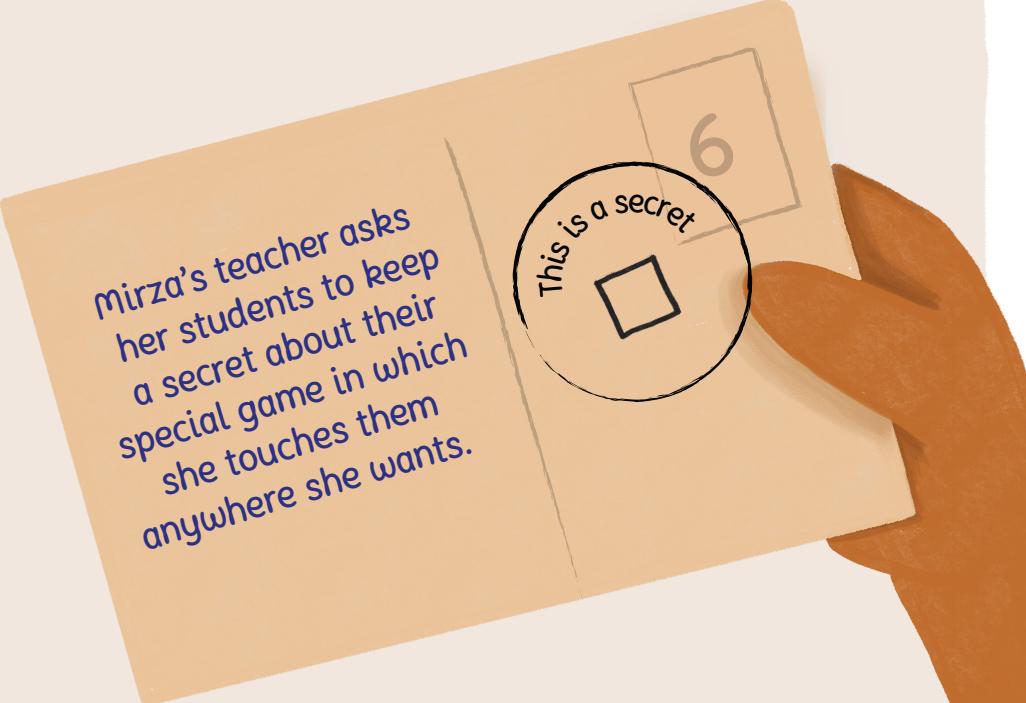
4



Grace's parents ask her to keep a secret about a surprise visit to her grandmother's house.

This is a secret

5



Mirza's teacher asks her students to keep a secret about their special game in which she touches them anywhere she wants.

This is a secret

6

It's okay to say "NO" to doing things that don't feel comfortable. If something feels uncomfortable, share it with someone from your circle of trust or call the numbers on Page 25. You are never alone!

YOUR BODY! YOUR RIGHTS!

My Choice and POCSO

Now that we have learnt about our body parts and safe/unsafe touch. Let us see what the POCSO Act says about this!

The POCSO shield protects us and gets activated if anyone makes us feel unsafe by:

- Touching any part of our body or
- Making us touch their body or
- Any one else's

This includes our vagina, penis, anus or breast.

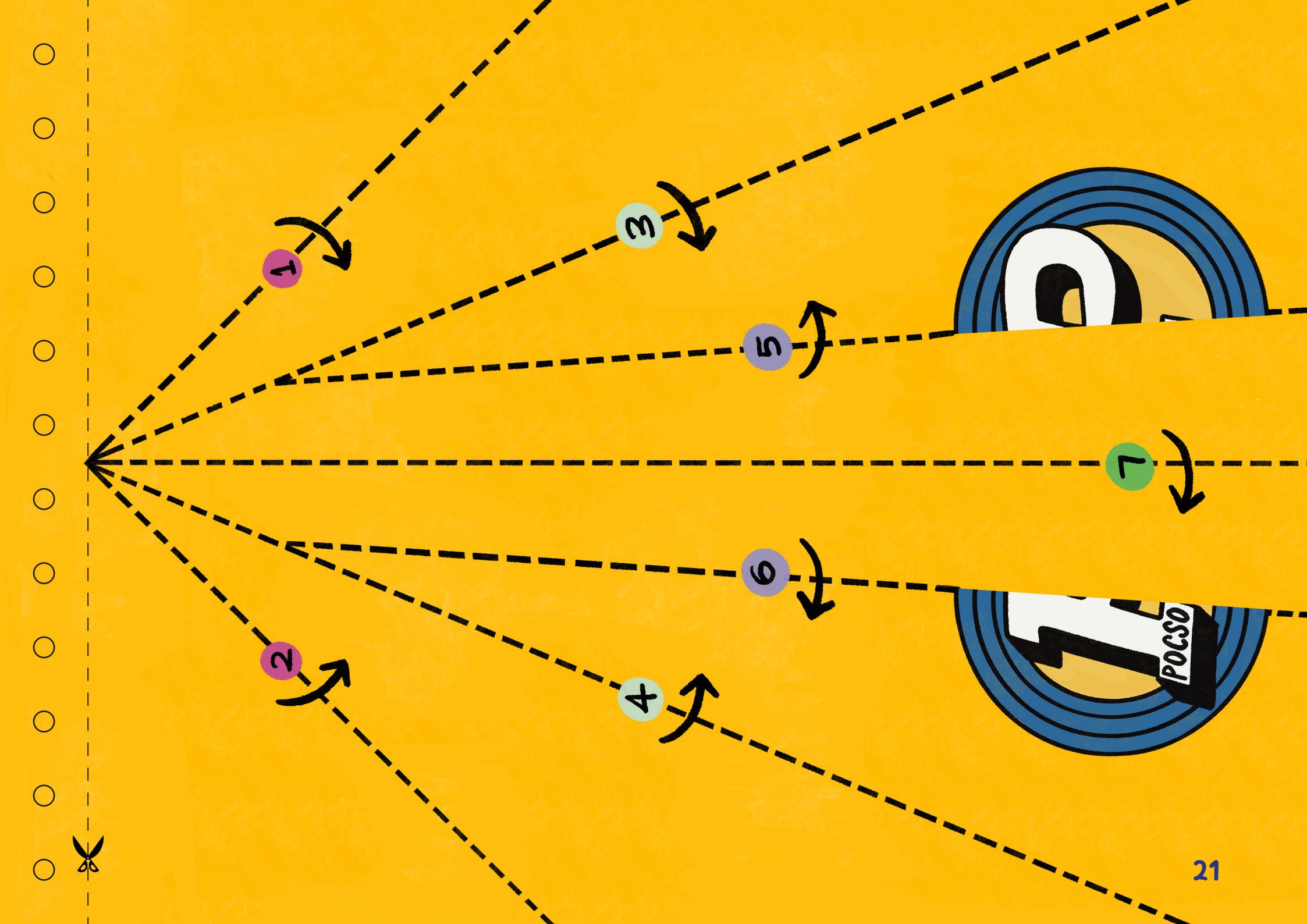
The POCSO shield also protects us and can be activated against anyone inserting/ putting their:

- Penis into our vagina, mouth or anus or
- Any part of the body or Object into our vagina, anus or penis

POCSO covers all situations of such acts being done including if any of the above acts are done to you or you are made to do these acts with that person or someone else.

If any of the above acts happen with us or someone we know who is under the age of 18 years, we must tell a trusted adult or call the numbers mentioned on page 25 so we can use the powers of the POCSO to keep us safe!







Let's fly towards safety!

Let's fly towards safety!

Can we feel unsafe even without being touched?



We have learnt how to identify safe and unsafe touches, but sometimes people can say, do or show us something that makes us feel unsafe and uncomfortable, even without directly touching us. We can also use the POCSO Act when such unsafe acts have happened with us, like:

Someone asks you to show your body or body part(s) or shows their own body or body part(s) which makes you feel unsafe.

12:48 pm ✓✓

Someone is following you, or repeatedly contacting you either in person or online through Instagram, Email, Facebook or other social media apps.

12:51 pm ✓✓

Someone is singing inappropriate songs or doing actions that make you uncomfortable for e.g. whistling.

12:56 pm ✓✓

Someone shows you a video or photo of people who are naked (porn).

12:59 pm ✓✓

Someone is threatening to show an obscene picture/video (real or fake) of yours to others.

1:04 pm ✓✓

Someone is offering money, gifts or sweets in exchange for clicking your pictures/videos without clothes.

1:06 pm ✓✓



Who can you contact to use the POCSO Act?



If you are feeling unsafe, you can contact these helplines or organizations:

- 112 Police Station/Police Helpline
- 1098 Childline, a government helpline for children
- 181 A government helpline for women and children



It is not your fault if an unsafe act happens to you.
You don't have to blame yourself for it.
You can always talk to a trusted adult or to any of
the numbers listed above.

POCSO shield is with you every step of the way!

When you tell a trusted adult or one of the helplines listed on page 27 about an unsafe act that has happened with you or someone else, they have to inform the police to activate the powers of the POCSO. Your safety and helping you use the powers of POCSO Act is the responsibility of the person you have informed about the unsafe act and the police.

You can move your finger along the winding road and at each step on the road, you will learn the steps of reporting the unsafe act and rights you have at each step.

1

Informing the Police

To get the person to stop hurting the child, they need to tell the police about the unsafe act by going to the closest police station or calling 112. It is the police's duty to help the child.

POLICE STATION

The child can talk to the police in a place that they are comfortable in, for example, their home. They can also have a trusted adult with them.

The child can speak to the police in a language that they are comfortable with. If the police doesn't know the language, they will call someone else who does. A child with disability can also request for a special educator, in case they need it.

The child can take their time to tell the police about the unsafe act and take breaks when they want to.

The Police Officer will write what the child tells them, read it out to them and give the child a copy of this written statement called the FIR.

Medical Examination

The doctor will check/examine the child's body to see if and where they are hurt and will collect information about the unsafe act.

The medical exam will be done with the child's consent and only in the presence of someone they trust.

The doctor will also treat any injury the child may have because of the unsafe act.

If the child doesn't feel emotionally well, the doctor can also refer them for mental health support.

The doctor may examine the child's mouth, vagina, anus as well if something has been inserted there. This will help punish the person who did the unsafe act with the child.

The child's examination will be done by a male doctor if the child is a male and by a female doctor if the child is a female. The child can also tell which doctor they feel safe with.



HOSPITAL

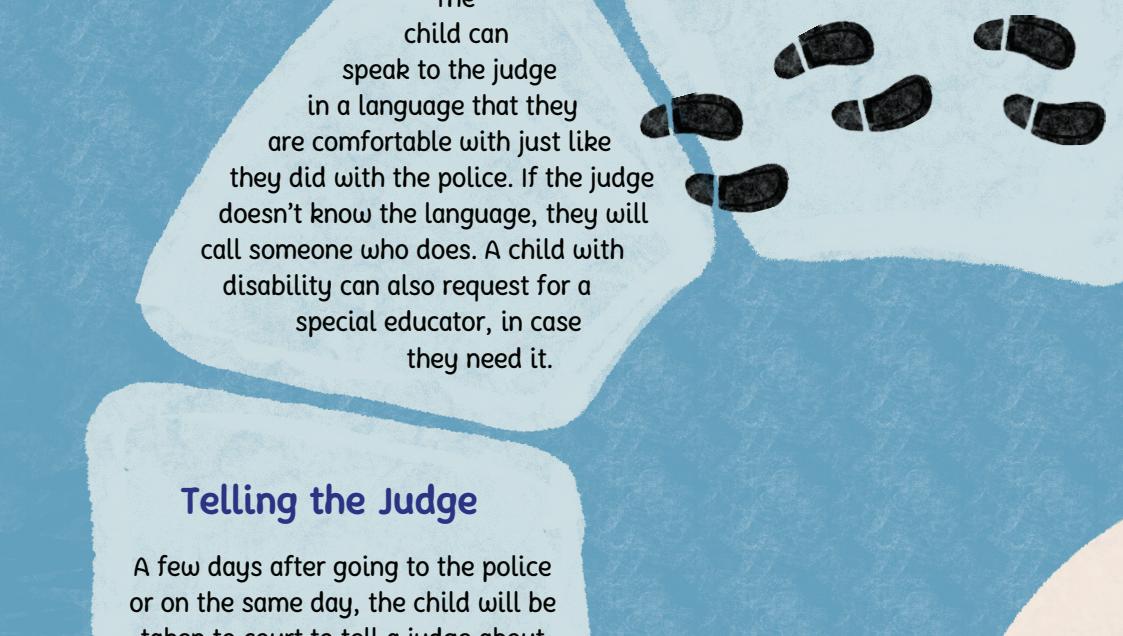
Child Welfare Committee (CWC)

This committee has been set up to help children who need protection and are in unsafe situations. They will provide support with any needs the child may have such as, if they need a place to stay as their family is not supportive or if they are having trouble with school.

The police will take the child to meet the CWC, a few days after they report the act or even the same day. After that, the child may meet them once a month for them to check in on how the child is doing and if they need any help.

The child's voice and thoughts are important. They can tell the CWC what they want, the problems they are facing, and the solutions they need.

They may appoint a support person to help the child till the trial ends. This support person will help the child and keep them updated on the trial. They will also work with the CWC to solve the child's problems such as with school, home or anything else.



The child can speak to the judge in a language that they are comfortable with just like they did with the police. If the judge doesn't know the language, they will call someone who does. A child with disability can also request for a special educator, in case they need it.

Telling the Judge

A few days after going to the police or on the same day, the child will be taken to court to tell a judge about the unsafe act. The statement given will help punish the person who did the unsafe act with them.



4



The child can take breaks while giving their statement whenever they feel like.



They can speak to the judge alone or ask for a trusted adult to be with them while giving their statement.



5

The Trial

A trial is done to ensure that the person who did the unsafe act can be punished. The process can take some time, but the child will only need to go to court to tell the judge what happened and answer some questions about it like in step 4.

The child will not come in contact with the person who did the unsafe act with them.

The child and their family have the right to know what is happening during the trial. The support person from the Child Welfare Committee or the police will help keep them updated.

When the child goes to court to give their statement, they will be in a safe room with either 1) a support person or 2) the child's support person from the child welfare committee or 3) with a trusted adult who will help the child through their statement. If there is no safe room, the child will give their statement in front of the judge with any of the above people. There will be no outsider in the room when the child is giving their statement.

The child will not be asked to give their statement again and again or be called repeatedly to court.

The child can take breaks while giving their statement.

The child can speak to the judge in a language they are comfortable with just like they did in Step 4. If the judge doesn't know the language, they will call someone who does. A child with disability can also request for a special educator, in case they need it.



Rights given under POCSO Act

The POCSO Act gives you many rights at every step to keep you safe and happy when you activate the POCSO shield.

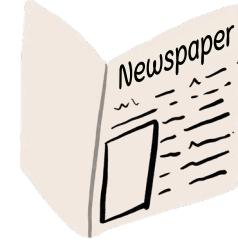
Reporting unsafe acts means you are using these rights, and you can ask for them when you need them.



The Right to Speak and be Heard



The Right to be Safe



The Right to be Informed



The Right to our Education not being stopped



The Right to Privacy and Confidentiality*



The Right to Say No



The Right to Support



The Right to a Safe Place



The Right to Free Medical Treatment

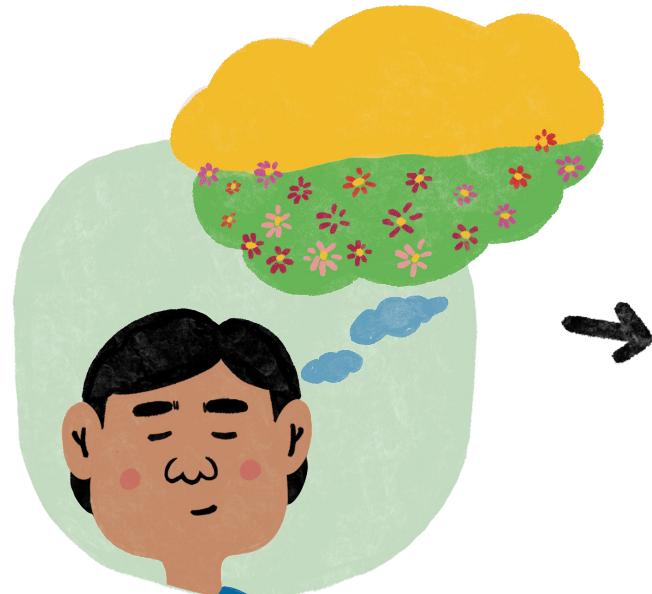


The Right to Free Legal Aid

*Anything that you share with the police/court will not be shared with anyone.

1.

Close your eyes and picture yourself in a garden full of beautiful flowers.



2.

Now, imagine your arms are turning into the wings of a butterfly!



Give Yourself a Butterfly Hug

5.

Do this for one minute or until you start feeling calm and relaxed. Take slow and deep breaths as you tap your hands.



4.

Like a butterfly flapping its wings, slowly tap your hands on your chest, one at a time.



3.

Cross your arms over your chest, just like a butterfly ready to fly.





How are you feeling now?

Write how you are feeling below, you can think about it on your own or look at the 'Feelings Wheel' to explore your emotions.

My Feelings:

You have reached the end of this book

We hope through this journey, you feel closer to the POCSO Act and learnt about some important rights that the POCSO gives you. The POCSO Act tries to make it easier for you to get help and justice in cases of child sexual abuse.

Your Body!
Your Rights!

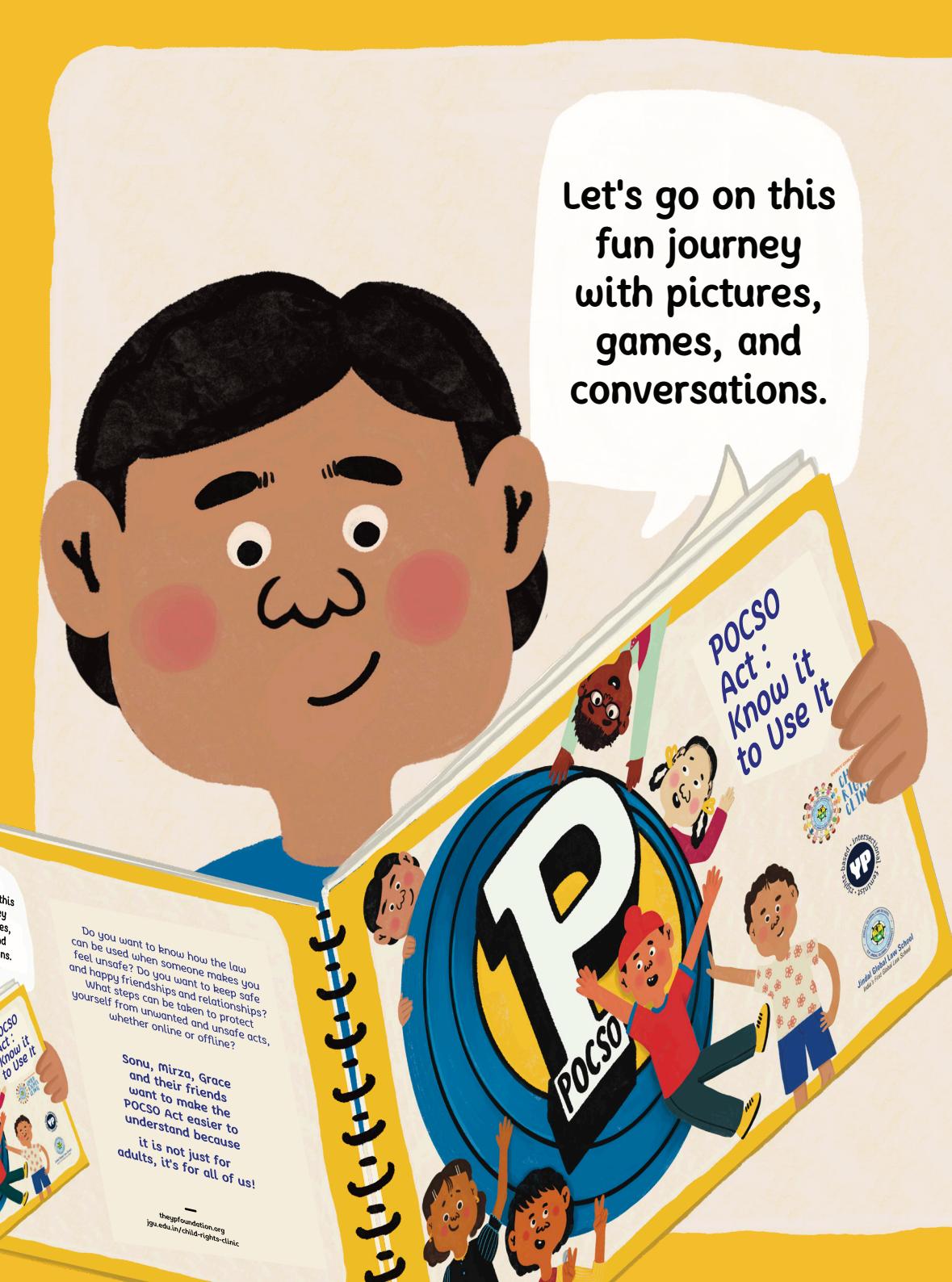
The POCSO Act also talks about the rights that are already written in the Constitution for us as citizens.

These rights include the power to make decisions about our own bodies and to decide when, where, and how to give consent is included in these rights. The rights in the POCSO Act help us use these rights given in the Constitution.

The Constitution also gives us the right to talk about things that are not mentioned in this Act as well as ask questions about them. This law works best when we keep talking about it with each other freely.







Let's go on this fun journey with pictures, games, and conversations.

Do you want to know how the law can be used when someone makes you feel unsafe? Do you want to keep safe and happy friendships and relationships? Do you want to learn what steps can be taken when unwanted and unsafe acts happen-whether online or offline?

Sonu, Mirza, Grace and their friends want to make the POCSO Act easier to understand because it is not just for adults, it's for all of us!

theypfoundation.org
jgu.edu.in/child-rights-clinic