It's OK to Cry



Dedicated to my husband Andy who, like many of his age, was taught to keep his feelings very well hidden. (But don't worry – it's being worked on!)



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It's OK to Cry



Molly Potter

ILLUSTRATED BY
Sarah Jennings

FEATHERSTONE
LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY

Dear Reader,



This book is called It's OK to Cry for a reason. It really is OK to cry! Everyone needs to be able to express how they feel and what makes them feel that way. When you get good at understanding your emotions and being able to talk about them openly, it can stop you from hurting people in the heat of the moment, it can make you feel better and it means you'll have a better chance of getting the help you need.

This book starts off exploring why boys in particular tend to struggle with their emotions and find it hard to express their feelings. It then looks at different emotions in turn and when you might experience them. It will help you explain to other people exactly how you are feeling and why.

It will also help you understand how to get better at coping with and responding to uncomfortable feelings. Getting better at dealing with feelings will make your life a whole lot easier!



It's good to know...

People nearly always feel better after a good cry.

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Why do some boys hide their emotions?

Boys often hear things that can make them believe:

They have to be tough.



They have to learn to cope on their own.



They need to be strong.



The only feeling they should show is anger because it's powerful.



Boys can also end up thinking:

They need to be in control.



They must be brave.



It's only OK for girls to talk about their feelings.



They are not supposed to cry.



So what does all this mean?

Because of messages like the ones on this page, boys can end up feeling they can't talk about or show their feelings and that they have to deal with problems on their own. This is really unfair as boys can still feel scared, nervous, upset, worried, helpless, insecure and sad. Sharing feelings is a positive thing and can make you feel less alone with your worries.

Why do boys think they need to act tough?

Many boys are told over and over again that they need to be tough. They pick this up from adverts on TV, from watching action films, from reading stories with male heroes who never cry and from some of the adults in their lives.

How many messages that encourage boys to be tough can you see in this picture?



It's good to know...

Sadly, boys are often taught that part of being tough includes not talking about their feelings. This is really unhelpful.

Why it's good to talk about feelings

Life is a lot easier if you can talk to other people about the things that are bothering you. If you manage to talk about difficult feelings and what made you feel that way, you'll start to feel better and you'll be more likely to get the help you need.



The following pages give you lots of words for feelings and suggest times when you might feel that way. Thinking about these words and situations can help you get better at expressing how you feel.