# IN My HEAD

A Young Person's Guide To Understanding Mental Health

LOUISE BATY

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IN MY HEAD

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*To J & J, who have always been excellent listeners, advice givers and cheerleaders during even the trickiest of times. Thank you for everything.*

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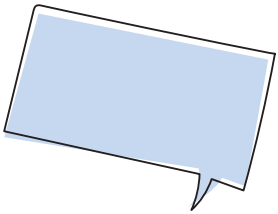
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# INTRODUCTION

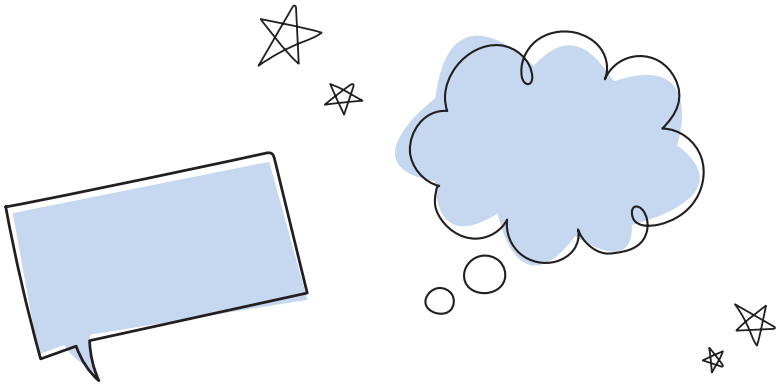
Hello! Welcome to *In My Head.* Chances are, you've picked up this book or someone else has given it to you as a helpful gift, because there's a lot going on for you right now.

From the age of 11 onwards, life starts to shift in a big way. Physical changes, mood swings, overpowering emotions... sound familiar?

It may feel as though you're the only one going through all this but you're not alone, honest! Every young person experiences a variety of challenges as they navigate the somewhat bumpy path through the pre-teen and teenage years, and beyond.

This book explains why you may feel like you do and includes easy-to-follow explanations about physical and mental changes and also neurodiversity – which simply means that not everyone's brain works in exactly the same way.

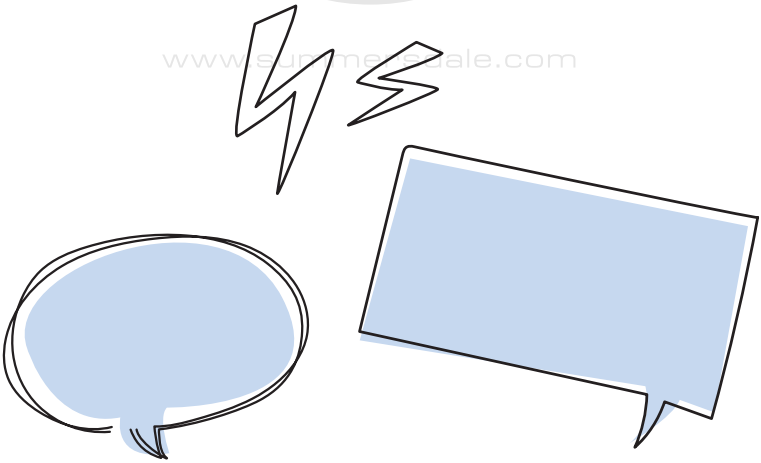
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There are tips for coping with tricky issues such as one-sided or unhealthy friendships and problems at school, along with advice on putting together your own personalized self-care toolkit.

You'll find handy fill-in pages for tracking your moods, lifestyle habits and low mood triggers along with straight-forward information about common mental health issues.

Sadly, with one in seven teenagers experiencing mental health issues worldwide it's wise to be prepared for tricky times that may arise so that you can move forward to happier times. This book aims to give you the knowledge and the power to do just that.

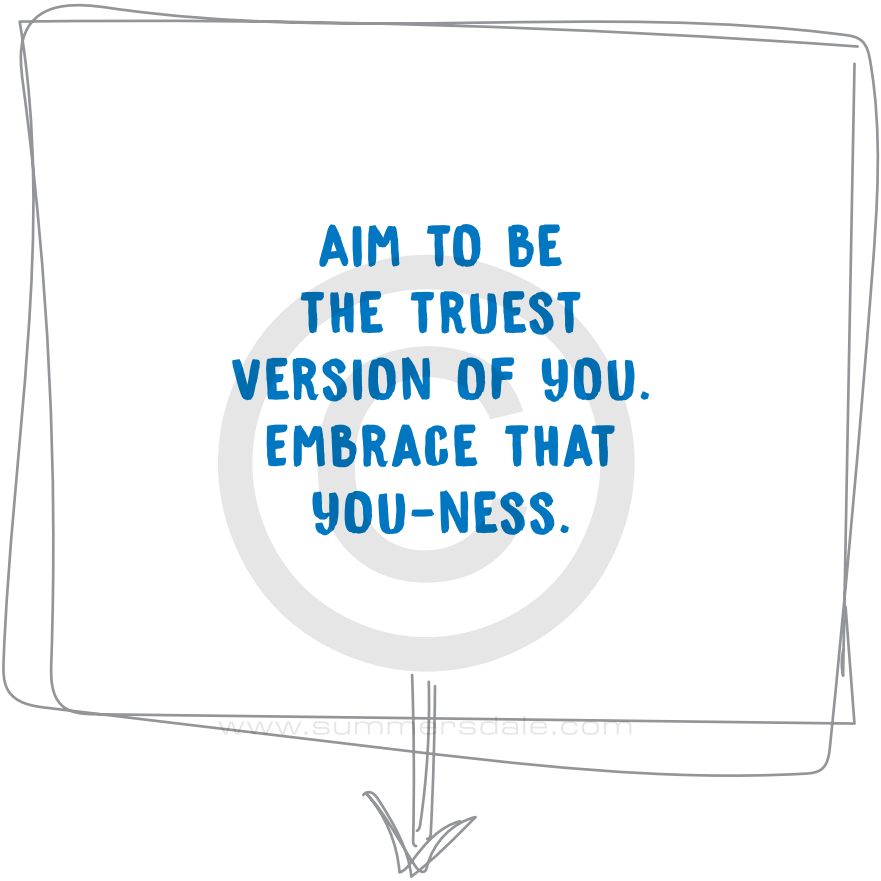


# CHAPTER ONE:

## IS IT ALL IN MY HEAD?

This chapter will explain what's going on inside that head of yours, covering simple science, hormones, mental health and neurodiversity – because in order to understand your emotions and mood changes, it's helpful to first understand what may be causing them.

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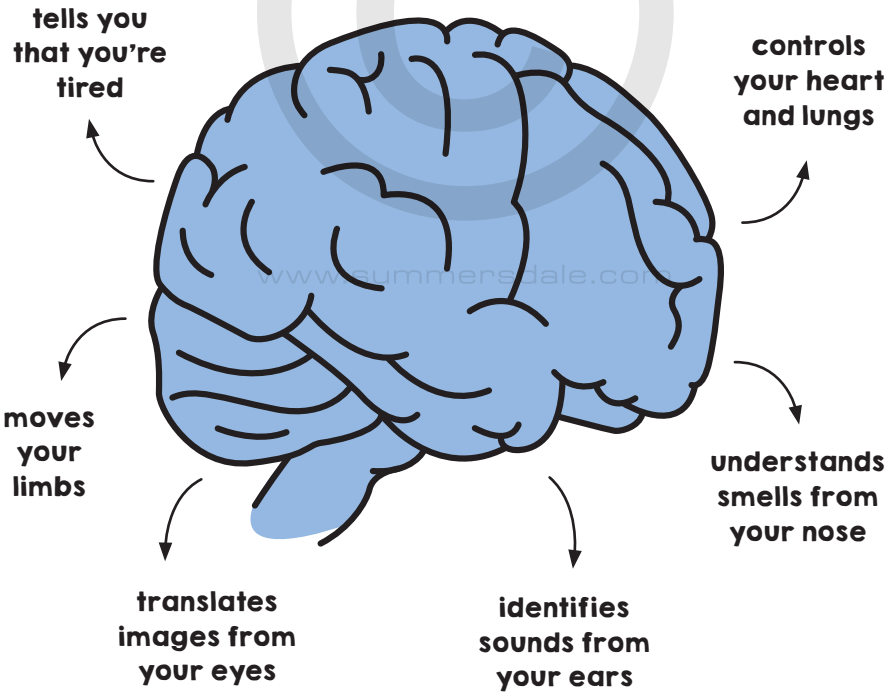
# INSIDE YOUR BRAIN

Ever wondered what's going on in there, in your head?

Well, first things first, let's get this out in the open. You are a living, breathing miracle.

Yes, you!

Every single day as you sit in class or catch the bus or chat to your friends or watch TV, truly AMAZING things are happening inside that brain of yours.



It's mind-boggling really, which is *entirely* appropriate for the situation.

Think of your brain as your body's control centre or HQ. Take a look at the diagram opposite to see a few things it does without you even noticing.

Your brain doesn't just tell you things, like when you need sleep or a sandwich or that there's a nasty whiff coming from your brother's room.

It does something else REALLY important too.

*It thinks.*

All day every day – even when you're snoozing – your brain is working hard, imagining, remembering, dreaming and feeling.

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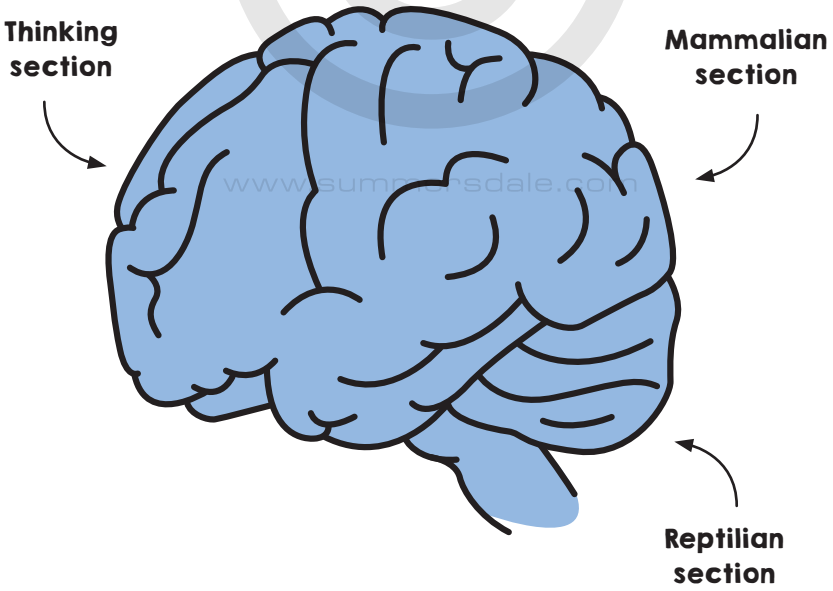
Now do you understand why it's your body's HQ? Everything you do, think and feel comes from your brain. You'd be nothing without it!



# HOW DOES YOUR BRAIN WORK?

To understand what's happening in your brain and how exactly it works, imagine that it consists of three sections:

- at the base is the "reptilian" or "primal" section, which keeps your vital organs working and puts you in survival mode if you feel threatened
- above that is the "mammal" or "emotional" section, which governs your emotional responses and connections
- the top part of your brain is known as the "thinking" section as it controls impulses and considers consequences




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