

## Age 15+ Beautiful Feet

# Shoes, feet and all things sweet!



## Introduction

Starting questions: what words would you use to describe feet? Would you ever call feet 'beautiful'? Today we're going to think of how some of the feet talked about in the Bible might be thought of as 'beautiful'.

### Finding Feet in the Scriptures

There are lots of times in the Bible when both feet and shoes are mentioned. In the Psalms, feet that avoid sinful places are blessed (Psalm 1:1). In Genesis 8:9 the foot of the dove could find no resting place, so returned to Noah's Ark. In Numbers 22:25, the donkey crushes Balaam's foot against the wall, so Balaam hits the donkey.

## The Last Supper

We now turn to look at the role of feet during The Last Supper.

### Game: Active Service

Write the following activities on slips of paper:

- Serving a tennis ball
- Dinner ladies serving lunch
- A waiter taking an order
- An army person at marching practice
- A grown up using the self-service lane at a supermarket

Give out the slips of paper to different people, and ask them to act out what is written on the sheet. The group have to try and guess what it is that they are acting out.

The Big Idea: The game will help to get the group thinking of the different people who serve us.

### Bible Reflection

Read John 13:1-17

During the Last Supper, Jesus shows his disciples that they must serve one another. How does he do this? He, the master and leader, takes a towel and some water and does the job of a servant, and washes their feet! Washing feet was an unpleasant job. The roads were dusty, and feet were hot and smelly from long walks and the heat of the sun.

**Ask:** *How can we serve one another?*

Some thoughts:

- Jesus sets us an example that we should keep in mind in every situation.
- We can think of how we can serve those who are far from us, by sending our prayers and raising money to help them.
- We can think of how we can serve those who are close to us, by praying for them, and doing kind things that will help them.

### Beautiful feet

Isaiah 52:7 gives a picture of feet that bring a message of hope:

*"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

Feet that tell of God's good news are actually called 'beautiful'! For us as Christians, the big question is how we can make our feet beautiful?

What we have already learnt about The Last Supper can help us here. Feet that take time out to rest, and allow us to listen to God, and feet that work at serving others just as Jesus did at The Last Supper are feet that are doing a good job!

We are called to **rest with God**, to **serve others**, and finally, we are called to **share the good news with others**.

**Ask:** *What places do our feet take us, that we could bring with us the good news about Jesus?*

**Pray:** *Read Aboubacar's story below - how can we pray for people like him? How can we pray for our communities?*



# Shoes, feet and all things sweet!

## *Game: A taste of chocolate*

You will need oven gloves and chocolate buttons

The game: Get two volunteers, and invite them to stand beside one another. Give each of them a plate, an oven glove, and then pour some chocolate buttons on to each of the participant's plate. Explain to them that they can only pick up the buttons using the oven glove, and that if they drop any, that will be counted against them. Then, invite them to race and see who can clear their plate first.

*Ask: What was frustrating about the game? Did you learn anything from the game?*

Explain: Having the oven gloves on made it much harder for their hands to work the way they need them to in order for them to do everyday tasks like getting dressed and eating. This is what it can be like for people with leprosy – when you don't have feeling and movement in your hands and feet, life can become much more challenging.

## **Bringing it all together**

*Ask: Have you ever seen a shoe shop in a hospital?*

Well, a lot of Leprosy Mission hospitals have a special shoe shop. Here, shoes are made that protect people's feet. This is where Aboubacar got his shoes from, and each year thousands of shoes are made that help protect people's feet which have been damaged by leprosy.

The Leprosy Mission Hospitals also have a little church in their grounds, and the staff love to share with patients about the good news of Jesus when they get the chance.

In these ways, The Leprosy Mission has beautiful feet – which rest with Jesus at chapel at the start of each working day (just like Mary!), which serve people with leprosy, by washing out their wounds, and protecting damaged feet with shoes (following Jesus' example to wash each other's feet) and finally by sharing the good news about Jesus with those that they meet, wherever it is that their feet take them.

## **Leprosy Fast Facts**

We're going to think of why people who have been affected by leprosy might need to wear special shoes. But first, what is leprosy? Here are some interesting facts about leprosy:

- Leprosy is a germ
- It is a very old problem. People had leprosy in ancient China.
- Leprosy hurts people's hands, feet and face.
- Leprosy stops us from ever being able to feel things – like hot, cold, soft, hard.
- Leprosy can be cured!
- Leprosy in our feet can stop people being able to walk properly.

We are thinking of how we can heal and protect feet damaged by leprosy, and the role shoes has to play in this. To do this, we're going to hear the story of a boy who has leprosy.

## *Aboubacar's Story*

Aboubacar is 14 and lives in Nigeria. He has had leprosy for 10 years. It has affected both his hands and his feet. The Leprosy Mission has helped him with both medicine and treatment.

Aboubacar lost the feeling in his hands and feet because of leprosy. For his hands, this means that he no longer is able to

sense when things are hot or cold to touch or pick up. This can be dangerous, and he has to be very careful when helping his mum with the cooking, or lighting the fire. For his feet, this means that he can't feel it when he steps on to something sharp, or rough. Recently, something jagged cut his foot. He didn't realise he had hurt it. Later, it became infected, and as a result, he had to go to hospital to get some treatment.

Each day, one of the nurses washes out his wound, and bandages it up. The hospital also gave Aboubacar special shoes that will help to stop him from doing any further damage to his feet.

*[Show the group the photo of Aboubacar wearing the foot bandage and special shoes. Share with the group that these shoes are made out of material that moulds around feet in order to give comfort and protection.]*



# Shoes, feet and all things sweet!

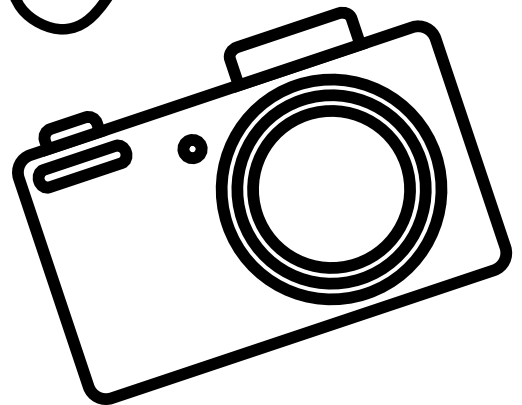


*Picture This is a game that challenges groups to take photos of themselves doing different, difficult tasks.*

There has been a lot of thought and talk about feet. This is the session for feet to take action! The idea is to get some pictures of feet doing funny things! As you take these photos, you could use odd shoes, funny socks, bare feet, imaginative backdrops, props, and perspectives. You can have one foot in some pictures, in others, everyone's feet. You have freedom to make these photos unique, and hopefully they will be great fun to make.

Take pictures of 10 feet poses, doing the following things:

- 1. Feet that are having a good rest**
- 2. Dirty feet getting cleaned**
- 3. Feet on the top of a mountain**
- 4. Feet being bandaged up**
- 5. Feet in a nice pair of sandals**
- 6. Talking feet**
- 7. Walking feet**
- 8. Cosy feet**
- 9. Cold feet**
- 10. Crazy feet**



## **Bonus Challenge**

Get the group to draw feet bringing good news. Make a collage of the drawings, and take a picture of the collage.

Thank you for using Shoes, feet and all things sweet! We hope that you have enjoyed it, and found it a helpful tool. For more resources and information about how you can support the work of The Leprosy Mission visit [www.leprosymission.org.au](http://www.leprosymission.org.au)

## Self Help Group Connection Exercise



Self help groups are way people affected by leprosy can support one another, learn how to care for themselves, feel empowered and receive access to educational support and the opportunity for loans to start small business. This is the Makwanpur Ghadi Agricultural Cooperative in Nepal. People who are affected by leprosy or disability can join the group. There are 60,000 people in Self Help Groups across the Leprosy Mission Global Fellowship. 80 % of people in these groups feel like their lives have had a positive improvement, especially in the area of feeling less discriminated against and more included by their communities.

These Self Help Groups receive regular mentoring and support. They provide feedback about what is most important to them. This activity allows your group to determine what would be important to them, and then learn about how what is important to us is different to what is important to someone affected by leprosy in Nepal.

For this activity everyone in the group will need 5-10 plastic tokens (or small coloured pieces of paper or cardboard). You will need to print off the pictures in this document. Each picture represents something people in the group have access to. That might be learning about better health for their family, or receiving financial assistance. Pictures are used because not everyone may be literate. These are real pictures used in Nepal. Each picture also has an English explanation to them.

Explain to the group what each picture represents and then lay out the pictures on the floor while the group stands around it. The group gets to vote what is important to each of them by putting their tokens on the picture they think would be most helpful to them if they were in a support group. They can put all their tokens on one picture or spread them out. The important (and fun!) part is they all need to vote at the same time. This is what happens in self help groups so no one is influenced by anyone else.

After they all vote – look at what received the most votes, and ask people why they voted for what was most important to them.

Then discuss with them about what is important to people affected by leprosy and disability who make up the groups – often it is different to what we might expect.

What is most important to people in these groups is usually:

Being connected in a group and feeling united

An increased awareness of leprosy in their community – this means they experience less stigma

Increased awareness of the importance of hygiene and nutrition.

Savings and loans for small business and assistive devices are listed as important but are rarely voted as important as the above.

You can ask the group what was different in the results between them and a group in Nepal. What was the same?

Here are some quotes from people who are in this group in the picture – you could maybe put a quote on a piece of paper and ask different people in your group to take turns reading them.

“Learned about the signs and symptoms of leprosy and shared this with others in our community. I used to use bad words for people affected by leprosy, now I have learnt about the real cause of leprosy. All I knew about leprosy before was the name – now I know the causes and consequences and what it looks like. I had leprosy myself but I didn’t understand it until I joined this group” (Laxmi).

Sabitri: “because of what I learnt through the project I was able to recognise two people in my community had the signs of leprosy – then with Krishna we referred them to Anandaban [hospital in Kathmandu]”

“Now I am saving regularly and I have taken a loan for vegetable farming, because my farming was successful I was able to purchase a power-tiller. I took a loan for goat rearing and ginger farming. Loan for cow rearing, poultry farming, pig rearing. We now have the habit of taking loans. I have taken a loan to buy a cow – from the milk I have made a good profit and now I can send my grandchildren to school. Because of our small businesses we are able to send our children to school.”

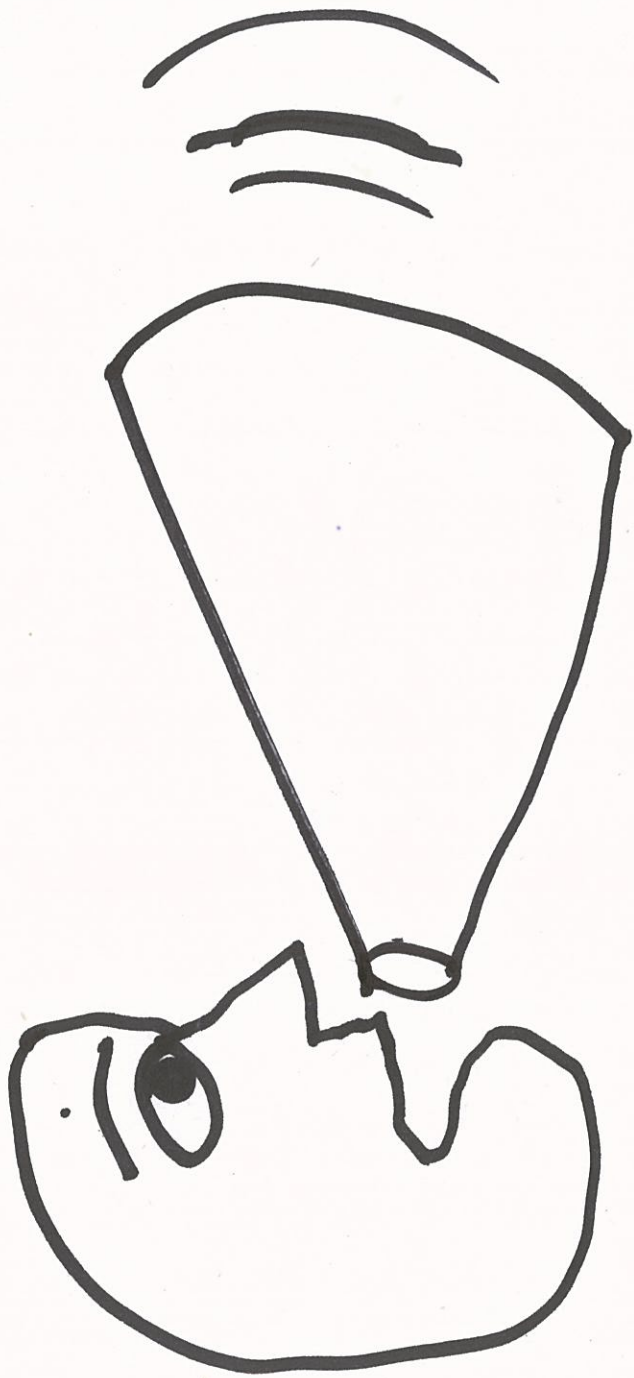
“I learned about malnutrition through life skills class – at the time my daughter was unwell and not walking, so I took her to the hospital and I was right, she was malnourished – they treated her and she got better and I know that if I had not learned about malnutrition I wouldn’t have taken her to the hospital.”

One of the great things about Self Help Groups is that they are empowered to help their communities. They are often people who have been discriminated against by their communities, but when they serve their communities it gives them dignity and helps their communities. Here are some of the things they have done to help:

1. We organised a handwashing education program in one school (we know that if children learn they will share this with their whole families).
2. We organised a community clean-up program (collecting litter – and educating the community on the importance of a clean environment). We also organised a program to clean the community spring.
3. We organised a domestic violence community awareness program focussed on the harmful effects of alcohol.
4. Because of our community awareness programs about leprosy – people from our community have approached us and then been referred for treatment. Our Cooperative’s aim is to eradicate leprosy from our area.

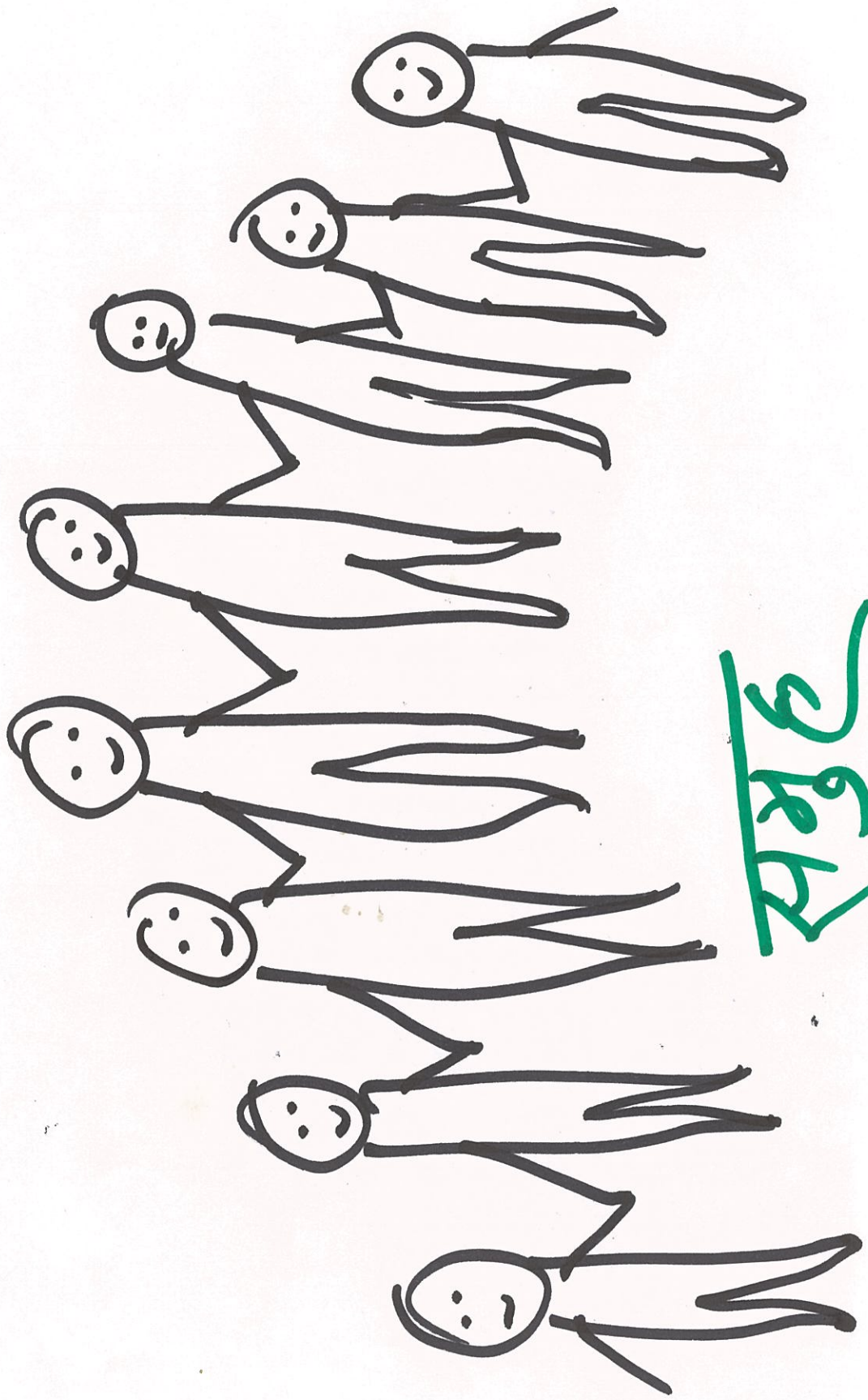
What are some ways your group could make a difference to your community? Brainstorm some ideas – picking up rubbish in a local park, asking your council how you could help, mowing someone’s lawn...

What are some ways your group could help people affected by leprosy? Posting on social media about what they’ve learnt, making a short Insta video, fundraising by a bake sale, or doing something creative like busking. (\$15 dollars is enough to provide a pair of protective shoes and \$432 is what it takes to cure, care and restore someone affected by leprosy)



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(बुद्धि का message out)



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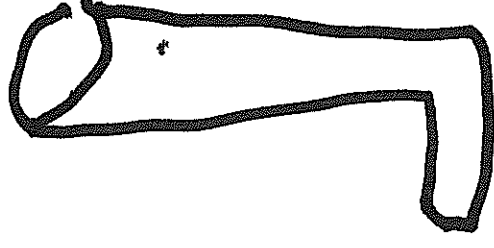
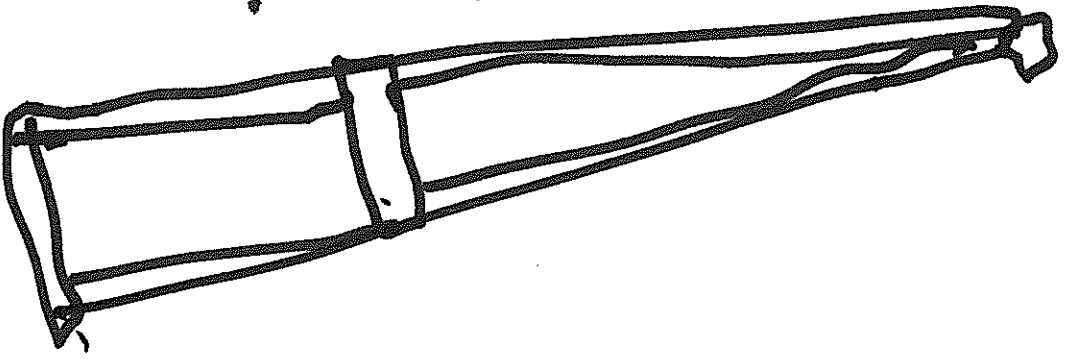
(Feelings supported in their community)



(Equipped to  
earn an income)

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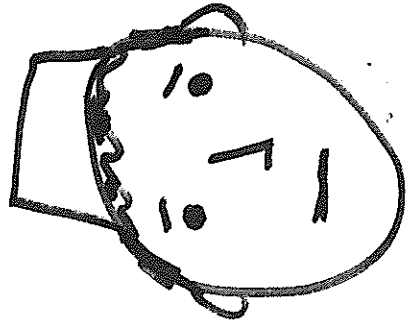


(getting assistive devices)

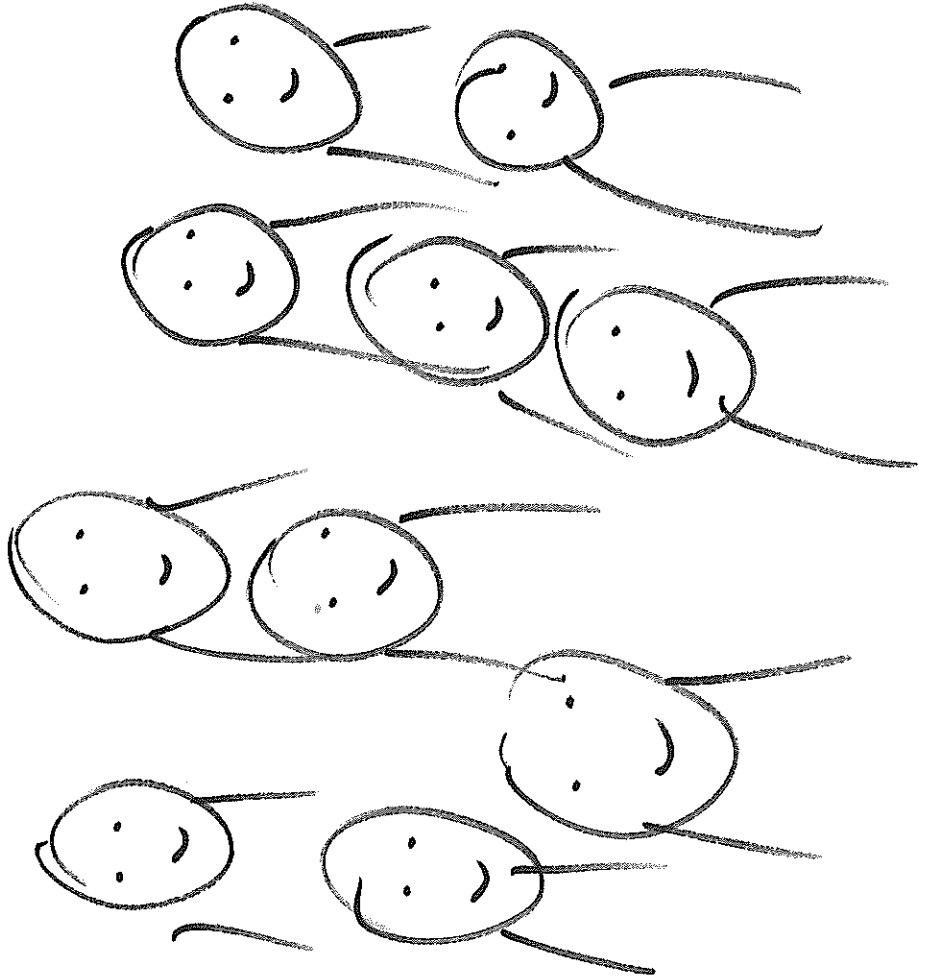
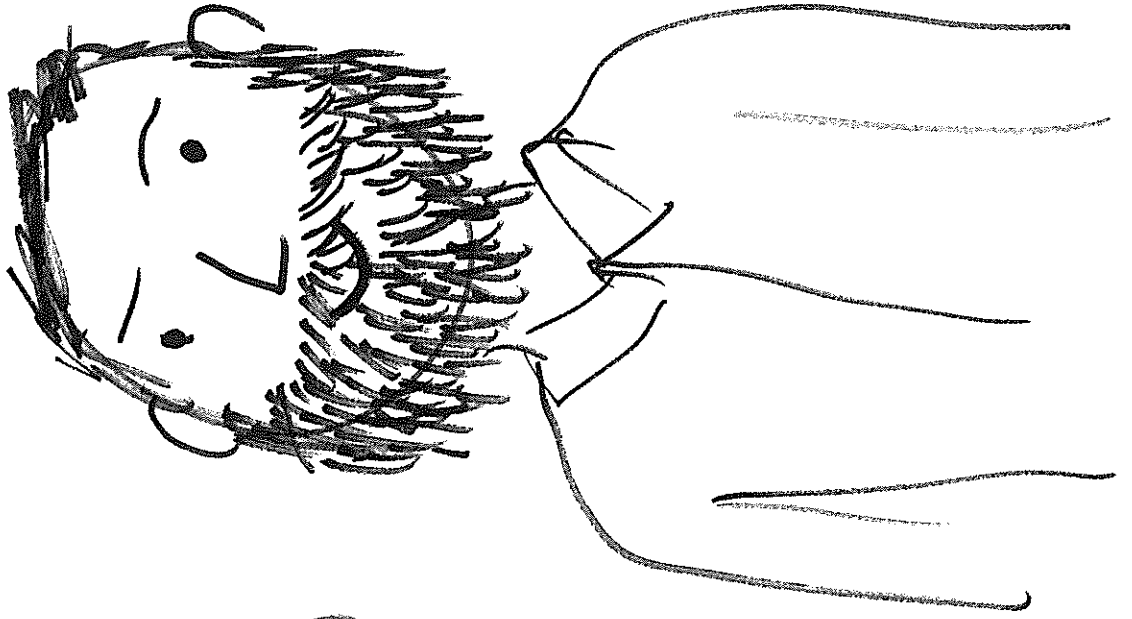


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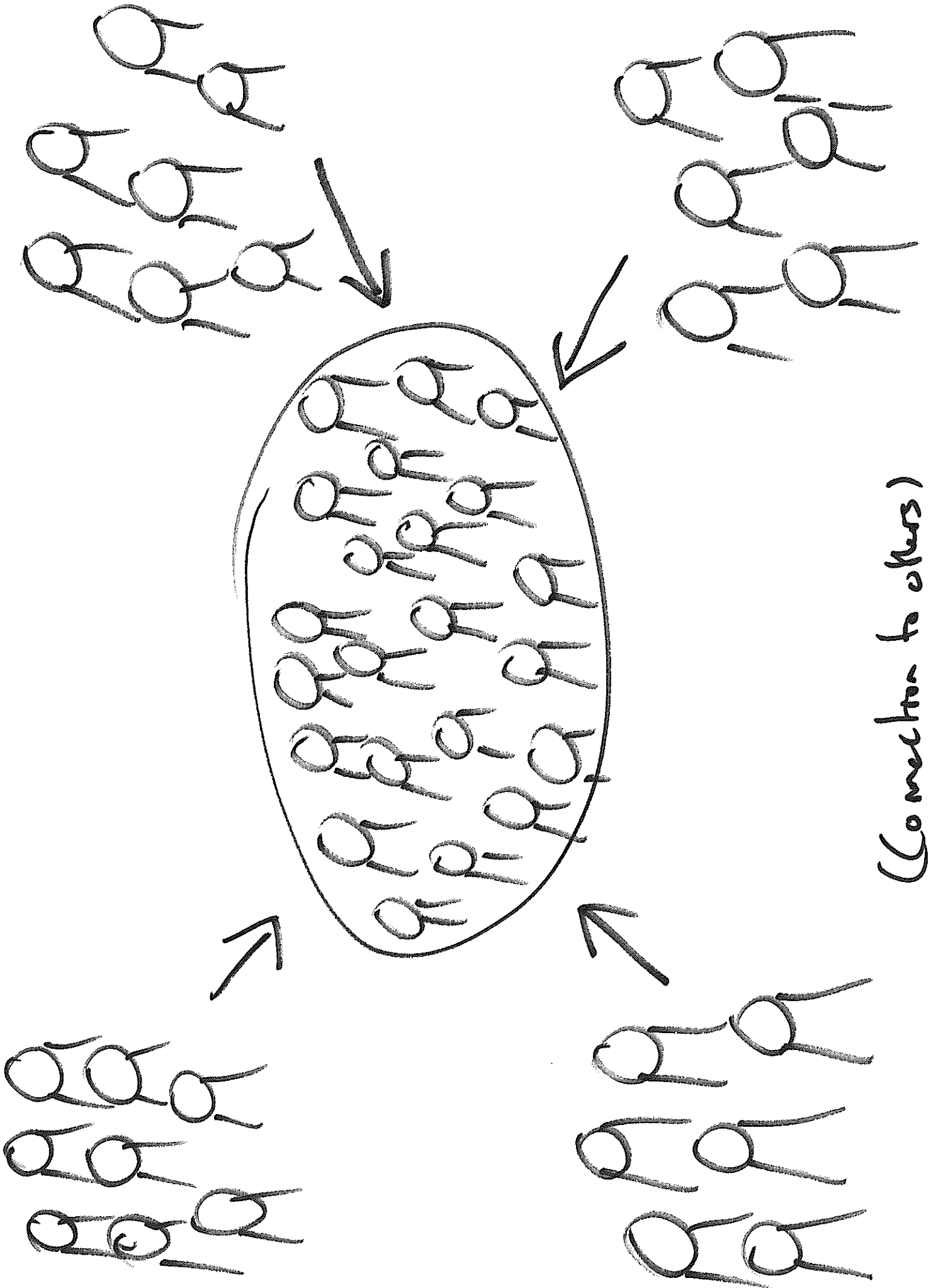
(Learning Domestic Violence is unacceptable)



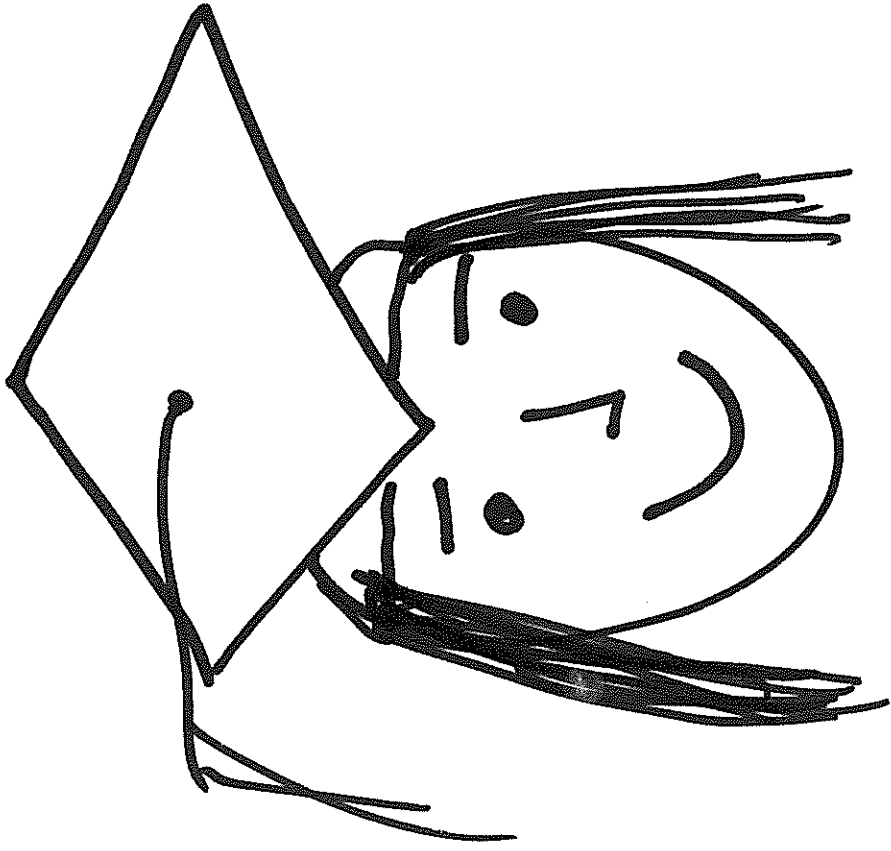
(Feelings supported)



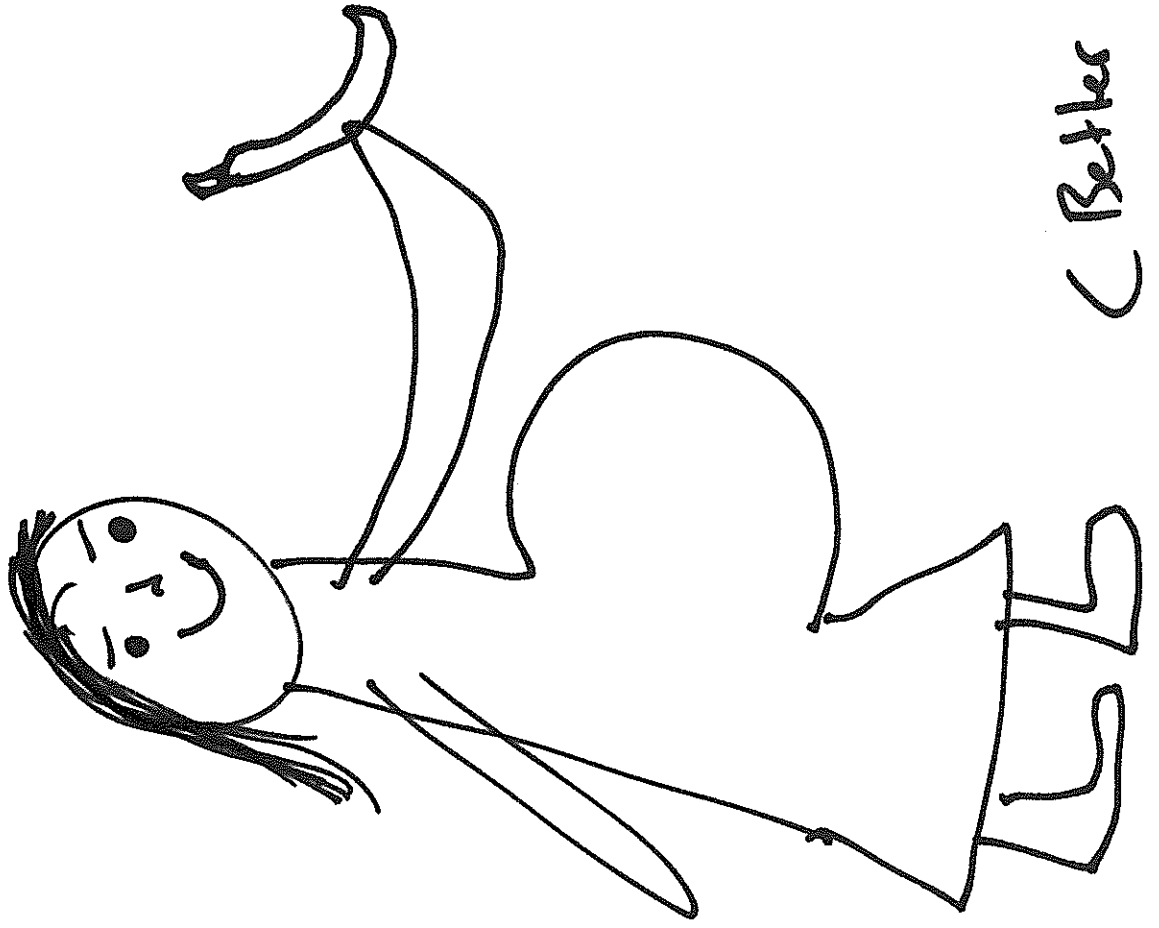
learning about hygiene



(Connector to others)

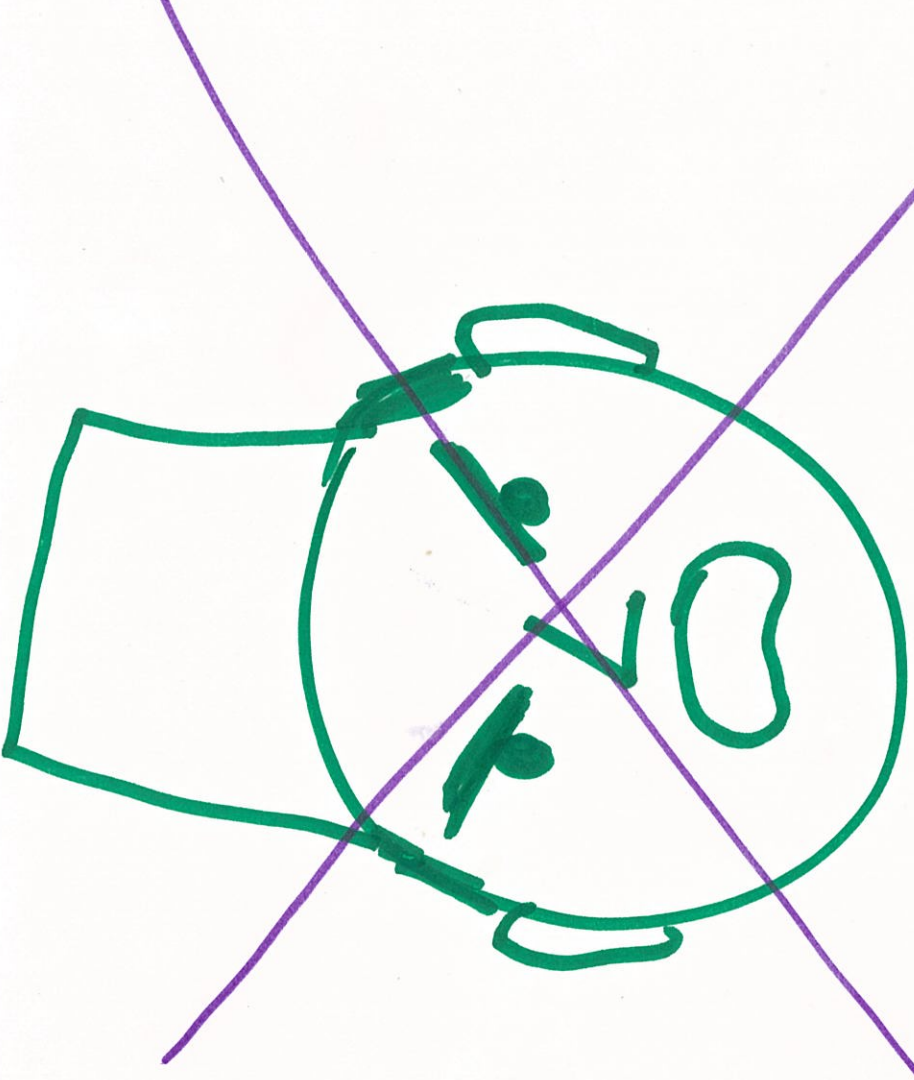


( Education for themselves /  
and for their children )



(Better health for babies)

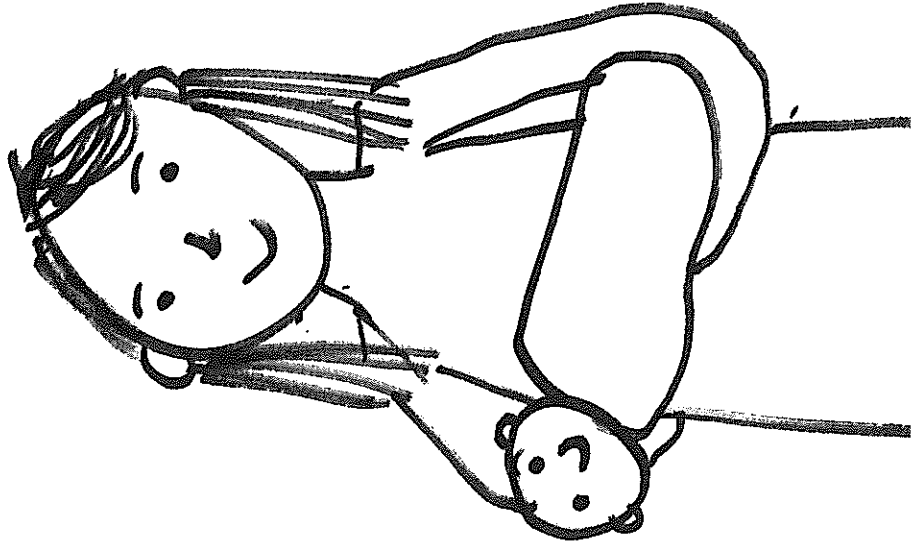
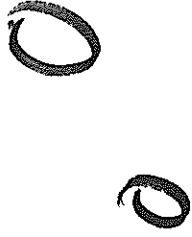
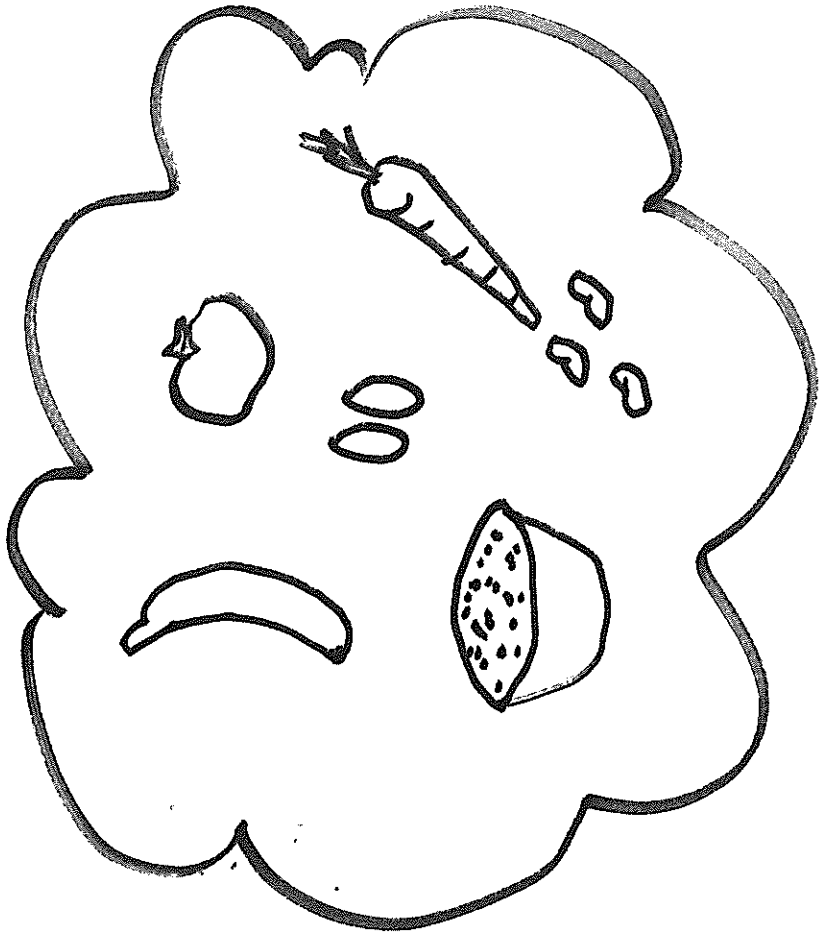
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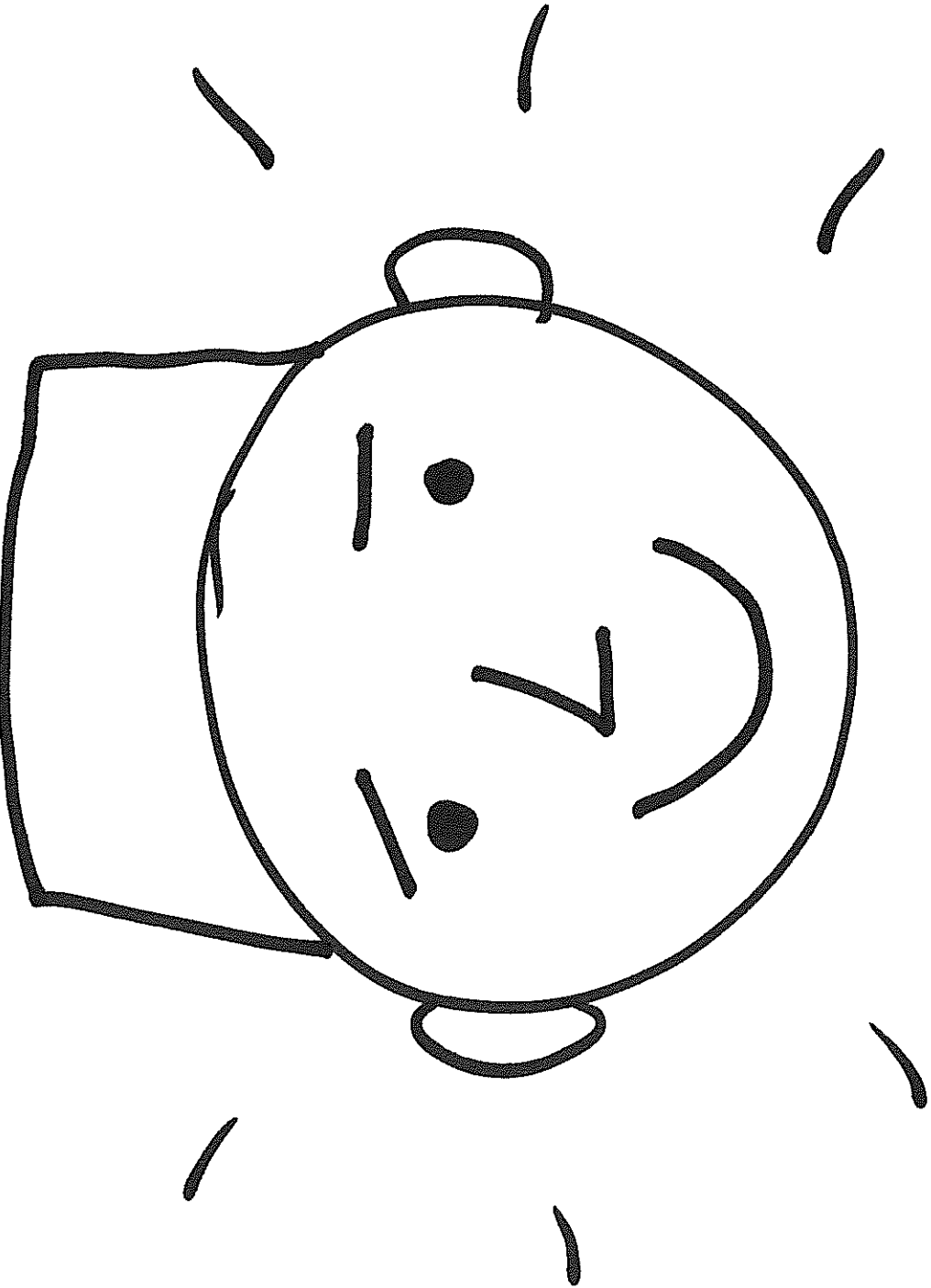
सामाजिक अवहेलनामा कर्मि

(Lack (No more stigma)





(Better Nutrition)



(self worth)