

## A COMPANION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS OR PARENTS

This book was inspired by a visit to Canuck Place Children's Hospice in Vancouver, Canada, where Poppy the therapy dog is a companion to children with life-threatening illnesses, their families, and the hospice's clinical care team.

This book tells the story of the positive impact a dog can make in a young child's life, particularly when faced with health challenges. The qualities of the dog are highlighted as she helps the boy feel more comfortable, safe and calm as he moves through his day. The story lends itself to opening discussions with children around the meaning and importance of compassion, support and being available to someone in need.

### VOCABULARY REVIEW

Kindness  
distractions

emotions  
joyfulness

body language  
self-awareness

strategies  
support

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### Before Reading

- Elicit answers to what the word compassion means. (Compassion is being a great friend, being aware and caring about other people's feelings and supporting others with care and concern).
- Look at the cover and title of the book and ask what the students think the book is about.

#### You show compassion when you:

- Notice and compliment others' talents and skills.
- Notice when someone seems sad or troubled.
- Put yourself in someone else's place or ask yourself how you would feel if it were happening to you.
- Take time to be a good listener.
- Invite a new friend to play with you or invite a new friend to play with you and your friends.
- Forgive others because you want to, not because you have to.
- Show kindness without expecting rewards.
- Tell and show others that you care.

# A COMPANION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

## Vocabulary

- Go over the vocabulary based on the age level of the children to familiarize them with the meaning depending upon the activities selected.

## DURING READING

### When she saw me, for the first time, she wagged her tail.

- *Ask, "How did the dog first connect with the boy? What did the dog do to connect? How was she kind, inviting or friendly?"*
- When you meet someone for the first time, what are some ways you be kind, inviting, friendly and help make another person feel welcome?
- Smile; say hello; introduce yourself and ask their name; shake their hand
- Emphasize that being kind is important to create a positive environment and to begin forming positive friendships.

### When I couldn't sleep I could hear her breathing.

- *Ask, "Have you ever had a hard time falling or staying asleep? Was there a reason you couldn't sleep? If so, what do you suppose might be some of the reasons you could not fall asleep?"*
- What were some things you did to help you fall asleep? Did you ask for help to fall asleep. What are some important things for you when you go to bed and fall asleep?
- The boy heard the dog's breathing and that provided the boy with a sense of calmness allowing him to fall asleep.
- *Ask, "What might be some other ways or strategies to help fall asleep?"*  
Having a parent read a story before bed; being near a parent before bed; reading a book or magazine independently; having a warm bath; drinking some milk; playing some soft music

### When I wanted to play in the garden she ran and picked up the ball I threw.

When we face challenges in life or life is hard for us, distractions are very helpful in helping us get through the day's routines. For example, in the story, the boy went outside to play with the dog. That is a very good distraction as his mind is focused on the fun he is having with the dog, breathing the fresh air, getting some exercise and just feeling joyful.

*Ask, "Are there distractions that help you when you have big feelings or when you want to find fun things to do?"*

Read a book; watch television; play games on your computer; walk outside or play outside; move to a new environment within the building; have family & friends visit; participate in such activities as painting; puzzles, drawing, board games;

### When we went for a walk she came with us.

The boy really enjoyed being outside for a walk with his entire family and the dog was a very important member of that family. There is a comfort when family is all together.

*Ask, "What kinds of activities do you enjoy doing with your family?"*

## AFTER READING

It is evident that the dog provided a lot of comfort and joy for the boy as he went through a series of emotions throughout the course of the day.

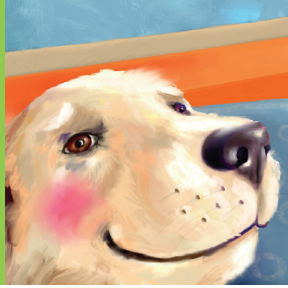
*Ask, "Can you remember the various emotions the boy felt throughout the day?"*

(Go back to the beginning of the book to provide a hint from the illustrations.)

- Shyness
- Sadness
- Feeling bad
- Being aware of our own emotions and the emotions of others is important.



Canuck  
Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE



## THE DOG | ACTIVITY 1

# EMOTIONAL CUES

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACTIVITY IS TO HELP BUILD EMOTIONAL SKILLS BY HAVING THE CHILD IDENTIFY HOW WE CAN DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ONE EMOTION AND ANOTHER OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS, AS WELL AS THEIR OWN.

## MATERIALS

- Chart paper
- Felt pen
- Emotion picture cards (provided)
- Mirror

## TEACHER/PARENT PREPARATION

- Photocopy and laminate the emotion picture cards
- Locate a mirror (full length or hand-held)

## END PRODUCT

The child learned to understand facial cues and body language to understand other people's feelings, as well as their own.

## STEP-BY-STEP

**1** Discuss the importance of being aware of our feelings throughout the day. In the morning when we wake up we feel a certain way. When we are around our family, we feel a certain way. When we are around our friends, we feel a certain way and when we are around our pets, like the dog, we feel a certain way.

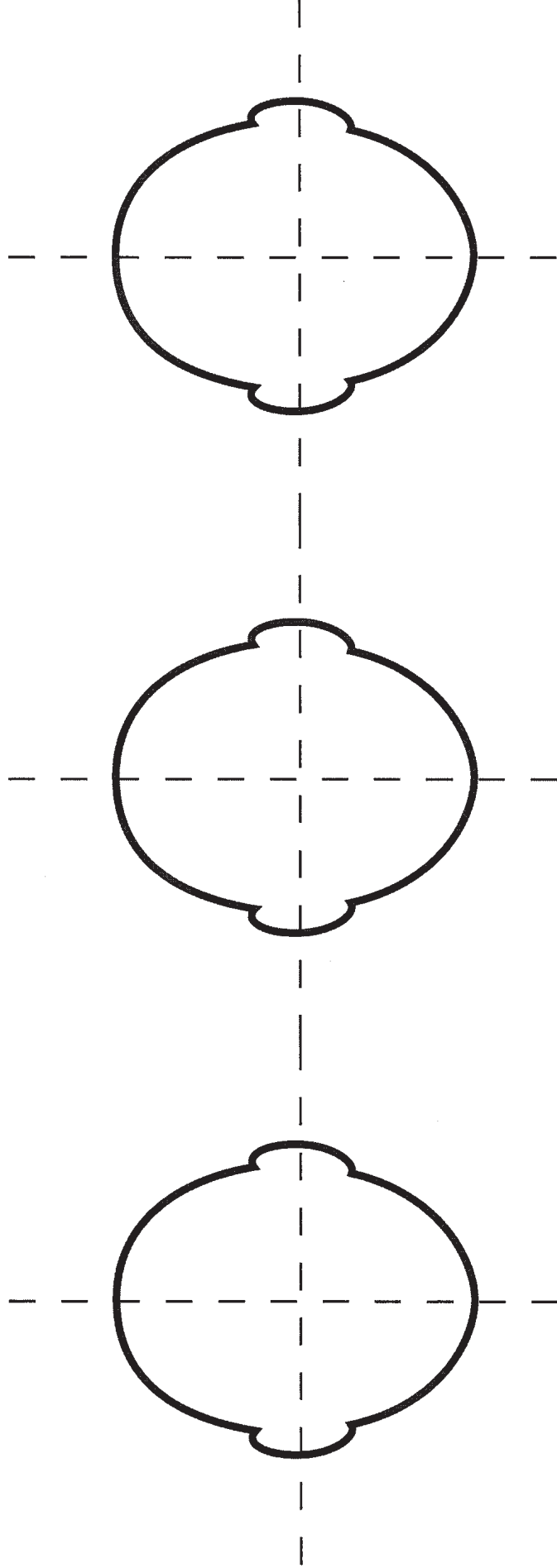
**2** Have the child brainstorm feeling words. Record the feeling words on chart paper. Once all feeling words are displayed, hold up a few emotion cards and have the students identify the feelings based on the picture.

**3** Standing in front of a mirror, have the child display an emotion that is on the card. Emphasize that we can tell how someone might be feeling not only by the eyes, but all facial features, as well as shoulders and how the rest of the body is looking.



Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | PRACTICE DRAWING FACES





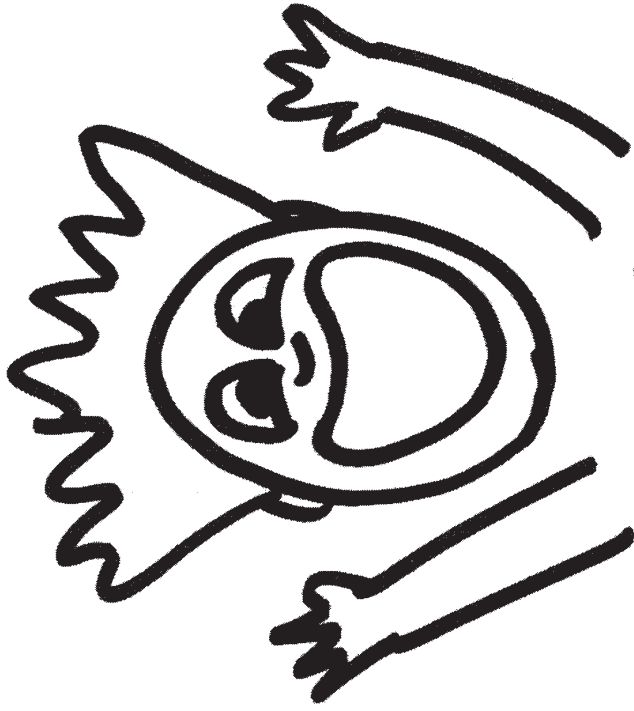
Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | EMOTION PICTURE CARDS

**Loved**



**Excited**





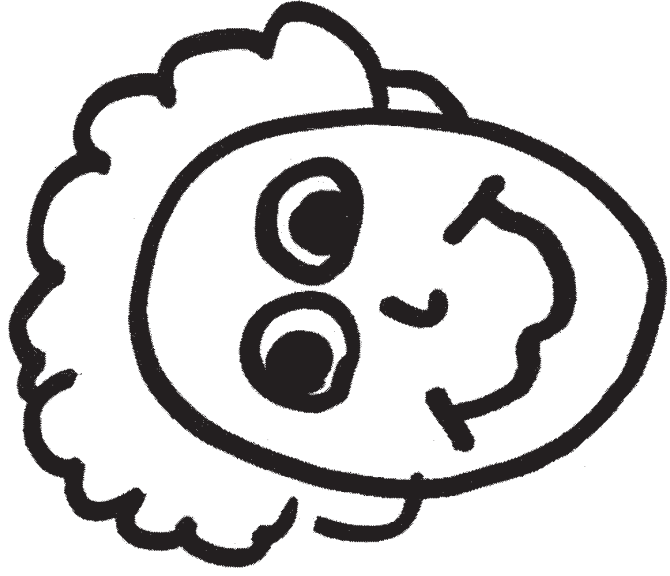
Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | EMOTION PICTURE CARDS

**Angry**



**Silly**

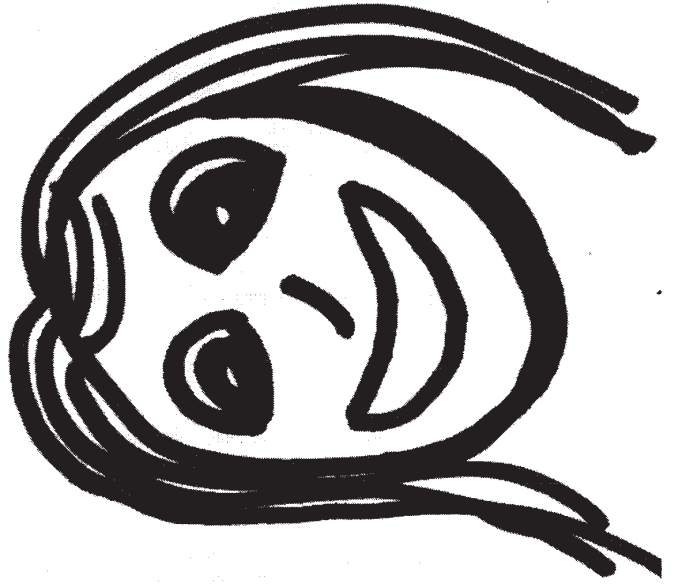




Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | EMOTION PICTURE CARDS

**Happy**



**Shy**







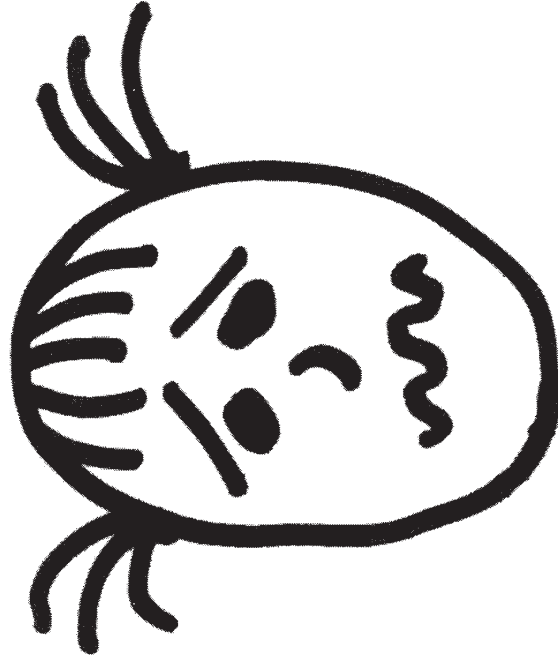
Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | EMOTION PICTURE CARDS

**Sorry**



**Worried**

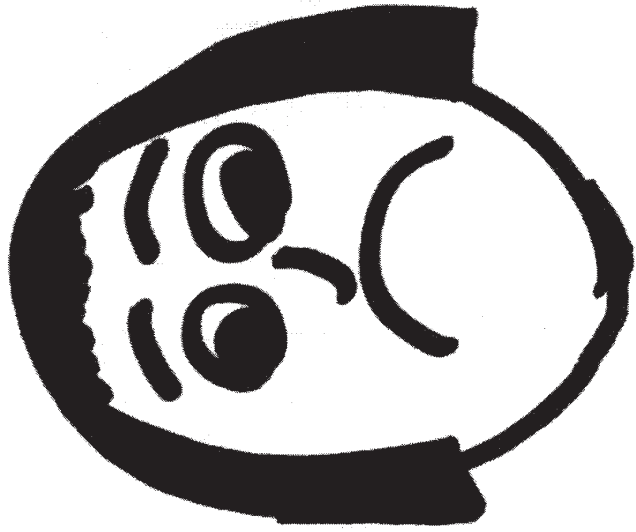




Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | EMOTION PICTURE CARDS

**Sad**



**Afraid**

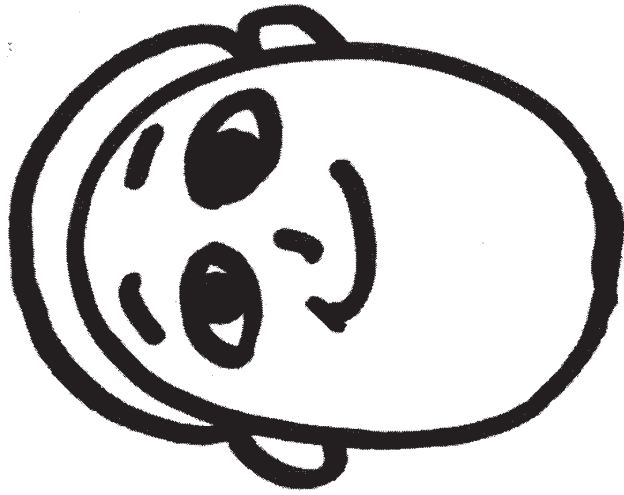




Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# THE DOG | EMOTION PICTURE CARDS

**Proud**



**EXCITED**



LOVED





**YTTIS**

**ANGRY**

W

Y  
H  
S

—



**HAPPY**



**WORRIED**



**SORRY**



**A F R A I D**



**SAD**



**PROUD**





Canuck  
Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE



## THE DOG | ACTIVITY 2

# UNDERSTANDING COMPASSION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACTIVITY IS TO HELP THE CHILD UNDERSTAND THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION. IT IS ALSO TO HAVE THE CHILD IDENTIFY POSITIVE WAYS TO RECOGNIZE AND SHOW COMPASSION (BEING AWARE AND CARING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS AND SUPPORTING OTHERS WITH CARE AND CONCERN) IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS.

---

## MATERIALS

- String for Mini Garland
- Materials from [canuckplace.org](http://canuckplace.org)

## TEACHER/PARENT PREPARATION

- Download *Caring and Compassion Creative Book*
- Download *Writing Activity Worksheets* using dog paws as the area to write in
- Download *Compassion Card*
- Download *Caring and Compassion Display Board*
- Download *Mini Garland*

## STEP-BY-STEP

**1** *Caring and Compassion Creative Book.*  
**PAGE 1** How did the dog show caring to the boy? Have the children list 1 example of how the dog helped the little boy. Write in the space what the dog did and draw a picture in the box. Remind them of the actions in the book that are related to the concepts of compassion.

**PAGE 2** How can I show caring and compassion? Have the child think of someone they know who might need help. Identify what kind of assistance this person might require and what the child could do to help or to show compassion.

**PAGE 3** How did the boy show caring towards the dog? Have the child identify what the child did in the story to show compassion towards the dog. What are some other ways that one

## THE DOG | ACTIVITY 2

could show compassion towards the dog if she were our pet? (Feed the dog, bathe the dog, take the dog for walks, spend time with the dog, speak to the dog, pet the dog)

**PAGE 4** *The Boy*. Have the student draw a picture showing something the boy could do for the dog that shows caring.

**2** *Caring Writing Activities on Paws*. Have the child write a paragraph describing 2 different people in their lives who have shown caring towards them. Have the child write a paragraph describing 2 different ways that they have shown caring to 2 different people.

**3** *Compassion Card*. Providing the child with a Compassion Card, have the child think of someone in their lives that would really be positively impacted if they received a Compassion Card.

Brainstorm the kinds of messages that one could write to make a difference.

Encourage the students to be specific in their message to show care, kindness and understanding.

Have the child complete the Compassion Card, writing a special message inside the card.

Once the card has been distributed, have the child report back to provide feedback regarding how it felt to be the one to present the card to the person that really needed it.

As well, to provide feedback on how the person receiving might have felt — have the child identify the emotions that may have been revealed by this recipient (joy, appreciation, happiness, gratitude).

**4** *Create a Compassion Board* displaying Mini Garland, Caring and Compassion Creative Book/Compassion Cards/Caring Writing Activities, and ongoing ways the child shows compassion. Encourage the child to continue to look for ways that people around them at home, school or in the community, who demonstrate compassion or who act with compassion.

### END PRODUCT

The child learned to understand the meaning and the importance of compassion by participating in self-awareness of the trait, looks for this quality in others around them and continue to identify ways to be compassionate in a variety of situations.







Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

CARING AND COMPASSION

# THE DOG

Helen Mixer

*pictures by*  
Margarita Sada





Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# CARING AND COMPASSION

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing or illustration related to the theme of caring and compassion.

Five horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for writing a response or reflection.



Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# CARING AND COMPASSION

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or writing.

Five horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice.



Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# CARING AND COMPASSION

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or writing.

Five horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice.



Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

# CARING AND COMPASSION

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or writing.

Five horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice.



# Paw-tastic Caring





# Paw-tastic Caring





# Paw-tastic Caring







# Paw-tastic Caring



**THIS  
IS A  
CARING  
CARD**



.....

.....

.....

.....

TO

.....

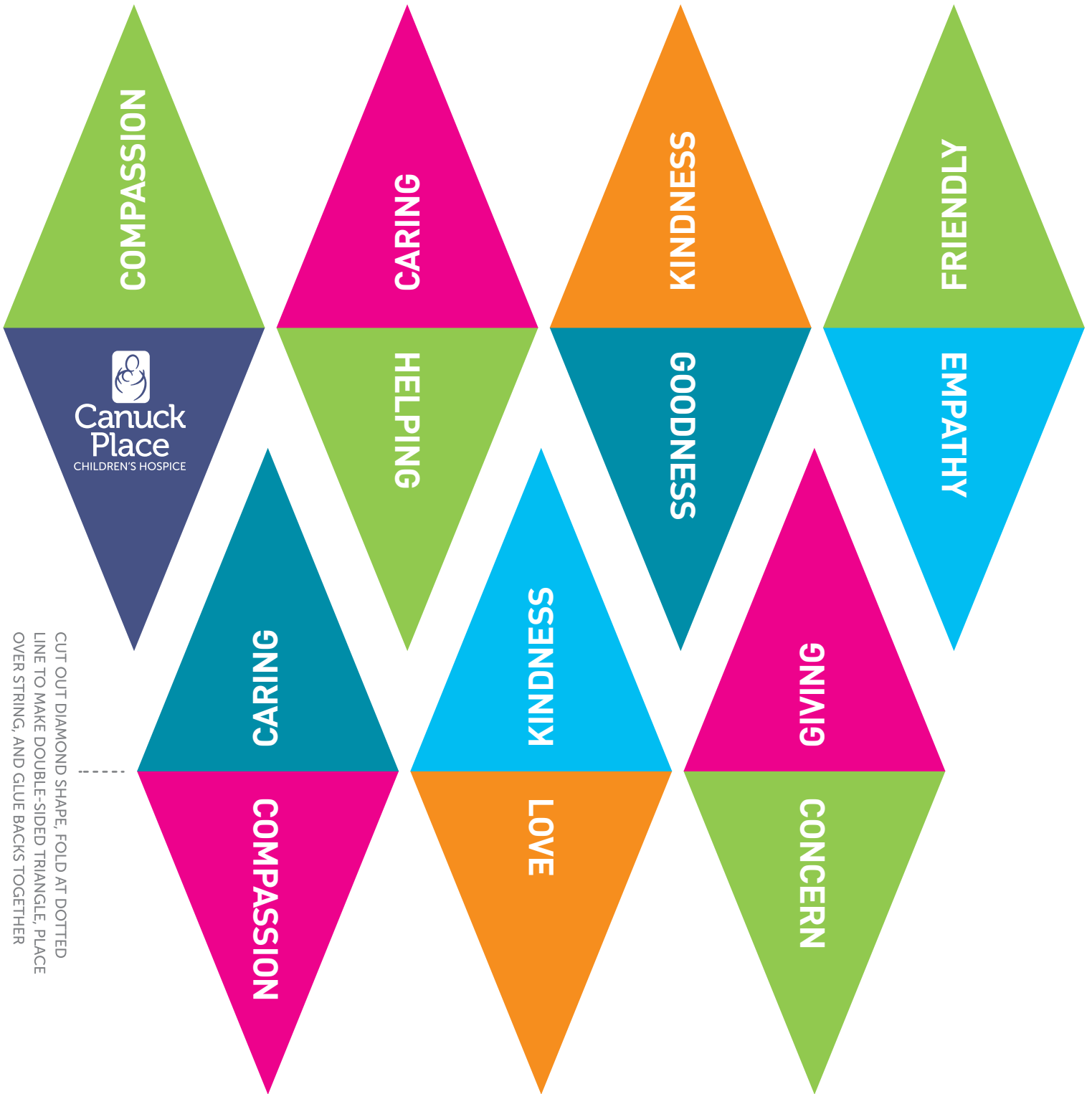
FROM

.....



# MINI GARLAND

Print out as many of these sheets as you like on 8.5" x 11" paper. Cut out each diamond shape, fold in half over string or ribbon, and glue the backs together.



CUT OUT DIAMOND SHAPE, FOLD AT DOTTED LINE TO MAKE DOUBLE-SIDED TRIANGLE, PLACE OVER STRING, AND GLUE BACKS TOGETHER

**COMPASSION  
AND CARING**



Canuck  
Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE



## THE DOG | ACTIVITY 3

# CARING CIRCLE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ACTIVITY IS TO FURTHER EXPLORE FEELINGS THEY HAVE DISCUSSED IN ACTIVITY 1 AND 2 AND PROVIDE THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH THEIR PEERS. STUDENTS ALSO PRACTICE LISTENING TO OTHERS AS THEY SHARE THEIR FEELINGS.

## MATERIALS

- Materials from [canuckplace.org](http://canuckplace.org)

## TEACHER/PARENT PREPARATION

- Download *Caring Circle Cards* from Canuck Place
- Laminate Cards and cut in circle shape

## END PRODUCT

Students learn to listen and accept other's expression of feelings. Students understand it is important to support their peers when they are sharing their feelings. Students learn to express their thoughts connected to an emotion with their peer group.

## STEP-BY-STEP

- 1** Bring students to a space in the classroom that allows them to sit on the floor in a circle.

- 2** Place the laminated Cards in the middle. Each student (or selected number of students) will take turns.

- 3** Discuss the importance of sharing feelings and listening to someone sharing their feelings. Listening and being present with a person who is hurting is important – it doesn't always have to be doing or saying something.

- 4** Put the laminated Caring Circle Cards word side down. Instruct one child to start the activity by choosing one card. Ask them to use the word in a sentence, "I was sad when ..." OR act out a story about the word, OR act out what "sad" looked like for them. Ask what is helpful for them when they feel that way. Ask students in the circle to listen acknowledge the student with word card and say, "Thank you for sharing." Give the students a moment to consider a time when they experienced a similar emotion or feeling and what helped them as they experienced the emotion.



**KIND**

**JOYFUL**



**HAPPY**

**SILLY**





**ANGRY**

**SHY**



**SORRY**

**WORRIED**



**SAD**

**AFRAID**



**PROUD**

**CARING**



Canuck Place  
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

## CARING CIRCLE CARDS

**COMPASSIONATE**