

THE HERD

- We are a Hull based theatre company who tell **new stories in playful spaces**. We make arts experiences for children and families. We **exist to show children that they are valued**, and that their experiences and voices matter.
- **Whalesong is a brand new picture book and immersive drama workshop project** has been developed with:
 - Stacey Hart Therapy
 - Hull Schools Library Service
 - Training from Child Bereavement UK



- Confidentiality
- Respect all opinions
- Remain non-judgmental
- Look after yourselves

**Feel free to ask questions at any point
There will be time at the end**



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Aims of Today's Training

- Share what the children will be doing in the Whale Song Workshop
- Contextualise the themes of the book
- Children's understanding of death according to age
- Explore how to support bereaved children
- Self care



Questions ?????

- Feel free to ask questions throughout!
- If you feel conscious about asking questions please write on the Flip Chart paper and we'll work through them together



What is the Whale Song Workshop for ?

- Talk about death
- Learn about big feelings
- Learn it's ok to express big feelings
- Learn that I can talk to people about my feelings
- Have fun!



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The workshop will include



- ▶ Mindfulness exercise
- ▶ An immersive set in 'life bay', to feel different from their everyday lives.
- ▶ **Developing emotional literacy**

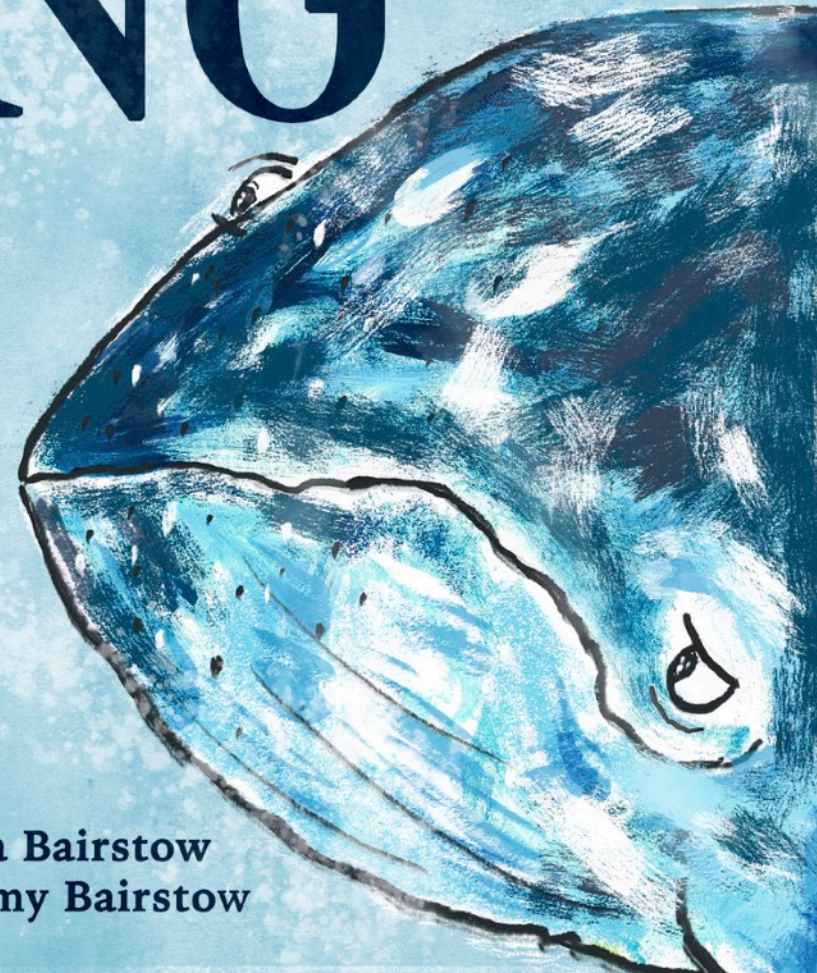
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WHALE SONG

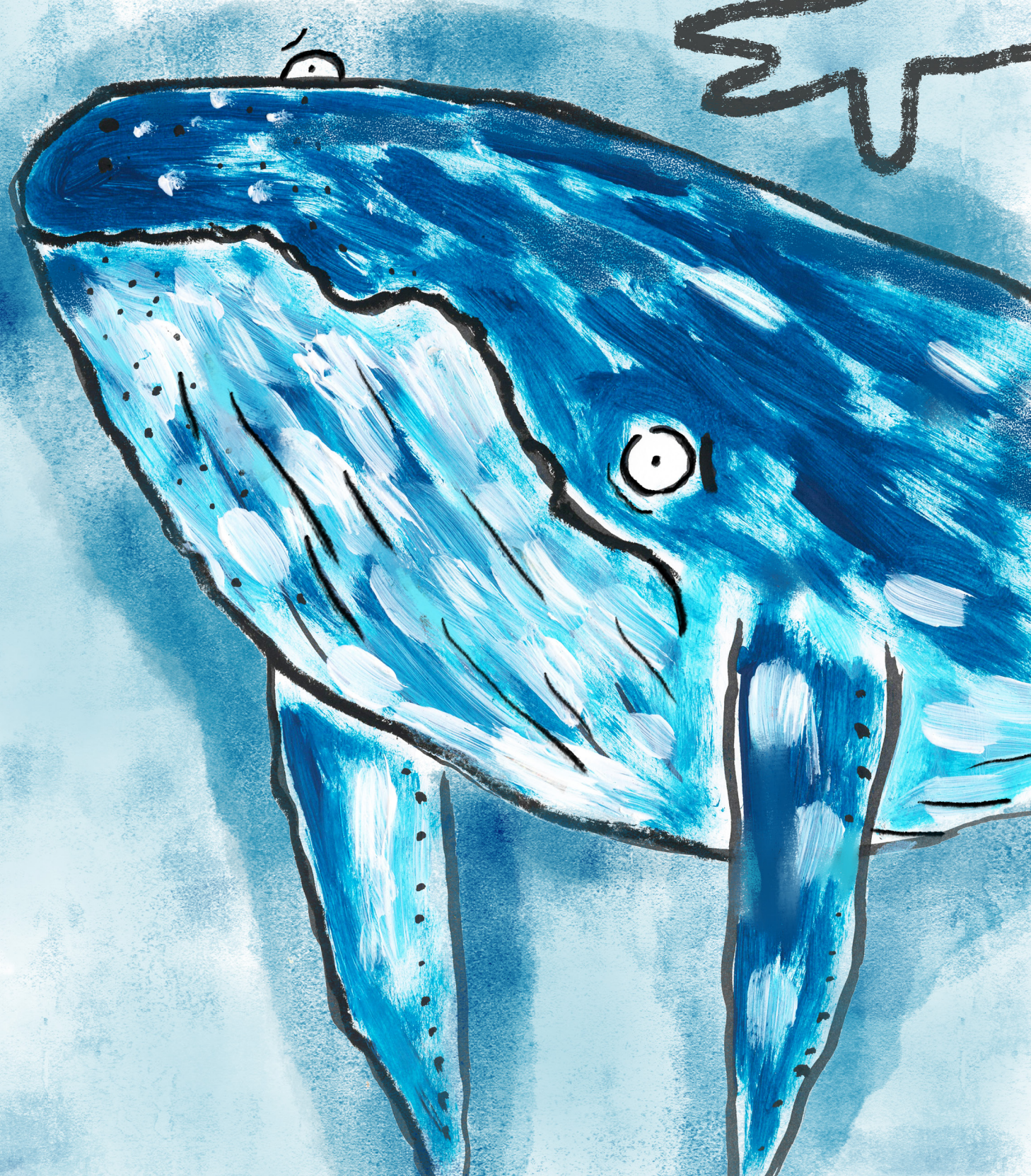


Written by Lua Bairstow
Illustrated by Amy Bairstow



I am Dolphin

and this
is my best
friend Whale

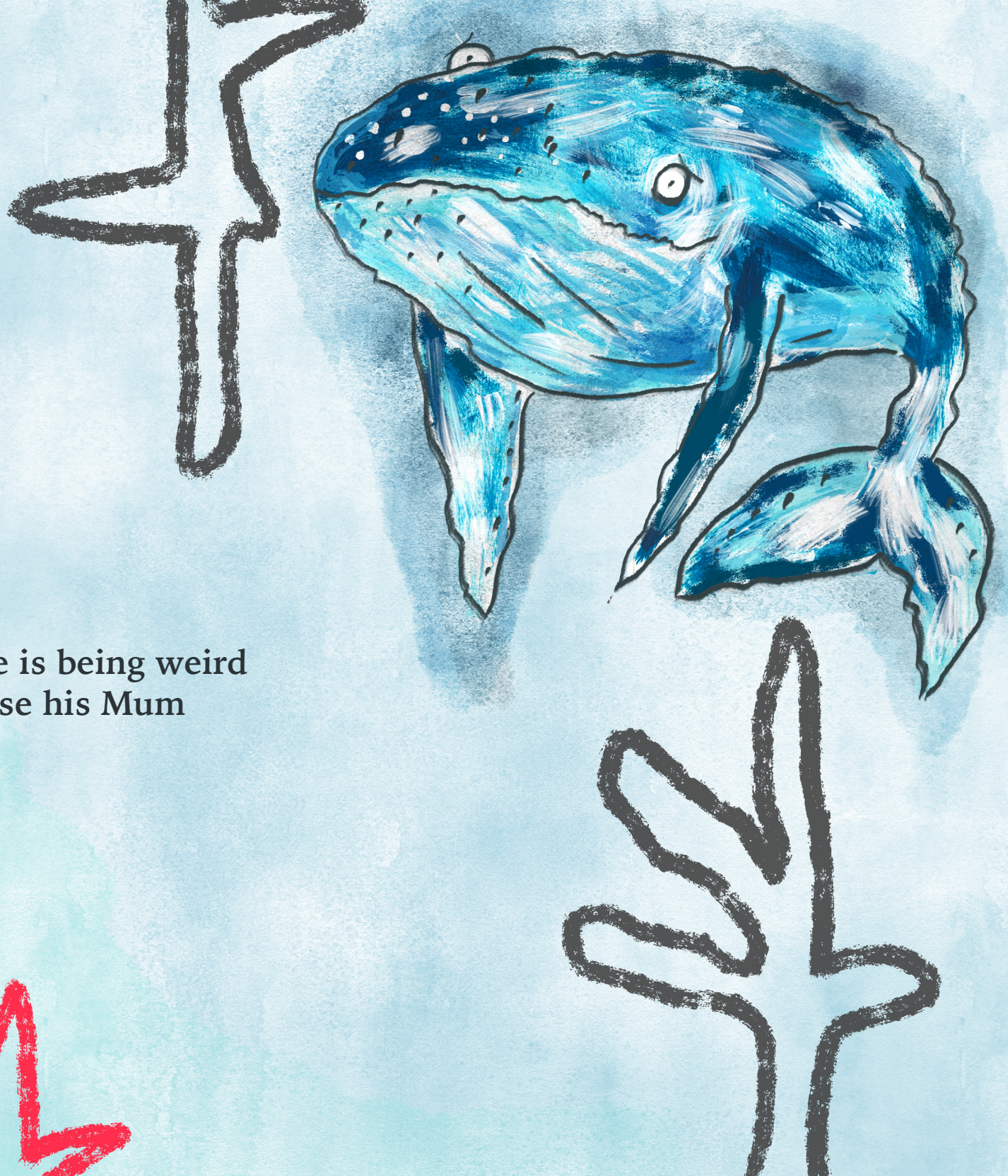


We live in Life Bay





Whale is being weird
because his Mum

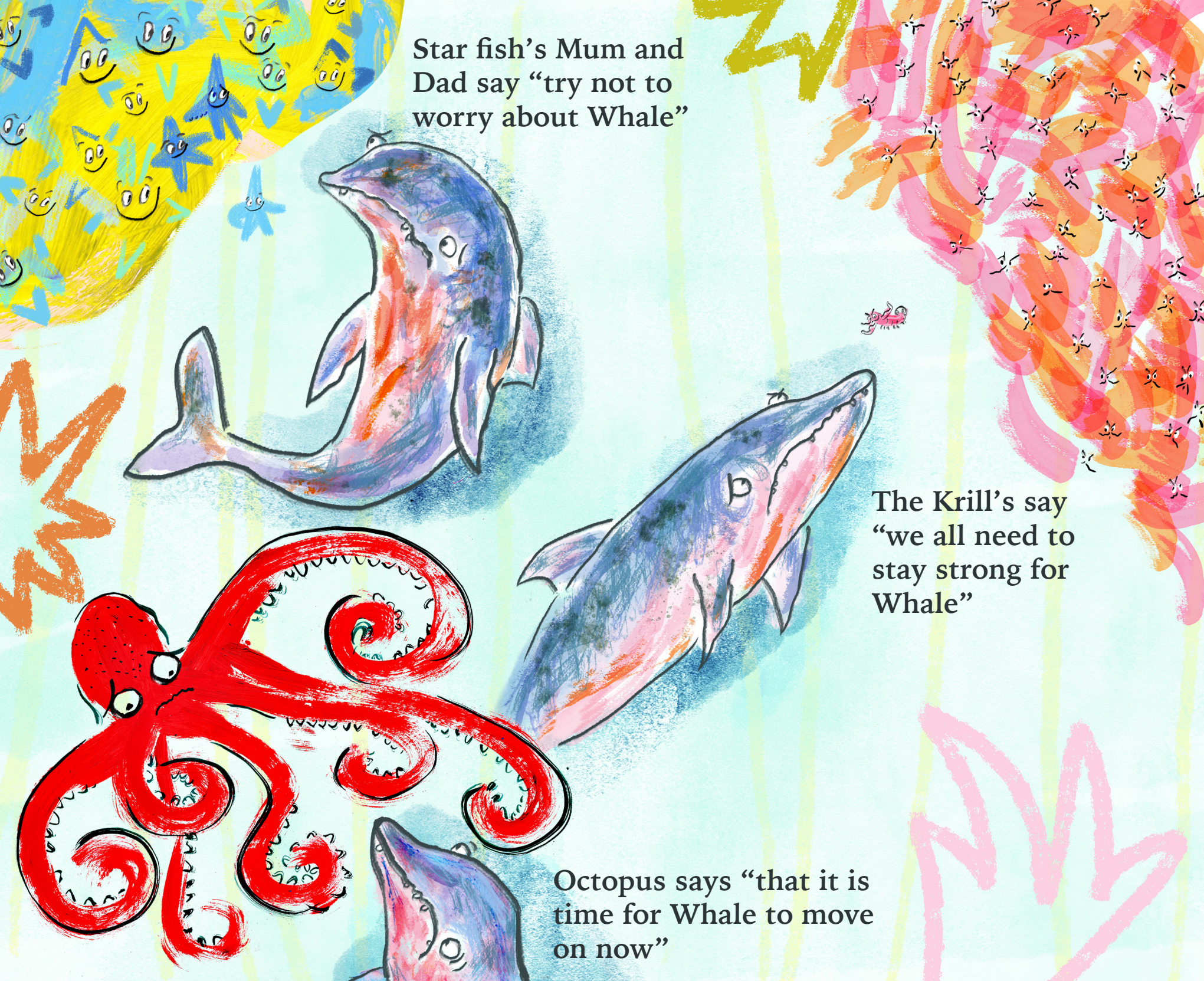




SHHH!



Oh dear, Whale is sad
and I need some help
to make him happy



Star fish's Mum and Dad say "try not to worry about Whale"

The Krill's say "we all need to stay strong for Whale"

Octopus says "that it is time for Whale to move on now"

You have changed Whale
you are not the same



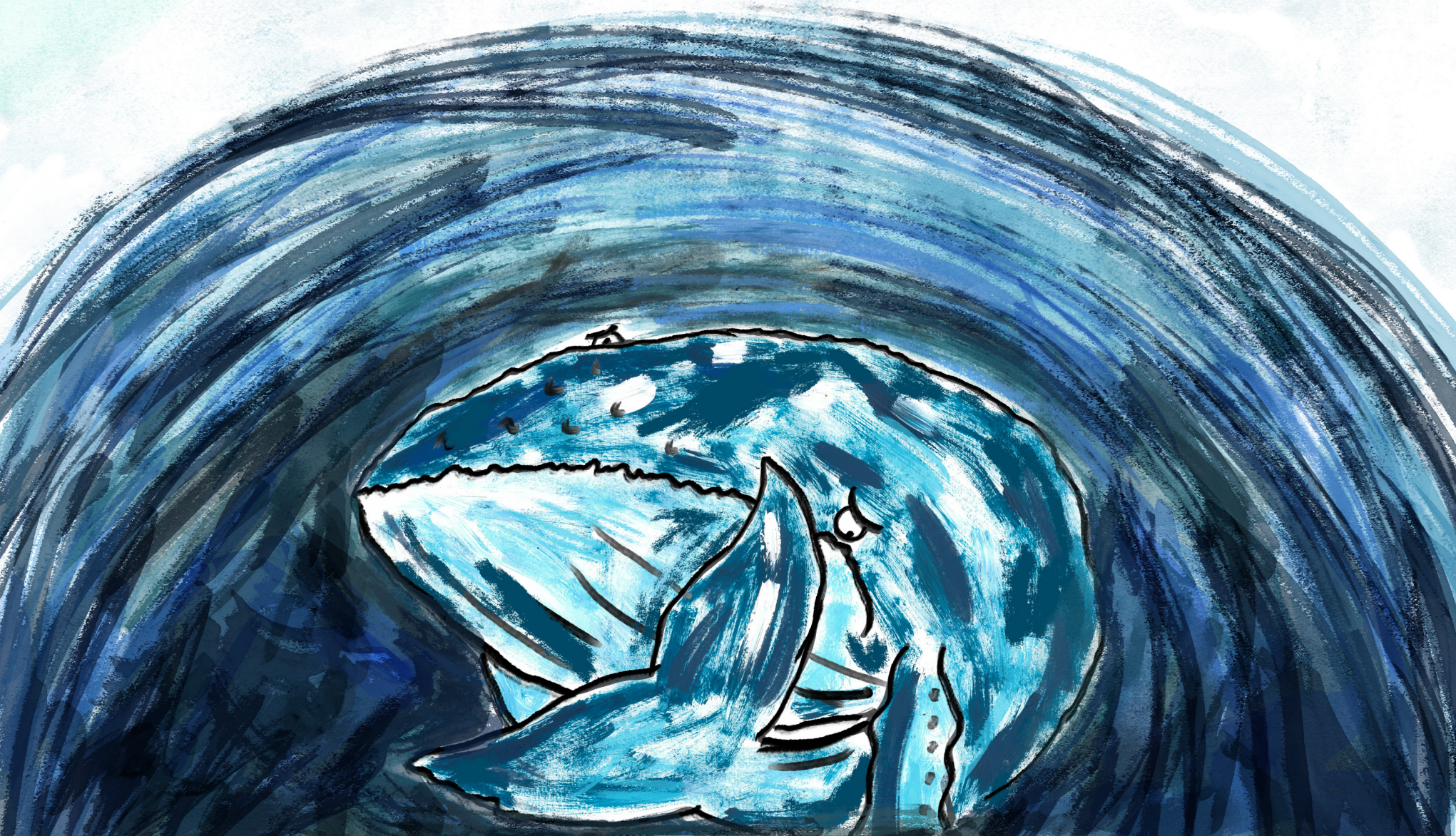
not

ever

since

your

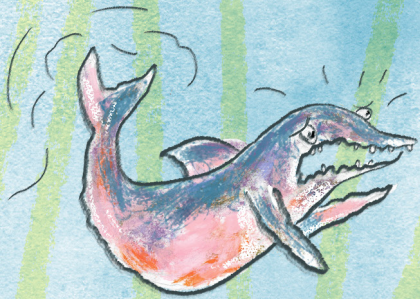
Mum





SHHHH!

I speak to Whale and I say

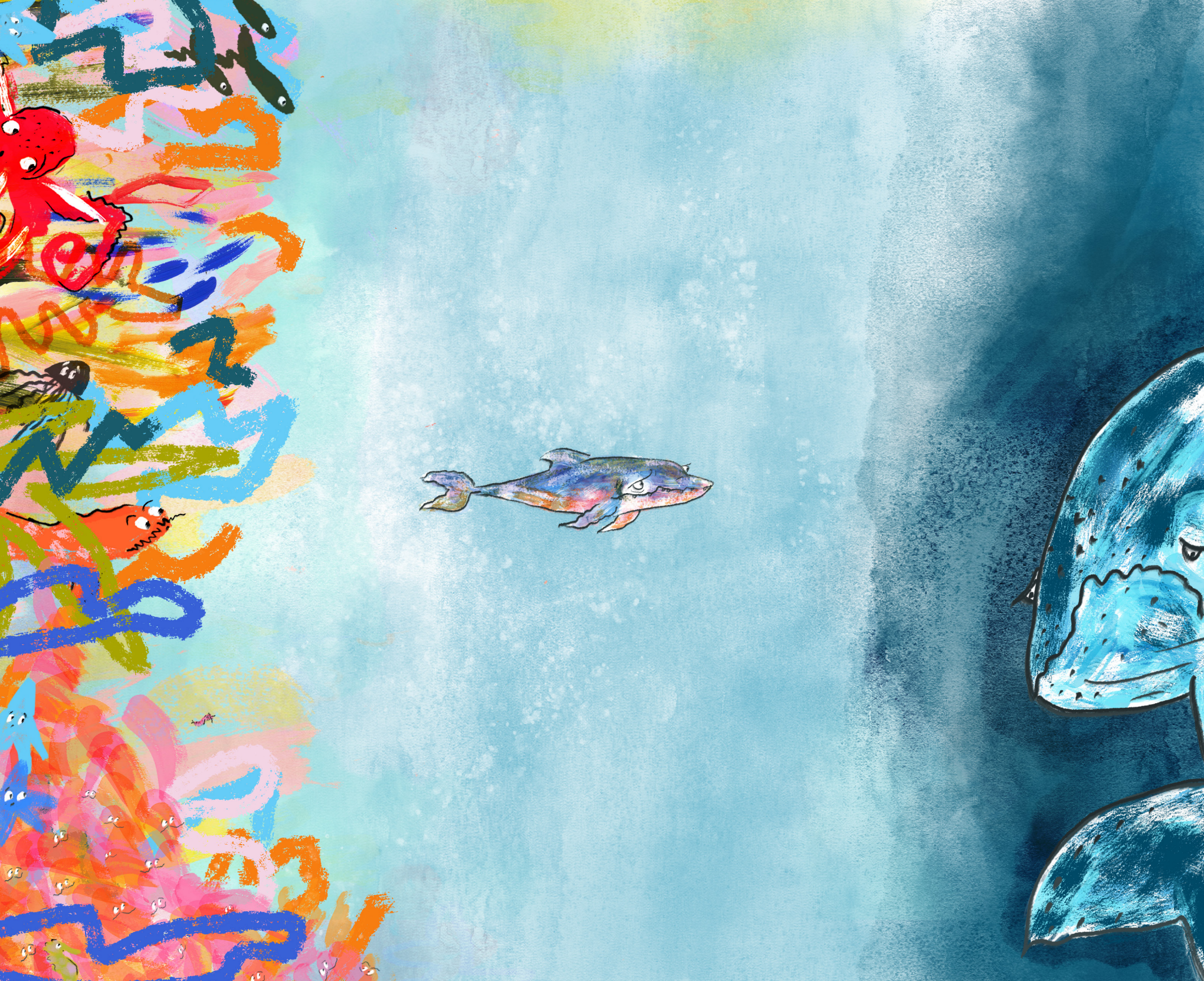


Whale I am worried about
you and I don't feel strong
and I don't know how to do
the moving on, not now, not
ever since your Mum





SHHHHHH!!





Your Mum died Whale and
I'm scared

She died Whale and I know
she did

But we don't know how to
talk about it or what to do

But I love you Whale
We all do

And we are here for you

A large blue whale is shown rolling on its back in the ocean. The whale is the central focus, with its body curved and its head tilted upwards. The water around it is a mix of light and dark blues, suggesting movement and depth. The whale's skin is dark blue with small black spots. Its eyes are visible, looking towards the viewer. The overall style is a colorful, textured illustration.

What's happening to Whale!?

He is rolling!

He is on his back!

He is opening his mouth!



A major bereavement affects children and young people

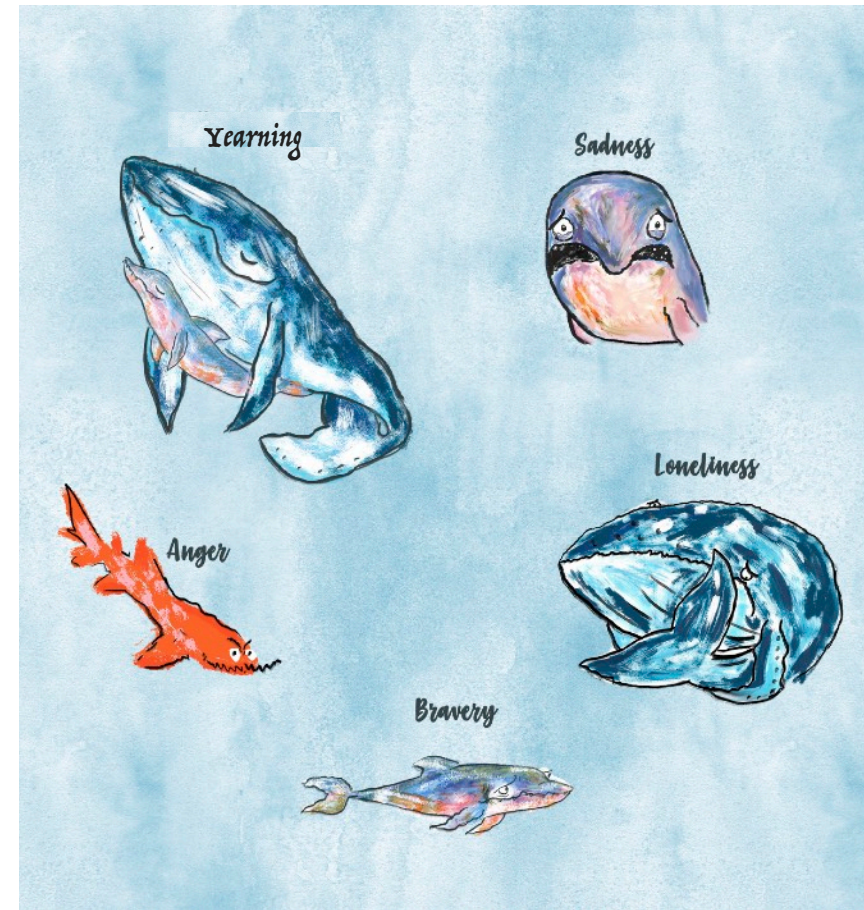
- Intellectually – threat to the structure of the world
- Psychologically
- Behaviourally – breaks habit patterns and creates new ones
- Spiritually – crisis of faith, meaning of life challenges
- Emotionally – feeling strong emotions, being out of control
- Practically – new arrangements for self and family
- Socially – change in role/status



When someone dies

Feelings

- Sadness
 - Anger
 - Guilt
 - Yearning
 - Numbness
 - Shock
 - Jealousy
 - Loneliness
 - Helplessness
- Anxiety
 - Fear
 - Tiredness
 - Relief
 - Worthlessness



When someone dies

Thoughts

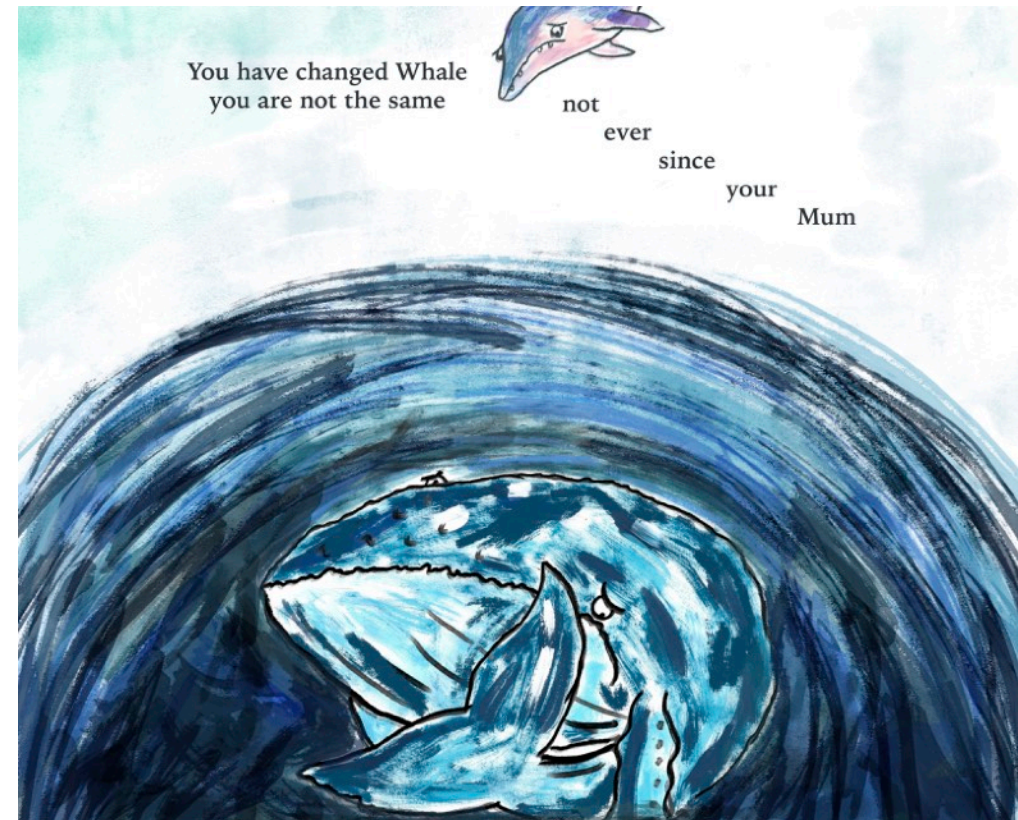
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Preoccupation
- Sense of presence (Disassociation)
- Dreams



When someone dies

Behaviours

- Sleep disturbance
- Loss of appetite
- Absent mindfulness
- Searching
- Sighing/crying
- Hyperactivity
- Treasuring objects
- Avoiding reminders



The workshop will include



- ▶ a mindfulness exercise
- ▶ An immersive set in 'life bay', to feel different from their everyday lives.
- ▶ Developing emotional literacy
- ▶ To stage the story as a play, and experience it physically and emotionally - to aid comprehension.
- ▶ **A scientific explanation of what death is**

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In a better place...

With the person next to you think about as many euphemism's for death and dying that you can think of

For instance:

Gone to heaven

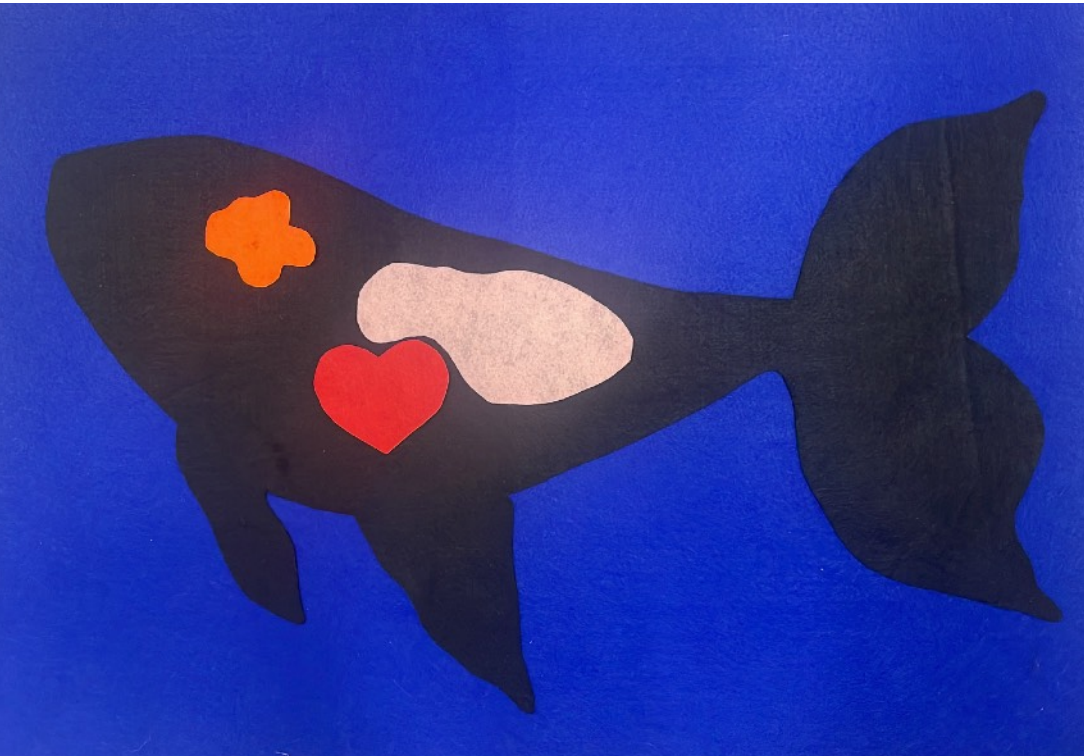
Kicked the bucket

- Why do we use them?
- Are common phrases helpful or harmful?



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Explanation of death



Whale's Mum died which means her heart stopped beating, her lungs stopped breathing, her brain stopped working and her whole body is no longer here.

Remembering

- The process is crucial in terms of self identity
- Remembering
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Favourite place
- Best memory
- Making memory boxes



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Tonkins - 1996

Growing around grief



Lois Tonkin (1996)

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- ▶ A scientific explanation of what death is
- ▶ **Discussions on helping someone who is experiencing bereavement**

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How can we help?

- Actively listen .
- Try and understand
- If they don't want to talk that's ok
- Communicate
- Bear their grief; it is OK to cry, it is a normal reaction
- Give them permission to grieve
- Allow them just to 'be.'
- Give them time and space: everybody grieves in different ways Just 'be' there
- If they want to talk, listen in a non-judgmental, empathic and congruent way
- Acknowledge loss



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How to help at different ages

2 – 5 years old

- Continual reassurance - butterfly taps
- Patience and tolerance
- Keeping to the usual day to day routine to keep things predictable

6 – 8 years old

- Need opportunities to express their feelings and ask questions
- Honest answers that can be built on over time
- Safety in the routine and the predictable

9 – 11 years old

- May seek support from their peers
- Awareness of peers emotional needs too
- Keep usual boundaries of acceptable behaviour



What happens if your child feels anxious about death

- ▶ Offer warmth and empathy
- ▶ Encourage them to speak openly
- ▶ They are not alone with their fears
- ▶ Age-appropriate information
- ▶ Be realistically reassuring
- ▶ A clear message, children's imagination can take them to a place that is more frightening than reality



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- ▶ A scientific explanation of what death is
- ▶ Discussions on helping someone who is experiencing bereavement
- ▶ **How to look after yourself when you have big feelings**

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Self-care

- Make your own 'Whale of self care':

Places or spaces that makes you feel better

Activities that make you feel better

People you can talk

- In a moment of pain (panic/ overwhelm/ grief/ sadness) try and bring your self to the present moment with a grounding exercise:

Notice 5 colours you can see around you.



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HERD resources website

- Visit
- www.theherdtheatre.co.uk/whalesongresources
- and download this parent/carer pack

- or search **The Herd Theatre Whale Song** in google



Further information and support



Resources, videos and training at

www.childbereavementuk.org

Professionals Helpline: 08000288840



Referrals and support in Hull

<https://camhs.humber.nhs.uk/>

Emergency Referrals Hull: 01482 303688



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Further information and support



Local child bereavement support

www.cruse.org.uk

Local Hull Branch Helpline: 01482 966000

Local child bereavement support groups

<https://www.dovehouse.org.uk/children/>

For referrals call: 01482 785745

Or 07890 630864

Or email: children@dovehouse.org.uk



dovehouse
hospice



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Further information and support



NHS Mental Health Advice and Support Line: 0800 138 0990

The Mental Health Advice and Support Line is available 24 hours a day for anyone in the Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire area who requires information, advice and support with their mental health.

You can also contact this line if you are worried about family or friends who may be struggling with their mental health.

Hull 01482 240200

info@heyhound.org.uk



Hull and East Yorkshire Mind
Mental health services

www.heyhound.org.uk

Hull 01482 240200

info@heyhound.org.uk



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Further information and support

The Samaritans logo consists of the word "SAMARITANS" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid green rectangular background.

Samaritans Helpline

If you need someone to talk to, they'll listen.
They won't judge or tell you what to do

www.samaritans.org

Call: 116 123

email jo@samaritans.org

The NSPCC logo features the letters "NSPCC" in a large, bold, green, sans-serif font.

NSPCC Helpline

If you're concerned about a child

Call: 0808 800 5000

The Herd logo features the words "THE HERD" in a colorful, stylized font where each letter is filled with a different pattern or color.The logo for Hull Schools Library Service, featuring the letters "sls" in a stylized font with a book icon above the "s", and the text "HULL SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE" below.The logo for Hull Culture & Leisure, featuring a crown above the text "Hull Culture & Leisure" inside a green circular border.The logo for Arts Council England, featuring a stylized hand holding a paintbrush and the text "ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND" and "LOTTERY FUNDED".

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