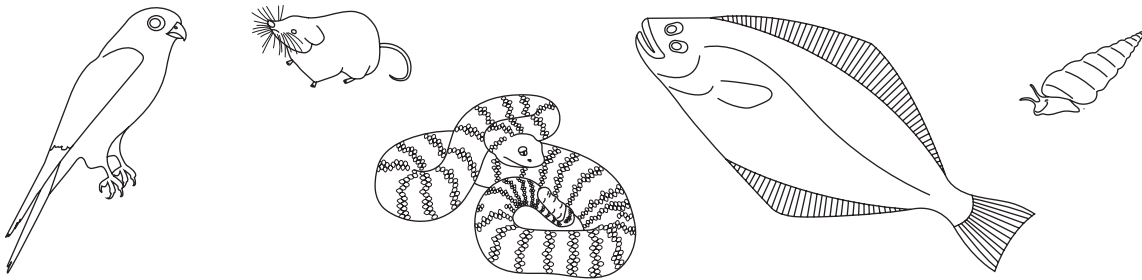


Today, I feel...

Activity Book



It's not always easy to express our feelings. We may not want to talk about them, but that doesn't make them any less real. Finding a way to express those feelings in constructive ways can help us move from feeling very sad to very happy. We recognize this as adults, but sometimes our kids need a little coaxing to get them back on track. This activity was designed for that very reason – to open the lines of communication and enact positive behavioral change through creativity, action and ownership.

This activity was developed by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency and NAMI San Diego – with art by the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation.

Instructions:

1. Print out the activity book (on cardstock, if available).
2. Color the characters on pages 4 – 8.
3. Cut out the colored characters and fold the tabs.
4. Fold the Critter Pocket on page 2 at the dashed line and seal the left and right sides (using tape, glue or a stapler).
5. Cut (only) the dotted lines on page 3. The top line is for taller characters and the bottom line is for shorter characters.
6. Hang the “Today I’m Feeling” sign on an easy-to-see place.
7. Each day, ask your child to select the critter that best resembles their mood, and post it on the sign.
8. Work together to have a great day!



My Critter Pocket

Name _____

Today, I feel...

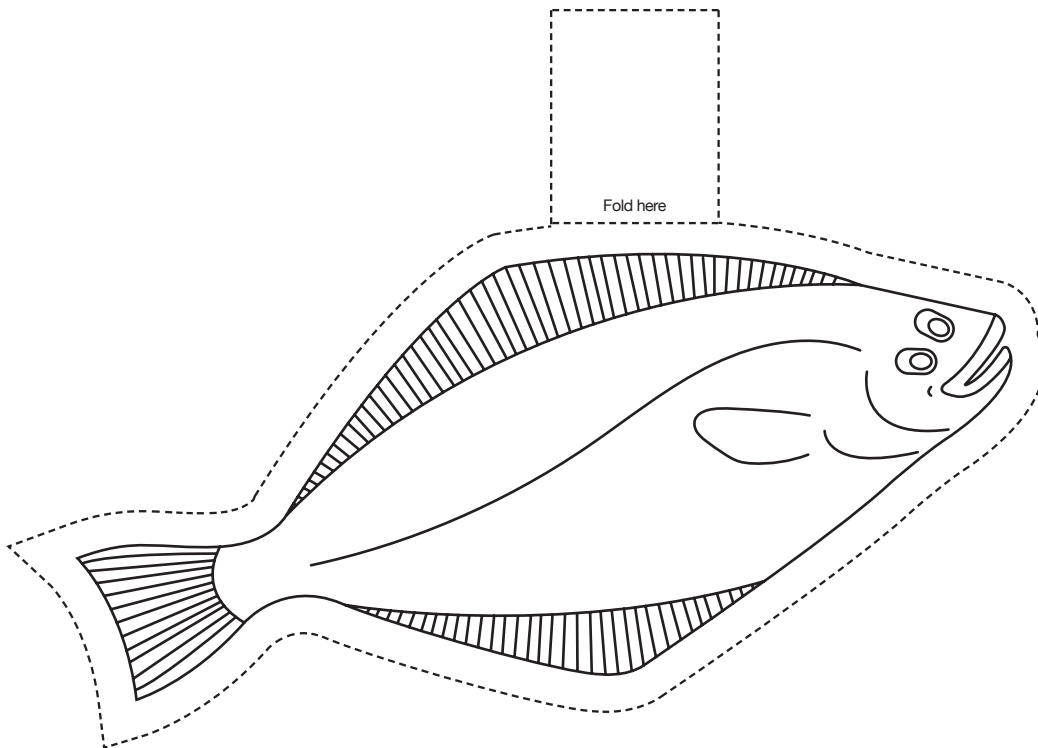
**Do you live near a park? Do you have a favorite park you like to visit?
Draw it here! Our mood animals need a happy home.**

Character Cutout: Very Happy Halibut

California Halibut - *Paralichthys californicus*

Fun Facts:

- Halibut are classified as the largest flatfish in the flounder family. This species of fish swims sideways due to their laterally shaped body.
- They can grow up to 8 feet, weigh up to 500 pounds and live up to 55 years.
- They can be found in the Pacific Ocean (near San Elijo Lagoon).



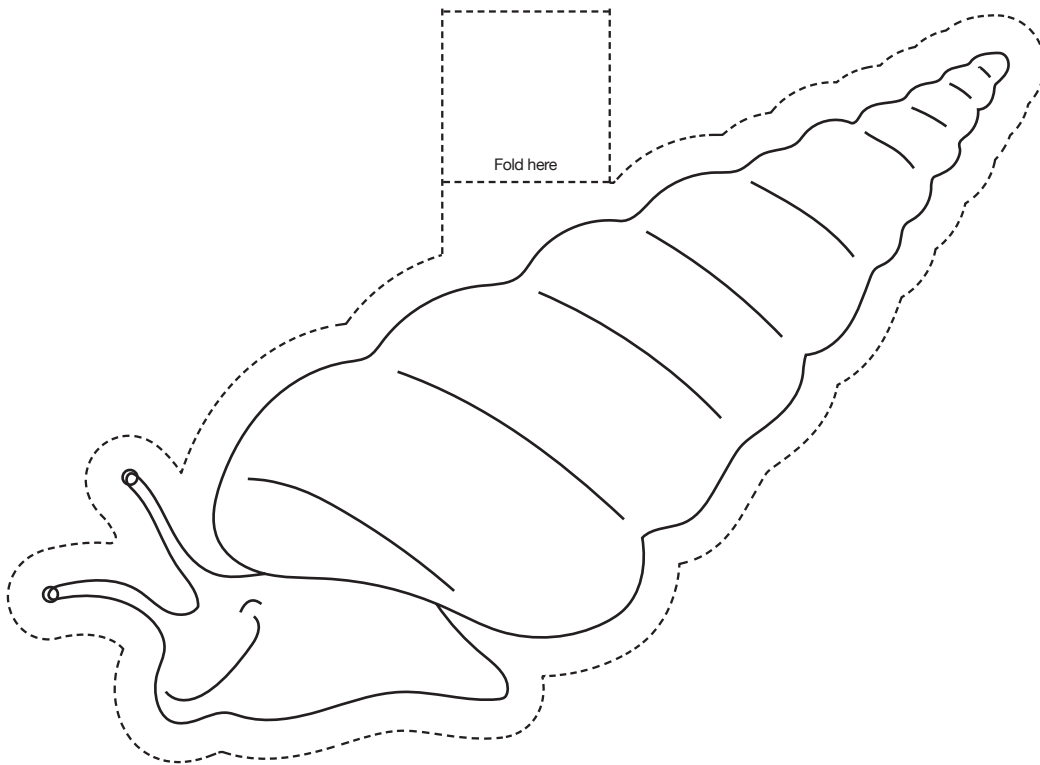
**What colors would a Very Happy Halibut have on its body?
Use your imagination and color it in.**

Character Cutout: A Slightly Happy Horn Snail

California Horn Snail - *Cerithidea californica*

Fun Facts:

- The horn-like shell has a special door called the “operculum” which allows the snail to seal itself to prevent from drying out when water levels are low.
- California Horn Snails feed on algae, diatoms and decaying organic matter.
- They can be found in San Elijo Lagoon.



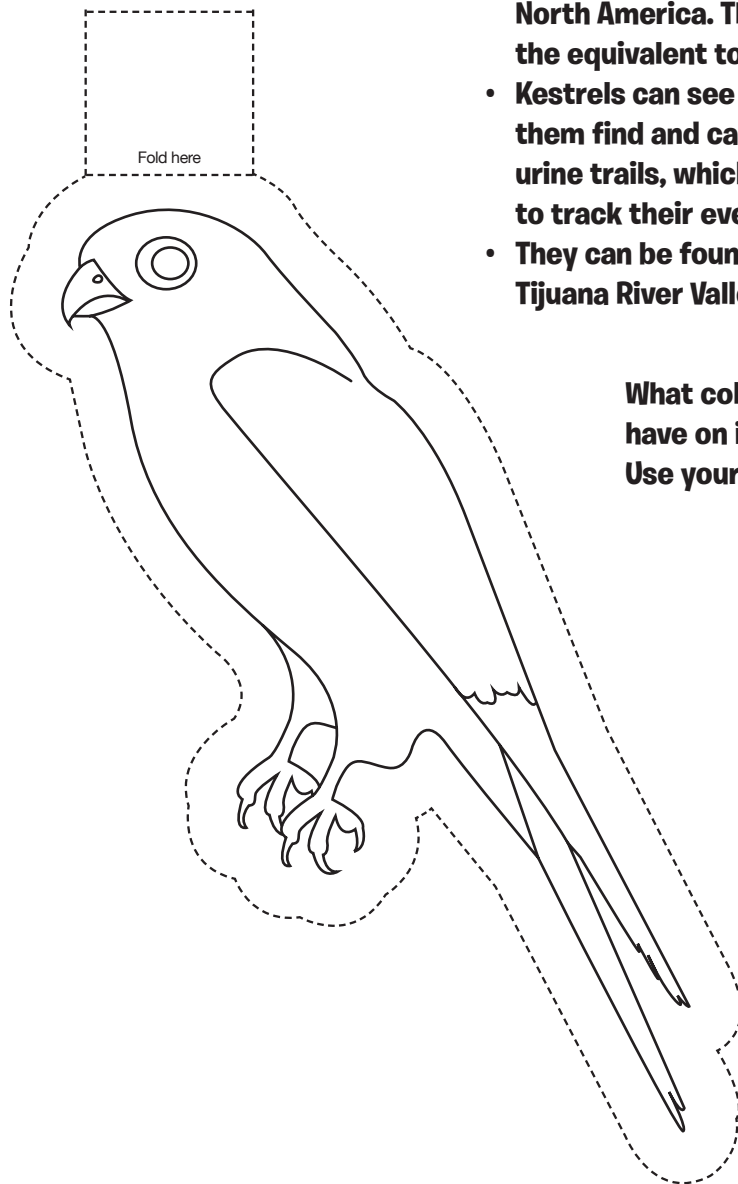
What colors would a Slightly Happy Horn Snail have on its body?
Use your imagination and color it in.

Character Cutout: Neutral Kestrel

American Kestrel - *Falco sparverius*

Fun Facts:

- **The American Kestrel is the smallest falcon in North America. They weigh 3 - 6 ounces, which is the equivalent to about 34 pennies!**
- **Kestrels can see ultraviolet light, which helps them find and catch prey. They can see rodents' urine trails, which reflect UV light, leading them to track their every move for a nice meal.**
- **They can be found in Rancho Guajome Adobe and Tijuana River Valley Regional Park.**



What colors would a Neutral Kestrel have on its body?

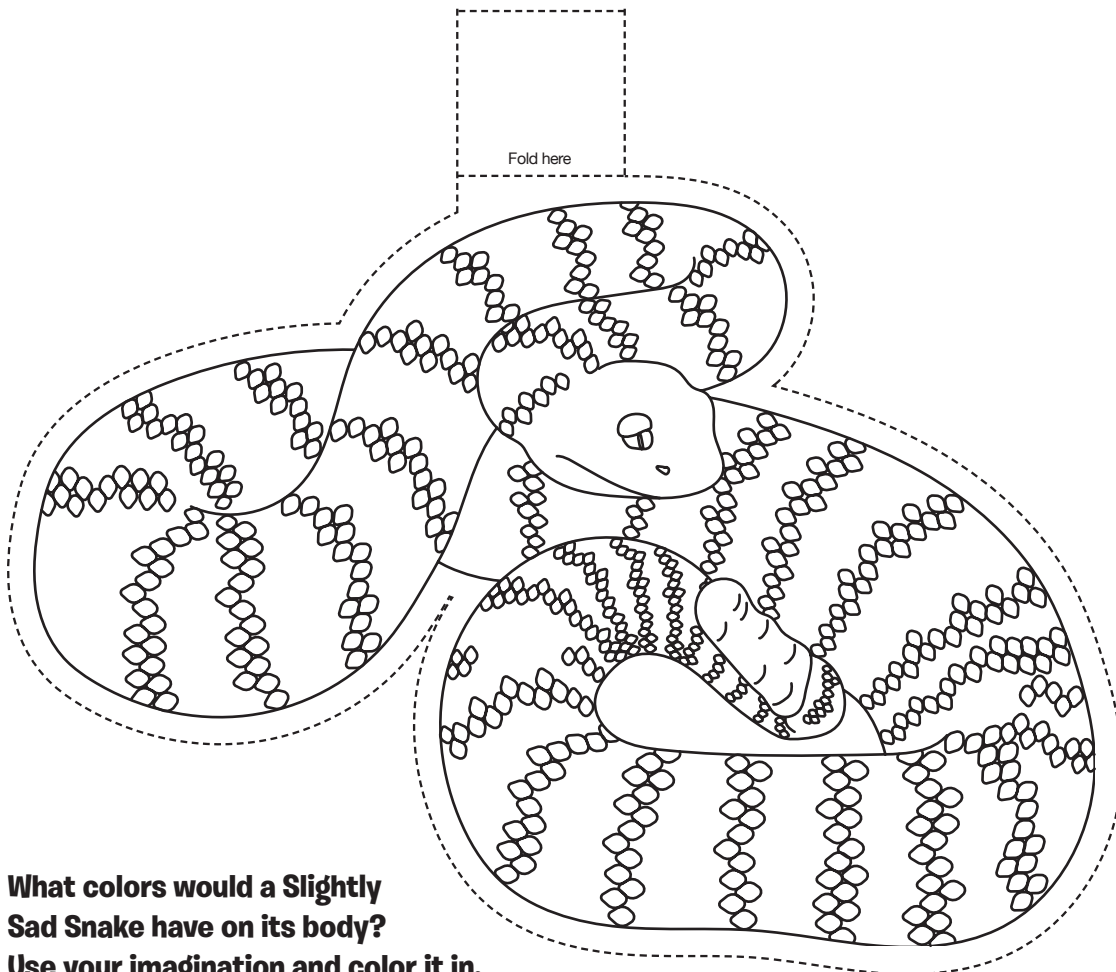
Use your imagination and color it in.

Character Cutout: A Slightly Sad Snake

Southern Pacific Rattlesnake - *Crotalus oreganus helleri*

Fun Facts:

- Rattlesnakes are common in San Diego, especially the Southern Pacific Rattlesnake. They shake their rattle to warn you they're nearby - always listen to nature, for your safety and to protect native species.
- Rattlesnakes shed their skin and their rattles, welcoming new skin underneath!
- They can be found in parks with scrub and grassland areas like Dictionary Hill County Preserve and Ramona Grasslands County Preserve.



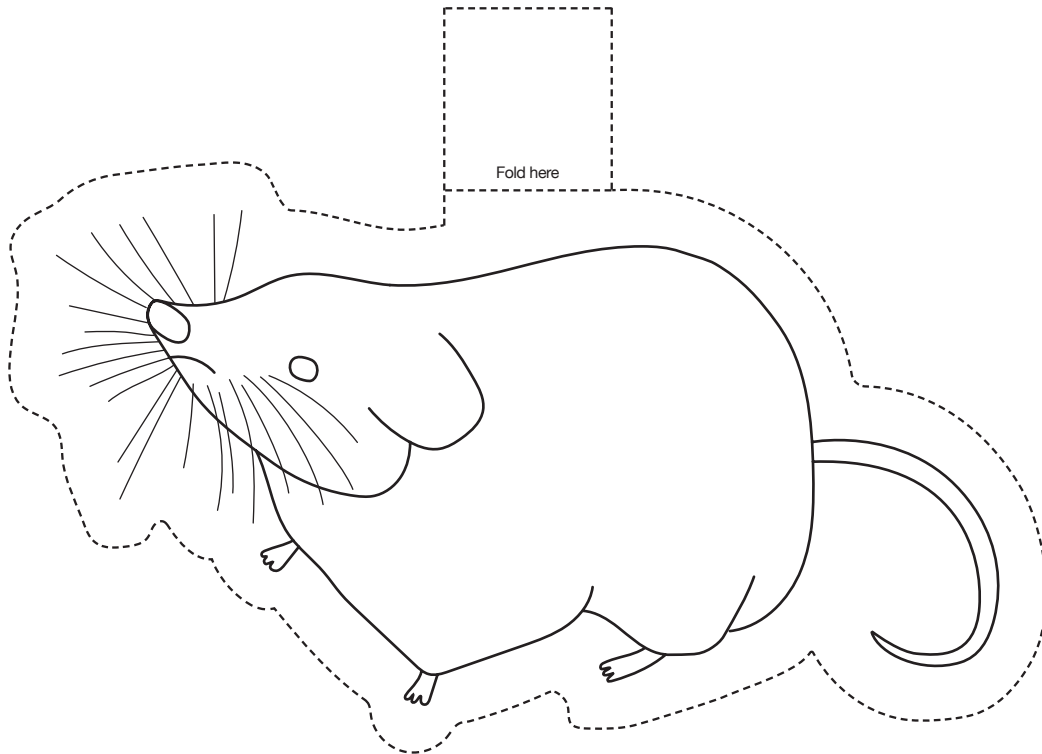
**What colors would a Slightly Sad Snake have on its body?
Use your imagination and color it in.**

Character Cutout: Very Sad Shrew

Desert Gray Shrew - *Notiosorex crawfordi crawfordi*






Fun Facts:

- Shrews must eat 80 - 90% of their body weight in food daily. Their diet consists of worms, insects, slugs and spiders.
- Shrews have an extremely fast heart rate of up to 700 beats per minute. That's almost as fast as a hummingbird!
- They can be found in Del Dios Highlands Preserve.



**What colors would a Very Sad Shrew have on its body?
Use your imagination and color it in.**

From Very Happy to Very Sad, a Parent's Guide to Improving Your Child's Mood

MOOD LEVEL	COPING STATEMENT
<p>VERY HAPPY HALIBUT</p> 	<p>Words of affirmation/validation honoring feelings and emotions, followed by words providing security/safety, followed by an offer to arrive a better mental state.</p> <p>If no answer is given: "I have some ideas..." Then offer activities from the tips section.</p> <p><i>You are very happy. Way to go! So proud of you. I'm happy too. I know things are different. We will be okay. How can I help you stay happy?</i></p> <p>If there is a specific answer, address it directly and honestly.</p>
<p>SLIGHTLY HAPPY HORN SNAIL</p> 	<p><i>I see you're little happy. Good. I also feel a little happy. We will be okay. Can you tell me how I can help you be happier?</i></p> <p>If there is a specific reason feeling neutral, address it directly and honestly.</p>
<p>NEUTRAL KESTREL</p> 	<p><i>I see you're not happy or sad. Sometimes I don't know how I feel. Our lives are different. We will be okay. Can you tell me what would make you happier?</i></p> <p>If there is a specific reason for being neither happy or sad, address it directly and honestly.</p>
<p>SLIGHTLY SAD SNAKE</p> 	<p><i>I see you're a little sad. It's okay to be a little sad. I feel a little sad sometimes. Our lives are different. We will be okay. Can you tell me what's making you a little sad? How can I help you feel better?</i></p> <p>If there is a specific reason for being a little sad, address it directly and honestly.</p>
<p>VERY SAD SHREW</p> 	<p><i>I see you're sad. It's okay to be sad now. I feel sad sometimes. Our lives are different. We will be okay. Can you tell me what is making you very sad? How can I help you feel better?</i></p> <p>If there is a specific reason for being very sad, address it directly and honestly.</p>

TIPS TO IMPROVE MOOD
<p>Offer activities to move from sad to neutral to happy. Consider asking your child/teen to create a "feel better" menu to get their buy-in.</p> <p>Develop daily routines and follow them – structure reduces stresses creates safety.</p> <p>Offer a safe and quiet place in the house. If space is limited, a corner of a room with pillows and preferred stuffed animals/items/scents will work. Check in often to encourage a return to normal activities.</p> <p>Offer a hug.</p> <p>Offer exclusive time together doing a favorite activity: art projects; baking, meal preparation; calling/face time with family and friends; playing board games; physical exercise (dancing, walking); watching TV; listening to music; sensory activities, like making slime, yoga, massage and movie time.</p> <p>Make a dream board or craft of future plans to look forward to – sometimes just going through the motions of listing things that can make us happy or that we want to do can also walk us through those happy feelings.</p> <p>Offer help with homework and distance learning.</p> <p>Offer words of encouragement and love: "so proud of you"; "love you"; "you're doing great".</p> <p>Ask them for help with a project. Sometimes the act of asking for help can shift the focus to something outside of themselves, shifting their mood. If they're not feeling well enough to participate by helping, try to get them to share their feelings or opinion on related topics.</p>