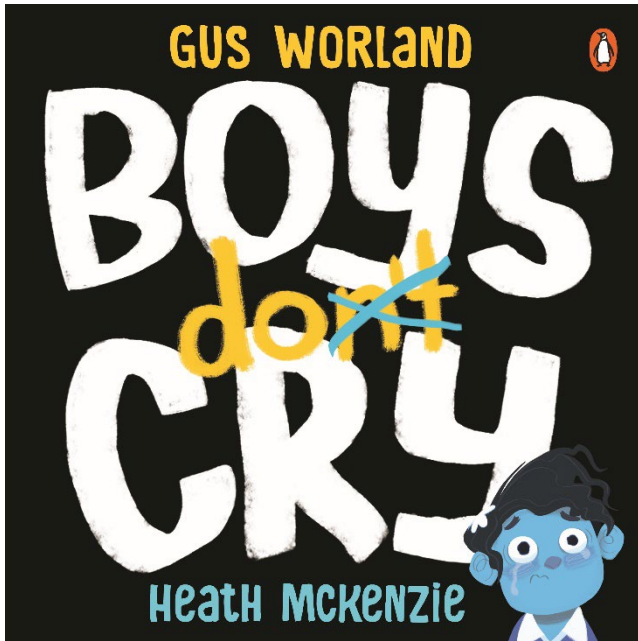




## TEACHERS' RESOURCES



### Boys Do Cry Gus Worland and Heath McKenzie

#### PLOT SUMMARY

*Boys Do Cry* is an absurd and exaggerated story about a young boy's bad day. Throughout the course of the day, he is met with a new annoyance or difficulty, but all the while he tries to keep his big feelings in. Only when he finally gets home and receives an understanding hug from his dad does he decide to let it all out. He then realises how much better he feels when he opens up and lets himself have a good cry!

This is a warm and funny picture book from TV and radio personality GUS WORLAND about battling big feelings and being okay about not feeling okay.

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

Ages 5+ (Kindergarten to Year 3)

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#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Health and Physical Education; Arts
- **General capabilities:** Social-emotional learning (SEL); Mental health and wellbeing; Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Ethical understanding; Personal and social capabilities

#### REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Depicts various scenarios where the main character may cry for different reasons, allowing children to see a range of emotions that they (as well as others) experience. This helps build empathy, as children begin to understand and relate to the feelings of others.
- Helps children understand that crying is a natural and healthy way to express feelings, which is essential for emotional development. By seeing the main character cry and be comforted, children learn that their emotions are valid and that it's okay to seek support when they are feeling overwhelmed.

#### THEMES

- Emotional adaptability
- Social connectedness
- Help-seeking
- Understanding emotions
- Empathy and understanding
- Cultural and social norms

#### PUBLICATION DETAILS

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# Boys Do Cry by Gus Worland

## ABOUT GUS WORLAND

Gus Worland is an Australian TV and radio personality, mental fitness advocate, Australian of the Year Nominee and Founder of Gotcha4Life Foundation.

Gus is a storyteller who knows how to get people thinking and talking about the things we often find hard to talk about. As a proud dad of three grown-up kids, Gus keeps it real, and he has a magical way of turning tricky topics into honest, heartfelt conversations that everyone can understand and relate to.

## ABOUT HEATH MCKENZIE

Heath McKenzie is a celebrated illustrator, known for his vibrant, humorous and whimsical artwork. His distinctive style, characterised by bold lines and vivid colours, has brought numerous children's picture books to life. Heath's captivating illustrations and engaging storytelling have led him to work with renowned authors and publishers.

Heath's artworks often explore themes of adventure and self-discovery, resonating deeply with young readers. As well as publishing, Heath has also worked in animation, advertising and product design, showcasing his versatility across various media.

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Gus Worland is a passionate advocate for mental fitness. To that end, he helped found the Gotcha4Life Foundation, a health-promotion charity dedicated to inspiring and enabling people to act and build their mental fitness.

Through his work with adults, Gus saw how mental health challenges are now affecting younger ages. While teenagers and adults are used to having discussions about their own emotional awareness, Gus realised that these conversations now need to happen from a very young age to encourage and

normalise opening up to friends and loved ones about their feelings.

This book was inspired by Gus's work through Gotcha4Life, as well as the common pre-conception that 'boys don't cry'. While feelings are natural, a prevailing social attitude is that crying and expressing feelings (particularly among boys and men) is a sign of weakness. Gus believes that it is important to show how having feelings is a part of life and opening up to others can help your mental fitness.

## WHAT IS 'MENTAL FITNESS'?

'Mental fitness' refers to our capacity to cope with life's ups and downs, our sense of connection and belonging and our ability to seek help when we need it. Gotcha4Life's approach to mental fitness is built on cultivating three evidence-based mental health protective factors: **emotional adaptability**, **social connectedness** and **help-seeking**.

These three factors help introduce the idea of mental fitness to young students, connecting them with their everyday experiences to make mental fitness relatable and easy to understand. By strengthening mental health protective factors, students can then learn essential skills for handling big feelings. Each of these factors also plays a unique role in supporting students to talk openly, find ways to solve problems and use tips and tricks to feel stronger on the inside – no matter what happens on the outside.

## BUILDING MENTAL FITNESS WITH BOYS DO CRY

The story *Boys Do Cry* brings mental fitness concepts to life, emphasising the importance of expressing emotions, seeking support and having strong social connections. As the young boy faces a series of challenges and holds his emotions in, the story highlights how bottling up our feelings can weigh us down or make us *blue*. Only when he finally opens up



at home does he feel relief, reinforcing the importance of **not worrying alone**.

Through Gus Worland’s story, young readers learn to **build their emotional muscles** by developing resilience and adaptability, and to **embrace their village** by developing resilience and adaptability, and to embrace their village by fostering strong social connections with loved ones and seeking help when needed.

### Pre-Reading Questions

1. Look at the illustration on the front cover. What do you think the boy is feeling? Think of some reasons why he might be feeling this way.
2. Look at the illustrations on the inside covers. What are they? Why might they be in the story?
3. Reflect on the title: what does ‘Boys Do Cry’ mean? Why is part of the word ‘don’t’ crossed out?

### WRITING STYLE

The rhyming text in *Boys Do Cry* is both gentle and playful, working to help lighten the mood and encourage reflection and discussion while storytelling. Much like what happens to the main character in the story, readers are encouraged to examine what happens to the main character in a safe and supportive space and to understand how it is perfectly normal and acceptable to cry. The blend of simple and funny with empathetic and self-accepting language will make children laugh while also being reassured by the story’s message.

### Questions and Activities

1. List the different things that happen to the boy in the story. Was there something that happened that surprised you when he didn’t cry about it?
2. Think about the last time you cried. What happened? How did you feel before and after? What or who helped you feel better?
3. What would you like to say to the boy in the book? Write him a note that you think would comfort him.

### VISUAL LITERACY

The vivid and expressive illustrations are funny and engaging but can also help younger readers better understand the story and to see how the story’s themes, such as expressing emotions, are important. Various rhetorical devices (e.g. sayings like ‘boys don’t cry’, ‘don’t cry over spilled milk’, etc.) are subtly explored through both the text and illustrations, which can suggest how words or ideas are often given weight. But ideas like ‘feeling blue’ are also treated quite literally in the story, helping young readers visualise the negative impacts of keeping feelings in. The boy gradually turns bluer in colour and only returns to normal when he lets himself cry out his sadness.

### Questions and Activities

1. Why do you think the boy started turning blue? What made his blue colour go away at the end of the story?
2. There are different emotions that each of us can feel in a day: happy, sad, angry, silly, calm, etc. If these feelings are colours, what would they be? Draw a picture of your face showing what you are feeling right now and colour it in.
3. In groups, sort the pictures from *Boys Do Cry* (Worksheet) into the correct order to retell the story. Explain what happens to the boy before he finally lets himself cry.
4. Think about all the things that happened to the boy in the story. What else might have happened to him that day that would make him want to cry? Draw a picture that could go on another page in the book, explain what happens and where it would go in the story.

### KEY STUDY TOPICS

#### Build Your Emotional Muscles (Emotional Adaptability)

Everyone experiences all sorts of emotions; that’s what makes us human. Some feelings are awesome and feel very easy, and sometimes we get hit with



tricky or not-so-easy emotions. That's when we can use our emotional muscles to help us deal with those feelings in a helpful way. When you practise using your emotional muscles, you'll get better at handling tricky feelings, and you'll feel mentally stronger inside.

### Questions and Activities

1. Icebreaker: What is something that makes you happy after feeling sad?
2. Even though a lot of things happen to the boy in the story, he doesn't cry until the very end. Have you ever felt like you could not or should not cry? Why/why not?
3. In the story, who eventually helps the boy feel like it's okay to cry? What happens?
4. In pairs, act out situations from the book. Then, talk about what either of you could do to make yourself or the other person feel better in those situations.

## The Importance of Understanding Emotions

### Questions and Activities

1. Icebreaker: The boy gets a cuddle from his dad in *Boys Do Cry*. Who do you want to cuddle when you're upset?
2. In the last two pages of the story, the boy shows lots of different emotions. What might each one be?
3. Think of situations that would make you feel one of the emotions on that page. In pairs, write a list of things that would make you feel that emotion.
4. In front of the class, take turns acting out different emotions without speaking. The rest of the class must guess what emotion is being acted out.
5. Discuss some of the emotions that were being acted out in the last activity. Were there some emotions that were harder to guess than others? Why is it important for us to understand what someone is feeling?

## Embrace Your Village (Social Connectedness)

Having people around you who care about you, listen to you and spend time with you helps you to feel happy and supported. Feeling close to others helps us to feel like we belong and that we're not alone. When we have people to talk to, and share our feelings and worries with, it helps us to feel stronger inside, especially when we face sad or tough times. We call these important people our 'village' - they're like your team of supporters who are always there for you, no matter what.

### Questions and Activities

1. Icebreaker: Can you share a time when you felt like giving up while doing something difficult? Did anyone help you along the way?
2. This story follows a boy for an entire day. What are some of the things that happen to him that make his day difficult?
3. Think about things that help you when you're having a hard time. Draw your very own "emotional" village and, inside, draw or write the names of people who would live there. Your village is made up of people who care about you, listen to you and spend time with you. They may also support you or make you feel like it is safe to be yourself. Decorate your village with things that make you feel happy and strong.

## Don't Worry Alone (Help-seeking)

When you're not feeling okay because you're facing a problem or a worry that just won't go away, asking for help is brave and smart. We all feel stuck sometimes and talking to someone you trust when you do can help you to find a way forward and feel better. It's the opposite of bottling up our feelings and worrying or feeling angry. When we share how we're feeling with someone who can help us, they can help us to feel better and bounce back.



### **Questions and Activities**

1. In the story, the boy's dad sees that he is upset and comforts him. In pairs, role play situations where you help a friend.
2. Write a thank you letter to someone who has helped you overcome a challenge.

### **KEY QUOTES**

1. 'Is there something in my eye?'
2. This morning, rain began to pour when I wanted clear blue sky.
3. . . . still I could not, **WOULD NOT** cry!
4. My feelings are enormous now.  
It's been an awful day.  
Even kisses from my cheeky dog  
won't make them go away.
5. But, when Dad gives me a cuddle, I just let one tear go . . .
6. Now, the things that made my feelings big don't seem so big at all.

### **Gotcha4Life's Primary Schools Program**

Gotcha4Life's Mentally Fit Primary Schools program takes a prevention-first, whole-of-school approach to building wellbeing capacity. The program is designed to inspire and enable staff, students, parent and carer communities to adopt a proactive approach to building their mental fitness. Discover how Gotcha4Life can support your journey toward building a mentally fit school community and access free, ready-to-use classroom resources to get started:

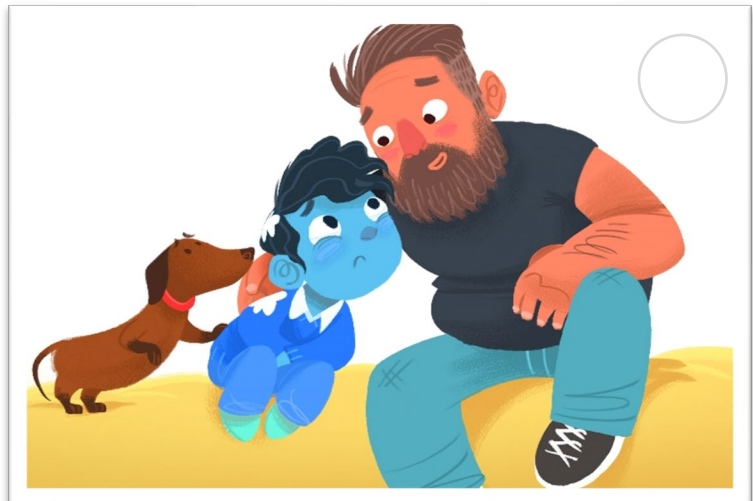
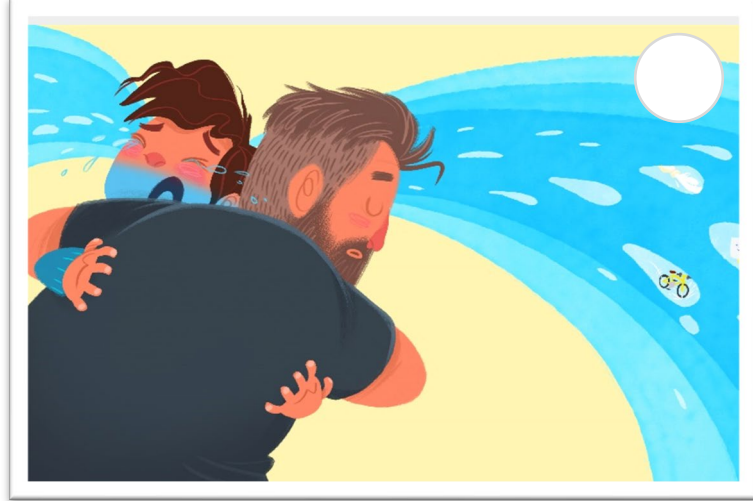
[www.gotcha4life.org/programs/primaryschools](http://www.gotcha4life.org/programs/primaryschools)





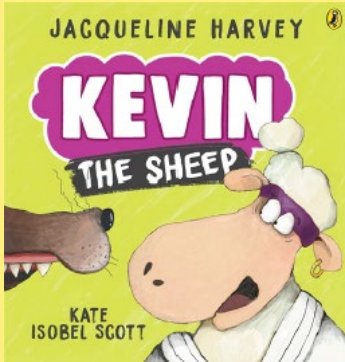
# WORKSHEET

Cut out the pictures below or write numbers in each circle to put them in story order.





## FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



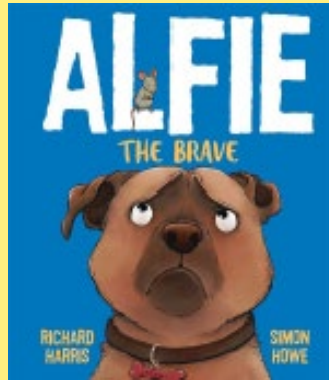
### **Kevin the Sheep** by Jacqueline Harvey, Kate Isobel Scott

Why can't Kevin be more like the flock?!

Kevin the Sheep is unusual, he does things his own way. But will being different help him save the day?

**A laugh-out-loud picture book perfect for children who love Pig the Pug and Macca the Alpaca.**

*Teachers' resources available.*



### **Alfie the Brave** by Richard Harris, Simon Howe

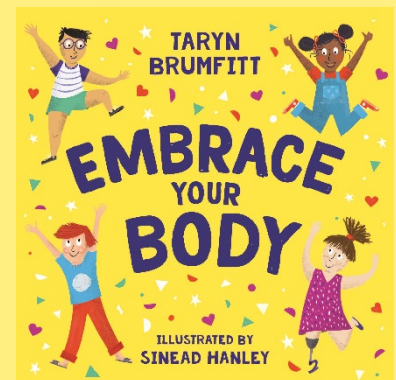
Alfie was a fine-looking dog. His coat was sleek and shiny like an otter. He was the son of champions.

But Alfie didn't feel like a champion. Alfie was scared of . . . everything!

Could Alfie ever be bold and brave like other dogs?

**A charming picture book about how bravery doesn't always come naturally, from Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris, a key member of the international cave-diving group who rescued the Wild Boar soccer team in Thailand.**

*Teachers' resources available.*



### **Embrace Your Body** by Taryn Brumfitt, Sinead Hadley

Embrace your body – you've only got one!

Based on the #1 hit children's song, this picture book encourages everyone to love who they are, inside and out.

**Taryn Brumfitt is the fiercely passionate thought leader behind the Body Image Movement and director of Embrace the documentary. She is determined to inspire everyBODY to celebrate their body, regardless of size, colour, ethnicity, gender or ability. Because everyBODY is unique!**

*Teachers' resources available.*



# ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>Boys Do Cry</i>	Gus Worland, Heath McKenzie	9781761346583	K- 3	\$19.99		
<i>Kevin the Sheep</i>	Jacqueline Harvey, Kate Isobel Scott	9781761048951	Preschool-K	\$19.99		
<i>Alfie the Brave</i>	Richard Harris, Simon Howe	9781761041358	Preschool-K	\$19.99		
<i>Embrace Your Body</i>	Taryn Brumfitt, Sinead Hanley	9781760895983	Preschool-K	\$19.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**POSTCODE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**TEL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**ACCOUNT NO.:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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