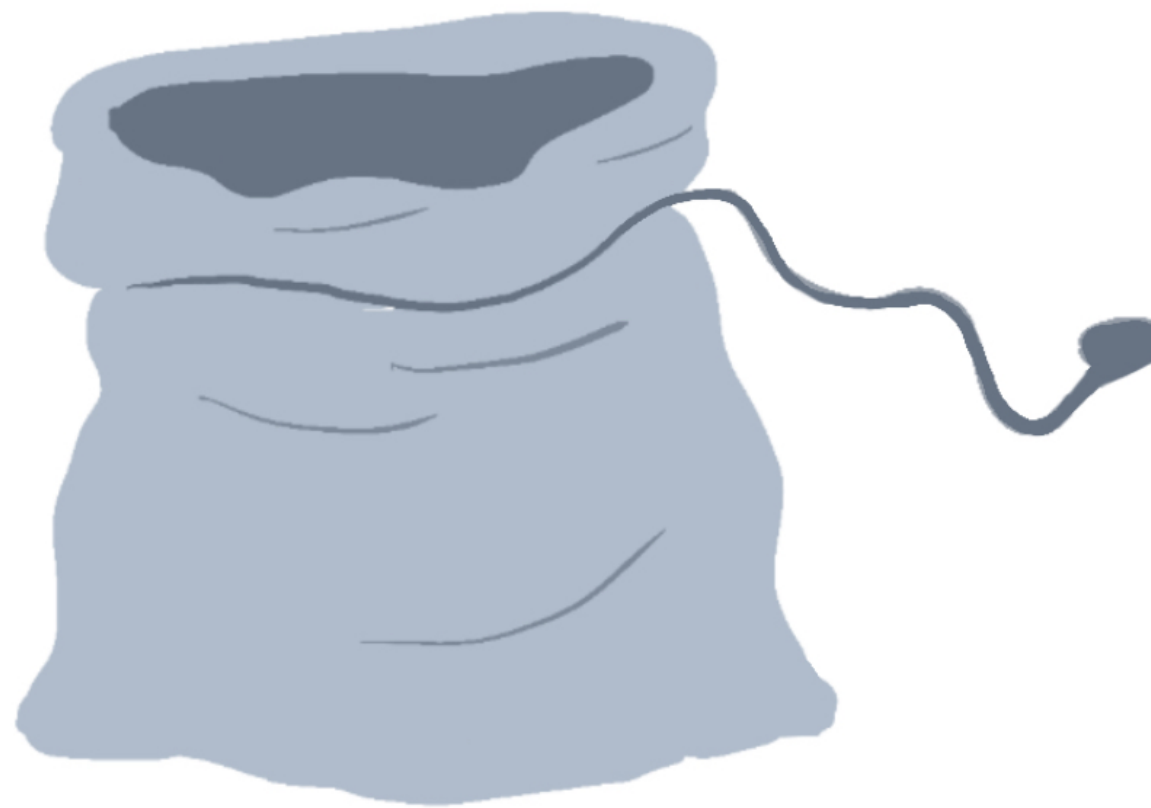


# The Sack



illustrated by Lee Jia Ai (IG: @soulfullydrawn)  
created for MWS Strengthening Families Programme@Family Service Centre  
© 2022 Methodist Welfare Services

failing exams  
rejected by others  
being accused  
parents fighting  
being bullied

Growing up, many bad things can happen to us... some of which are beyond our control. And sometimes, these bad things last for a really long time...

Day by day, slowly but surely, these events form a dark raincloud over our lives.



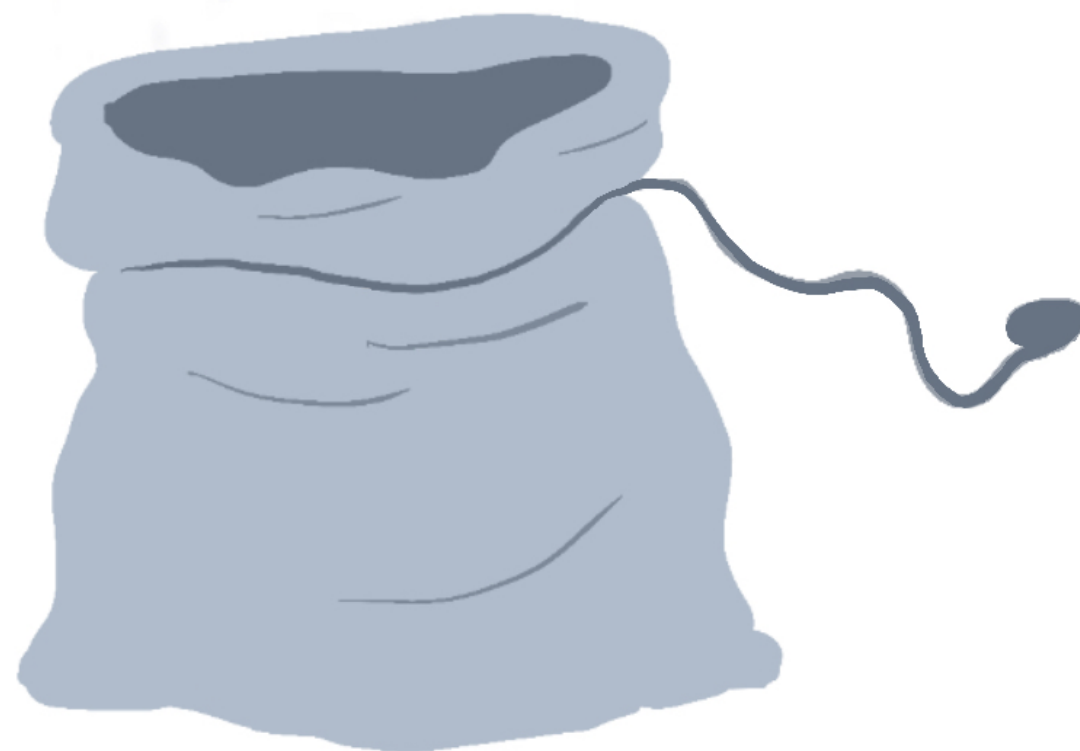


failing exams  
rejected by others  
being accused  
parents fighting  
being bullied

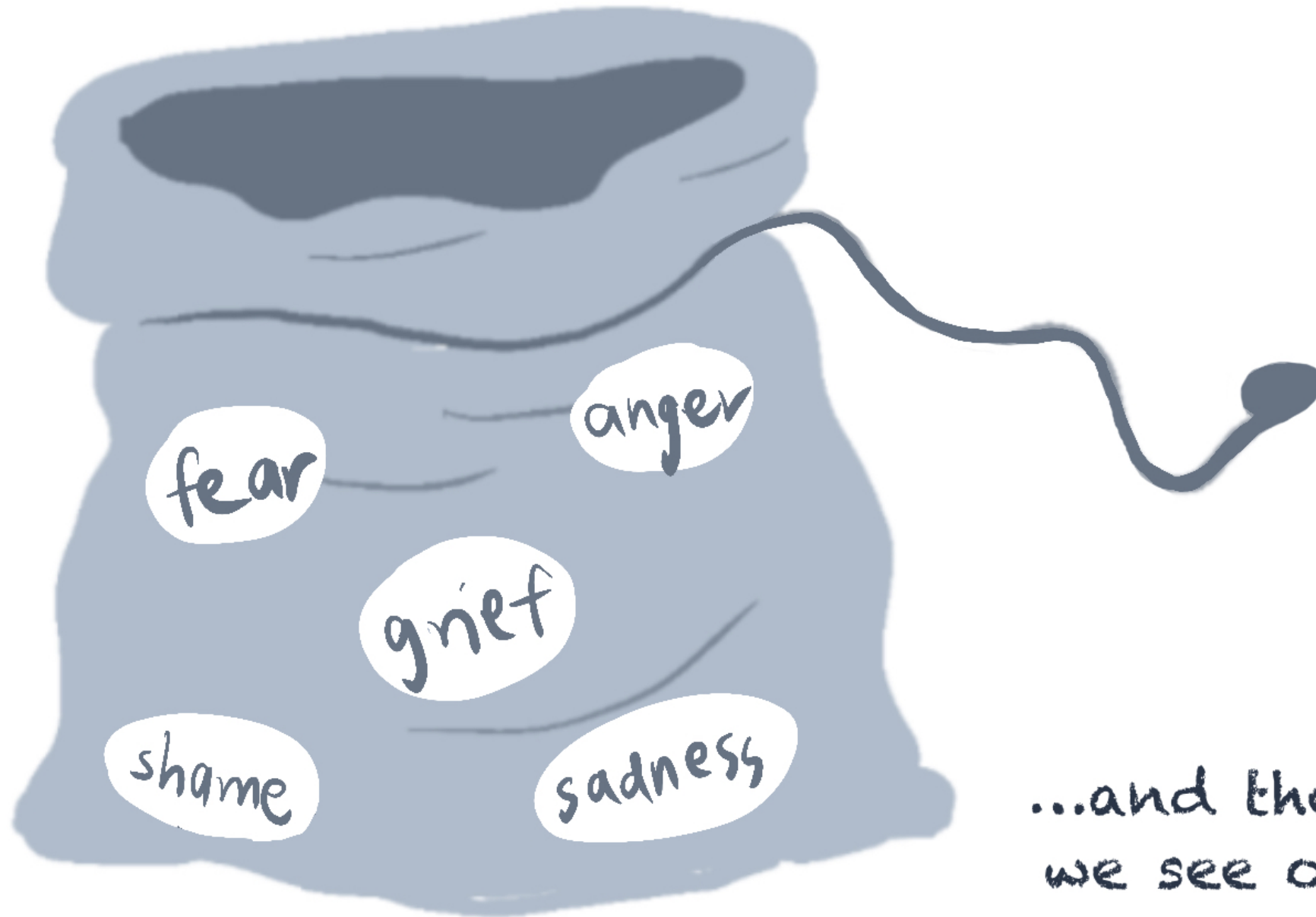
And one fine day, the  
raincloud finally starts  
to pour.

But strangely, it wasn't  
rain, but droplets of  
something else...

And they came falling  
into this huge sack in  
our lives.



Upon a closer look, this sack contains emotions like...



...and they slowly change the way we see ourselves, and the world.



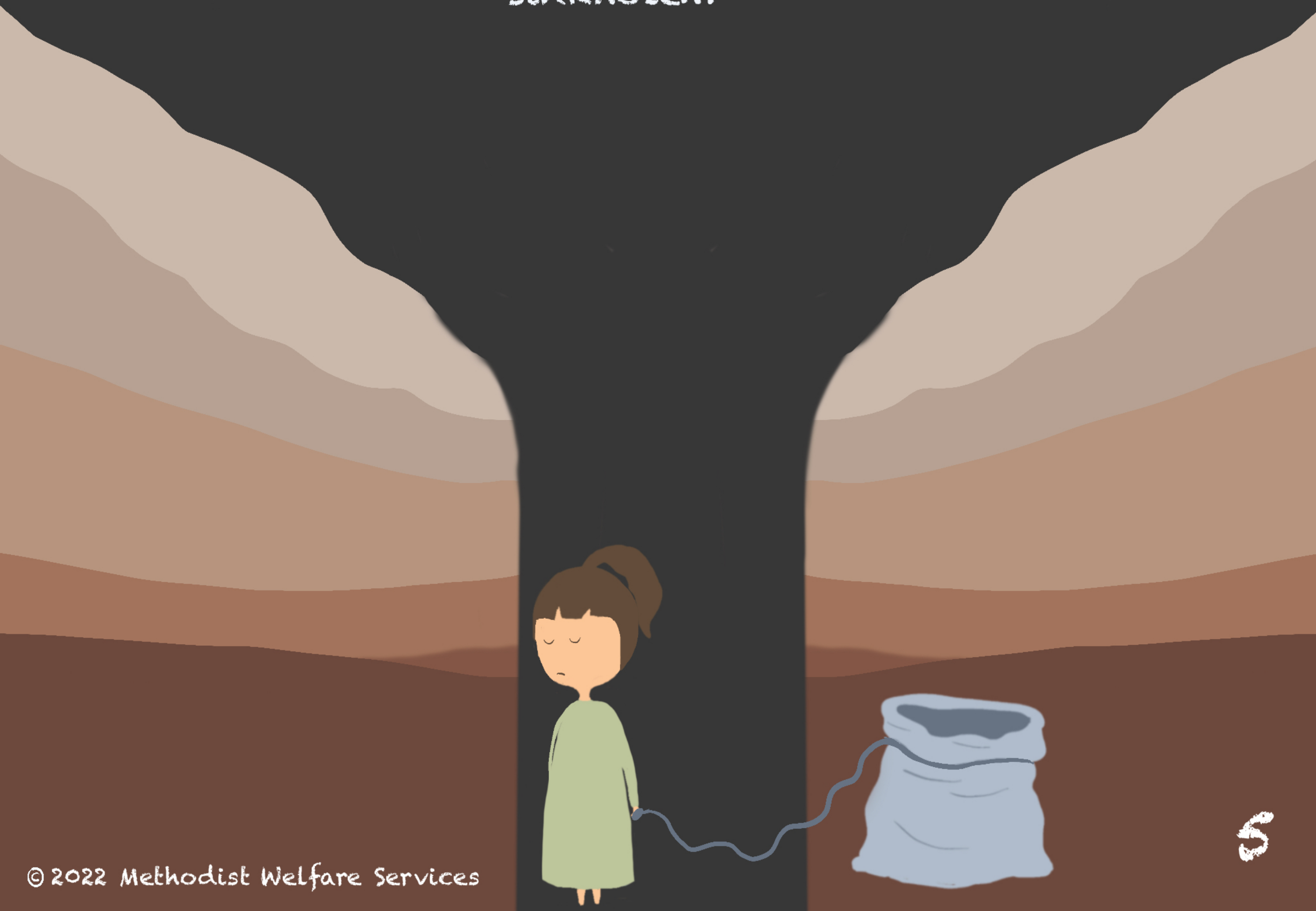


We carry this sack wherever we go...



... not because we want to,  
but because it is just so difficult to let go...

And as time goes by... the sack gets heavier and harder to carry alone... It starts to feel like a sinkhole...





As the weight gets unbearable,  
we may unknowingly build a wall to separate  
ourselves from the sack...

... so as to block out those unwanted emotions.



Each brick in the wall represents an unhelpful strategy that we use to protect ourselves from pain and harm.

MISS PERFECT

"Everything must be within my control."

MR ACHIEVER

"I must get full marks, otherwise I'm not good enough."

MISS NICE

"It's okay even if people cross my boundaries. I don't want them to be upset."

MISS INDEPENDENT

"I don't have a best friend because I can never trust anyone."



"DO NOT ENTER MY BUBBLE!"

MR ANGRY

"It's all your FAULT!"

MR RIGHT

"I failed my exams because my teacher is bad."



"I just want to bury myself."

"GO AWAY!"





For a while, it may seem like things are getting better...

... but after some time, those survival strategies will eventually fail, as we get more and more tired, resentful, isolated, and lose important relationships in our lives...



... leaving us trapped in a web of pain and suffering.

Perhaps then, it might help to talk to someone about the sack...

"This sack is killing me. I don't know what to do anymore. Am I weird? Is it just me? Why is this happening to me?"

Everyone has his/her own sack, and it is absolutely normal to talk to a counsellor about it. This is a safe space for you to unload your sack ok... let's find out what's happening, and how we can make you feel better...





Sometimes, that process may offer us the safety and courage to gradually peep into that scary sack again and find out what's actually inside...



... and we may be surprised to discover good things in there too which we simply lost sight of because of all the bad things that happened.





Over time, we may learn that it's not so much about keeping the sack out of our lives, but recognising that we are all survivors... that we are so much bigger than our circumstances, and we have the power to live with the sack without letting it rule our lives.

