

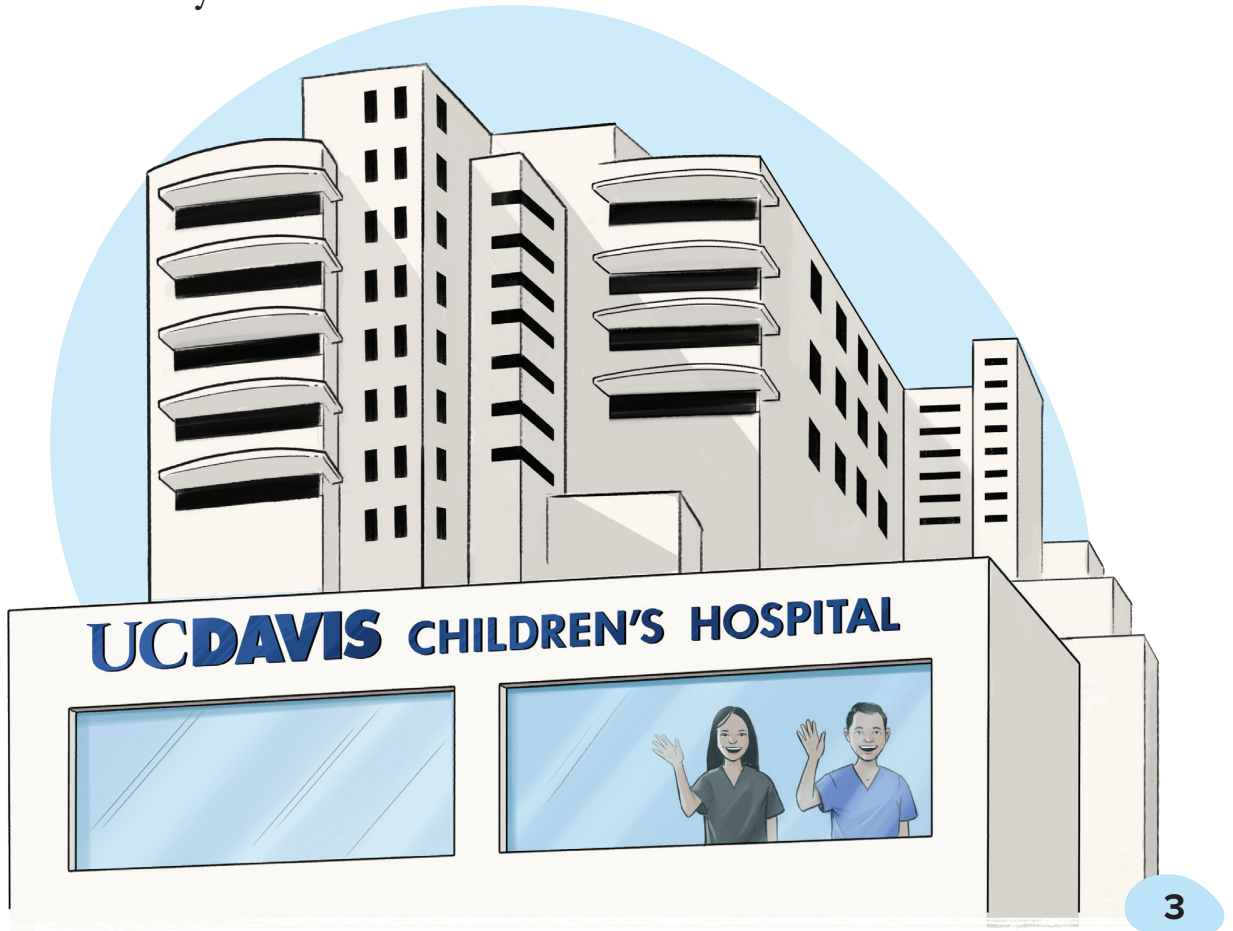
My First Hospital Visit

Coping at the Hospital and Beyond

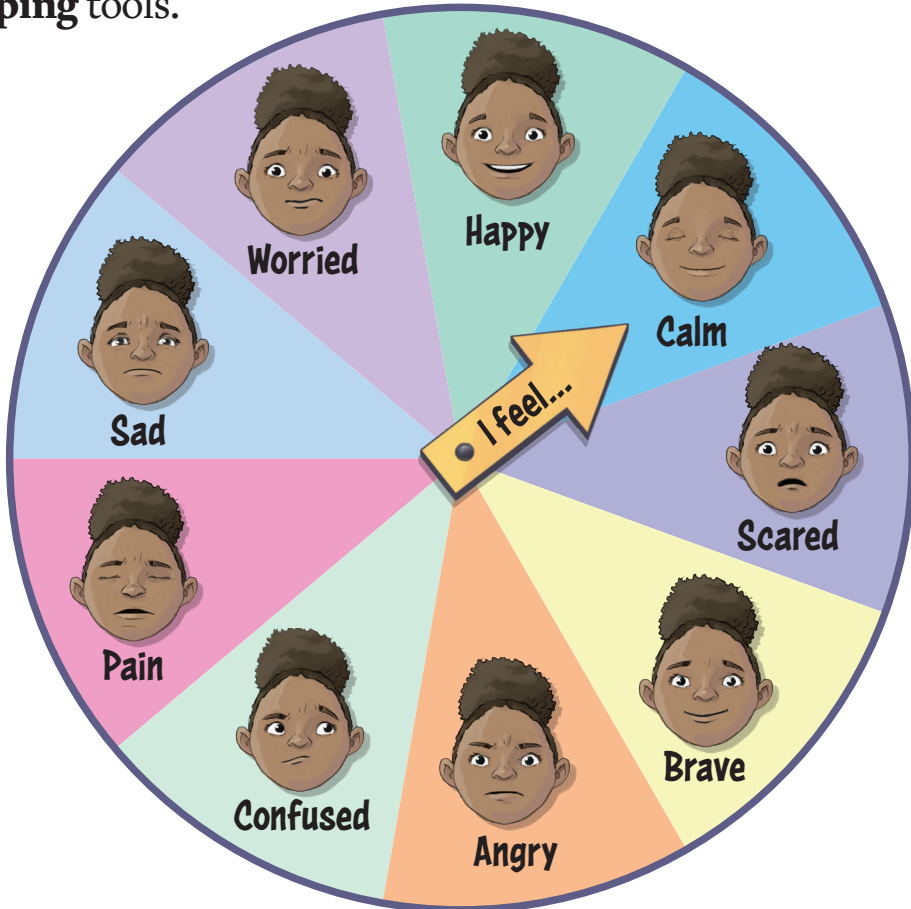


by **UC Davis Child Life**

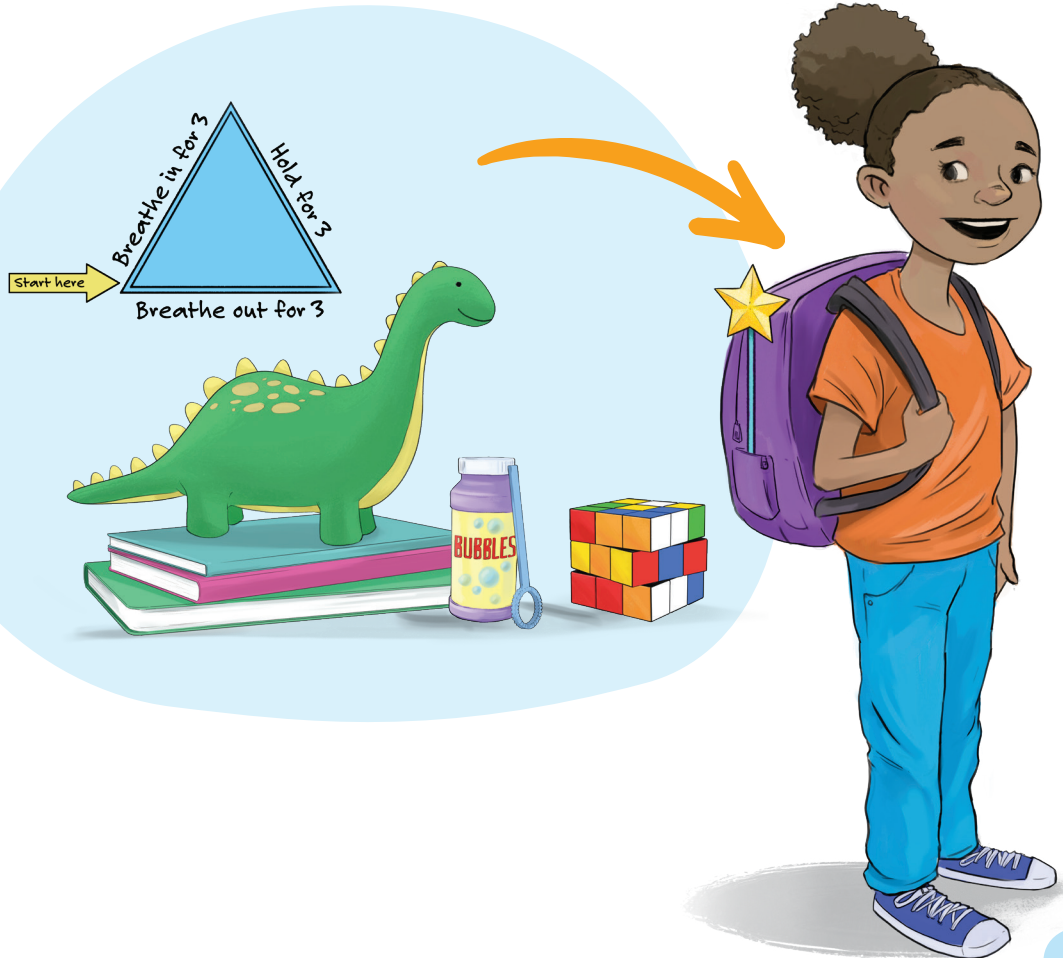
This story shows one child's hospital experience, but every child's experience can be different. It shares simple ways to understand feelings and use coping tools along the way.



My name is Annie and I'm going to tell you about when I had to go to the hospital for the first time. I had a lot of **feelings**, and I learned how to get through each step using different **cop**ing tools.



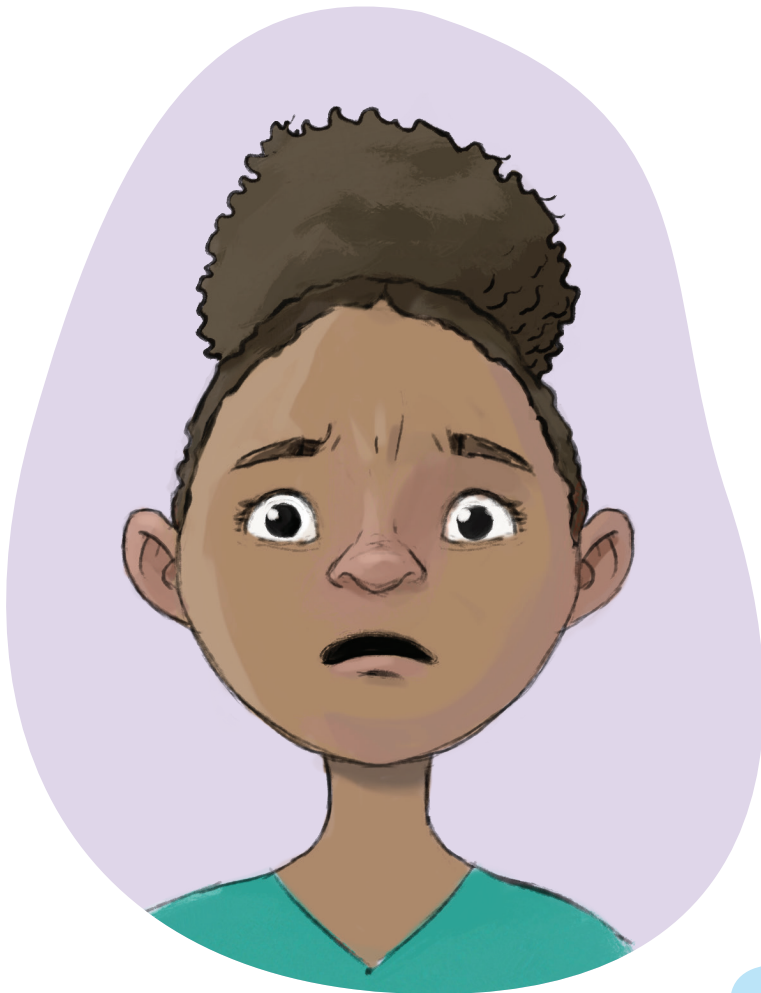
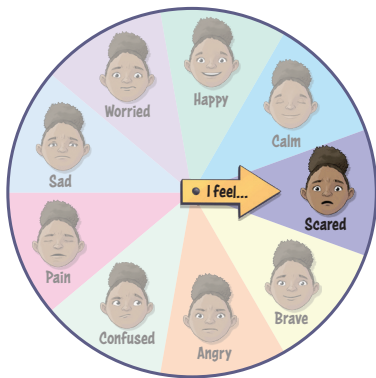
Coping tools make hard situations easier.



It all started when I got very sick one weekend. My parents had to take me straight to the **emergency department**. The emergency department is a place where doctors and nurses help people who are sick or hurt.



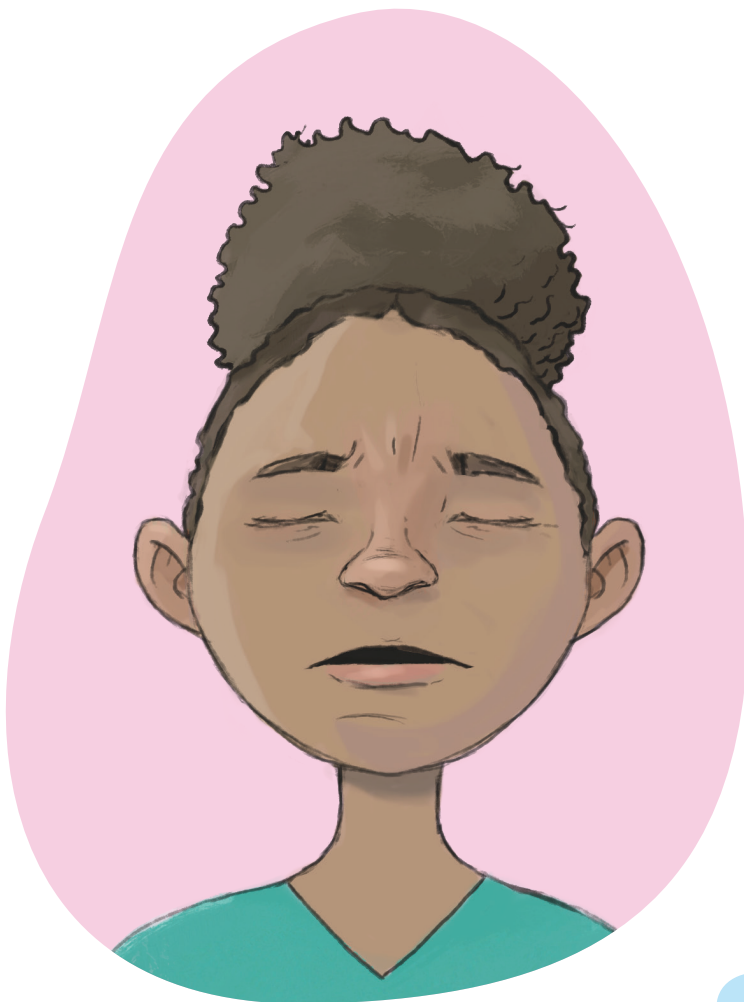
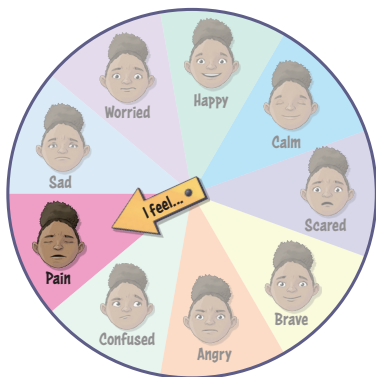
I felt **scared**. What was going to happen to me?



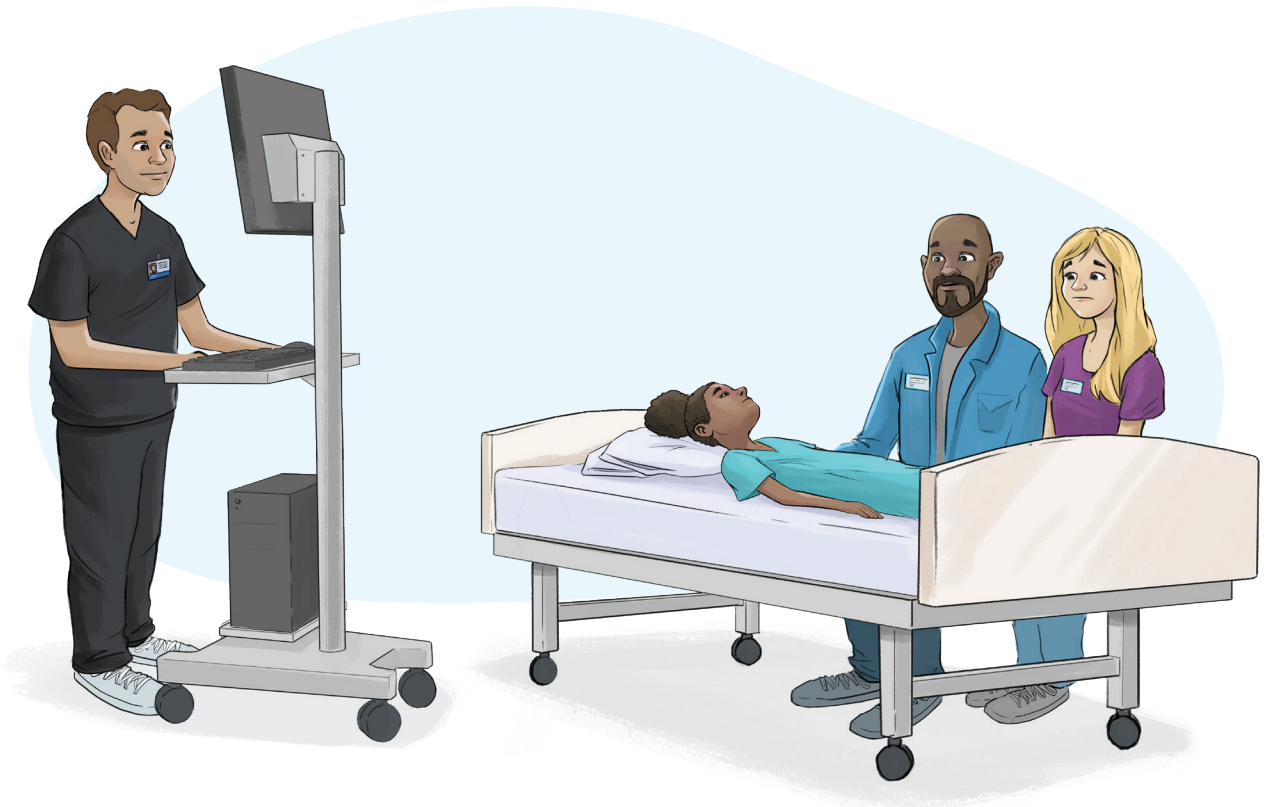
After we checked in, we spent some time in the waiting room. I noticed that lots of people come to the hospital for different reasons.



I wondered if anyone else felt as much **pain** as I did.



We were finally taken to a room in the emergency department.
I saw medical people wearing different colored uniforms.
Then, I met my nurse, Ted, and Dr. Martinez.

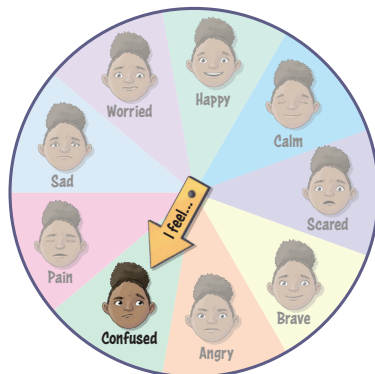


First, they asked me and my parents a lot of questions. Then, Dr. Martinez checked my body to figure out what was wrong.

I felt **worried**. Would I get better?



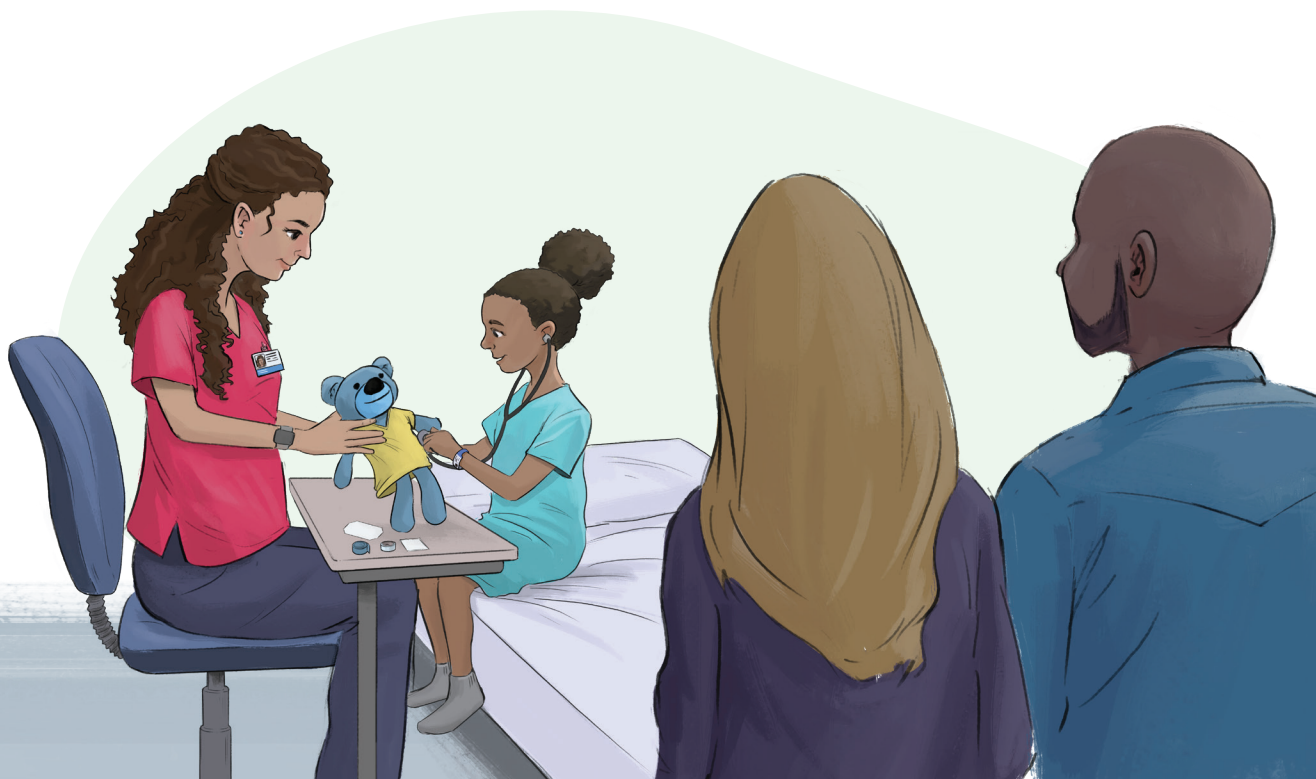
Next, they told me I needed to get an “**IV**” and an “**ultrasound.**”
I began feeling very **confused** – what were these things and why
did I need them?



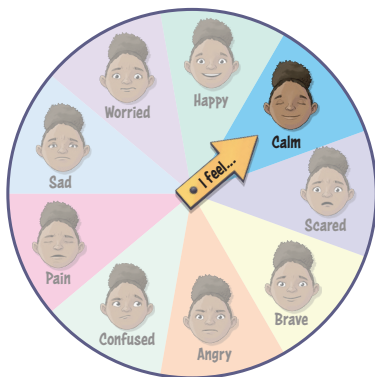
Before I could blink, someone new was in my room. She said her name was Carly, a **child life specialist**. Carly's job was to help kids understand what was happening. She also helped kids make coping plans.



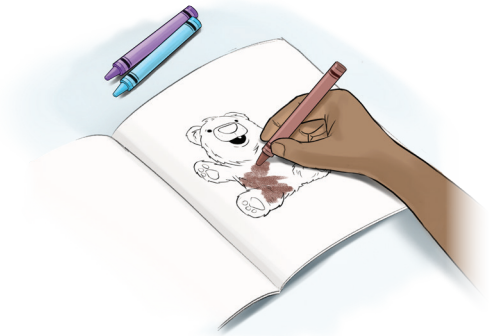
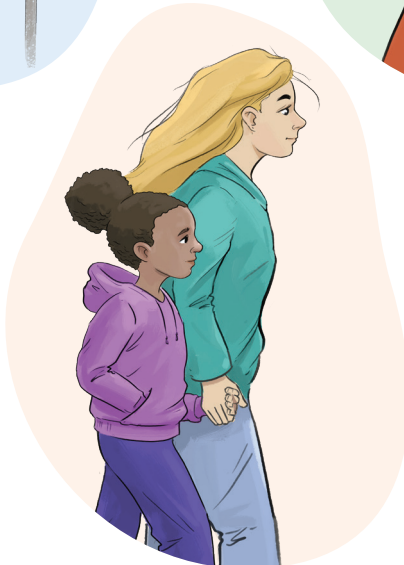
Carly taught me about the IV and ultrasound one step at a time. She used a stuffed animal to show me what would happen. She also showed me the tools I'd be seeing the medical team use.



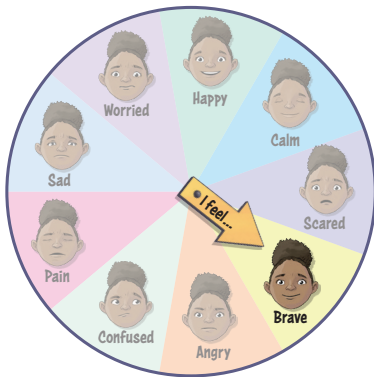
I asked questions and talked about my feelings.
This helped me feel more **calm**.

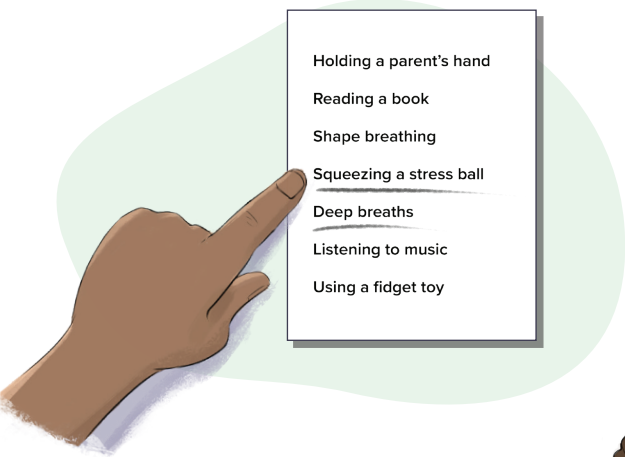


Next, Carly and I talked about **coping** tools. She asked me about things I enjoy and what has helped me in the past during hard situations.



I started to feel a little **braver**. What coping tools would help me here at the hospital?





Holding a parent's hand

Reading a book

Shape breathing

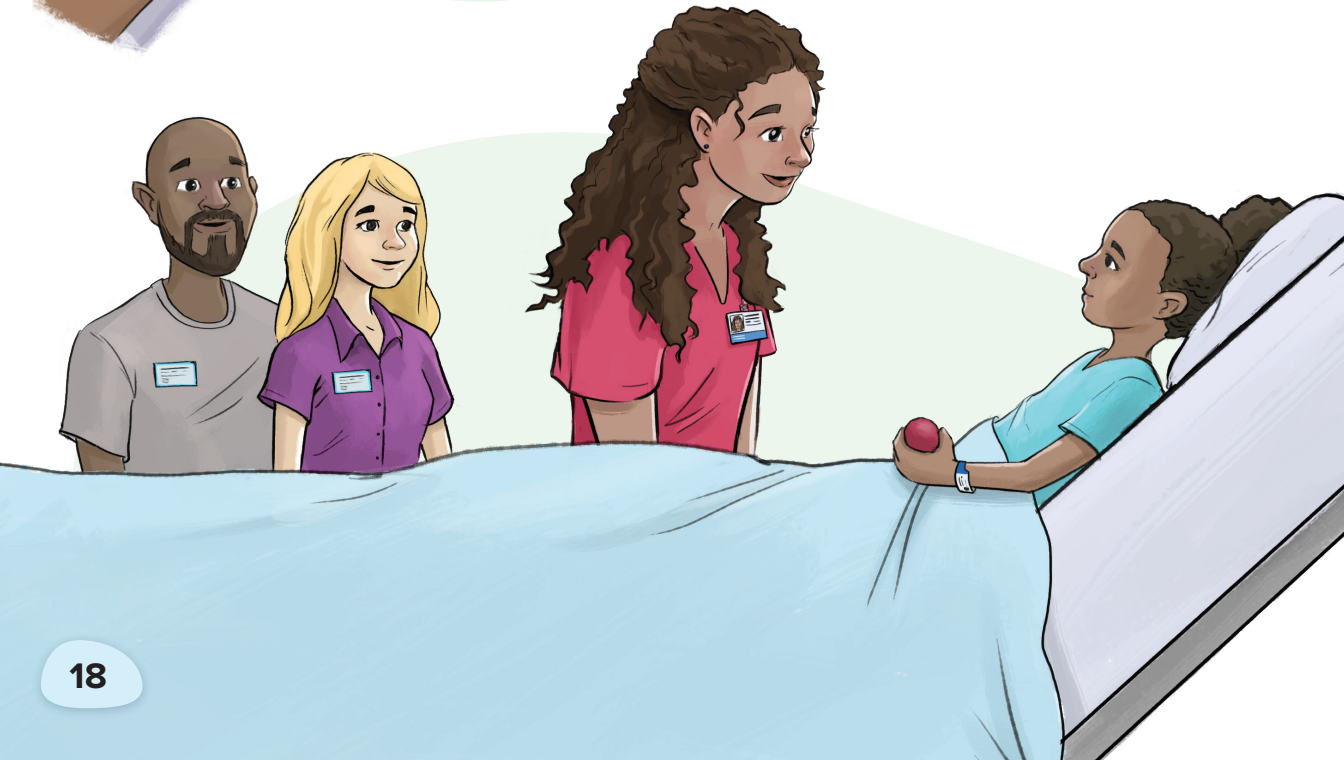
Squeezing a stress ball

Deep breaths

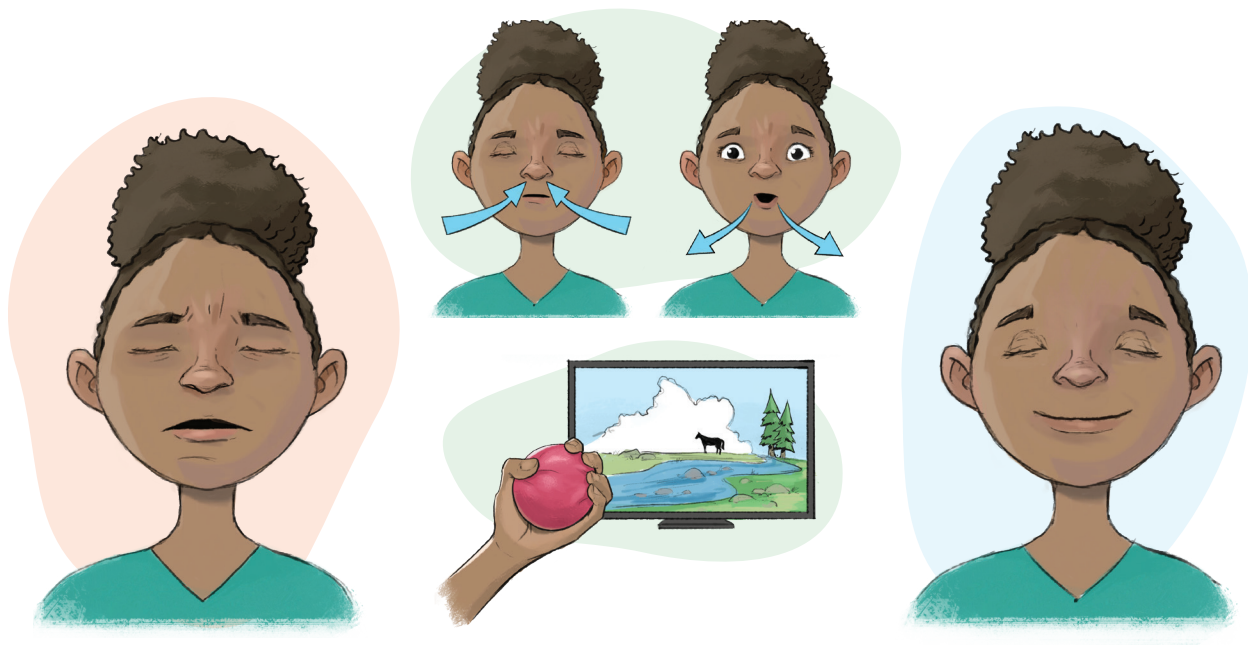
Listening to music

Using a fidget toy

Before the IV, Carly gave me some coping ideas. I chose to squeeze a stress ball and take slow, deep breaths.



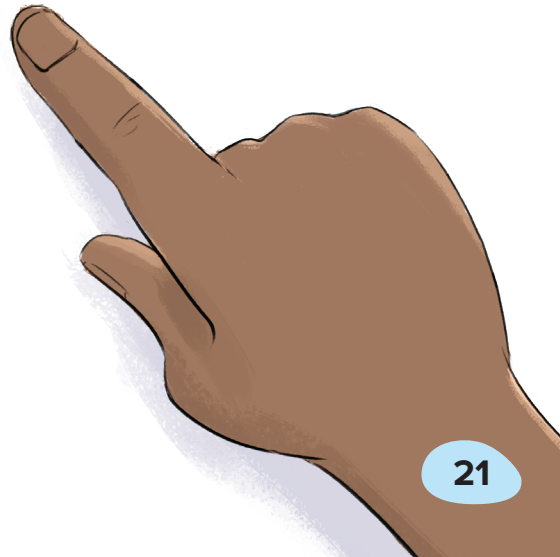
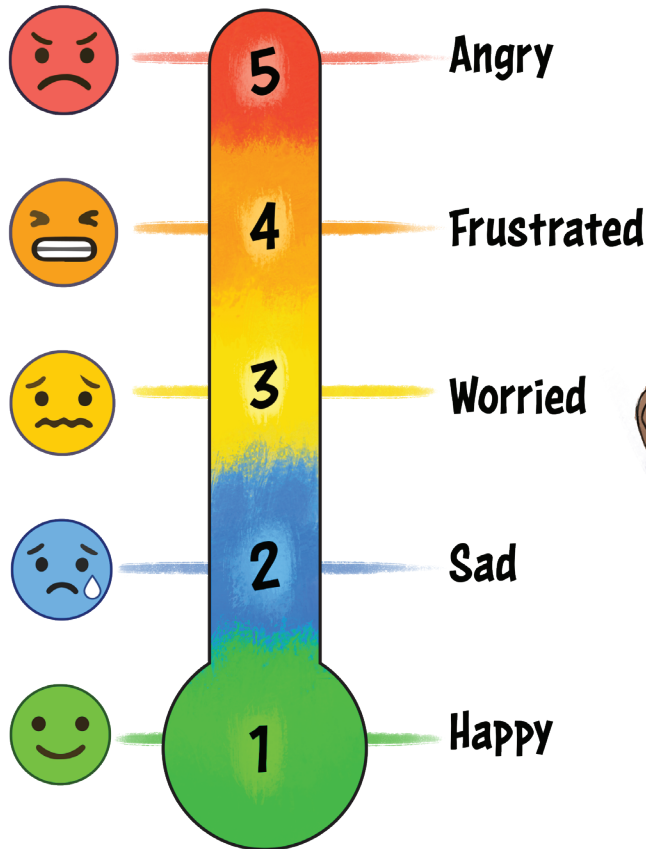
After the **procedures**, I was still in a lot of **pain**. Carly helped me use the coping tools that I had used during the IV and watch a movie.



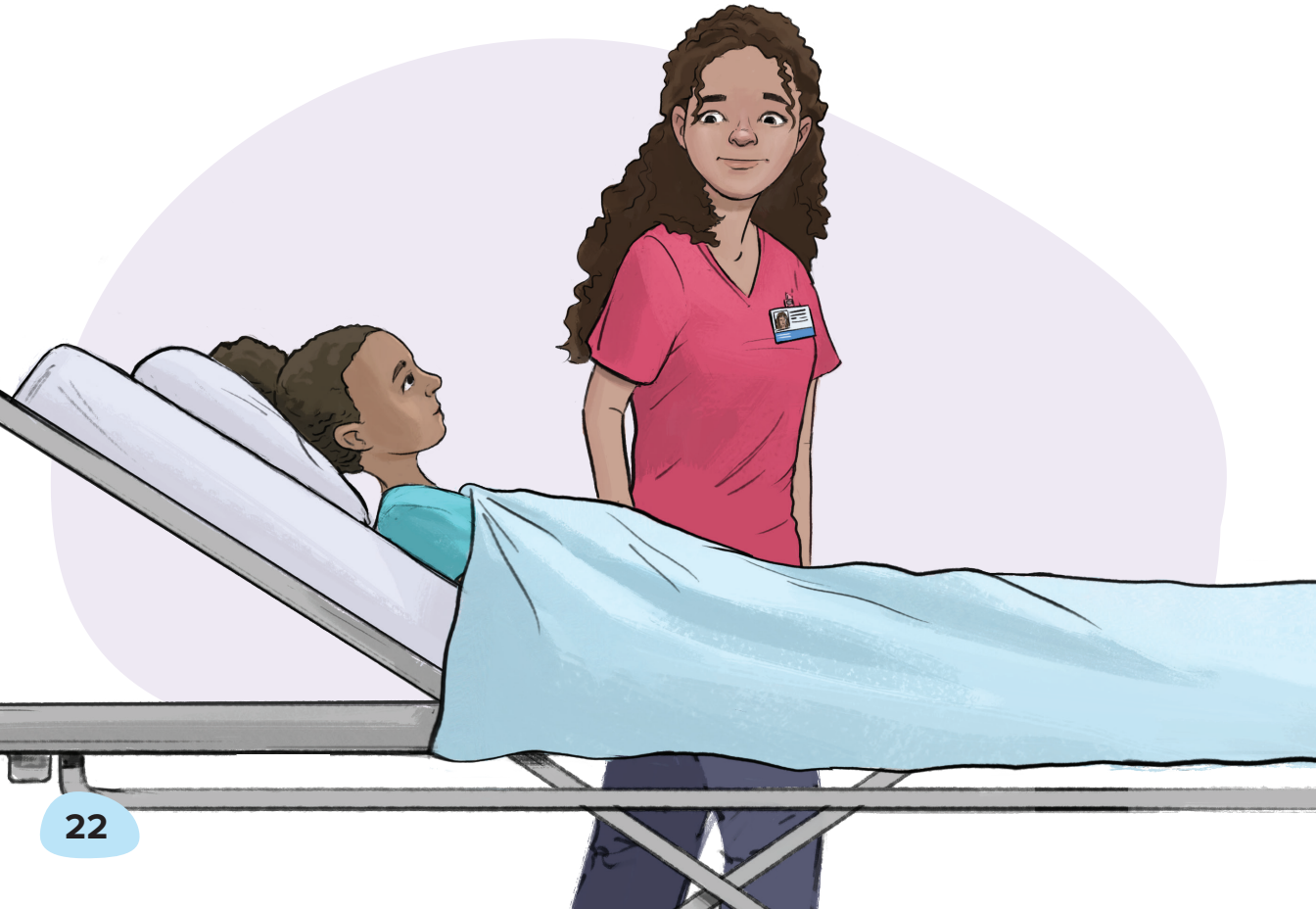
The medical team came back and told me I needed **surgery** to help me get better. So much was happening. I was feeling **frustrated** – I just wanted to feel better already. It also made me feel **sad**. Why did this have to happen to me?



Carly prepared me for surgery so I knew what to expect.
Carly told me it was okay to have lots of feelings. She
reminded me that feelings come and go.



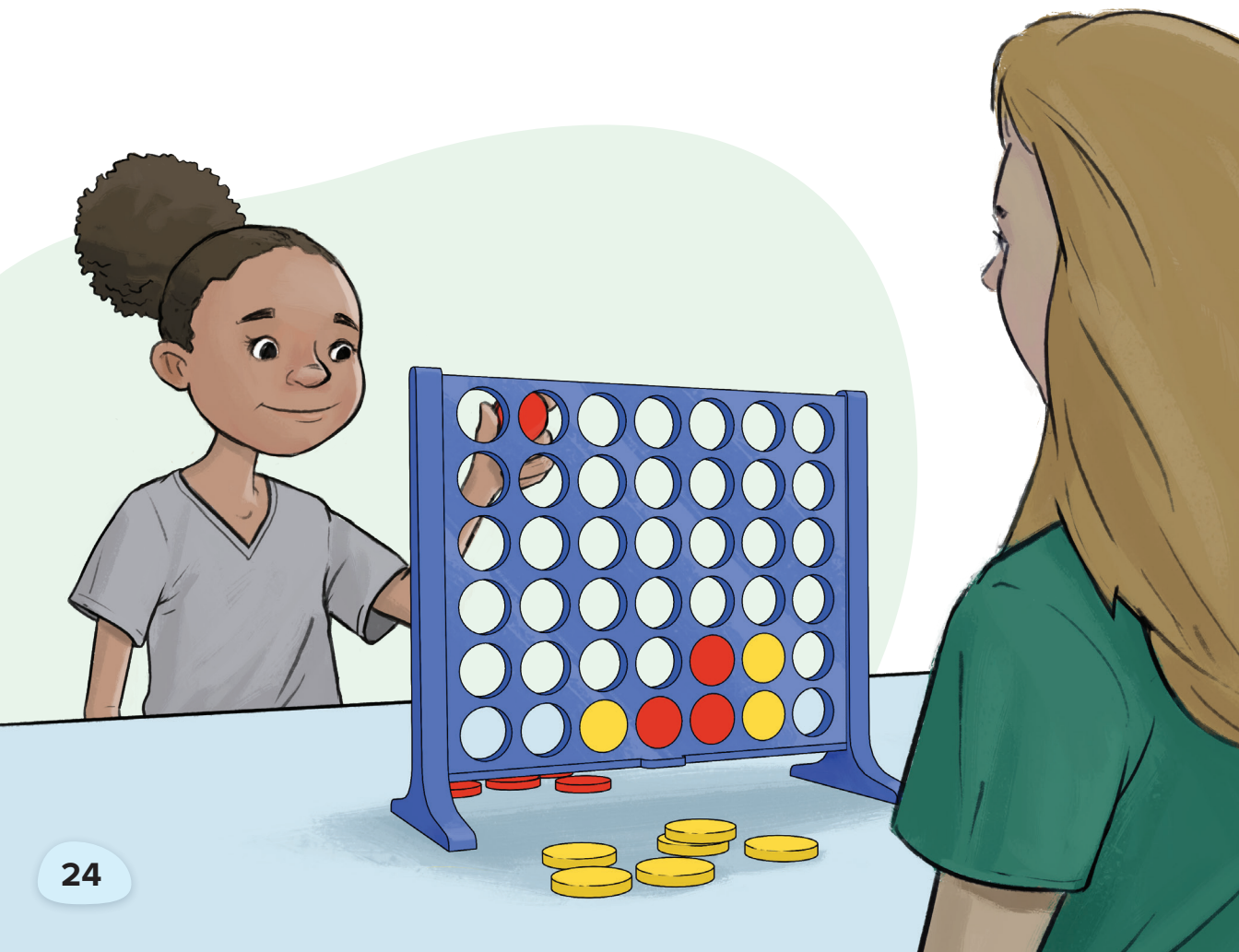
I was soon headed to surgery. I hugged my parents and said, “see you in a bit.” I was glad Carly was able to stay with me.



In no time, I was waking up after surgery with my parents next to me. I felt **happy** that surgery was over and my parents were with me.



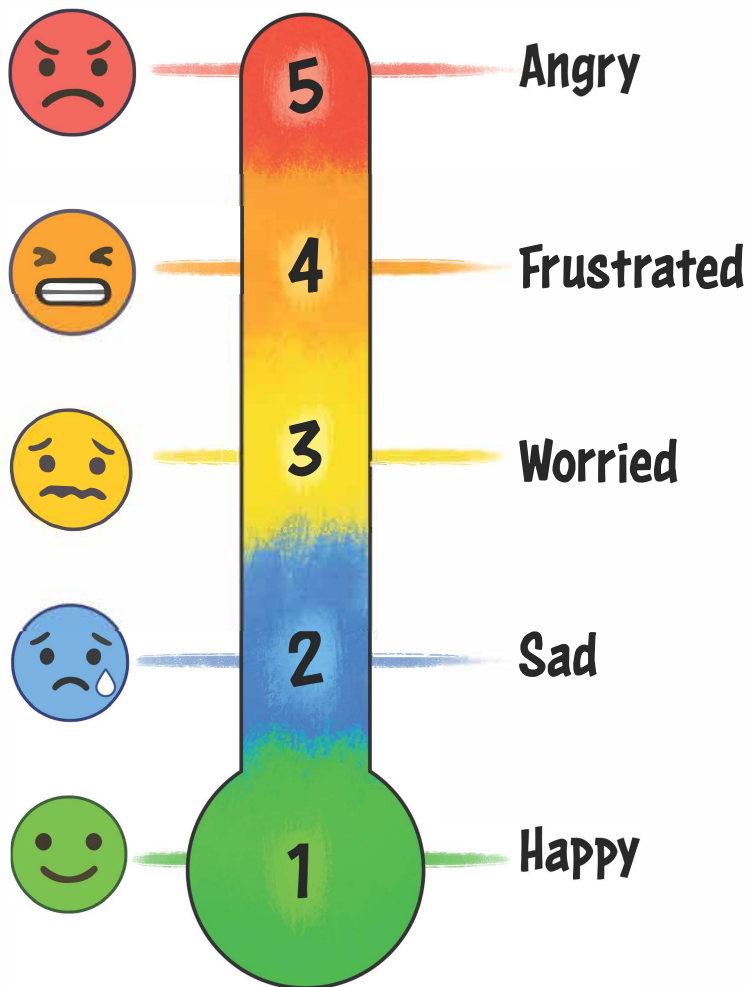
I had to stay overnight in the hospital, but the good part was, I felt better the next day! I was even able to go to the hospital activity area and PLAY.



Being in the hospital was not always easy. But I learned that I can do hard things. I also learned new coping tools to keep in my coping kit. I can use them anytime I have big feelings or face something hard.



How are you feeling?



What would you put in your coping kit?

Write some coping ideas to place into your backpack:



Tips for supporting children at the hospital:

1. Stay calm.
2. Talk about feelings and questions.
3. Explain what is happening in simple words.
4. Use coping tools.
5. Make time for play.
6. Offer realistic choices.
7. Let your child know all feelings are okay.
8. Bring comfort items from home.
9. Keep routines as much as possible.
10. Tell the medical team what helps your child.

Glossary

Feelings: The different ways you can feel, such as happy, sad, excited, or worried.

Coping: Things you do to handle big feelings and get through tough situations.

Emergency Department (ED): The part of the hospital that helps people who are hurt or very sick right away.

Child Life Specialist: A hospital helper who helps kids learn, play, and cope.

IV: A tiny tube that gives your body medicine or fluids.

Ultrasound: A special camera that uses sound waves to take pictures of the inside of your body.

Procedure: Something a doctor or nurse does to help you stay healthy or get better.

Surgery: When a doctor fixes a problem inside your body to help you get better.

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