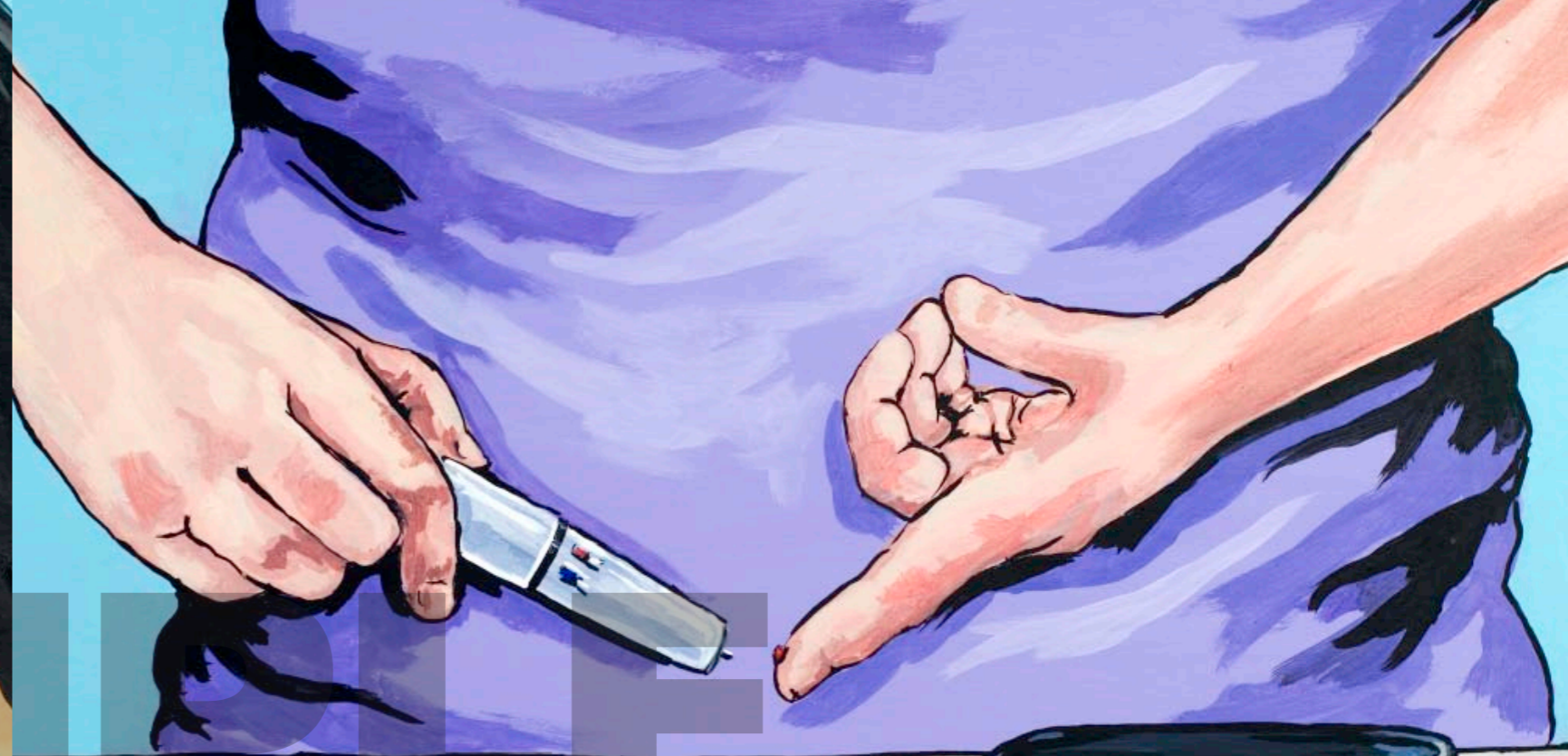
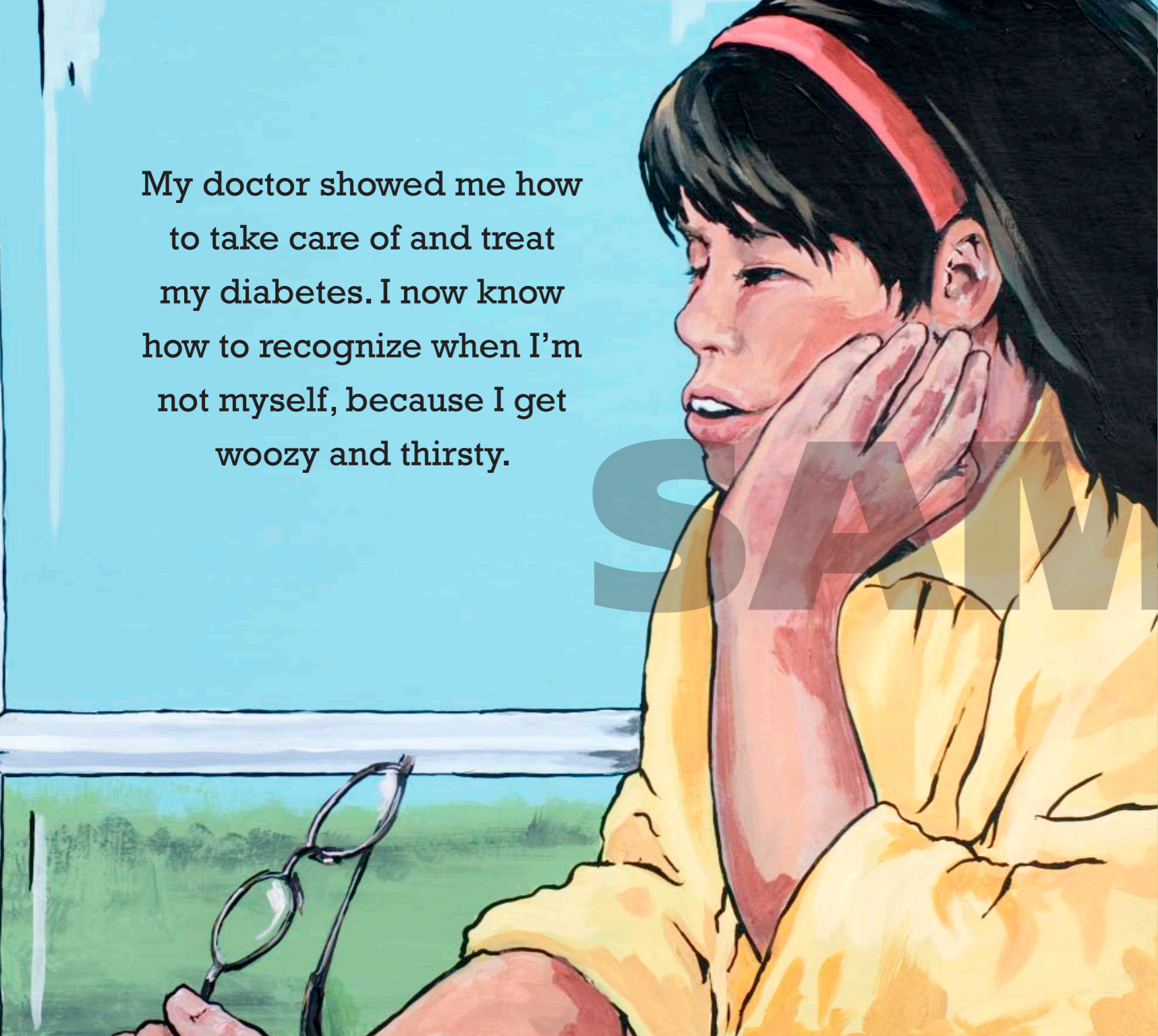


My doctor showed me how to take care of and treat my diabetes. I now know how to recognize when I'm not myself, because I get woozy and thirsty.



I still have stomach problems. I get heartburn. But I just have to watch my diet and my carbohydrates. If my sugar is over 150, I get an extra unit of insulin.

Author's Note

As a school counselor in a large elementary school, I work with children confronting a wide variety of personal challenges from family changes to learning disabilities, a loss of a grandparent to having an incarcerated parent. Treating each child as an individual and with respect, I try to help them explore their feelings about their struggle, as well as uncover options they would like to try to find healing and comfort. I focus on unconditional acceptance, as well as past successes. We create goals and interventions—sometimes spontaneously—that the child is “willing” to try in order to create greater emotional well-being. My goal is not to save or judge children, but just to be with them in their journey. This support is usually what they need to grow stronger and become self-sufficient adults.

Many students have disabilities that not only affect their everyday living, but may cause pain emotionally as they realize they are different. This book was an impromptu intervention conjointly created between a 3rd grade student, Natalie, and myself. We wrote this book to help both of us! This was Natalie's way of explaining diabetes and its effect on a child to me, but also my way of helping her put into words her feelings about this disease.

This book can be a resource for parents, educators, and counselors who know children with diabetes. But also, it can be a lesson of respect when working with other children to encourage understanding and acceptance.

I have included some work pages children can use to create their own story and uncover their personal feelings and individuality. Everyone's story deserves to be heard!

Cindy Leason Hepner, M.Ed.

Adult Guide

This book provides some examples of exploration an adult can use to help a child.

The goals are:

1. Help the child define their problem “from their personal” viewpoint and developmental level of understanding. (Often what we think is the problem is not what they consider important). This may require some prompting, particularly if problem behaviors need to also be addressed.
2. Uncover feelings associated with this problem. Some education on “feeling words” may be necessary to help define appropriate labels that match their descriptions. Remember to validate and accept all feelings as real and important.
3. Uncover past successes and explore exceptions when the child utilized appropriate solutions. Recognize and praise these accomplishments. Remind the child that he/she should be proud of themselves and the strength it took to help themselves.
4. Perhaps using past successful experiences again, create a plan for change incorporating ideas that motivate the child and he/she is able to attempt. Be sure to instill hope and encourage him/her toward solutions.
5. Promote self-esteem and self-acceptance of his/her differences, including anything he/she sees as a flaw, adversity, or challenge. Look for strengths and vitality that make him/her feel unique and special.