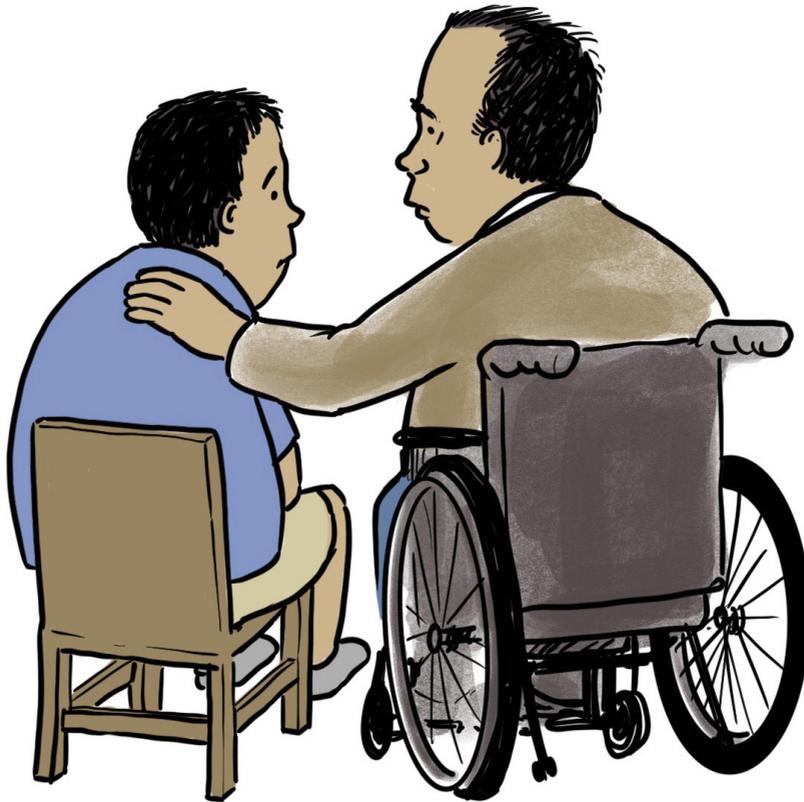


# My Hero



A Children for Health book

# My Hero

## Introduction

*My Hero* was a story developed over many months. It is a collaboration between the team at Children for Health and with children, their teachers, youth workers and public health professionals in Guam.

We began the process by training teachers in how to run workshops with children, using the participation of children in action and learning on the prevention of Type 2 Diabetes. The teachers conducted these workshops with the children and collected ideas and information from them. These included ideas for characters, situations and little pieces of dialogue.

The central character is Harry whose father is ill with Type 2 Diabetes, this idea and Harry's worry are lifted straight from these workshops. From the workshops we also understood that children knew a lot about healthy eating: the need to drink water instead of sugary drinks and the need to exercise. The problem is that despite knowing what to do, for many reasons it is hard to do make these choices. So this story looks at the idea of identity and how changing habits are linked to identity.

As well as these themes Children for Health also seeks to weave in the very real influence that children have on each other in early adolescence. Children for Health worked with an experienced author to create a good story from the many ideas developed in Guam.

Once our story was written in draft form, the team in Guam reviewed it and gave us feedback. We have had more readers and received feedback from other experts as we wish for this book to work, not only for children in Guam, but for children in other countries too.

The red sentences provide summaries for older children to use when they read or tell the story to others including younger children.

We hope you like it!

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ISBN 978-1-911480-52-5

Date of publication May 2023

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank...

Ms. Flora Asanoma, a Guahan Academy Charter School Health and Physical Education Teacher, for facilitating in-person workshops.

Mr. Franklin Castro, a Guahan Academy Charter School Language Arts Teacher and Curriculum Coordinator, for coordination of the project at the school.

The 6th and 7th grade students of Ms. Flora Asanoma in school year 2022-2023 Guahan Academy Charter School, Tiyan, Guam.

Ms. Yvonne Tyquiengco, an Inarajan Middle School health teacher, for facilitating in-person workshops.

The health class students in school year 2022-2023, Guam Department of Education.

Facilitators with Manelu and the youth who participated in the workshops.

Rico Diaz and Renee Veksler, with the Get Healthy Guam Coalition, who coordinated the project.

Guam Marianas Training Centre for supporting efforts in health promotion.

Guam Economic Development Authority and Guam Regional Medical City for the Qualifying Certificate Community Contribution Grant Program award that supports this Health Care Project.

Guam Memorial Hospital Authority for their in-kind support of this project.



## Glossary

**Hero** – a person admired for their qualities

**Weird** – strange or different from the norm

**Type 2 Diabetes** – a common form of diabetes that is linked to the body being unable to use insulin or produce insulin in the normal way

**Pre-diabetes** – a state of the body that comes before developing signs of diabetes

**Figure out** – to try to understand

**Junk food** – food that is high in calories and tasty, but low in nutrition and unhealthy, especially if consumed regularly

**Arcade** – a place that has games machines

**Version** – a form of something that is different in form or from another point of view

**Hang out** – a favourite place for spending time

**Reassurance** – the action of removing someone's fears or doubts

**Tragic** – something that is very serious and sad

## Chapter One

Queenie and Harry lived in the same neighbourhood and studied in the same school. They were the same age and both enjoyed going to the beach after school. But they also had many differences.

Queenie didn't have many friends. She wanted friends, and tried to make friends, but most of the other children in her school thought she was weird because she asked a lot of questions. She knew that people found her weird because she had overheard them saying this when they didn't know she was listening. Because of this Queenie often felt sad.

Harry had lots of friends. Each day after school Harry could be found at the beach with lots of people, eating ice cream and popcorn and laughing at one another's stories and jokes. Harry and his friends were all very good at video games, Harry even had a nickname, "Master of Video Games". This made Harry popular at school. Harry always looked happy.

After school one day, Queenie was walking along the beach looking for shells when she saw Harry sitting alone looking sad, which Queenie thought was not his usual self.



Queenie wanted to sit next to him and see if she could make friends with him. Queenie hadn't tried to make friends for a long time, but since Harry was alone it felt a little less scary.

"Hi Harry, how are you?" Queenie asked.

"Hi Queenie, I'm not doing so good today." Harry replied.

"Oh, why is that?" Queenie asked.

"My dad isn't very well, and he seems to get worse every day. He has something called Type 2 Diabetes. He is also in a wheelchair and there is something wrong with his heart too." Harry told Queenie.

"I'm sorry Harry, that would make anyone sad. Is there a way for him to get better?"

"No, his condition is too far along now to be reversed." Harry said sadly.

"Gosh, that must be hard to deal with. Are you scared?" Queenie asked.

"Yes, I am scared about losing my dad, but I am also scared of becoming ill like he is." Harry told Queenie.

"Well, you are healthy Harry; you don't have to be scared of that." Queenie replied.

"No, I am not healthy."

"Why would you think that?" Queenie asked.

"Turns out I have pre-diabetes. I can change it if I change my behaviours. I need to eat healthier foods and get more exercise. But the thing is I love video games, and ice cream and all the junk food I am not supposed to have. If I stop doing all these things, maybe I won't have friends anymore, maybe I will become boring, maybe I won't be me anymore." Harry said.



"I understand Harry, and I think the opposite sometimes. I wish I could change myself. I know people think I am weird because I ask too many questions, but I can't seem to stop myself." Queenie told Harry.

Harry laughed.

"You have asked me A LOT of questions. But you are also the only one who has asked me the right questions. I haven't told anyone else about this problem I'm having because nobody had asked me these questions."

"I just saw you looking sad and wondered if you needed a friend, because I know what that feels like." Queenie replied.

"You do ask lots of questions, but you are a good listener too. Thanks Queenie." Harry said.

"Harry, before I go home is there anything I can do to help?" Queenie asked one last question.

"No, I need to figure out how to change myself and be okay with it." Harry said as he walked off down the beach with his head hung low.

*Queenie and Harry go to the same school. One day they meet at the beach. Harry seems sad and then explains to Queenie that his father is ill with Type 2 Diabetes. Harry also tells her that he has pre-diabetes. He thinks that his friends might not like him anymore.*

## Chapter Two

Queenie couldn't stop thinking about Harry; probably because he was the first person who had talked to her and not called her weird. She wanted to help Harry, but she didn't know how.

As Queenie walked to school that day, she noticed that all the posters outside of the shops and on the walls were of people enjoying themselves with unhealthy foods.

Burgers, sweets, ice cream, chocolate, fizzy drinks.

Queenie went into a shop and looked at all the food. Some foods were labelled as "healthy", "low fat", or "real fruit inside". But when Queenie read the labels, there was actually lots of sugar and chemicals in all these foods. Some of these foods were in Queenie's house and she hadn't even realised how unhealthy they were.



Once Queenie was at school, she could see Harry with all his friends, playing video games on their phones. Harry looked happier, but she couldn't help wondering if he was just pretending.

In class, all the children were asked to describe themselves to the rest of the class.

Harry went first as he was very confident.

"I am Master of Video Games. Someone who likes a challenge and likes winning all my battles. I have friends who I like to spend time with because we make each other laugh and we play games together. My favourite foods are ice cream and popcorn and my favourite place is the beach because it has the best arcade in town."

Everyone cheered for Harry.

Queenie was hoping the school bell would ring before her turn came because she didn't know what to say. But as the others spoke in turn the bell didn't ring, and soon she was up next.

Queenie said swiftly, "I am Queenie. I like to learn about lots of things and I ask a lot of questions which I know people don't always like. I also like the beach and I collect shells

because they are pretty." She could hear people laughing at her, and her cheeks went red with embarrassment as she returned to her seat.

Harry saw this and felt sad for Queenie; he decided to do something brave at recess.

"Hey Queenie, why don't you come and sit with us?" Harry called over to Queenie.



Harry's friends were shocked!

"Harry why have you asked Queenie to sit with us? Don't you think she is a little weird?" Milo asked Harry. Milo is one of Harry's friends.

"Milo, you don't even know her properly! Let's get to know her better." Harry replied.

Queenie felt uncomfortable but went to sit with Harry and his friends anyway.

After school they all went to the beach to get ice cream. Queenie spent most of the time trying not to ask questions and trying not to be weird.

She stood next to Harry when ordering her ice cream. On the menu Queenie saw what an alternative to ice cream was, frozen yoghurt! Queenie ordered this because she hoped to show Harry that being healthy may not be as difficult as he thought.

"Frozen yoghurt is weird Queenie. Why aren't you getting an ice cream?" Milo said as he laughed in Queenie's face.

"I had ice cream yesterday, Milo, and I don't want to put too much sugar in my body because too much sugar can make you ill," Queenie replied.

Harry ordered his favourite ice cream, but thought about Queenie's choice and what she had said. Queenie was being brave by standing out from the crowd. But Harry felt that he had more to lose than Queenie. She didn't have friends, not proper friends anyway, and Harry was worried he might lose his friends if he changed who he was.

*Harry's illness is on Queenie's mind. When she goes shopping, she sees that so much of the food in the shops is unhealthy. At school, Harry asks Queenie to join his group of friends. At the beach when they are all getting ice cream, Queenie orders frozen yoghurt instead.*

## Chapter Three

Queenie could sense that Harry was not comfortable changing his food yet and was still worried about what his friends thought about him. Queenie was worried about this. So she decided to do some research.

Queenie went to the store on her way home from the beach. She couldn't help pacing up and down the aisles. Different foods caught her eye and she decided to look at the labels. *"Is this what the science teacher meant when she described so much of the food we eat as 'Highly Processed'? So many of the food items are not made of whole, natural ingredients but are full of chemicals, sugar, and salt."* She picked up a packet of her favourite biscuits and looked at the list of ingredients on the back of the packet.



It shocked her that what seems to be in the shops is highly processed when we all know that eating fresh food is the best. "Isn't there anything people can do to change this? This food can harm people's health!" exclaimed Queenie to herself.

Queenie went home and watched her mother cook dinner. She saw her mother preparing fresh vegetables and fresh fish and adding spices to it.

"Mom, what makes food healthy for us?" Queenie asked as her mom continued making dinner.

"Well Queenie, food which hasn't had anything added to it is the best for us, like vegetables that grow on plants, fruit from trees, meat and fish. And products which haven't got lots of sugar in them and that haven't been processed too much." Queenie's mother replied.

"Are those vegetables that you're chopping going into our meal tonight?" Queenie asked.

"Vegetables like tomatoes, green beans, onions and squash make a meal tasty and satisfying. Yes, these will be included in tonight's meal."

"Can we have juice instead of water with dinner?" asked Queenie.

"We'll have some pure water. For dessert we can have some apples. It's much better for us to eat whole fruit instead of juice, as you eat the fibre in the fruit too, which is important. Fruit juice and smoothies are not as healthy and contain a lot of sugar." Queenie's mother replied.

"I eat some food which is unhealthy. Do you think I should stop eating it?" Queenie asked.

"Everything is OK to eat if you balance it out. So, something like ice cream is a delicious treat once in a while. Or, having one biscuit is OK, but having ten is not." Queenie's mother laughed.

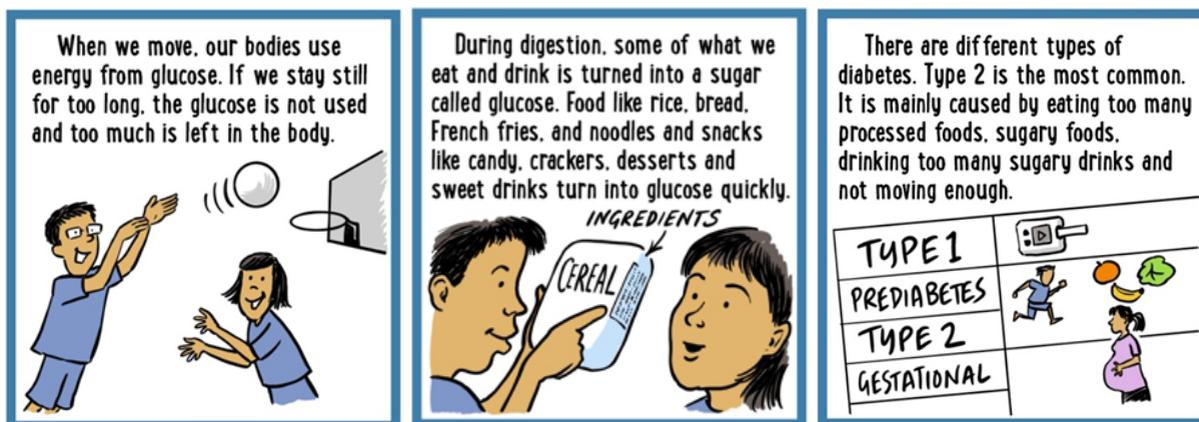
Queenie spent the evening looking at information about healthy eating. Queenie had a thought, "I can do something on this for my class presentation next week".

For her presentation, Queenie decided to make some posters to show her classmates.

The following week the class had to do presentations on something they enjoyed. Queenie had planned to show her shell collection, but she felt this was more important.

As Queenie stood up, she glanced over at Harry, who gave her a smile and a nod. Queenie had been worried that she was risking her new friendship with Harry by talking about an issue Harry had not told people about yet. But Harry's smile and nod gave Queenie some reassurance that he was okay.

Queenie's presentation had the class's attention. Queenie's presentation was about Type 2 Diabetes. Everyone was quiet and listened to what she had to say.



For once in her life, lots of people were asking Queenie the questions and *she* was answering *them*!

Prevent Type 2 Diabetes! 1. Eat and drink less sugar. 2. Eat meals with colorful fruits and vegetables. 3. Move more. 4. Drink mostly water. 5. Get eight hours of sleep at night.



Harry did not share with the others that his father had this condition or that he may get it in the future. But Harry did lots of thinking and was surprised to see how interested other people were about keeping themselves healthy.

*Queenie talks to her mother and then decides to find out more about what food makes some food healthy and others not. She decides to make posters to tell her classmates about all the important information she found out.*

## Chapter Four

At home, Harry's dad was becoming sicker. The doctor told Harry and his family he may not live for much longer.

Harry and his family had changed a lot at home. They cooked healthier meals with lots of colourful vegetables and went for family walks to move their bodies. Harry felt that he was living a double life. On the one hand his lifestyle at home, where he was trying to change to become healthier and on the other hand, his lifestyle at school where his friends and habits were stopping him from making the right choices.

Harry sat with his dad one day to talk about things.

"Harry, I am so proud of you! You have made so many changes which I know have been hard." Harry's dad told him.

"Dad, I haven't made the changes I need to all the time, and I am scared I will lose myself if I do."

"What are you afraid of losing?" Harry's dad asked him.

"I am good at video games, my friends and I like to hang out at the ice cream parlour, and we like to have sleepovers where we eat popcorn and sweets. If I don't do those things, who am I? Maybe I won't have friends anymore?" Harry explained.

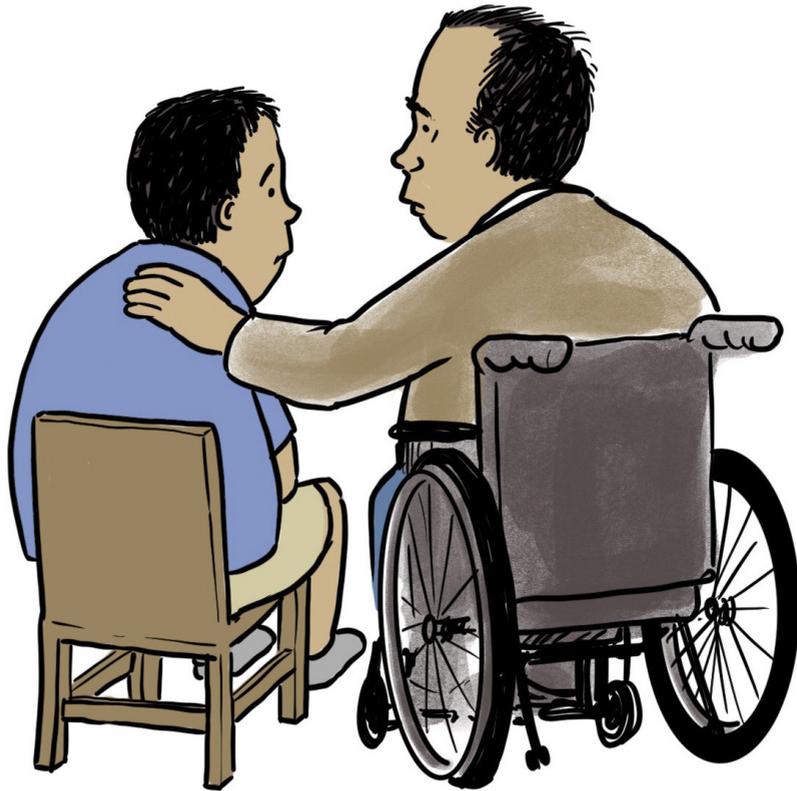
"Harry, that is not who you are. That is just what you like doing. And your friends will still like you even if you do different things sometimes." Harry's dad replied.

"What do you mean, Dad?"

"Harry, tell me who do you think I am?" Harry's dad asked.

"You are my dad! You are my hero. You are brave because you are sick, and you keep going, you keep trying, and you keep loving me!" Harry said, with tears in his eyes.

"I loved playing basketball with you," his dad replied, "I don't do that anymore because I can't, but does that change how you think about me? Does that change who I am?" Harry's dad put his arm around Harry.



Harry looks up at his dad and says, "You will always be my hero no matter what you like to do or what you can do."

Then, Harry's dad asked, "When I couldn't walk anymore and got my wheelchair, did I change in your eyes?"

"No, I felt sad that you couldn't walk, but, like I said, you will always be my hero," Harry said. Harry then gave his dad a big hug.

"Let me describe you now, Harry. You are kind, and you are brave, and you know the importance of friends and family. Most of all you like to have fun! And you are becoming the best version of yourself with every day that passes!"

Harry thought about this conversation a lot over the next few weeks.

He was scared about losing his friends while he was losing his dad.

*Harry and his father talk about Harry's worries and fears. Harry tells his father that he is his hero. Harry's father tells him not to be afraid of changes and that he is a brave person.*

## Chapter Five

Back at school, the class was asked to pair up with someone and this time to describe another person to the class.

Queenie was worried because no one ever paired up with her. But Harry came over to her and asked if he could be her partner.

Queenie knew exactly what to say about Harry, but what would he say about her, she wondered.

Harry stood up in front of the class, and with his eyes on Queenie, started.

"Everyone thinks Queenie is weird. But I like her. She asks questions because she cares. She cares about learning. She cares about people. She cares about learning about other people! She is kind and offers help when she can. She isn't very good at video games, but that is because she prefers walking on the beach. Queenie is brave because she stands up for others and isn't afraid to be herself." Harry told the class. The class was silent for a moment then everyone cheered - not for Harry, but for Queenie.

"Go Queenie! Everyone needs to be themselves!" The class roared!

"Yeah! Go Queenie! You taught us loads about our health the other day too!" Someone shouted.



It was Queenie's turn, but before she stood up Harry handed her a piece of paper. The paper was Harry's notes he took down before presenting. "Add your own bits to this Queenie, but could you also say this about me?" Harry asked.

Queenie nodded and smiled as she looked through his notes.

"Harry is a lot of people all rolled into one. He is 'Master of Video Games', but he is also good at football and basketball. Harry likes to be with his friends and family because they make him laugh and feel good about himself. He can also be sad, because his dad isn't well. Harry's dad is his number one role model in the entire world!" Queenie read aloud from Harry's notes.

Queenie added her own bit in.

"Harry is one of the only people who saw me as I am and didn't mind me asking so many questions. Harry is friendly and cares about people just as much as I do. Harry isn't afraid to make changes because he is brave." Queenie finished.

The class was quiet and felt sad for Harry and what he was going through. Harry's friends wanted to help cheer him up. So, they, and the rest of the class teamed up on a plan.

The class all went to the beach that day after school to hang out. Queenie was also there, finally included with the others. And Harry's friends started asking him questions about his dad. Harry decided now was the time and told them all about his dad and everyone ordered frozen yoghurt instead of ice cream.

*In a class activity Harry and Queenie describe each other to the class. Everyone cheers for Queenie after Harry describes her. Harry gives Queenie some notes to use when it is her turn to describe him. He wants the class to know his dad is not well. After school Harry tells his friends the truth about how ill his dad is.*

## Chapter Six

The tragic day came, and surrounded by his family, Harry's dad died.

Harry did not go to school that week because he was very sad and cried a lot.

Harry invited his friends to the funeral and made the brave choice to make a speech for all his family and friends about his dad.

"My dad was, and always will be, my hero. He had Type 2 Diabetes which turned into a lot more problems including not being able to walk well, and his heart becoming very weak. But he never let that stop him from being the best dad in the world. He told me once that who we are is not about what we like or dislike, it is about so much more. It is about how we see the world, and ourselves and our friends and family. It is about how we can be the best version of ourselves. I have pre-diabetes and I have been making some changes. This doesn't change who I am because I know my dad will always be proud of me. Change can be hard, but I hope that I will keep making choices that will make me the best version of myself and keep healthy. Dad you are my hero, and I hope you are resting well."

Everyone at the funeral cried as Harry gave his speech.

## Chapter Seven

School was very different for Harry and Queenie after the funeral.

Harry played more football and basketball, and only the occasional video game.

Queenie made friends with all of Harry's friends who finally understood that one of her best qualities was how she asked the right questions and cared about people.

Everyone ate more frozen yoghurt and other healthier foods.

At times when they brought food and ate together, the friends made sure they always brought some cut up cucumbers, apples and carrots. Harry and Queenie always ate the healthy food and drank water. It became normal to them after a while and they enjoyed it.

And every time someone found a pretty shell, they gifted it to Queenie. The shells became a symbol of the time Queenie and Harry became friends.

Harry and Queenie became the best of friends and when new challenges came into their lives, they got through them together.

Harry always thought he had some extra luck, feeling that his dad was watching over him.



*Harry's father dies and Harry tells people at the funeral about his pre-diabetes. Harry finds that his friends understand and support him. Harry improves his diet and plays more football and basketball. Queenie finds new friendships everywhere.*

## Activities Section

**My Hero** is a story for children aged 10-14 depending on their reading ability. They can read it to younger children using the red sentences at the bottom of the pages plus the pictures. The themes of the book are about the children learning about preventing pre-diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes.

### Ideas for Using the Storybook

1. Ask the children to look at three of the pictures. Ask them to guess what the story is about. The right answers are not needed - this activity helps to develop curiosity.
2. Read the story with the children.
3. Ask the children to read the story to each other or retell the story chapter by chapter.
4. Divide the children into groups. Each group can read, retell, or act out their chapter and think about what they learned or like about that chapter.

*Add your own ideas!*

### Ten Comprehension Questions

These are questions about what is written in the story. They are suitable for pairs or groups of children to ask and answer verbally or, if writing practice is required, select one or two of the questions and ask children to write an answer. With the discussion or writing approach, children can take it in turns to read or tell their answers to the whole group.

1. Why did people think Queenie was weird?
2. What did Queenie like to collect on the beach?
3. Why was Harry sad when Queenie found him on the beach?
4. What was Harry's nickname?
5. What was the reason why Harry said he wanted to be friends with Queenie?
6. Why was Harry scared of making changes to his lifestyle?
7. What did Queenie's mother say about the benefits of eating vegetables and fruit?
8. What was the message that Queenie prepared in her presentation about how important it is to move?
9. What health problems can happen if you have Type 2 Diabetes?
10. What 5 things can a person do to help prevent Type 2 diabetes.

*Add your own questions!*

## **Other Questions**

These questions ask children to think more deeply about the story and link the story to their own lives. Select one or two questions or ask children to vote for the questions they like the best. Ask children to 'take a question home' to talk about with their friends and family. At the next session, ask them to describe what their friends and family discussed then make up music or songs, draw pictures or dance.

Also, you can use one or two of these questions as a topic for a lesson or a class project.

1. This story is called *My Hero*... what do you think this means and why do you think this has been picked as the title?
2. How do you think it feels to be told you need to change your lifestyle?
3. How can friends help each other become healthier?
4. Why is it important to listen to how others feel?

*Add your own questions!*

## **Reading Between the Lines Questions**

These are questions about moments in the story where there might be characters who are thinking before, after or between the sentences.

1. How do you think Queenie felt when Harry asked her to sit with him and his friends?
2. Do you think Harry was boring when he changed his lifestyle?
3. Why did Harry become friends with Queenie in the end?
4. How do you think the memory of his dad will help Harry in his future life?

*Add your own questions!*

## **Response to the Story Questions**

These are questions which are asking about your own feelings about different aspect of the story.

1. How can you help people in your class or school feel more included?
2. When you read that Harry's dad had died how did this make you feel and why?
3. What would you say to someone who was going through losing their parent?

*Add your own questions!*

## **'Suppose you were...' Questions**

These are questions which ask you to put yourself into the story and to think about how you would react to an event or a character.

1. Suppose you couldn't join in with other children eating ice cream, how would you feel?
2. Suppose you were Queenie and wanted to help someone who was struggling, what would you do?
3. Suppose you were trying to help someone give up things they like to eat, drink, or do to try to become healthier what would you do?

*Add your own questions!*

## **Linking the Story to Real Life Questions**

These are questions which help you think about how this story might relate to people and situations that you can face in real life.

1. When was the last time someone really listened to you? Describe how that made you feel.
2. Have you ever seen someone being left out? What did you do? Did you know how to help them or did you feel you couldn't help them?
3. Describe how you would share what you have learnt from this story with others? Friends, family, siblings.

*Add your own questions!*

# Activities on Promoting Health and Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

## Introduction

People who have healthy lifestyles can get Type 2 Diabetes (T2D). A healthy lifestyle is only one factor that contributes to preventing the disease. If a child has one parent with T2D, then the risk to the child of getting it is higher. If both parents have T2D then the risk is even higher.

However, lifestyle factors can lead to Type 2 Diabetes and unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly common for children to be diagnosed with pre-diabetes. This is especially true in places where children regularly consume high levels of sugar and carbohydrates.

It is always good for children to develop good health habits like eating healthier food, drinking water, and having enough sleep.

Changing health habits is hard as mostly we are choosing to do things for reasons that are the best for us at the time.

*For example: the reason why a young person starts to smoke is not to do with the taste (which is horrible!) or that the person likes to cough and then smell of ash, they will do it for one or more very good reasons: to join a group, impress a friend, look 'cool' or grown up, or to have something that they can share with others. They may enjoy the 'lighting up' and the ritual can help a person feel more powerful and bonded to others who are also smoking. Smoking gives them something to do. But because of the addictive nature of tobacco it is not long before that person feels they need to smoke and they get used to the taste. Smoking is extremely harmful to their health and **everyone who smokes knows that** but the knowledge that its harmful is rarely powerful enough to motivate people to stop, especially when they are addicted. Smoking or starting to smoke will feel like the best choice the person can make at the time despite the health risks.*

It is easier for children to adopt healthy habits as they grow and develop rather than changing behaviour later and they can develop good habits quickly with the support of family and friends.

For many people (but not all), the prevention of Type 2 Diabetes is linked to living a healthy lifestyle. This means eating well (i.e. a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds pulses and other 'real' foods) plus drinking water or other drinks that do not have any added sugar. It also means being active (like walking, jogging, cycling, gardening and generally just moving around). Even 'fidgeting' is useful movement! Enough good sleep is also important.

The reasons why families may not be eating well, like the smoking example, may have little to

do with the actual taste of what they are eating (until the person starts to feel strongly attached to the items they are eating) and more to do with the comforting activity or regular habits with which these items are associated. For example – I love to walk with my friend to school, and, on the way, we buy my favourite sugary drink, a ready meal (like Lunchables), potato chips and candy. We share some of the candy as we walk.

Health habits are linked to the culture of the family (including traditions), habits, everyday ways of doing things at home and a school, the environment around a child, the attitudes they have or adopt from those around them and the way their body works uniquely. Children may have limited power to choose what they consume with their family. However, as they get older, children can be influential and motivate others. They can be agents of change. Their scope to do so will not only vary widely from village to village or community to community but from family to family.

It is great to involve children in what they can do to influence change and how to achieve it. Children can come up with their own ideas about what they can do – on their own and with others. They need opportunities to understand different factors influencing choices and when given the chance to do so and in a learning environment where they feel safe to speak.

Our challenge as their teachers and facilitators is to create that informed, safe learning environment and ensure no child feels the pressure to take action beyond what they feel skilled and competent to do, especially if the activity involves speaking out or initiating a discussion with the family. Children must be encouraged to do activities that feel fun and safe. As adults we need to be supportive and encouraging to children and resist unhelpful comments which can have a profound impact on how children see themselves.

*When I was 14, an adult who was working to serve school lunches  
saw what I put on my plate and said,*

*“Are you going to eat all that?” I remember it extremely vividly.*

*From that time, I started weighing myself. That was the start of my eating disorder.*

This toolkit proposes activities and discussions to help children develop an awareness for the ways in which their everyday lives and the choices being made affect their health and wellbeing as they grow. The aim is to prevent Type 2 Diabetes. The ambition of Children for Health and of our partner in Guam is to equip children with the information and the tools to become aware of how to live healthier, happier lives using a process that connects with the everyday realities of the lives that they lead. Part of this process is also enabling children to share what they have learned with others.

Not all the following activities will be right for the group of children you work with and many of the activities will need to be adapted.

**Please note:** Children for Health supports the idea that people can be healthy at many sizes. We do not believe in weight loss through dieting and the pressures in society that cause children to try to lose weight. These pressures are ineffective and are almost always harmful and can lead to eating disorders. Children for Health promotes healthy eating and enjoyable physical activity to feel better and live longer. We do not believe weight loss through dieting is the way to become healthy. We do believe in learning what makes us feel strong and happier and emphasizing the small changes that are realistic and that can be sustained and supported within a child's family and community setting. Scientific evidence supports this.

### **Activity 1: Let's Get our Facts Straight**

*Explain - In many countries children are involved in sharing messages about different health topics. These topics include Type 2 Diabetes (T2D). Here are the 10 T2D messages. You can also download the two-sided Children for Health poster from our website. The 10 messages are illustrated and there are suggestions for more activities on the back of the poster.*

1. Our body breaks down what we eat and drink into fuel that our bodies need to grow, move, and think. This is called digestion.
2. During digestion some of what we eat and drink is turned into a sugar called glucose. Food like rice, bread, French fries, and noodles and snacks like candy, crackers, desserts, and sweet drinks turn into glucose quickly.
3. When we move, our bodies use energy from glucose. If we stay still for too long, the glucose is not used and too much is left in the body.
4. There are different types of diabetes. Type 2 is the most common. It can be caused by eating too many processed foods, sugary foods, drinking too many sugary drinks, and not moving enough.
5. Type 2 Diabetes is a health condition that happens when there is too much glucose in the blood. It can make a person tired, weak, thirsty, and feel ill but some people do not feel any symptoms.
6. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes! 1. Eat and drink less sugar. 2. Eat meals with colorful fruits and vegetables. 3. Move more. 4. Drink mostly water. 5. Get eight hours of sleep at night.
7. Type 2 Diabetes affects the circulation of the blood. If not controlled it can damage the eyes, heart, kidneys, nerves, skin and lower limbs.
8. To make sure our body is strong inside and out, we must be as active as we can.
9. Prediabetes happens when sugar levels in the blood are high. It can be reduced by eating well and moving more. More and more children have prediabetes which can lead to Type 2 diabetes.
10. Changing what we eat and drink and moving more can be HARD at first. Help from friends and family can make eating healthy and moving more fun for everyone. Start today with one small change.

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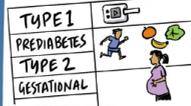
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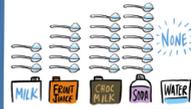
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1. In the whole group ask the children to take it in turns to read out the 10 T2D messages. Explain the meaning of each message as necessary. Ask after each one – Hands up if you knew that! Hands up if you didn't!
2. Explain - *Here are 10 messages about T2D for children of your age to learn and share! Imagine you are sharing these messages to your friends and family.*
3. In pairs or small groups ask the children to learn ONE of the 10 messages. (Give each pairs/group a different message). Ask the children to practice saying the messages out loud together. One by one and in turn, ask the children to recite their message together. If there is not enough time in the session to learn the message, split this session into two. Ask them to practice and recite their message at the next session. They can add actions which help children remember messages.
4. If time or if children finish before others, ask them to illustrate one message in their notebooks. Doing this also aids the memory.
5. Discuss with the children (in small groups first and/or in the whole group)
6. What are the best ways to promote health and prevent TD2 and what can children do to help?

## Activity 2: Letter to the Leadership

1. Children can find all the local schools, gyms, libraries, health centres etc. that sell sugary snacks and drinks.
2. They can work together to compose a letter to send to these places. See below for text that can be used or adapted.
3. After the letter is delivered, children can follow up to find out if any action has been taken.

### **To Whom it May Concern,**

*To translate science into improving public health we are writing to request that you consider a policy to phase out the sale of sugary drinks at your institution.*

*Sugary drinks are the single largest source of added sugars in our diet. Drinking sugary drinks has been strongly linked to the increase of major chronic diseases that afflict our community. These diseases include obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, and tooth decay.*

*Many top health centres have already implemented policies to remove sugary drinks. To protect the citizens of our community from preventable chronic diseases and premature death, we strongly urge you to consider taking action on sugary drinks.*

*Thanks for your consideration.*

*Sincerely,*

## Activity 3: Draw and Write

1. Give all the children a sheet of paper and ask them to write the phrases, Pre-Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes at the centre of the page.
2. Ask the children to write words and phrases and/or draw pictures that come to mind when they see these phrases.
3. In pairs or small groups ask children to share their ideas.
4. A further 'whole group' diagram can be made putting the children's ideas together.

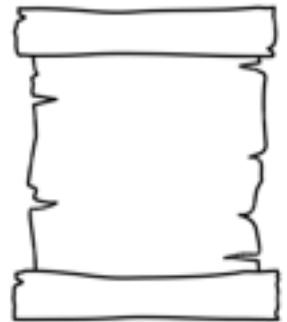
**Note:** This is a good exercise that can help adults understand any myths or misunderstandings about Pre-Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes. It is important to check children's Draw and Write results for accuracy and to correct any inaccurate ideas. Conduct a session about the facts of Pre-Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes if needed. Activity 1 is useful to do this.

## Activity 4: Life in Threes

1. Ask children to work alone for this first step. Explain - *You are being blasted off to another planet. You have to choose three food items, three drinks and three play items (like a ball or a skipping rope).* Write these into your notebook.
2. In groups of 3 or 4 ask the children to share their ideas. Ask them to make another list of nine food items, three drinks and three play items. Explain - *This time remember that you won't have any other food items and you want to make sure you will keep your body and mind happy and healthy on your new planet. As you discuss this together, you can change your ideas from the first list.*
3. In the same group – ask the children to draw a planet on a large piece of paper and draw onto it nine food items, three drinks and three play items.
4. Display your planets for the whole group to see by dividing the whole group in half. One half of the group visit the planets of the other half so that the members of the group can explain their choices. Then swap over.
5. Using stickers or pens to make a tick, ask each child to put a sticker or a tick beside the planet they think is most likely to be where the people will be the strongest and healthiest due to the food, drink and fun activities on that planet.

## Activity 5: Let's Move!

1. In pairs or small groups. Write the phrase, 'Let's Move!' in the centre of a large piece of paper and draw a circle around it. This can also be done in a notebook.
2. Discuss the physical activities you do or want to do during the week such as helping in the house or garden, walking, dancing or basketball.
3. Write the names of each activity around the middle phrase.
4. Each member of the group puts a tick beside all the listed activities they enjoy and a cross beside those they do not enjoy.
5. Discuss activities they would like to do which they don't do and write those on the paper and draw a triangle around this activity/ies.
6. Discuss activities they do but would like to do more often and put a circle around those activities.
7. On a smaller piece of paper, each child writes a pledge to do one small thing to increase their physical activity in the next week. It can be fun to create these as little scrolls.
8. Remember to follow up these pledges and give children the chance to create more. Maybe there could be prizes for those children undertaking and achieving the most pledges over one term.



## Activity 6: I am the Ruler

Alone, in pairs or in a group write, draw or 'draw and write' your ideas to answer to the following question. *If you were the ruler in your country, what would you do to help your people eat more healthy food, drink more water and do more physical activity?*



## Activity 7: Three Big Questions

Here are some **Big Questions** to ask children to debate or discuss in small groups and then in the whole group.

1. What would you ask your aunty if she told you she had just been told she has Pre-Diabetes or Type 2 Diabetes?
2. How could your family's homes and lives change to try to reduce their risk of Pre-Diabetes and T2D?
3. If you were to use social media to tell others about Pre-Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes, how would you do it and what would the core message be?

## Activity 8: Big Chart

The **Big Chart** activity is a way that peers can help to nudge each other into trying to achieve a wider variety of fresh food items in their diet or to increase physical activity. The idea is to create two wall charts for display in the classroom.

Both charts have the names of the children in your group down one side. On the food and drink chart – a growing list of fresh, healthy food items across the top (plus water). On the physical activity chart a growing list of different activities.

Each morning the children are encouraged to go and tick the box where there is the overlap of the food/activity and their name. From time to time a teacher or facilitator refers to the chart and selects a child to stand up and talk about the food or meal they had that included that food item or physical activity. This is best done quite a lot at the start of using the **Big Chart** as it should reduce cheating!

This activity can be done regularly and quickly and creates a learning environment where increasing physical activity and increasing the variety of fresh healthy food is regularly celebrated. The facilitator closely monitors that peers help and support each other and do not compete or

tease each other. It might not work well in every setting. It should work well when the group is already happy, calm, and supportive. Depending on how well used the charts are they may need to be replaced from time to time. Here is an example but you can adapt it however you like!

		Food Items		
Names		Broccoli	Tomatoes	Water
1	Miss Castro (teacher)	√√		
2	Luigi		√	
3	Mario			
4	Joe	√		
5	Sara		√√	

		Physical Activities		
Names		Housework	Dancing	Football
1	Miss Castro (teacher)	√√		
2	Luigi		√	
3	Mario			
4	Joe	√		
5	Sara		√√	

### Activity 9: Making Commercials or Radio 'spots'

1. Ask the children to get into groups between 3 and 5.
2. Explain to the children that they are going to make a TV or Radio Commercial about bringing healthy snacks to school. Their commercial can be about healthy choices like fruit or cut up fruit and vegetables with healthy dips. Points they can make should include: the importance of eating whole fruits which contain more fibre; that 'fruit juice' in cartons is not healthy; and the sugar content is high in many snacks that are sold as healthy (e.g., granola bars or breakfast bars).
3. Children can use cameras or cameras on mobile phones to record their commercials.

**Note:** This is a good activity to set for a weekend and then have a 'competition' the following week where children can listen to the commercials and score them against three criteria.

1. Fun and entertaining.
2. Gets the message across clearly.
3. Is memorable.

An idea to extend this activity is for children to investigate how the advertising around them is often about tempting them to eat and drink things that are not healthy.

## Activity 10: Blind Tasting

Prepare this session carefully, making sure that you have the permission of parents and the school to undertake this activity. Also make sure you either have handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser so the children's hands are clean before they touch the fruit/veg items.

You will need to purchase and prepare carefully and safely, fruits and vegetables which the children may not have tasted or which they decided when they were younger that they did not like and will not try again! The aim of this activity is to get children to taste fruits and vegetables with which they may not be familiar so that they are open to trying a wide variety of plant foods that are full of micronutrients and fibre. A fun way to do this is by using blindfolds.

1. Decide how to arrange the fruits and vegetables. They could be arranged on plates or trays with one type on each table with the children moving around or with a wide variety on one table. Cover the trays with a cloth until you are ready. You may want to have fruits on one set of plates or trays and vegetables on another set or mix them.
2. Ask the children to form pairs and then one ties a blindfold on the other. You may have one group of three.
3. Ask the children to wash their hands or to use hand sanitiser.
4. The child with no blindfold comes to collect the tray of fruit/veg and then encourages and helps the child with the blindfold to try each piece and rate it on a scale of 1-5. They can guess what the fruit/veg is. The child without the blindfold keeps a record of the scores. Please note that no child should be forced to try a piece of fruit/veg if they do not want to.
5. Then the children reverse roles with the second tray of fruit/veg.
6. At the end of the session discuss with in the whole group the fruit/veg tastes that the children did not know but are willing to try. Each child should record one fruit and one veg that they will try over the coming two weeks.
7. During the next two weeks, check in with the children to ask what they are trying.
8. You can combine this with 'The Big Chart' activity.



978-1-911480-52-5