**Build a Toolbox**

In *Bertie Stewart is Perfectly Imperfect*, we learn that Bertie has anxiety. She has an Inside Voice that sometimes scares her or makes her feel worried, but with the help of Mr. Bryan, she learns several ways to help manage her Inside Voice.

I call these tools. And I have created an imaginary toolbox of all the different things I have discovered over the years that help me feel better. These tools can be many things. Simple things, fun things, silly things. A tool that works for me might not work for you, and you might find something helpful that doesn’t help me. Everyone’s toolbox will look different.

One of the keys to a good toolbox is practice. Practice using the tools every day, even when you feel good. That way, when you don’t feel good, you may remember they are available to help you.

In my toolbox, I put things like getting enough water, eating good food, getting enough sleep, and exercise. These tools help my body feel better, which in turn helps my mind feel better.

I also include things that bring me joy and make me smile. And sometimes that is enough to ease my worries.

Some tools are activities that distract me from my worries and break the cycle of negative thoughts.

I have also added tools that I learned about from professionals like therapists. These tools include meditation, deep breathing exercises, and visualization techniques.

For example, one of these exercises is called Spot a Rainbow. When you are feeling anxious, look around and notice something in every colour: can you find red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple? This draws your mind back to the present moment, so you stop worrying about the past or fretting about the future.

Add anything that makes you feel good into your toolbox. There are no right or wrong answers. You may be surprised to see what tools others use. Maybe you can find a new tool that will work for you. Maybe one of your ideas will help a classmate.

To help you build your toolbox, ask yourself these questions:

* What helps my body feel good?
* What makes me smile?
* What can I use to distract myself from my worries?
* What is something a friend has added to their toolbox that might help me too?