



# COMPOSITION BOOK

Alex and the BIG BULLY BRAIN

KEEP  
OUT!  
(that means you)  
chloe!!!

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Dear Journal,

Hi. This is weird. I never had a journal before, but I guess I'm going to start now. Maybe I should tell you what my name is. Maybe I should decide what your name should be? I think it's weird to be talking to a book, but that's what Ms. Jacobs told me to do.

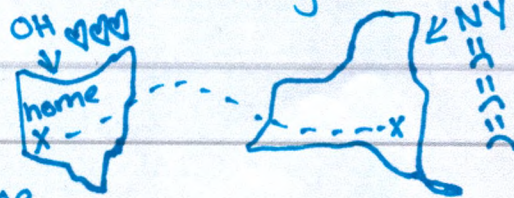
Ms. Jacobs is the doctor lady my dad is making me talk to every week. I'm not sure if I like her yet. I know! I'm going to start at the beginning.

My name is Alex Meyer. I am 12 years old, and I just moved to New York! No, I don't mean the big, busy NYC, That's what Clarissa thought I meant



when I told her. Clarissa is my best friend from my old house. I used to live in Ohio, before my dad lost his job. My dad, my sister, and I had to move so far away for his new job! We live in a town in NY called Kingston.

There's nothing to do here. There's not even any kids my age that live on my block! My sister Chloe



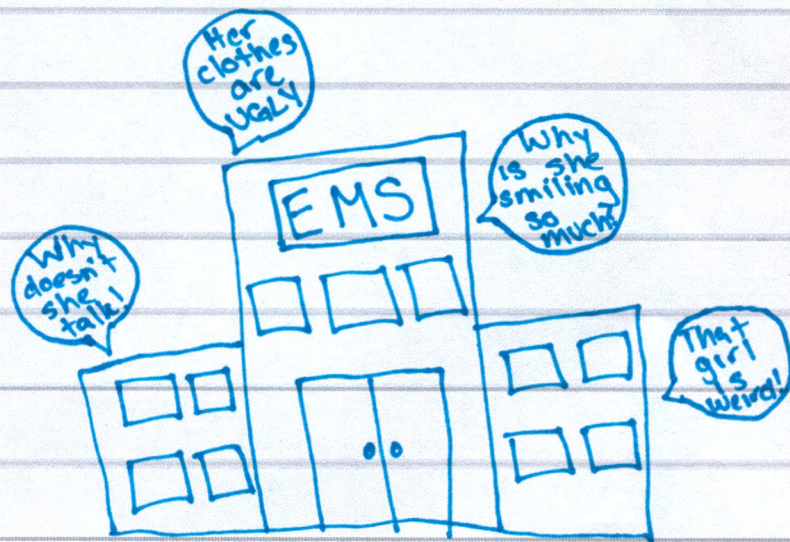
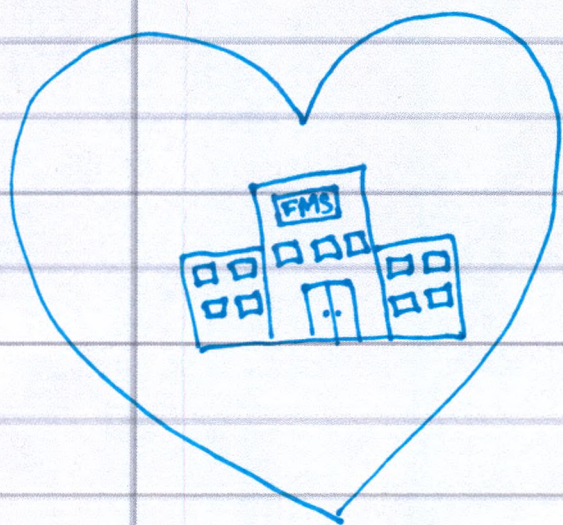
is 17 so she doesn't care. She has a car and can drive wherever she wants to. She already has a lot of friends at her new school! It's not fair, Chloe is always popular and everyone likes her. She's perfect. I'm... not!!



Anyway, I go to Edison Middle School. My school is so big! My old school was small and everyone was friendly. At this school, I don't know anyone. We have 7 teachers in one day! At my old school, we only had 3 teachers and everyone stayed together. I think I meet a new person every day. No one likes me here. I try to be nice and say hello and smile, but I know that people think I'm weird.

I don't even want to talk to Ms. Jacobs. At my old school, my friends and I used to make fun of people who saw a therapist. What's the point? It's NOT going to help me anyway.

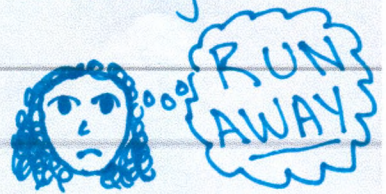
I hate stupid NY. I just want to go HOME!  
Bye for now,  
Alex.



Dear Journal,

I'm just going to call you journal. I hope that's okay. And if it isn't, too bad. You're just a bunch of paper. You can't do anything about it! Ms. Jacobs explained a little bit better about who she is and why she wants me to write about my life. She said that she is a psychologist who likes to help out kids who are having trouble feeling like they fit in at school. Just like me! She said that a psychologist is someone who went to school and learned a lot about how to help people understand and fix what is bothering them. She said that if I show her what I write, she'll be able to help me a lot better!

She said that she wants to use something called Cognitive Behavioral Modification to help me. It sounds weird, but it isn't. I promise. It's just a big fancy word that means she's going to help me understand why I have anxiety at school. Oh yeah. I have something called anxiety. That means sometimes I feel super nervous and I don't know why. I didn't know what she was talking about at first, but then when we talked more about it, I totally got it! It's kind of like when I'm at school, and I'm about to say hi to someone I don't know,



and my hands start sweating, and I get a headache. When that happens, I just want to run away. I thought I was the only kid who has this thing called anxiety, but Ms. Jacobs said that a lot of kids have it! That made me feel a bit better. I guess I'm not so weird after all!

Bye for now,  
Alex.

Note to self:  
It's OKAY  
to be  
DIFFERENT!

Dear Journal,

Today, Ms. Jacobs did something called psychoeducation. That's another word that sounds complicated but really isn't. It basically means that she is going to teach me what I need to know about CBM so that I can help myself feel better when I'm not with her. She also said that she wants me to do homework every week. That kind of made me mad. I have homework to do for school. I don't want extra homework! I told her that, and Ms. Jacobs said that it's important to do the homework because it will help her to know how to help me. She said that it will definitely be worth doing!

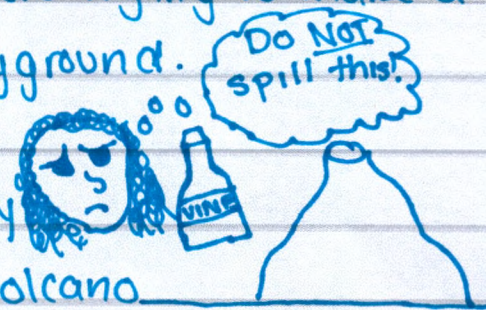
She wants me to complete something called a Thought Log. I'm going to give in a copy of my thought log so you know what I'm talking about. A thought log helps

More  
homework  
No!



What Happened?	What did you think?	How did it Make you Feel? ● ● ● ● ●
I said hi to Rachel in the hallway. She ignored me.	Rachel thinks I am weird.	Red- Angry Blue- Sad
I spilled vinegar in Science class.	Tanya and Jeremy hate me!	Blue - sad Purple - scared and shy

me and Ms Jacobs to understand what I'm thinking about during the day. One of the things that I wrote about this week was when I had to work on a group project in my Science class. We were trying to make a volcano explode outside on the playground. Every group had to get the biggest explosion they could. You do this by pouring vinegar into a big paper volcano that has baking powder inside. I didn't want to have to pour in the vinegar because everyone was going to look at me and laugh at me if I spilled it. Guess what. I did spill it. Tanya and Jeremy got so mad at me. I don't think they'll ever want to work with me again. I'm such a klutz!

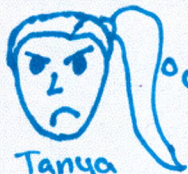


Anyway, I showed Ms. Jacobs what I wrote about the stupid volcano, and we talked about it. She asked if anyone else spilled vinegar, and I said that

What a KLUTZ



Jeremy



Tanya

I never want to work with her again!

they did. Almost everyone spilled it! I didn't even think of that! Maybe it wasn't my fault. Ms. Jacobs asked why I thought that Tanya and Jeremy hated me. I mean, obviously it's because I ruined the project, duh!!! She asked what they did after I spilled the vinegar. I told her that they both left super-fast and got paper towels. They didn't say anything they were so mad. She told me that maybe they just wanted to clean up the mess as quickly as they could. I didn't think of that either!

You know, I used to think that going to therapy was stupid. Maybe it's going to help me. Ms Jacobs seems really smart. Maybe sometimes people just need a little extra help to understand their world. People are really confusing sometimes!

Bye for now,  
Alex

Note to Self:  
**EVERYONE**  
needs help  
sometimes!

Dear Journal,

It's been a long time since I wrote to you. I have been so busy at school! Guess what! It's all good news too! Do you remember Tanya from the volcano thing?

Well, Ms. Jacobs and I talked about that some more. She told me that I should talk to Tanya and see if she wants to hang out after school some time. She said that Tanya was just trying to be nice and help me out.

We talked about how I could change what I think when something is happening that makes me feel bad. She said that I do something that is called a cognitive error. This is another fancy word that really isn't hard to understand. A cognitive error happens when your mind tells you something about what someone else says or does that is just not right. It's kind of like when you see people talking and laughing near you, and you think they're laughing at you, but really someone just told a joke. Sometimes your brain can be your own biggest bully. Ms. Jacobs said that it's important for me to know when my brain is being my bully so I don't have to feel sad or anxious. She gave me some MORE homework called a Thought Modification Log. I put that right



NO  
ONE  
LIKES  
YOU



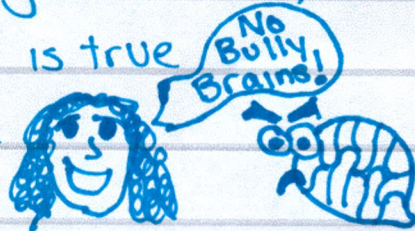
here :

What Happened?	What did you THINK?	How did it Make you Feel? ● ● ● ● ●	What could you do INstead?
I said hi to Rachel in the hallway. She ignored me.	Rachel thinks I'm weird.	Red- Angry Blue- Sad.	Say hi louder next time. Rachel probably didn't hear me!
I spilled vinegar in science class	Tanya and Jeremy hate me!	Blue- sad Purple- scared and shy	say sorry and help them clean up. They were being nice to me!

A thought modification log is a worksheet where you write down what happened and what your brain told you to think about right after it happened. It's really cool because you can look at what you wrote, and decide if your brain was being a bully. If your brain was being a bully, then you should think of things that you could do to stop your bully brain. Like, making your brain think of something that is true. Like, instead of thinking, "those mean girls are laughing at me because I'm weird," you could think, "one of those girls told a funny joke."

We talked about how I thought that Tanya was mad at me for spilling the vinegar, and how maybe she was trying to help. So I talked to her, and guess what! She was just trying to clean it up fast for me. She

Note to Self:  
You are AWESOME!

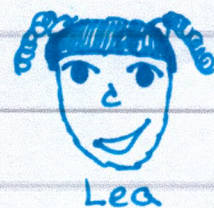


said that she spilled a bunch of water during science last year, and people laughed at her. She said that she didn't want anyone to laugh at me, so she tried to clean up the mess. We sat together at lunch that day. That was two weeks ago, and I eat lunch with Tanya and her friends every day now! She even invited me to her birthday party next Friday!

I am so happy that Ms. Jacobs was able to help me. At first I was mad because of all the homework. But after a while, I realized I actually liked doing the homework. It helped me to think about what I was doing at school and it helped me realize that sometimes you can be wrong about someone. Going to therapy was the nicest thing my dad has ever made me do. Did you know that going to therapy isn't a bad thing? Everyone needs help, and it's okay to ask for it.

Bye!

♥ Alex



My New Friends!