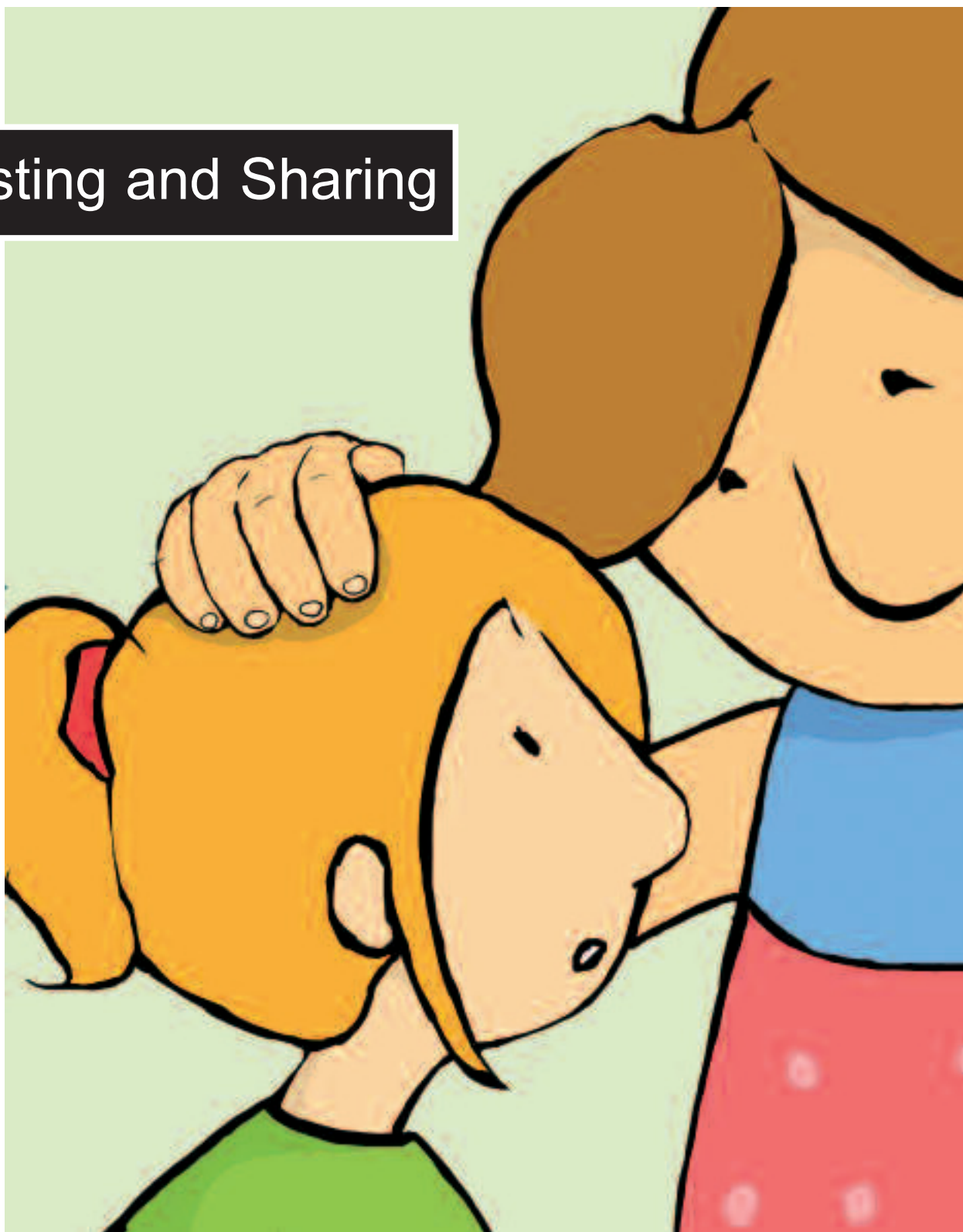


Trusting and Sharing

FUNDACIÓN
LUCÍA

Ana Allepuz





Trusting and sharing

Illustrated by Ana Allepuz

FUNDACIÓN LUCÍA

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Today was a very special day. We were making a birthday cake for my sister Clara. The kitchen looked like a sandwich and cake laboratory. It was so much fun!

On the table there was flour, eggs, cream, sugar: all the ingredients to make a great cake. We were getting ready to have a party and my aunts and uncles, cousins, and some Clara's friends from kindergarten were going to come.



Mom opened a little cupboard in the kitchen where we keep all the medicine.

It was all in one box and mom told me, "Lucía, today we better put this medication in your room."



I looked surprised when she said this and asked her,
"Mom I don't understand. I know that I need to take my pills
everyday and they help me feel better so I can do all the
things other boys and girls do. But you, dad and the doctor
all told me it is better that I don't explain to anybody that I'm
following a treatment plan. And today you hide the medicine.
Don't you think that's too much, mom?"

"I don't understand why you say that maybe other people
could be scared of me. I'm not scary!"



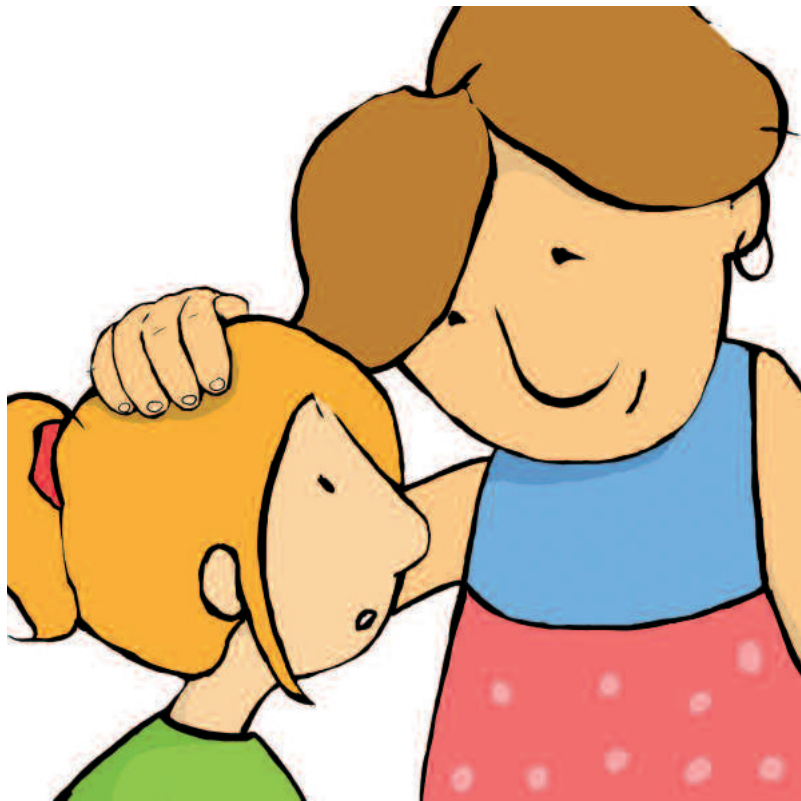
Mom stopped putting sugar in the cake mix and looked at me.

"Mom, please understand that it is very difficult for me to not talk with anybody about what is happening to me; not with my friends at school or even with people in our own family."

"For example, Laura is my very best friend and I know that she would understand. When she had appendicitis I went to the hospital to visit her."

"And even when I go to the hospital I can't tell anybody. I would like to tell Laura, mom. Please."

Mom gave me a hug and told me, "Lucía, it should be our secret, because maybe the people would not understand."



As I was listening to her I thought that I would like to share it with Laura, but at the same time I was afraid to. Maybe if she knew she would stop playing with me at school. That would make me very sad.

"You know mom? I don't really understand why, but I think you are right. I better keep it a secret."



We were so involved in our conversation that we didn't hear dad come in. He came home early this afternoon because he wanted to help us with Clara's party.

12 "Hello, beautiful ladies. What were you talking about?" he asked.

"Well, about Lucía's infection," mom answered. "I told Lucía that not everybody is ready to know that we have to take medicine everyday, and that maybe they would be scared and stay away from us."



Then my dad told me, "I know that it sounds incredible, but what we are saying is true."

"You are right that no one has any real reason to be afraid of us because we are responsible with our medicine and take care of our health. But you have to be careful when you talk to others about your personal life. Knowing very personal things about other people is a big gift that we should only share with those who really love us."

He continued, "This is our family secret and that's why it is reserved for the most important people to us. That's why we only share it with your grandparents and aunts and uncles. We are not always sure we want to explain our situation to someone else. It is very important to carefully choose the ones you think deserve this gift."

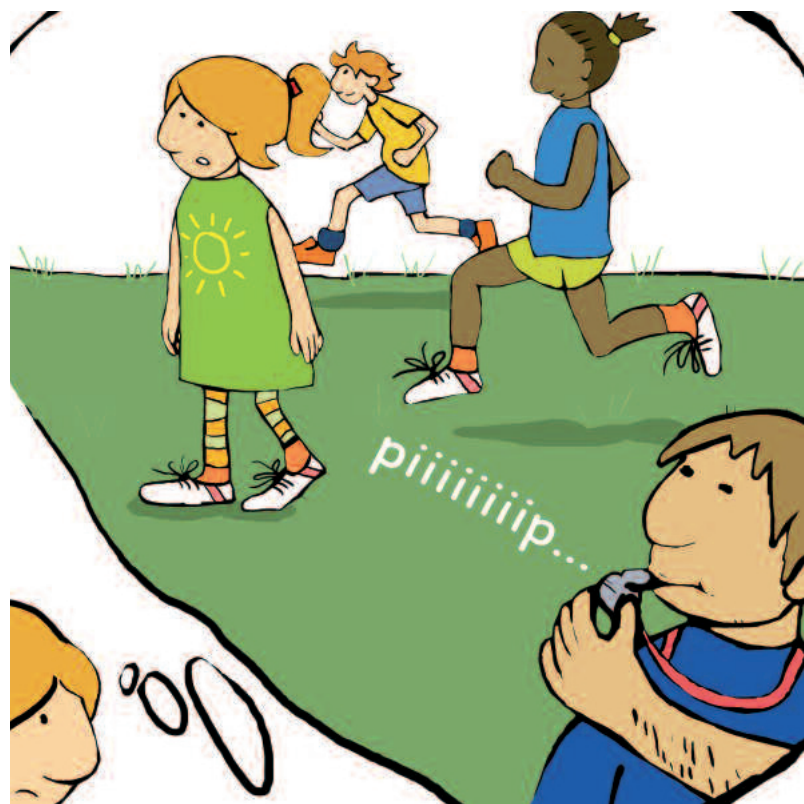
"Remember, you don't have to explain your personal life and ideas with everybody. Secrets are like jewels, and you only share them with people you are absolutely sure will appreciate and keep them."

"Now do you understand our reasons better?"



"Yes I do, but I would still like to talk about it with some people. For example, if my soccer coach knew my situation she would understand why I sometimes don't want to do so much because I feel sick and want to throw up all my medication. And I'm sure that my teacher at school thinks I don't care about his class, I'm at the hospital doing my blood tests. That's why I arrive late sometimes."

"I think that if I could tell everybody my situation, they would understand better. Or maybe not, because if they don't understand me and know my secret, it might make everything worse."



Mom interrupts, "Yes, you are right! All people are different, but the most important thing is to respect each other. Everybody has secrets and everybody has the right to decide who is important enough to know them and keep them secret. This is called the right to privacy, or the right to keep secrets."

"In the near future you will have to decide with whom you share your secrets, but for now, take your time."

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Suddenly the door bell rings. Ring, ring, ring!

It's my grandma Rosa and my grandpa Miquel, here for Clara's birthday party. So mom, dad and I will continue this conversation some other day. For now I have a lot of things to think about!





ACTIVITIES

- 1 Do you have a secret? Make a list with the names of the people you trust to tell the secret to, and another list with the names of people you wouldn't.
- 2 Read and think:
Everybody has secrets.
If you don't want anybody to know your secret, never mention it.
 - Do you agree with these sentences?
 - Who do you prefer to share a secret with: your parents or your friends?
- 3 Imagine you are Lucía. Would you share your secret with your best friend? Explain why.
- 4 Why do you think Lucía is afraid to share her secret with Laura? If you were Lucía, would you be afraid?
- 5 Look up the meaning of the word "trust" in the dictionary, and write it down.
- 6 Has you ever shared a secret with someone, and that person told it to another person? How did you feel about that?

NOTE FOR TEACHERS

These stories are written to explain to children between 7 and 13 years of age what is known about the HIV infection and AIDS: its origins; how it is thought that new pathogens appeared affecting humans; the transmission channels of this disease; the measures to prevent it, and also its clinical, social and emotional treatments.

These stories do not correspond to the story of the real Lucía who gave her name to the Foundation.

Here are some additional aspects to take into consideration:

- 1 Since some of the topics covered in these stories are difficult for children to understand, we recommend the participation of an adult to lead the reading and clarify and comment on any questions.
- 2 The stories take place here, in Spain. Thanks to access to treatment, the quality of life for infected persons is generally good, but these circumstances are not the same in the rest of the world. There are many countries where HIV infection means certain death in a short time period.
- 3 The treatments described in these stories are the same ones that were available when they were written. But other, more complicated treatments are being developed, and we hope that these treatments will be able to improve current ones.
- 4 One of the main aims of these stories is to diminish the social stigma surrounding the disease and the people infected with it via an objective approach based on information.
- 5 All stories were written to give answers and work on different questions when children ask to talk about these topics.
This material was developed to support adults when they talk with children about HIV infection. For children in general, the material is a basic tool of information and knowledge towards preventing infection. For affected children, there are stories that can be read before their own diagnosis or a family member's diagnosis is known: the second story, "How Does My Body Work?", the fourth story, "Visiting the Hospital", the fifth story, "Trusting and Sharing" and the sixth story, "A Normal Day". All these stories are very useful for answering questions that children may ask when the topic is discussed with freedom.
- 6 All stories contain a minimum of 5 exercises for afterthought and consolidating knowledge.

- 1

The Family

We all have a family and a history.
- 2

How Does My Body Work?

Anatomical and physiological concepts necessary to better understand how to take care of our health and practice good prevention.
- 3

The History of HIV

This story goes over the origins of this new infection, the discovery of the pathogen that causes it and its transmission channels.
- 4

Visiting the Hospital

To have a good understanding of our health, it is necessary that we have periodic check-ups.
- 5

Trusting and Sharing

Due to social rejection, infected people have a right to intimacy in order to avoid discrimination and mistreatment. It is important to mention that if this is taken to the extreme, it can cause loneliness, because we all need each other and need to relate with one another. In life it is always important to evaluate with whom you can and want to share your secrets.
- 6

A Normal Day

The daily activities of a child who takes medication are different, and like all children they sometimes have more needs than adults do.
- 7

My Friends at the Hospital

The lives of people who are infected with HIV are affected by many realities, all of which have been taken into consideration here.
- 8

Medication

This story explains drug mechanisms to hinder the progression of the disease, as well as the need to use different types of drugs.
- 9

The Future

A future with hope is life's bond. This story explains how infected children make their plans for the future, as well as the most common questions they ask.
- 10

Children's Rights

This section is on the vulnerability of children and young people, and their rights.

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