

# My Story

*A Book About What Happened and How I Got Through It*

 **EXAMPLE COMPLETED BOOKLET** — This is a sample showing how a caregiver might fill in this booklet. Names and details are fictional. Answers shown in green.

*My picture goes here*



**This book belongs to:**

**Sam Williams**

**Made with love by:**

**Mom (Karen Williams)**

**Date:**

**March 15, 2025**



# A Note for Caregivers

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This booklet is designed to help you support your loved one in creating a personal story about a difficult experience they have been through. Telling our stories — in our own words and our own way — is one of the most powerful tools we have for healing.

## **How to use this booklet:**

Work through each chapter together, at your own pace. There is no rush. Some days you may only complete one page. That is okay. Use words, drawings, photos, or magazine pictures — whatever feels right for your loved one.

It is okay to skip sections that feel too hard right now and come back to them later. It is also okay if some answers are short, or if your loved one wants to express something through a picture instead of words.

Consider working with a therapist or counselor as you go through this booklet, especially if your loved one becomes distressed. Your loved one's feelings are valid — there are no right or wrong answers here.

***Remember: the goal is not a perfect story. The goal is YOUR loved one's story.***

 Caregiver note for this example: Sam is 26 years old and lives with his parents. He was in a car accident when his mom was driving him home from his day program. Another car ran a red light and hit their car on the passenger side. Sam was not seriously injured, but he was very frightened and had to go to the emergency room by ambulance for evaluation. He had bruising and a minor wrist fracture. After coming home, he had nightmares, did not want to ride in cars, and became very anxious. His

*therapist suggested making this book together over several sessions to help Sam process what happened.*

# Chapter 1: All About Me

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*Before we tell the story, let's remember who YOU are. You are so much more than what happened.*

**My name is...**

Sam Williams

**I am \_\_\_ years old.**

26 years old

**Some words that describe me:**

Funny. Kind. A good friend. A hard worker. Loves music. Loves the

Nationals baseball team. Very helpful.

**Things I love:**

Baseball. Especially the Washington Nationals. Listening to Taylor Swift.

Cooking with Mom. Playing with my dog, Biscuit. Going bowling on Fridays

with my friends from day program.

**People who love me:**

Mom (Karen), Dad (Robert), my sister Jess, Grandma Pat, my friends

Marcus and Deja, my support worker Tonya.

**My picture or a picture of my family:**

*My picture or drawing goes here*





## Chapter 2: Before It Happened

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*Every story has a beginning. This chapter is about your life before the hard thing happened.*

### **Before this happened, my life looked like this:**

I went to my day program Monday through Friday. I worked in the kitchen at the program and I was really good at it. Every Friday I went bowling. I liked riding in the car with Mom. We always listened to the radio and sang together.

### **Where I was living:**

At home with Mom and Dad and my dog Biscuit in our house in Richmond, Virginia.

### **People I spent time with:**

Mom, Dad, Jess on weekends, my friends Marcus and Deja at day program, and my support worker Tonya on Tuesday afternoons.

### **Things that made me happy:**

Singing in the car with Mom. Petting Biscuit. Watching baseball. Cooking dinner with Dad on Sundays. Talking to Marcus on the phone. Going to bowling league.

**Draw or paste a picture of a happy memory from before:**

*A happy memory*





## Chapter 3: What Happened

*This is the hardest chapter. We will tell the story of what happened — only as much as you want to share. You do not have to include every detail. You are in charge of your story.*

### **Something hard happened. Here is what I want to say about it:**

**I was in a car crash. Mom was driving me home from my day program on a Tuesday. We were almost home. Another car ran the red light and it hit our car really hard on my side. It made a very loud bang and the car spun around. Everything happened so fast.**

### **It happened...**

**On a Tuesday afternoon in January, on the way home from my day program. It was on the big road near our neighborhood, at the corner with the stoplight by the pharmacy.**

### **When it happened, I was...**

**Sitting in the front seat next to Mom. I had my seatbelt on. The music was on. And then boom. After the crash, there were sirens and lights. People**

came to help. I had to ride in an ambulance to the hospital. My wrist hurt a lot.

**If I could draw a picture of what happened, it might look like this:**

*A drawing or picture*





## Chapter 4: How I Felt

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All of your feelings about what happened make sense. Feelings are not right or wrong. They just are. You are allowed to feel more than one thing at the same time.

### When it happened, I felt:

(Circle or underline any that fit, or write your own)

SCARED SAD Angry CONFUSED

ALONE SHOCKED Numb

Hurt WORRIED Embarrassed TIRED OVERWHELMED

(Underlined words = feelings Sam circled)

### Other feelings I had:

I felt like I wanted my Dad right away. I also felt embarrassed in the ambulance because I was crying and there were strangers. I felt really sad that the car was wrecked. I was also VERY worried about Mom even though she kept telling me she was okay.

### The feeling I had the most was:

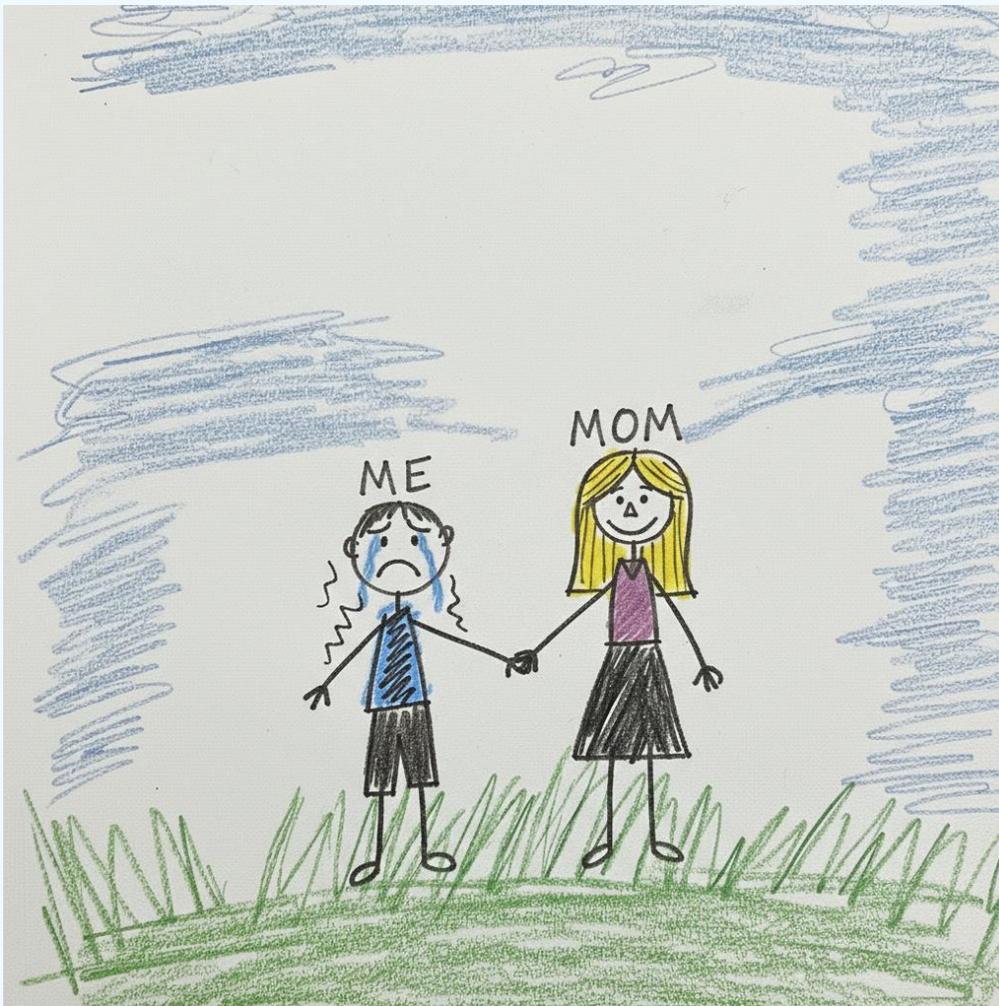
SCARED. I was the most scared I have ever been.

**I felt it in my body like this:**

**My heart was beating SO fast. My wrist hurt really bad. I was shaking and I could not stop shaking even when people put a blanket on me. I kept crying and I could not stop. My ears were ringing from the loud crash.**

**Draw a picture of how you felt:**

*A drawing of my feelings*



# Chapter 5: What I Did to Get Through It

*Even when things are very hard, we find ways to keep going. Think about what helped you get through each day.*

## **Things I did to help myself feel better:**

I held Mom's hand in the ambulance. At the hospital I asked the nurse a lot of questions so I understood what was happening. I held my stuffed animal (my monkey, Kevin) at the hospital. I kept reminding myself that Mom was okay. When I got home I let Biscuit sleep in my bed.

## **A safe place where I felt calm:**

My bedroom at home. Being in my bed with Biscuit and my stuffed monkey Kevin.

## **Something that helped me feel safe:**

Having Mom right next to me. Knowing the doctors were checking both of us. Getting a warm blanket at the hospital. The nurse was very nice and explained everything before she did it. That really helped.

## **One brave thing I did:**

I got in the ambulance even though I was very scared and had never been in one before. I also let the doctor look at my wrist even though it hurt. The doctor said I was very brave and cooperative. Mom said she was proud of me.

**Draw or paste a picture of something that helped you:**

*Something that helped me*





## Chapter 6: Who Helped Me

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*You did not have to go through this alone. Think about the people who were there for you.*

### **People who helped me:**

**Mom (she stayed with me the whole time). The ambulance team a man named Derek and a woman. The nurses and doctors at the ER. Dad (he came to the hospital right away). Tonya my support worker. My sister Jess. My therapist Dr. Jones.**

### **This person helped me the most:**

**Mom**

*What they did that helped:*

**Mom stayed right next to me the whole time — in the ambulance and at the hospital. She held my hand. She told me over and over that I was safe and that she was okay. She spoke to all the doctors and nurses for me when I could not find my words. She slept in my room the first few nights so I would not be alone.**

**Something kind that someone said or did for me:**

Derek the ambulance man let me listen to his walkie talkie for a second to distract me on the way to the hospital. He said, 'You are doing great, Sam.'

A nurse at the hospital gave me a warm blanket and an orange popsicle.

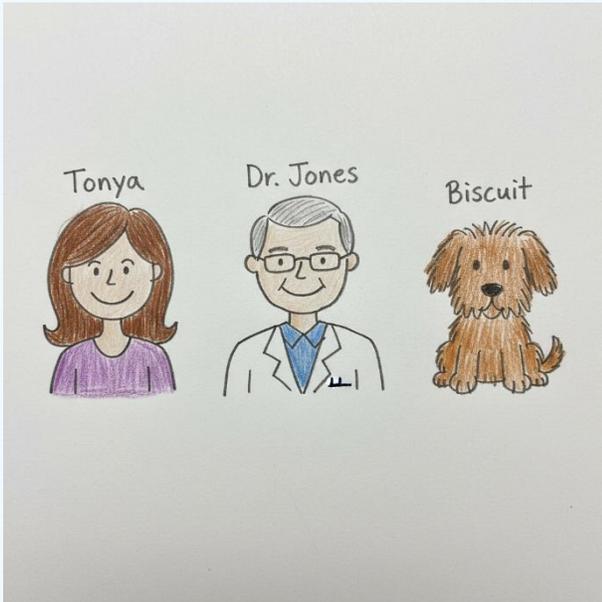
She remembered my name the whole time.

**If I could say thank you to someone who helped me, I would say:**

Thank you Mom for never leaving my side. You were hurt too but you made sure I was okay first. You are the best mom. Thank you Derek for making me feel less scared in the ambulance. Thank you to the nurse who gave me the popsicle.

**Draw or paste pictures of people who support you:**

*My support people*





## Chapter 7: What I Know Now

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*Sometimes going through hard things teaches us things we did not know before. You have learned and grown, even if it did not feel that way.*

### **Something I learned about myself:**

I learned that I am braver than I thought. I was so scared but I still answered the doctors' questions and I still got in the ambulance. I also learned that asking questions helps me feel less scared when I do not know what is happening.

### **Something I know now that I did not know before:**

I know what an ambulance looks like on the inside. I know that doctors have to check you even if you feel okay after a crash. I know that my wrist can heal — the doctor said the bone will be totally better in a few months. I also know that car accidents can happen even when you do everything right.

### **A strength I discovered in myself:**

I can stay calm enough to answer questions even when I am scared and hurting. Mom said that helped the doctors help me faster. I also found out

that I am good at telling people what I need — like I told the nurse exactly where it hurt.

### **Something I want others to know about what I went through:**

It was really really scary. When people say 'it was just a car accident' that makes me feel bad. It did not feel small to me. It was the scariest thing that has ever happened to me. I want people to understand that it was hard even if I am okay now.

### **Something I want to remember about this time in my life:**

I want to remember that I got through it. I was scared but I survived. My family loves me. Strangers helped me. I am safe now. My wrist is getting better. I am getting better too.

## Chapter 8: My Future

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*You have been through something hard. And you are still here. This chapter is about looking forward — to the life ahead of you.*

### **Things I am looking forward to:**

Going back to bowling league with Marcus and Deja. Watching the Nationals in spring training. Cooking my special pasta recipe for Dad's birthday. Going on a trip to see Grandma Pat in North Carolina. And someday — being okay in the car again without feeling scared.

### **A dream or hope I have for my future:**

I want to work in a real restaurant kitchen someday. My day program teacher Ms. Gloria says I am good at cooking. I want to make food that makes people happy. And I want to go to a Nationals game again this summer.

### **Something I want to do more of:**

Cooking. Calling Grandma Pat on the phone. Spending time with Biscuit. And I want to practice getting back in cars a little at a time so it does not feel so scary.

## **A goal I have for myself:**

**My goal is to ride in the car to bowling league again by April. Dr. Jones is helping me practice. I am going to start by just sitting in the parked car, then short drives, then longer ones. I know I can do it.**

## **Words I want to say to my future self:**

**Hi future Sam. You went through something really hard. The crash was scary and your wrist hurt and you had bad dreams for a while. But you did not give up. You talked about it with Dr. Jones and you made this book and you kept going. I am proud of you. You are brave and you are loved. Go Nationals!**

**Draw or paste a picture of something you are looking forward to:**

*My hope for the future*



# You Did It.

*Sam told his story.*

That took courage. That took strength. And he did it.

Sam's story is not over. The car accident is part of his story —  
but it is not the whole story. He is so much more than what  
happened to him.

*My favorite picture — something that makes me smile*



**This book was completed on: March 15, 2025**

**With the help of: Mom (Karen Williams) and Dr. Jones**