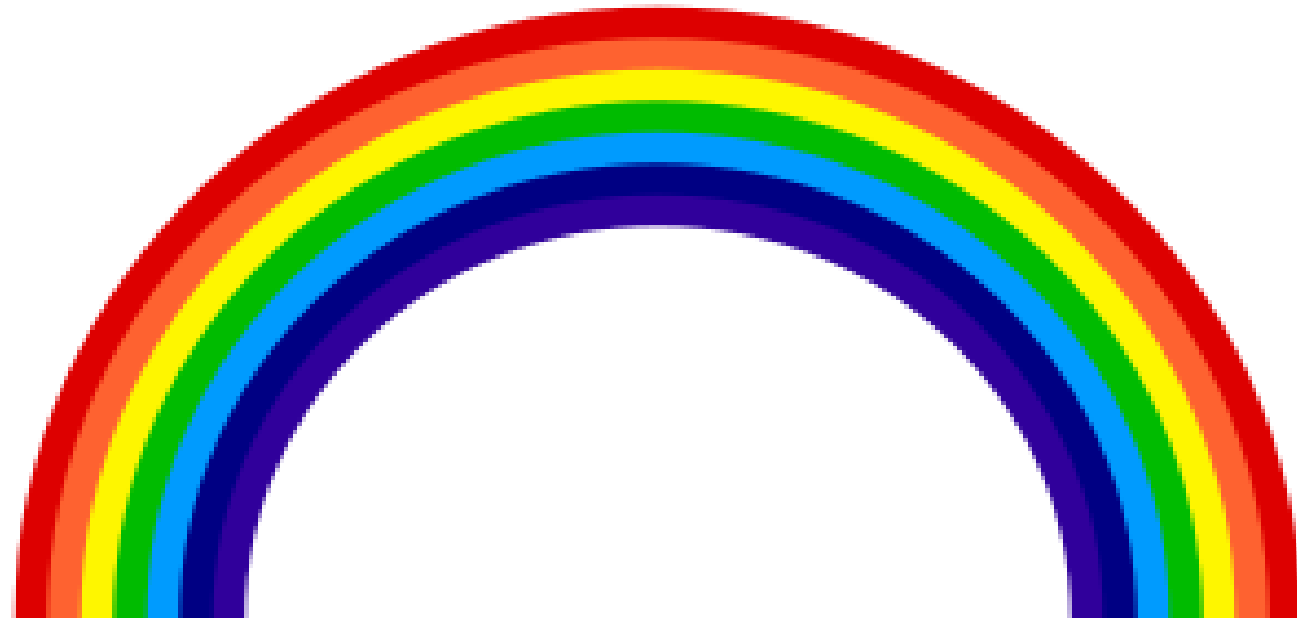


The Changing Savanna



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(DRAMATHERAPIST) & ILLUSTRATED BY ERIN COOPER

The watering hole was getting busy; Peter the panther approached carefully looking out for his friends. Silo the lion cub came bouncing up and Hetty the hedgehog stood apart from the watering hole, but he could not see Gerry the giraffe and wondered where he was?

It was the first time they had seen each other since the sickness had sent them back to their herds. This lockdown they had been with their families for what felt like a longer time, and had not been able to go to school, go out or see their friends.

Peter was so excited to see all his friends again, he had missed them so much, remembering to keep his distance from the older animals at the watering hole he air high fived his friends as they all smiled at each other.



EI the elephant saw all the friends coming together and wandered over to say hello. Now EI was the wise old elephant of the Savanna who was always there to listen to the little ones. Hetty smiled at EI and said “it is really nice to see you EI, you were right when you said that we would meet again” as the last time they had seen each other, EI had said the sickness would not last forever. EI asked the friends “did you make Savanna planes and write messages on, and throw them to each other to keep in touch” and they all nodded shyly in agreement.

EI explained “it is okay that you are all feeling a little bit hesitant and shy, the sickness has meant that we could not see each other for a while and being back with one another for the first time in a long while might feel a bit strange.” Peter asked “EI do you know where Gerry is?” EI nodded slowly and said “Gerry is still with his family as they had some very sad news.” Everyone went quiet, Silo said “I feel worried”, Hetty burst into tears and said “I feel scared” EI said “I am glad that you are sharing your feelings with each other and I am here to listen.”



EI then reassured them that there were lots of different feelings animals were having “I wonder about some of the difficult feelings you have all had while in lockdown.” Feelings like worry, loneliness, and sadness were spoken about and EI stated “these feelings might still be around and you can continue to talk to someone you trust or you could do some rainbow breathing.” Silo asked “what is rainbow breathing?” EI explained “you take a breath in of your favourite colour and then you breathe out the colours that make you feel upset.” Hetty and Peter nodded and said they had tried it and it had made them feel better.



They started to talk about their old favourite games like football and tag and how much fun it would be to play them. El gently reminded them “remember you can play your games but only in your bubbles.” Excitedly Silo asked “can we still play hide and seek and football?” Hetty joined in with “what about eye spy?” El smiled and said “those are great games to play.”

El asked them “what were you doing in lockdown that was different to the way things were before?” Peter said “I enjoyed spending time with my family as we had more time together to hangout,” Hetty and Silo nodded in agreement. Silo said “I got to stay in my pyjamas for longer and did not have to rush in the mornings,” they all giggled at the thought of Silo in his pyjamas.



El suggested “it is time to go home and that our world for a time would continue to be a bit strange as the sickness continues to clear itself.” El made them all smile when she said “little ones remember to hold onto the nice things like staying in your pyjamas till late, playing games and spending time with your families and remember to keep on sending Savanna planes to your friends...”

