



The Lilly Mae Wellbeing Pack

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With special thanks to Steve Thorp (www.21soul.co.uk)
for his invaluable advice and input.

A note for the grown-ups

Now, more than ever, it is important that children have opportunities to talk about their emotions. That's why we've put together this Children's Wellbeing Pack for parents, carers and teachers.

The materials are inspired by the beautifully illustrated picture book, *Lilly Mae* – a story about a little girl who lives on a cloud and changes the weather according to her moods. This pack includes ideas and activities designed to get children of all ages (toddlers to pre-teens) thinking about how they feel.

Some of the suggested activities refer back to the original *Lilly Mae* book, which can be purchased via the shop page on the Can-do Kids website (www.can-do-kids.co.uk). If you don't have the book, however, don't worry; you'll still be able to get loads out of these materials.

In this Wellbeing Pack, there will be lots of opportunities for you to talk to your children about their emotions, both positive and negative. It might feel strange or counter-intuitive to focus on negative emotions, but allowing your child the time and space to express their negative emotions (like sadness or anger) can help them to process what they are feeling. It might help you as well to understand how your child is feeling.

Just one more short notice before you dive in. Not all of the pages in this pack will apply to every family, so please help us to reduce waste and protect the environment by only printing out the pages you need. Thank you.

So, without further ado, let's get started. We hope you and your children enjoy these activities. We'd love to hear from you if you do.

Lots of love,
Sarah

Can-do Kids

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What's in the pack?

- [Pages 3–4](#): Let's think about feelings for ages 2 years–10 years
- [Pages 5–7](#): Let's think about behaviours for ages 2 years–10 years
- [Page 8](#): Let's think about our bodies for ages 2 years–10 years
- [Pages 9–10](#): Let's breathe for all ages (toddlers to teens)
- [Page 11](#): Let's dance for all ages (toddlers to teens)
- [Pages 12–13](#): Creative writing for ages 7 years and upwards



Let's think about ... feelings

• Questions and activities for ages 2 years–10 years

- In *Lilly Mae*, Lilly experiences lots of different feelings. Can you remember what some of them are?

Note for grown-ups: You could just talk about this, write a list, or ask your little ones to draw different faces to show the emotions.

- What sort of weather does Lilly Mae make when she is feeling sad?
- What sort of weather does she make when she is feeling angry?
- What sort of weather does she make when she is feeling happy?
- Sometimes, Lilly Mae feels confused. She doesn't know what she is feeling or what sort of weather to make. Do you ever feel like that?
- Can you think of a time when you were confused? What did you do?
- If you could make the weather today, what sort of weather would you choose? Why?

Note for grown-ups: If your child finds it difficult to talk about these things, don't worry; there are lots of other ways to communicate and express emotions, many of which are mentioned in the following pages. Perhaps your child can choose a non-verbal way to answer some of these questions.

Let's get creative

Choose a feeling (we sometimes call these emotions) and find a way to show your feeling. You could:

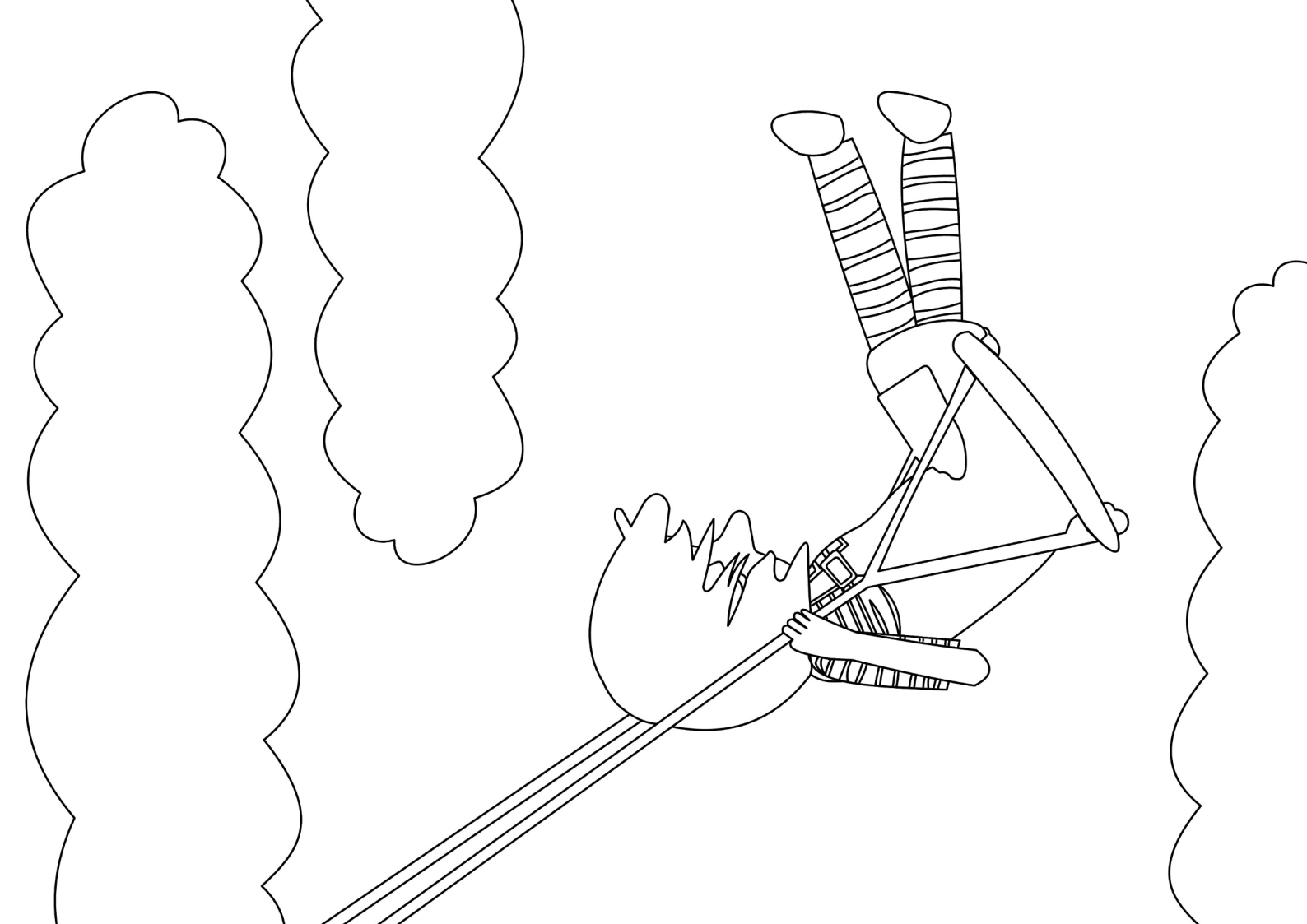
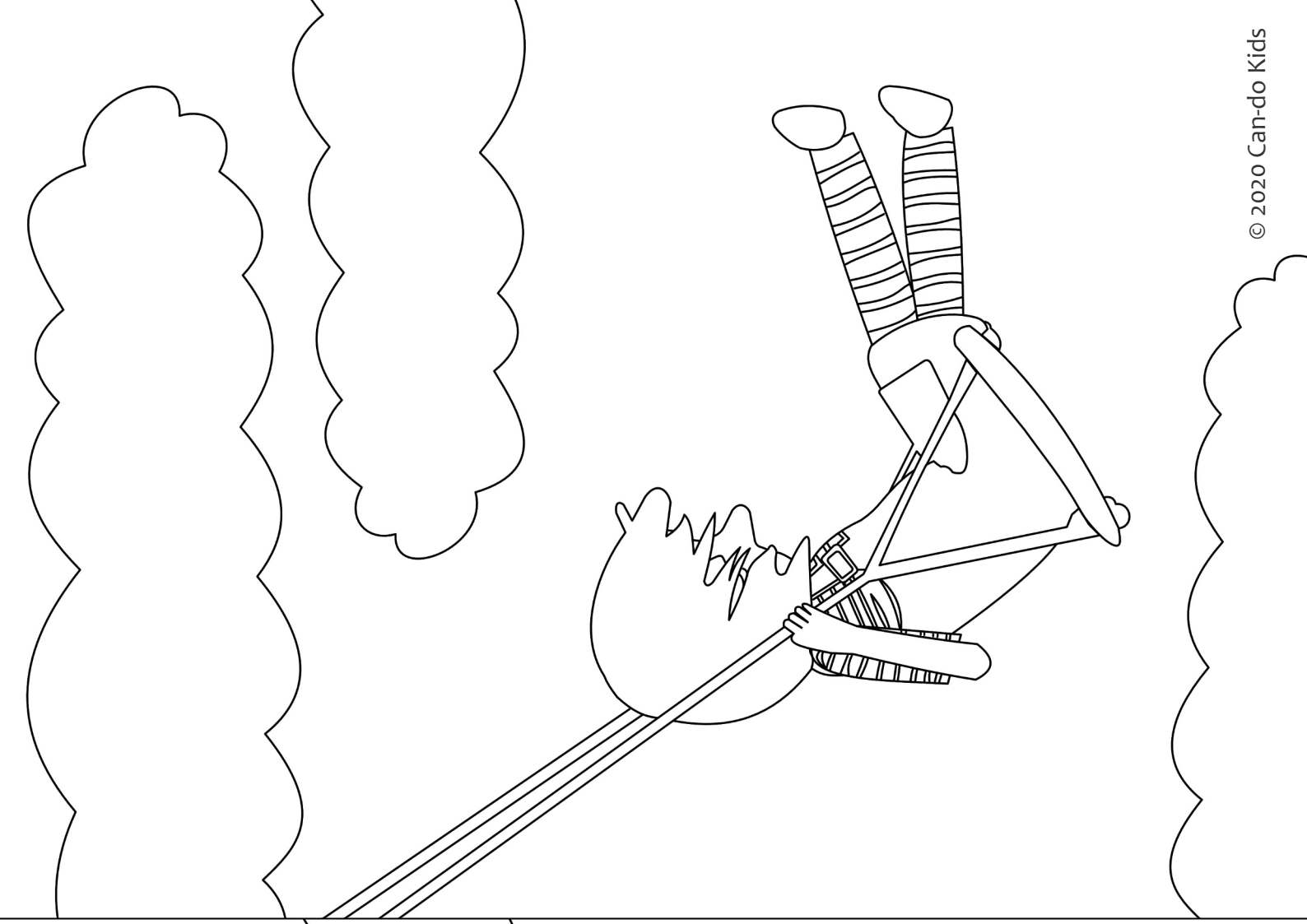
- Think about the type of weather that best matches your emotion/feeling and draw a picture or make a photo collage of that type of weather;
- Draw or paint a picture to show your emotion;
- Make a collage or a mood board;
- Find a piece of music that sounds like your emotion;
- Make up actions or a dance to show your emotion;
- Make a mosaic or a collage from things you find in your garden.

Colouring

- Print out the *Lilly Mae* colouring sheet on [page 4](#). Think of a feeling/emotion and decide which colours might best show this emotion. Colour in one picture to show this first emotion.
- Now think of another emotion (perhaps a contrasting one). Colour in the second picture with a different set of colours to show this different emotion.

Mood boards

- A mood board is a collage of things that show how you are feeling. This could include certain colours, pictures of objects, things from nature, patterns and shapes, etc.
- Draw, write, or make a mood board of things that make you feel happy. There are no rules when it comes to mood boards. You can use any materials and any methods you like: you could make a PowerPoint of your happiness or you could go into the garden and make a nature mood board on your lawn. Whatever works for you.
- You can make mood boards for other emotions too. Maybe you are feeling sad, or angry, or scared? Make a mood board for these feelings and talk about them with your adults.



Let's think about ... behaviours

Questions and activities for ages 2 years–10 years

In our lives, we show our feelings through what we do and by what we say to other people. This is called our 'behaviour'. Sometimes difficult feelings can come out in our behaviour: we might be quiet and want to hide, or we might become loud and throw something.

When you have feelings, what do you do?

- What do you do when you are happy?
- What do you do when you are calm?
- What do you do when you are sad?
- What do you do when you are scared?
- Can you think of other feelings and talk about how they make you behave?

Let's move

- Print out and cut up the mood cards on [pages 6 and 7](#). You can make your own if you prefer or add more to the ones we have already provided. We have left two boxes blank for you to add your own emotions.
- Shuffle the card and place them face down.
- Take it in turns to pick a card and act out the emotion. Younger children might need help with this. Older children might prefer to play it like a game of charades so that the other children or adults in the room have to guess what emotion they are acting out.



Eco tip: instead of printing out our cards, why not cut an old cereal box into squares to make your own cards and write the emotions out yourself.

Excited	Sad
Nervous	Worried
Happy	Confused

Angry	Scared
Calm	Amazed

Let's think about ... our bodies

Questions and activities for ages 2 years–10 years

In Lilly Mae's story, her feelings affect the weather, but feelings can also affect us in our bodies. If the feeling in your body is tight or stormy or hot or cold, the emotional feeling might be being scared or angry or embarrassed or upset. Your body and your mind will have their own weather, which can change when you feel different emotions, just like Lilly Mae.

- When you feel certain feelings, where do you feel them in your body? Put your hand on your body where you feel the feeling. Do you feel different feelings in different parts of the body?

Note for grown-ups: One way to introduce this idea to children is to think about how the body feels in different scenarios. Give your children some different scenarios and ask them to finish the sentence, e.g.

When I lose something, I feel ...

When I get told off, I feel ...

When someone hugs me, I feel ...

- When the weather inside your body is stormy and wild, is there anything you can do to calm it?
- Do you know some ways of making your own weather a little calmer?
- Do you have any behaviours that help you to protect yourself when things feel stormy or difficult?

On the following pages, we'll have a think about some ways to help settle our inner storms.



Note for grown-ups: Mindfulness, breathing and yoga are all fabulous ways to help your child connect with their bodies and calm their emotions. There are lots of great resources out there to get started with this. Depending on the age of the child and their personality, different methods will suit different children. Below, I will suggest a few exercises for you to try with your children. These are just a few ideas; there are loads more out there for you to discover if you want to research this further.

Pass the ball

This works really well with younger children as well as slightly older ones. It not only gets them to think and talk about how they feel, it is also a great way to teach them about waiting their turn and listening to others. For this, you will need a ball or a teddy (or any object you like really).

Sit on the floor, facing one another (in a circle if there are enough of you). The adult will think of a question and everyone will take it in turns to answer. Only the person holding the ball is allowed to talk; although, the others in the group can help by prompting or asking further questions so long as they are listening and giving the speaker time to express themselves.

Example questions:

- *What are you thankful for?*
- *What makes you happy?*
- *What do you love?*
- *What do you love about yourself?*
- *Can you think of ways to show kindness?*

Button breathing

For this, you will need a pile of buttons (or stones, scraps of paper, dried pasta, etc.). You are going to ask your child to be calm and still for 2 minutes. This might not work with very young children!

Ask your child to find a comfortable place to sit, and place the buttons in a pile in their lap (or in a pot in their lap). Ask them to close their eyes and try to clear their mind of all thoughts. This is not easy and will not happen all at once. Ask them to focus on their breathing and on their body.

Every time a thought pops into their head, they should take a button and place it on the floor (or table) in front of them. As they do this, they should breathe and let the thought float on by without paying any attention to it.

Some days the child might find there are more buttons in front of them by the end than on other days, but if they keep practicing, they will get better and better at letting those thoughts float by.

If your child enjoys this exercise and finds it beneficial, it might be worth doing it as a daily practice. As they get more and more used to being still and mindful, you might want to gradually increase the time of the activity.

Positive journal

This is a daily practice I use myself. I have tried it with primary and secondary school aged children too, and it worked very well with most of them. The idea is to spend just a few minutes a day reflecting on positive thoughts. This is a nice activity to start the day with, but it can be done at any time. Every day, ask your child to write down:

- One thing they are grateful for;
- One thing they love about themselves;
- One thing they you are proud of.

Breathing shapes

These breathing activities are wonderful for younger children. You don't have to spend ages on each one. Follow the child's lead and keep things calm and relaxed for as long as they seem to be engaging with it.

Butterfly breathing: (adapted from www.twinkl.co.uk resource: *Mindful Minute Brain Break Cards*)

- Sit on the floor with the soles of the feet together and knees apart.
- Slowly bounce the knees up and down like butterfly wings.
- Imagine you are fluttering through the air. Gently and calmly breathe in and out in time with the wings.

Balloon breathing: (adapted from www.twinkl.co.uk resource: *Mindful Minute Brain Break Cards*)

- Sit on the floor with the soles of the feet together and knees apart.
- Relax your head and body forwards over the legs like a saggy balloon.
- Take a long, deep breath into your tummy and imagine it expanding like a balloon. As you do this, slowly lift your body and head until you are sitting up tall and proud.
- Breath out slowly and as you do so, begin to deflate like a balloon until you are relaxed over your legs again.
- Repeat a few times.

Rainbow breathing: (adapted from www.twinkl.co.uk resource: *Mindful Minute Brain Break Cards*)

- Stand tall with your feet hip width apart and your hands down by your sides.
- Take a long, deep breath in and as you do so, lift your arms up in a rainbow shape all the way up until they join above your head.
- Breathe out slowly as you bring your arms back down along the rainbow.
- Repeat a few times. You can imagine you are holding paintbrushes in your hands and that you are painting a different colour of the rainbow each time you lift and lower your arms.

Stretch and release relaxation

This is great for all ages. Younger children will need you to lead this each time but older children might find that once they have been led through it once or twice, they can practice it on their own.

- Ask the child to lie comfortably on their back with their arms relaxed by their sides, their legs outstretched but relaxed, and their eyes closed.
- You are going to ask the child to tense and then relax each body part one at a time, starting at the feet and working all the way up to the head.
- Begin with the feet and toes: ask them to tense/stretch them for the count of 5 and then let them flop.
- Next move on to the lower legs, the upper legs, the buttocks, tummy, shoulders, arms, fingers and hands, neck, face, whole body. Tense each part of the body for 5 seconds before releasing it.



Let's dance (Suitable for all ages)

Moving the body in whatever way feels good is one of the best ways to relieve stress. It can also be a brilliant way of expressing yourself, especially when you add music into the mix.

For younger children

Choose some contrasting pieces of music that suggest different moods and feelings. *The Planets Suite* by Gustav Holst works really well for this because each planet has a different mood and feel to it (you can find it on YouTube). But any type of music is fine. If you want to use classical, go for it; if you prefer pop music, fine; if you prefer to use a mixture of different music genres, that works brilliantly too.

Play an extract from each piece of music and ask the child how it makes them feel. Then ask them to dance to the music with that feeling in mind.

For older children

Some older children might not feel comfortable improvising like this in front of you. That's fine. Perhaps they would just prefer to listen to music in their own time and dance if/when the mood takes them. Give them the encouragement and space to do this if they want to.

They might like to pick a piece of music that speaks to them or says something about them and how they feel. Ask them if they'd like to do this and share it with you. Some children/teenagers will enjoy taking this a step further and choreographing a dance to their chosen piece of music ... and some won't. Don't put pressure on them either way; just suggest the idea and see where it leads.

Creative writing

Activities for ages 7 years and upwards

Creativity is just as important to our overall wellbeing as anything else. Using writing and other creative arts to express, calm, and heal can be hugely beneficial for people of all ages.

Even though *Lilly Mae* is a picture book for younger children, there is a lot that older children can learn from it too. These creative writing exercises are useful for writers of any age. In my role as an editor, I have recommended similar ideas to adult writers, and I have also seen them used with teenagers preparing for the creative writing portion of their GCSE English exam. Equally, my eight-year-old has a wonderful time playing around with weather and mood in her own story writing.

In this worksheet, we will be looking at how we can use the weather in creative writing to evoke atmosphere and mood in a story (or in a poem if you prefer).

Linking emotions to weather

- Read through *Lilly Mae* and note down the different emotions mentioned or implied in the rhyme and pictures.
- Print out the table on [page 13](#) or draw your own. Then write the emotions in the top row of the table.
- In the column below each emotion, write down the different types of weather Lilly makes when she is feeling each emotion.
- Now add your own emotions and types of weather to the table. Be as imaginative as you can.
- Next, you can add different descriptive words to the table too. Use a thesaurus to find some really imaginative adjectives and adverbs to use in your writing. There is a good online thesaurus here: www.thesaurus.com

Start writing

Now you have your table of emotions, weather and words, it's time to get writing. Begin by writing a few sentences or the opening paragraph to a scene using weather to evoke an emotion or mood (or write a poem). Don't mention the emotion in your writing. Get someone else to guess what emotion you are trying to evoke.

Top tip: think about using the different senses in your writing. What can you see, hear, feel, smell and taste?

You can develop this idea by choosing a different emotion and describing the same scene but through the lens of this new emotion. How does the weather differ from the first one? How does the vocabulary differ?

If you are inspired and want to continue with the first piece of writing, that's great.

We'd love to see some of your creative writing projects, so please feel free to email them to us when you are done: can-do-kids@outlook.com

