

Growing up, I spent a lot of time in
psychiatric hospitals

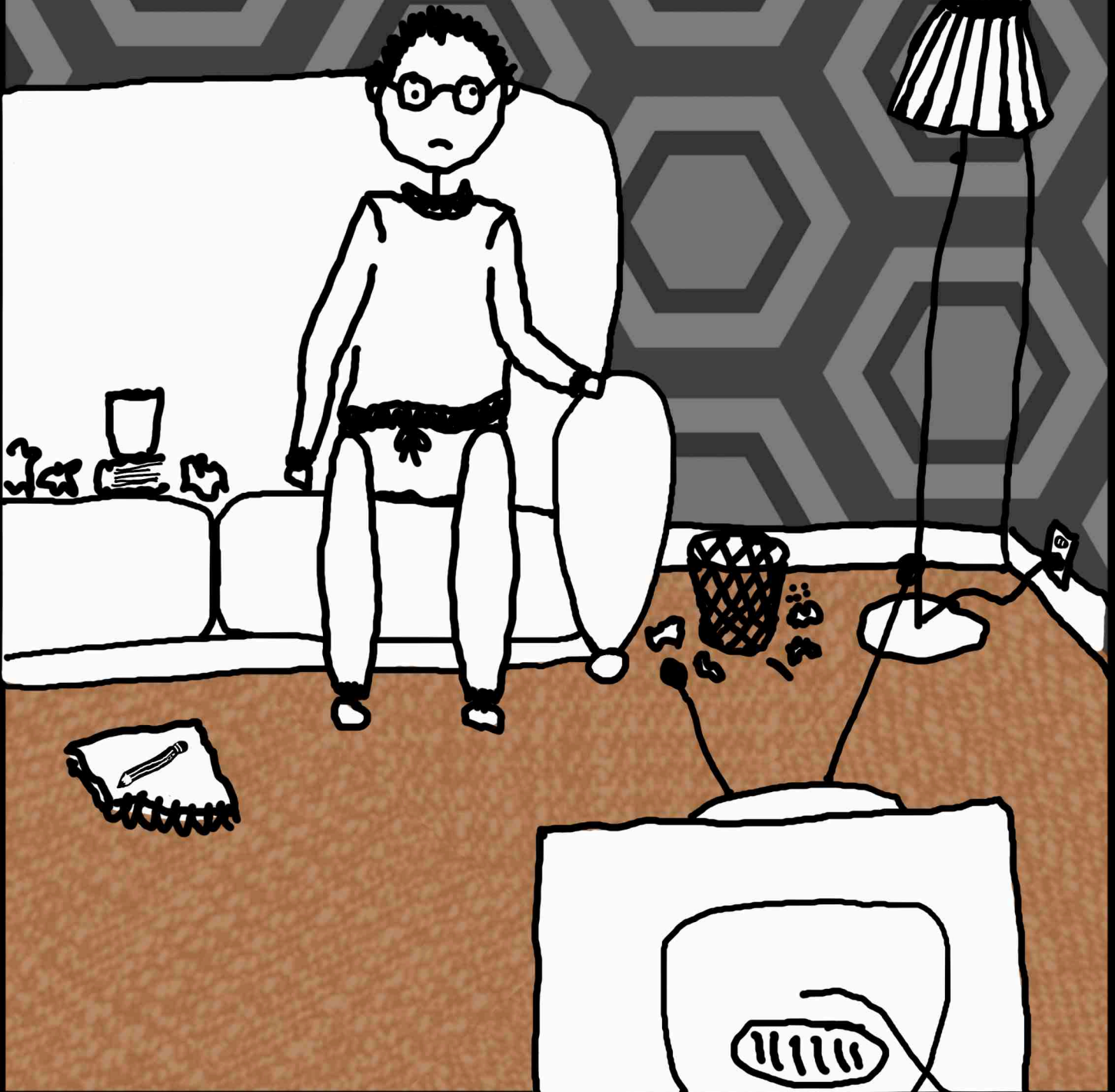


The structure of the unit provided
an immense sense of safety

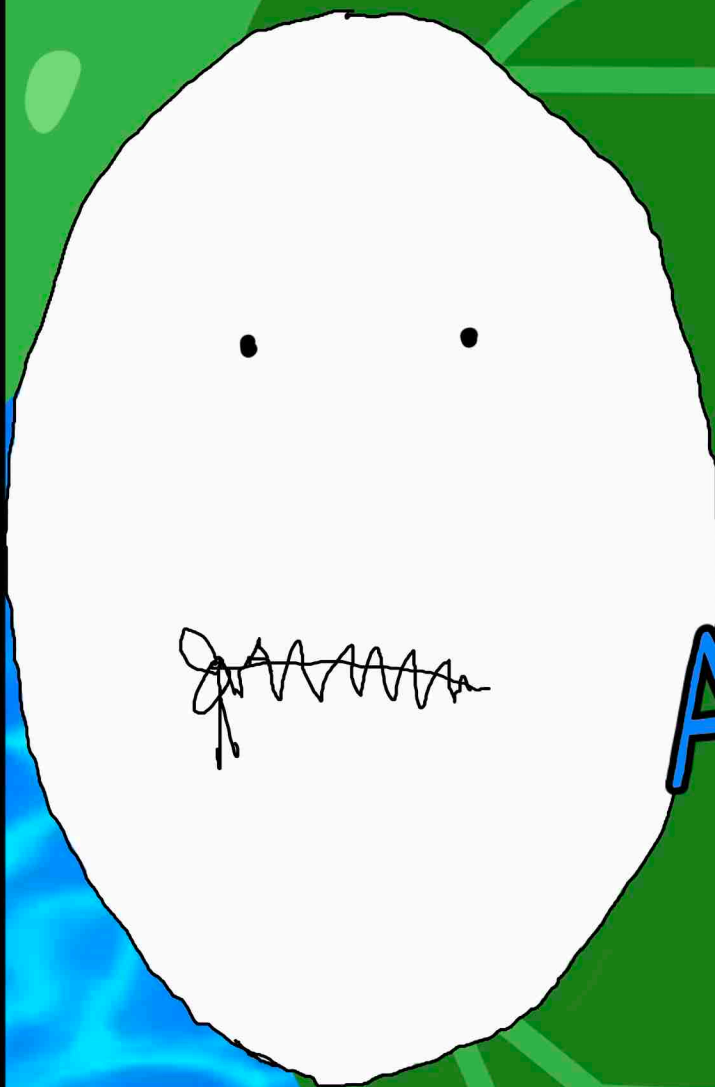
'UNIT SCHEDULE'

7am wake up
8am breakfast
9am morning meditation
10am goals
11am group therapy
12pm lunch
1pm gym
2pm medication management
3pm group therapy
4pm dinner
5pm-8pm free time
8pm wrap up
9pm evening self care
10pm bed
11pm lights out

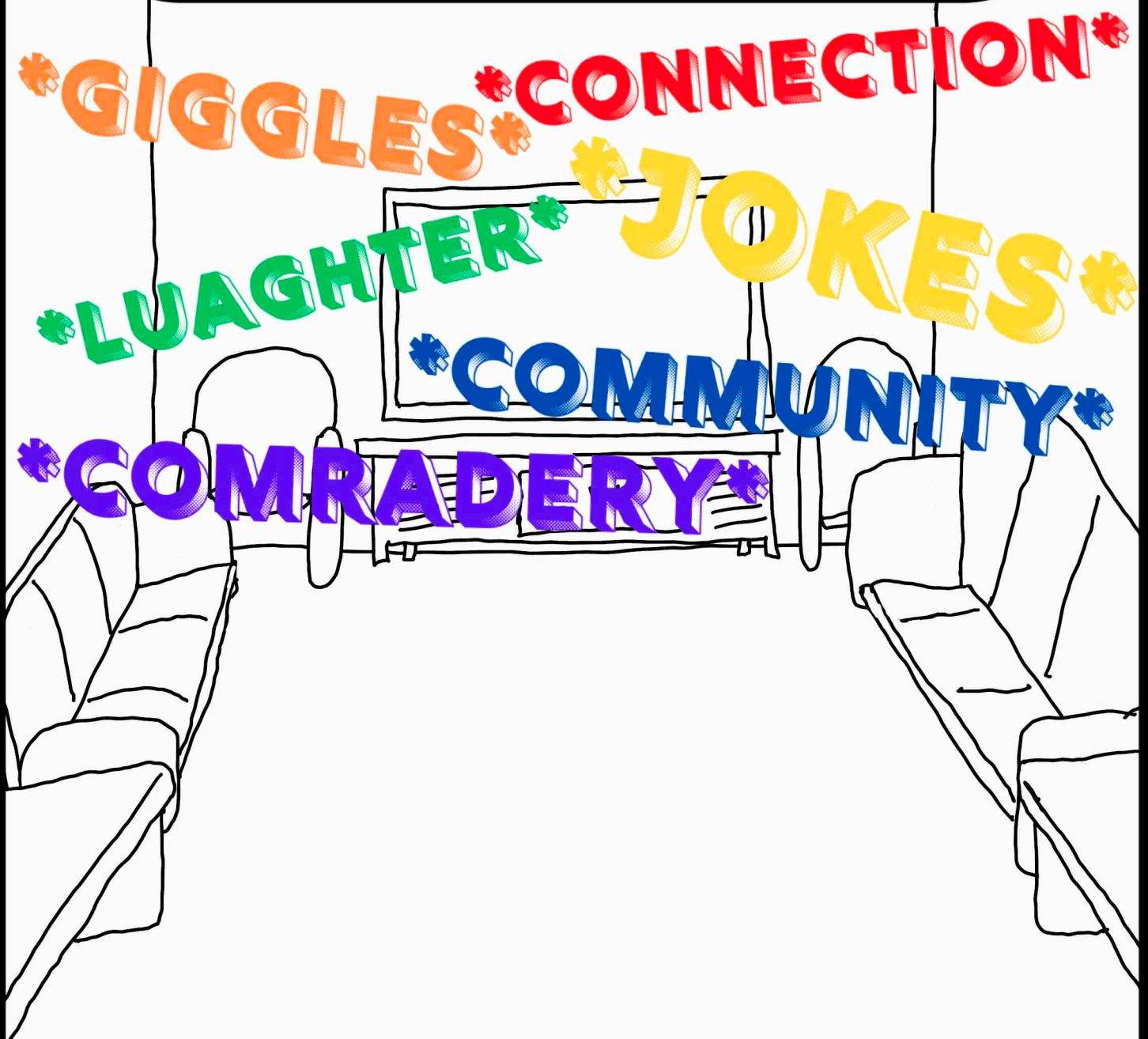
I didn't have any friends or supports outside of the unit



I didn't know how to make friends. I vacillated between constant interrupting or mutism. I was not well liked.



On the unit, staff would point out
when I was interrupting
& help me redirect.
I had friends on the unit.



I didn't know what it was at the time but being in the hospital was also incredibly helpful for sensory issues.

UNIT RULES

1. **NO PERSONAL CONTACT**

Clients will keep their hands & feet to themselves. This includes handshakes, shoulder taps, hugging, & any other form of touch.

2. **NO YELLING**

Client will use their inside voice at all times.

3. **NO RUNNING**

4. **NO HORSEPLAY**

5. **RESPECT EACH OTHER**

I didn't know it at the time that I was having a different experience than others— even other patients. They would laugh while almost touching one another while chanting "No PC! No PC!"

NO PC!

NO PC!

Like sibling tease of "I'm not touching you!"

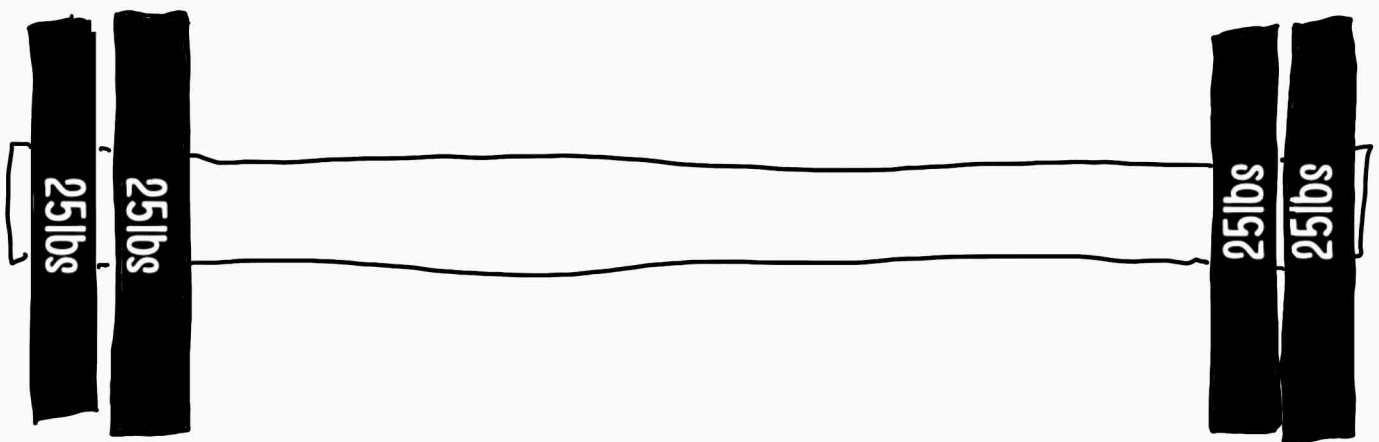
But I like the NO PERSONAL CONTACT rule because friendly hugs & gentle taps on the shoulder feel like fire to me.



But aggressive, tight, heavy, poppa bear hugs that lifted you off the ground & knocked the breath out of you provided ENORMOUS relief.

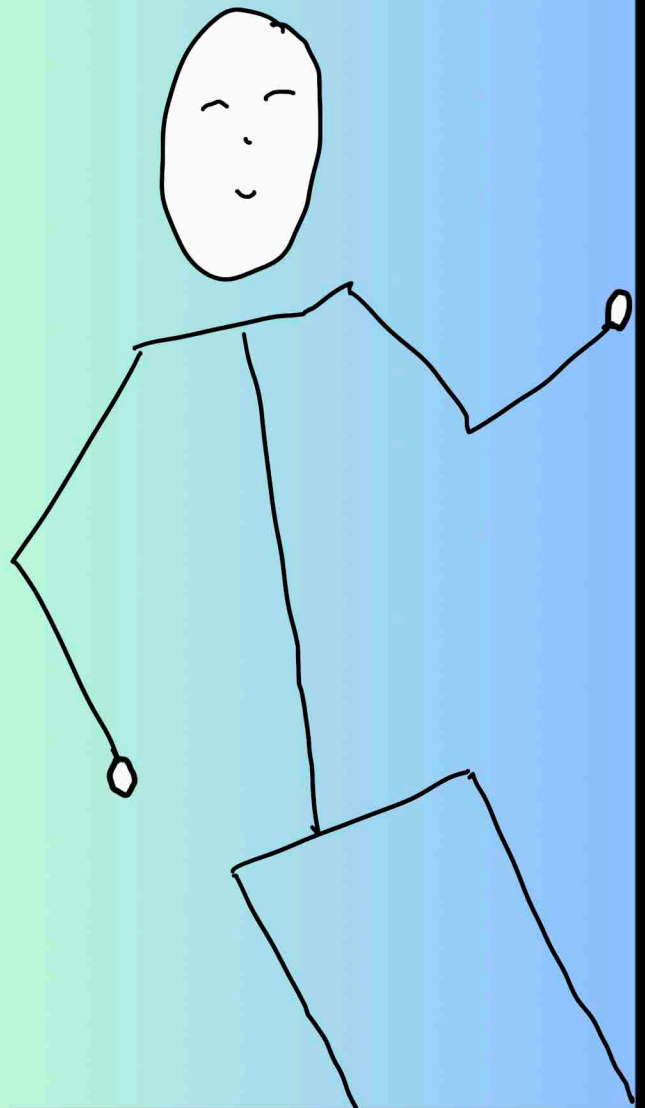
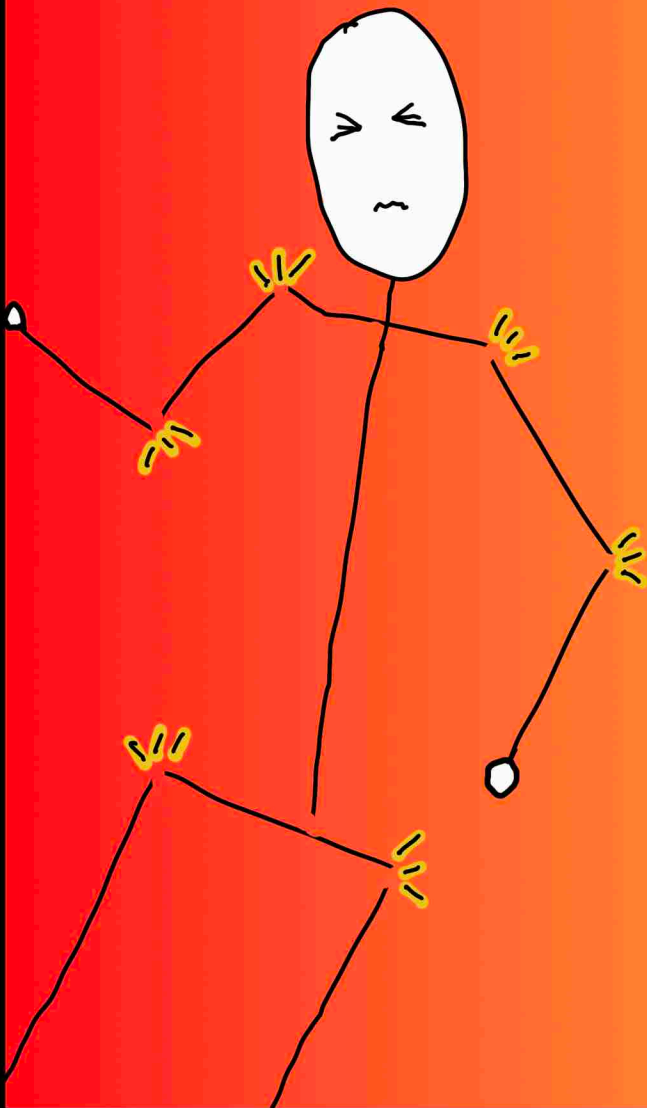


Heavy weight, deep pressure particularly when applied to my entire body allows me to relax. My brain quiets, my skin stops crawling, & I can breathe.

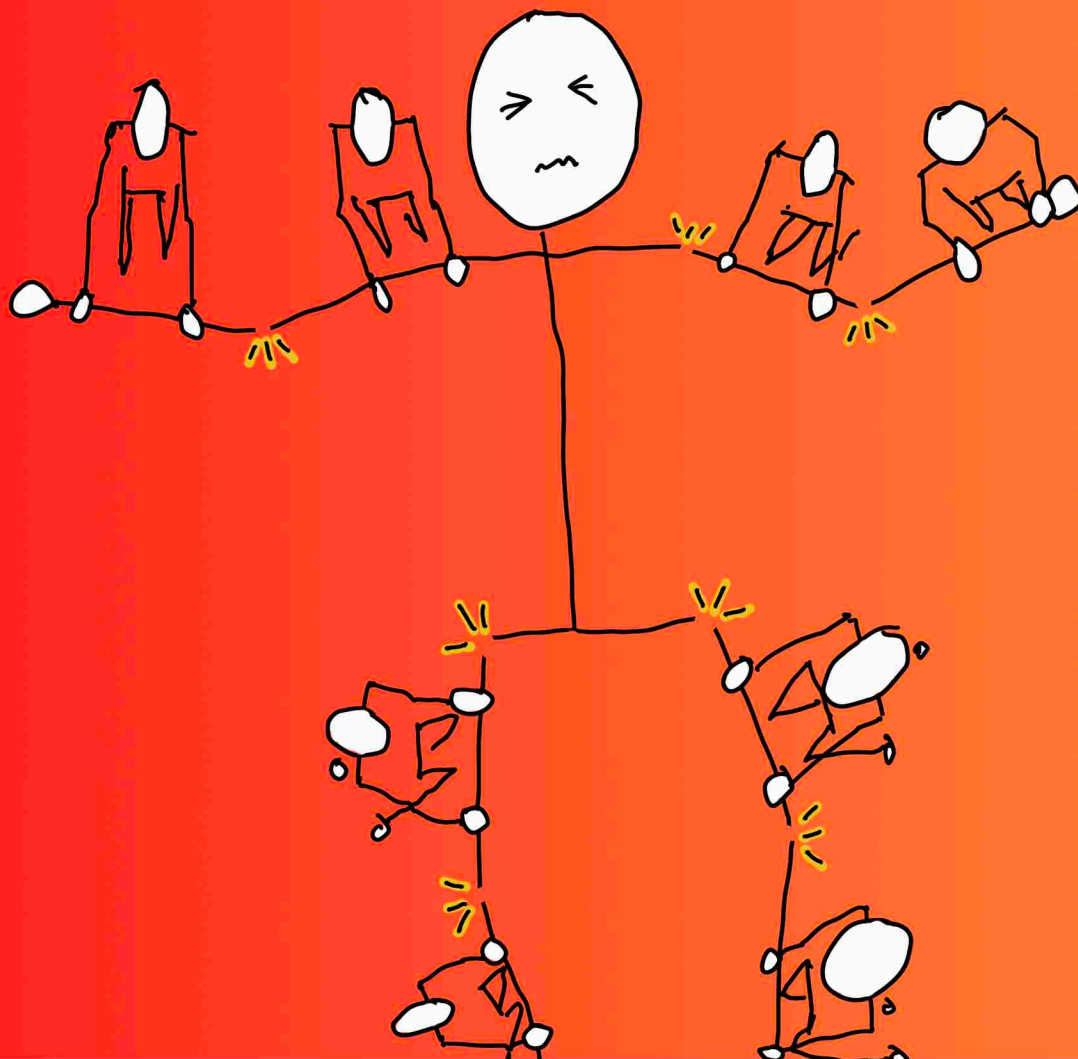


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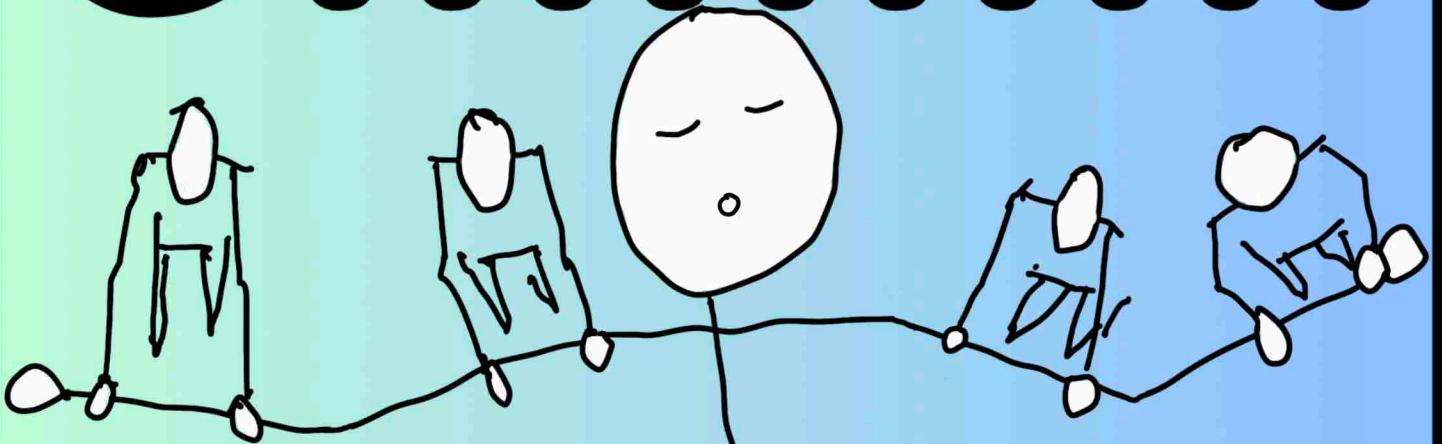
It's like all my atoms are forever just a squinch apart. Deep pressure & heavy weight smushes them all back together. In that moment, I am whole.



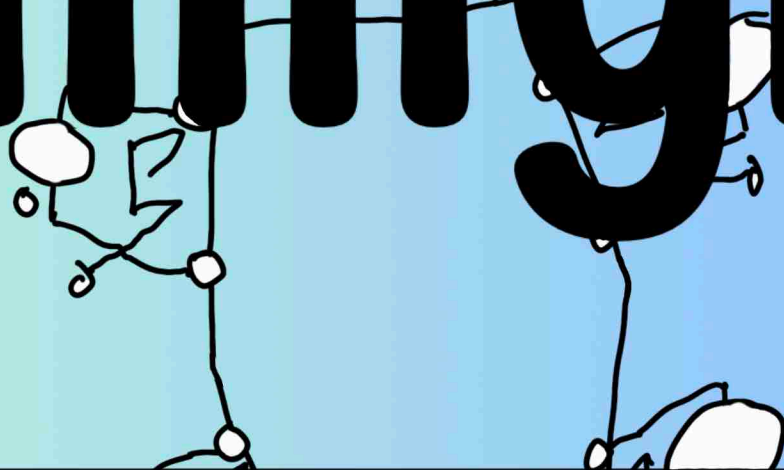
I didn't know it was Autism. I didn't know I was having sensory overwhelm. I just knew I was flying apart at the seams and having 10 techs pile on top of me fixed it



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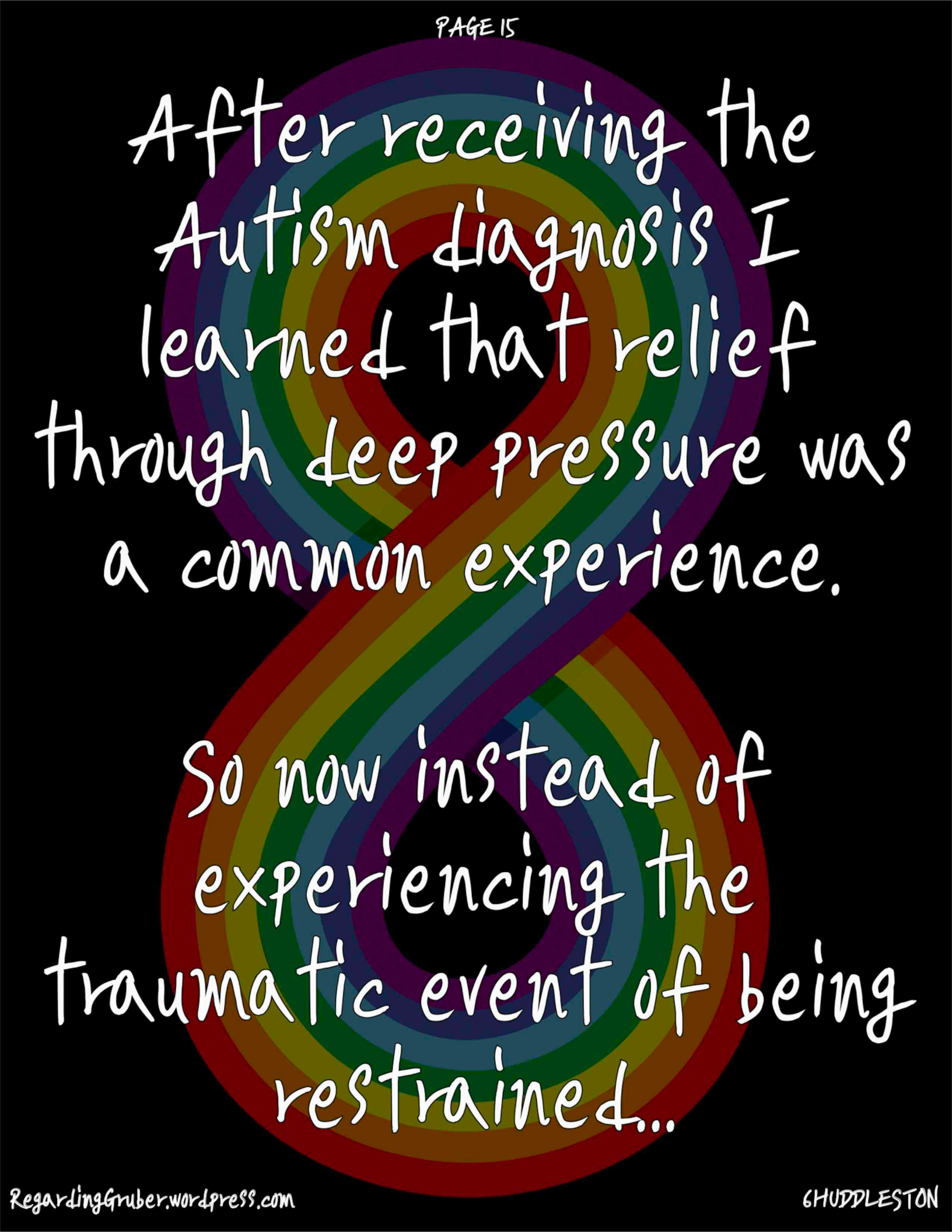
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So I would "go off" (yelling
screaming throwing things, act
aggressive) to be coded.

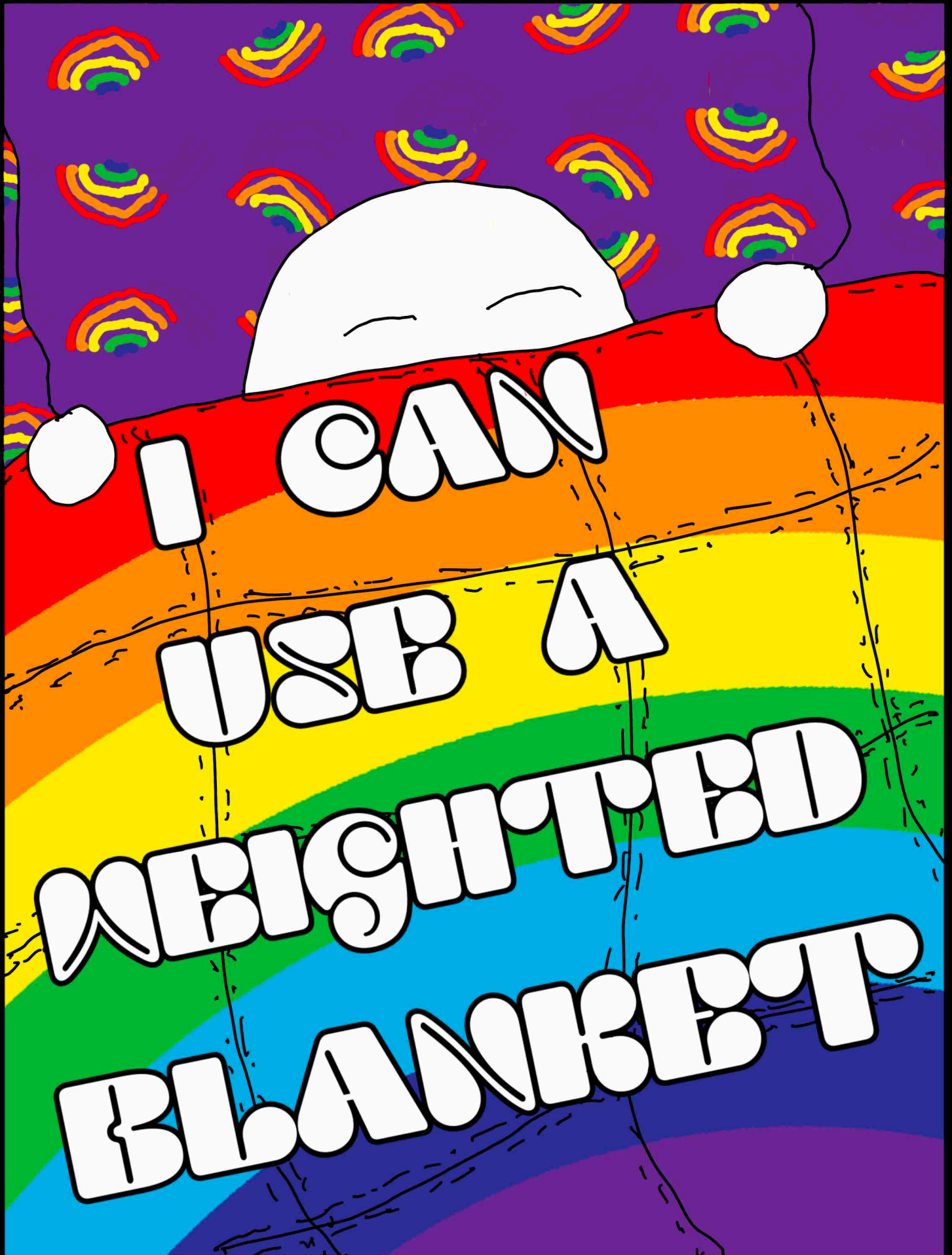
CODE RED ADOLESCENT UNIT
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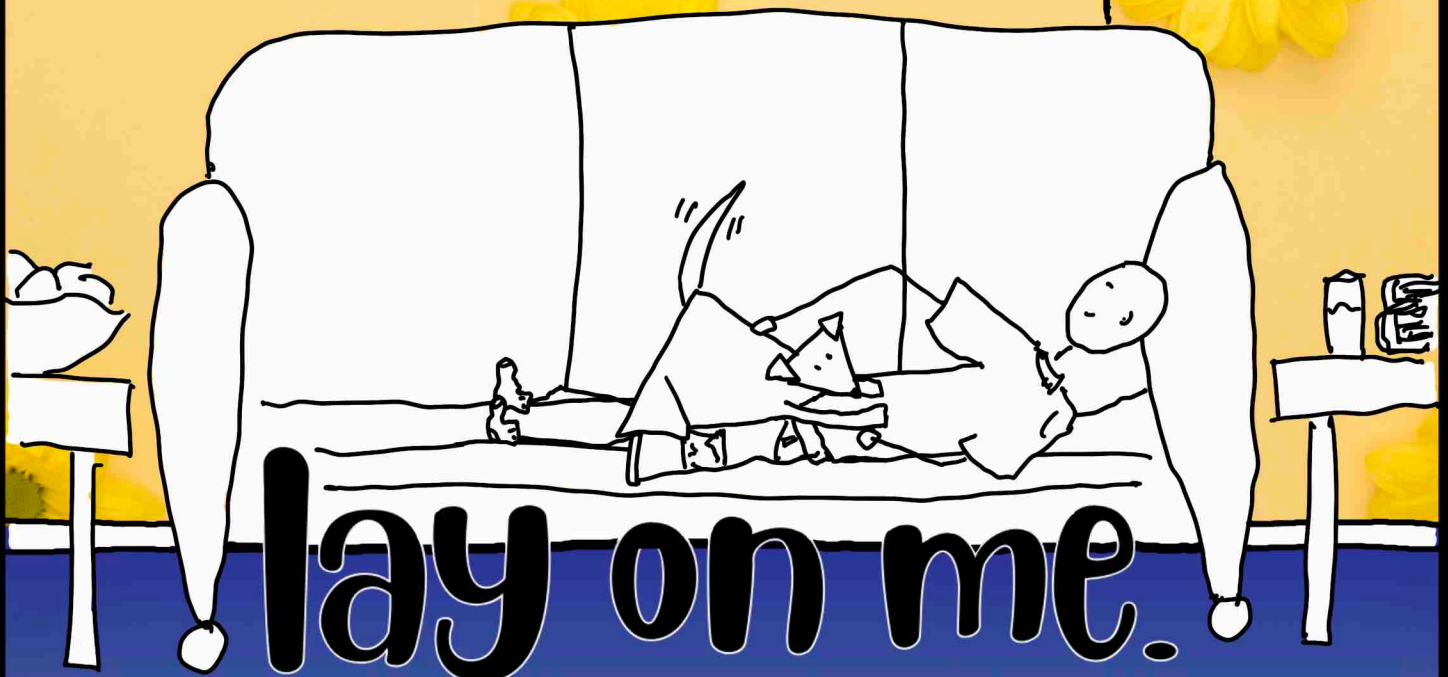
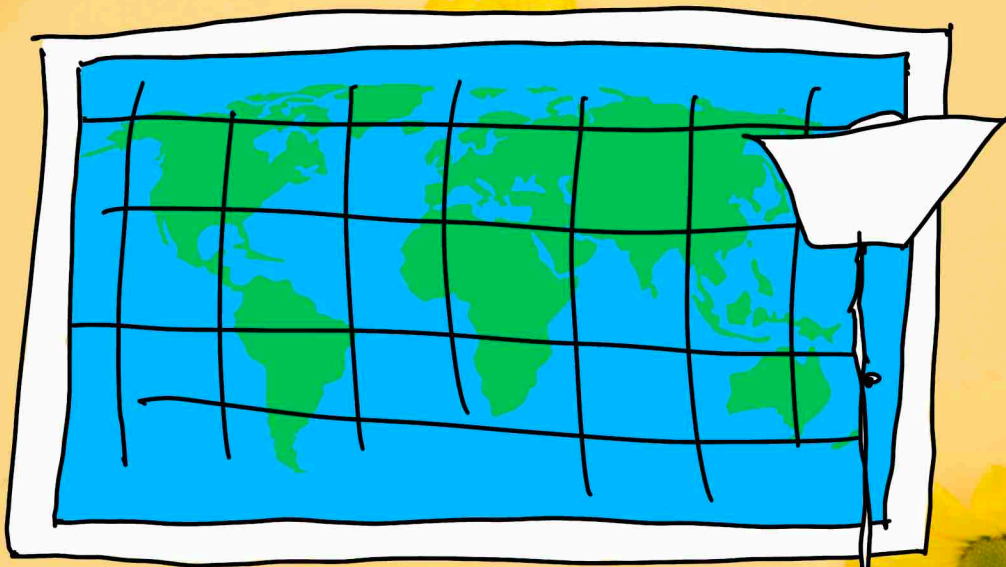


After receiving the
Autism diagnosis I
learned that relief
through deep pressure was
a common experience.

So now instead of
experiencing the
traumatic event of being
restrained...



OR i can have my Service Dog



OR I CAN ASK
A FRIEND FOR
A BIG POPPA
BEAR HUG!



Receiving the correct diagnosis led to discovering why the behavior occurred. This led to far more appropriate & much less traumatic coping skills.

BIG NOTE:

This is MY
experience
ONLY— It should
not be
generalized to
others, even other
Autistics.