Magnificent Mei and Friends

Comic 1
The Magnificent Mei and Friends comic series was developed as part of the WHO-UNICEF Helping Adolescents Thrive initiative. This comic series was created in partnership with UNICEF and WHO experts, as well as young people, teachers and mental health practitioners from 15 countries.

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Magnificent Mei and Friends Comic Series
WHO-UNICEF Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) initiative

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13-year old Mei and her friends Yasmin, Addo and Pablo are navigating the ups and downs of their first year as official “teens”.

Nicknamed “Magnificent Mei” by her grandmother, Mei doesn’t always feel magnificent these days. Living in a world with many twists and turns, Mei and her friends must learn how to deal with their feelings, navigate relationships, overcome challenges, and make good choices.

Join Mei on a journey where she discovers her own abilities and realizes just how magnificent she really is!
Hi, I’m Mei, or Magnificent Mei, as my grandmother likes to call me. 😊
This is my family 🧡

She spends most of her time working at our family’s store.

I want to be a rocket engineer!

He loves singing and dancing with me.

She named me Magnificent Mei when I was born. She gives me hope and strength.

He is in grade 3. He wants to become a veterinarian.
Ever since I turned 13, my life has felt like it’s upside down.

Let me tell you why...

I woke up on my birthday excited to celebrate at school with my best friends, Yasmin, Addo and Pablo. But my school had suddenly closed because of the coronavirus (COVID-19). What luck. 😞

My birthday sure didn’t go as planned. I wonder when it will be safe to return to school...

I got so annoyed after spending all day every day with my brother. 😞

Studying by myself at home was so boring and difficult without my teachers. I was so worried about passing my exams this year.
Then I got worried because my parents had to close their shop for several weeks. 😞 On top of that, they started arguing a lot. 😞

Coronavirus is spreading across the world.

Every day, the news kept saying more and more people were getting the coronavirus.

News flash – schools are opening up!

Hooray!

Even though I'm excited to go back to school, I still feel nervous… 😢

So you see, it's been an unusual year. Now I have to get ready for school. Tomorrow is my first day back in months!
Mei, did you finish packing your school bag?

Still working on it!

Mom, my bag feels so heavy now! Much heavier than I remember.

Will school stay open or close again?

Will I ever catch up on my schoolwork?

What if someone dies?

What if I catch COVID-19 at school?

Will Mom and Dad lose the store and keep fighting?

Will Yasmin be at school tomorrow?

Will Grandma be safe?
Nothing is the same as it used to be.

I can't get to sleep! Aaaarrrggghh! I'll be so tired tomorrow for school!

I think I should talk to Grandma.

I can't get to sleep, Grandma. I feel so worried about going back to school. I don't feel magnificent.

Ahh, my Magnificent Mei. With everything going on in the world, it is very normal for you to feel worried right now. I feel worried too. But somehow by sharing our worries, it makes me feel a little better.

I agree, somehow it does. Thank you, Grandma. Goodnight.

Morning

Mei, I can't believe you're going back to school! I'm so jealous! You get to see all your friends and teachers! Studying at home is so hard, and I keep falling so behind.

I will keep helping you, and one day you will go back to school too.

Yasmin's mom just called and said she can walk to school with you this morning! You'd better hurry up!

Yay! I can't wait to see Yasmin! 😍🏃‍♀️
Part two
There’s Yasmin!  
Yayyyy!  
But I wonder if it’s safe to hug her...?
Nothing much really. It has been soooo boring.

It's so good to see you! What have you been up doing?

I can't stop smiling at the thought of being with teachers and classmates again! 😊

Neither can I!

I do feel a bit nervous, though. 😚
What is it going to be like at school? 😔
I'm starting to feel stomach pains just thinking about all of this.

How will I ever get through this day? 😞

Hey, was that Addo? 😜
I hope they didn't see me. I just don't feel like talking to anyone right now. This is a really hard time for me... 😞
I thought I saw Addo too, but I guess not. Yasmin… what if I'm not prepared for exams this year? 😞😞😞

I've been wondering that too, but we can get through this together, right? 😊😊

Addo!

Are you okay, Addo…?

I'm fine.

Hi.

I'm fine.

I feel excited!

I feel nervous.

I feel miserable.

Hurry up!

My heart is beating so fast… 😢

I feel like going back to bed…

Even if we wash our hands a thousand times, we could still get infected… 😞😞

School could close again, and we will be stuck at home all over again. What's the point of going in?

Addo, Mei – are you okay?
I know things have changed, but we are here together.

You’re right Yasmin. C’mon, Addo. Let’s go in.

That’s true. We are in this together.
Good morning, everyone!
A big welcome back!
It's exciting to see you all.

PLEASE SANITIZE YOUR HANDS!

This feels scary, but here we go!

This is hard, but here we go!
Part three
Good morning! Let’s start by taking a moment to think about how we are feeling.

How are you feeling?

This is a feelings chart. We experience different feelings every day. Let’s take a moment to think about how we’re feeling right now.

sad  worried  afraid  angry

happy  silly  excited  calm
What if I need to turn in the schoolwork I have not finished?
What if I fail my exams this year!?

It feels so good to be back at school!

I really don't feel like being here right now, and I can't focus on what the teacher is talking about...

I feel so down. Everything has gone terribly in the last few months, and it isn't getting any better.

Which of these faces best match how you feel right now?
We all experience different feelings like happiness, excitement, sadness, anger... to name a few. We can feel many different feelings throughout the day or even at the same time. All of these feelings are ok.

Meanwhile...

Psssss...

Addo!

Do you want to play soccer after school? Pablo

I can't. I just don't feel like seeing any friends today.
Back to the lesson.

Being able to recognize our different feelings is actually a SUPERPOWER!

Superpower?
Well, I can see all of you must be busy practising your superpowers...

Many of us have been experiencing strong feelings because of COVID-19. All of our lives have been changed in some way.

Some days I feel worried because I see people around me getting sick. Right now, I feel happy because I am with you all again!

It is important to notice how we feel, and to be able to manage strong feelings.

When you have strong feelings, what are some things that can help you?
I take slow breaths, breathing in for three seconds and breathing out for three seconds.

I am going to use the Feelings Chart so I can notice what I am feeling and then write in my journal.

Listening to music and getting a hug from my mom and dad always makes me feel better.

I jump up and down and try to move my body!

These are all excellent ways to help manage feelings! Remember to be kind to yourself and tell yourself, “whatever I am feeling right now is okay”. Also, don’t forget that you can talk to someone you trust—your friends, your parents, or even me!

Class is over. You may go outside for a break! See you back here in 20 minutes.

Addo, do you want to talk for a minute?
I know it is only our first day back, but I noticed you didn't seem like your usual self today. Are you okay?

I'm not sure, Mrs Abadi... but I haven't been feeling like my usual self now for a few weeks...

It is okay to feel unsure, and you don't have to figure things out alone. Maybe it would be helpful for you to talk with Ms Kim, the school counsellor? She is someone we can trust and turn to.

Yes, I could try that.

After school that day

If I had a super power it would be invisibility... and I would have a unicorn with wings to fly me around!

Mine would be super speed...

It feels so good to be laughing with my friends again.
Stay tuned for more adventures with Magnificent Mei and her friends at
https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/who-unicef-helping-adolescents-thrive-programme
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