Activity Introduction:
When was the last time you asked yourself the question, “Why me?” What was happening at the time? How did things work out for you? Was it really the right question to ask?

In this activity you will meet a character named Claire around whom the fictional story, “Manage Me” was written. Claire is looking for the answer to “why me?” You will explore whether Claire was able to answer this question or whether there were even more important questions she needed to ask and answer. You will use your critical reading skills to consider both the emotional and the factual content written in the story. You will explore the emotional aspects of living with diabetes as you become acquainted with different characters, all of whom converge at Camp Running Water, a special summer camp for young people with diabetes.

You will use an “editor’s eye” as you read the story, highlighting diabetes facts that appear in the story and highlighting emotions and emotional responses that characters show in their speech and their behavior. You will show an “empathetic heart” when you respond to these characters, especially to Claire, as they come to grips with all they must learn and do to be better managers of their own diabetes care. You will respond or react to the story as you read using the dialectic format your teacher provides. In some cases you will be asked something very specific or given a suggestion as to when to respond to the story and to what elements in the story. At other times, there will be no prompts for you and you may respond to the story in many different ways.

So where do you think that the ideas for fictional stories come from? The ideas for the story, “Manage Me,” came from interviews that the author had with different people who have diabetes. The author learned that the diagnosis of diabetes can generate many emotional responses. Some people reported anger, fear, disgust, sadness, loss, frustration, and despair upon hearing that they had diabetes. Some people had very long bouts of depression and needed medical and psychological assistance beyond that which was directly related to their diabetes care. Even though doctors presented each of these people with factual information about diabetes, and assured them that proper care and treatment can help them have long, relatively unaffected, healthy lives with their diabetes, their immediate reaction was not “intellectual” (that is, how can I take care of myself? Where can I get my supplies? Can I pass this disease on to my friends and family? You know, thoughts like that!). Each of the people who were interviewed said that their immediate reaction to their diabetes diagnosis was an emotional one. Each of them said that it has been a growing and maturing process, as they came to grips with the “loss of freedom”
they felt and the loss of the “old person” they use to be. They reported a sort of “emotional rollercoaster” they experienced as they grew to learn more about their disease and its management, and the “new person” they were becoming.

Maybe you have experienced all or some of the emotions that people with diabetes have experienced. But your emotions were caused by other circumstances – like when a friend moves away, or parents get divorced, or when you don’t make the team you tried out for, or when someone is insensitive to your needs and feelings. Do you think that since you have experienced these emotions, you might better understand them in someone else?

Maybe you know someone with diabetes. Maybe you have tried to talk with that person about his or her disease. Maybe you have wanted to, but just didn’t know where to start. Maybe you have wondered about the concerns that person has about his/her diabetes. Maybe someone with diabetes has trusted you with health information and signs to watch for so that you may assist at critical times in the life of your friend or loved one.

Maybe you have diabetes and you know, first hand, what it is like to receive this diagnosis. You know first hand how people react to you when they find out you have diabetes. You have a story to tell, too. Maybe you could write it down in a story that could help others understand how you feel and how you have matured as you have learned to manage your disease. Maybe you have experienced “the look” that Claire’s mom gives in the story. How did you help your parent or other loved ones understand your diabetes?

By reading a fictional story and going through the responsive writing process that accompanies it, you may gain some insight into the lives of your friend or family member who has diabetes. “Interacting” with the characters in the story might help you interact in a different way with your friend who has diabetes. You may see a bit of yourself in some of the characters in the story, and see that people with diabetes are not much different than you or I.

**Activity Background:**

The story you will read in this activity is written into a format that allows you to respond as you read. In some places there are “prompts” for you to respond to – to consider something that the teacher wants you to write about. In other places, you can record your own observations, your questions, and what you are thinking in response to what you have read. You may create an imaginary dialogue with a character in the story, summarize what you have read, or give your personal reaction to it and how it is written. It is like having a “conversation” with a book!
It’s a great way to read and increase your understanding of what you read. For example, this format:

✓ gives you a way to interact with characters, “sensing” what they were feeling when they talk about their diabetes, guessing what the character really meant when they said something about their care issues or about another camper or person in the story, and visualizing how they said it.

✓ gives you a way to interact with the author – suggesting a better way to reveal information, asking why some element of diabetes care or disease progression was left out of a story (or why it was included), complementing him or her on the way a particular passage has been written.

✓ is a way to interact with the setting of the story – imagining from context clues what the camp scene looks like for instance or how Claire might have looked at the dance, sketching a scene or a person from the story, adding in your own elements to make that “come alive” in your head.

✓ allows you to interact with the story – questioning: are the events in this story plausible, even though fictional? Are there accurate facts about diabetes in the story? Does it leave out some information you’d like to know? Does it just “miss the point” – doesn’t quite make things clear to you? Does it leave the wrong impression on you, as the reader? Are there errors in the story that might mislead someone?

The more you interact, the better you can understand the story and the more discriminating you will become in discerning “story facts” from “real facts.” You will get a chance to show what you have learned about diabetes facts from the story and how accurate that information is as compared with a medical fact sheet, “Drawing Out Diabetes.” It will help you compare the fictional content with factual content. So get ready!

To do all of this great interacting, you will do some writing, some highlighting, and some drawing. The notes you make will really become “thinking tools” for you – a way to help you understand and discuss what you have read with others.

**Activity Materials:**

- “Manage Me” Student Pages
- “Drawing Out Diabetes” Student Pages
- Blue highlighter
- Yellow highlighter
- Drawing supplies: pens, pencils, colored pencils
Activity Instructions:

1. Read the story, “Manage Me,”. As you read, reflect on how Claire’s feelings (and those of other characters) are portrayed in the story. Every time you read a “feeling” word, or realize that someone’s feelings are being described in the text, highlight it in blue. Be ready to write about those feelings and how you react to them. What would you like to say to Claire or the other characters?

2. While you read the story, also be on the lookout for things that sound like diabetes “facts”. Later you will use your “editor’s eye” to see if the “facts” are accurate. Mark these “facts” with a yellow highlighter.

3. Respond directly to any prompt that appears in the “response” column provided with the story. You may be asked to answer a question, make a comment, or draw a picture. Be thoughtful in your responses and clear in your drawings.

4. In sections of the story that do not have a required prompt, write your own reflections or thoughts about the passage. You may write a summary of the passage, or your reaction to the passage – perhaps a simple comment about what is written, perhaps a strong feeling incited by the information or interaction depicted, perhaps a question, or something they would like to say to the character(s) in the story.

5. When you have completed “Manage Me,” obtain a copy of the student handout, “Drawing Out Diabetes.” Read through this text which is based on scientific and medical information from the National Institutes of Health and the American Diabetes Association. Look at all of the diabetes facts written there. It is usually best to get your facts from a reliable resource – not from a fictional story. Underline some of the key facts in “Drawing Out Diabetes.”

6. Now, remember all of those “facts” you highlighted in yellow in the story? Well, compare them to the “real thing.” Are the “facts” in the story “real facts?” In other words, are they accurate as compared with the information in “Drawing Out Diabetes?” Are the story “facts” overstated? Are they incomplete? Are they subtly misleading? Are they totally wrong?
7. After completing all of your reading, responding, and highlighting, and examining the diabetes facts in “Drawing Out Diabetes,” you will create a graphic organizer that illustrates the similarities and differences in the facts in “Drawing Out Diabetes” and the facts in “Manage Me”. A graphic organizer is a visual way to show what you have learned – to bring out the key points you want to compare and contrast. Some examples of graphic organizers are Venn diagrams, tables or charts, web maps, and things like that. You have probably seen and used a lot of graphic organizers in your classrooms by now. It has been shown that using and designing graphic organizers can increase your brain power! They help you understand what you read, show what you know, improve your thinking and learning skills, and help you remember what you have read. Using and making your own graphic organizer is like exercise for your brain.

8. Throughout this entire process, participate in class discussions as you go, share what you are learning with your family, and ask for a chance to show the class your graphic organizer. Think about a way you would like it to be graded, and let your teacher know why.

9. If there is time, consider doing one of the following things:

Write about a time when you felt much the same way as Claire or any of the other characters in the story.

Write a new paragraph for the story which introduces another camper who responds to Claire or other characters in the story.

Write about how you think the way you “feel” emotionally can affect the way you “feel” physically.

Read more about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, the disease onset, management, and progression and use that information to write new paragraph for the story that clarifies an error or misconception in the diabetes “facts” as presented in the story.

Find out how insulin is manufactured and its daily use by Type 1 diabetics.

Write a supportive, encouraging letter to someone they know who has diabetes.

Write a research report on how “attitude” affects “health.”