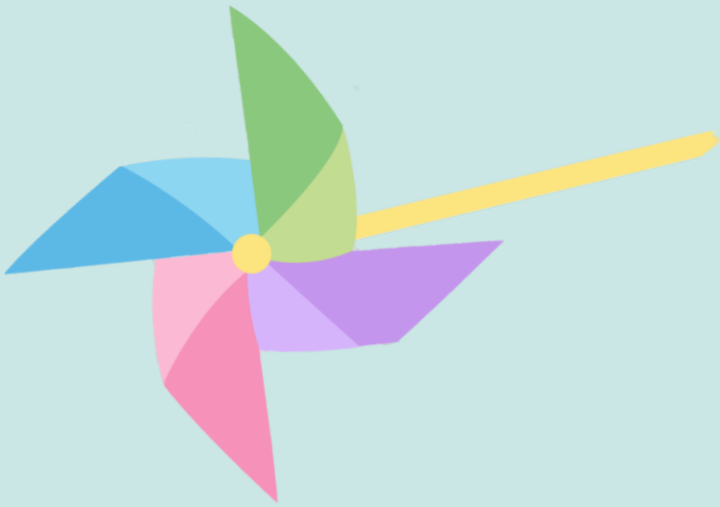


## SAMPLE LETTER



# The Rheumad Mill

Dear Friend,

How are you doing? I hope you're fine.

I want to let you know that there are big changes in my life right now. I have been diagnosed with Rheumatoid Disease. It's an auto-immune disease that causes inflammation in my joints which causes me intense pain. It also causes inflammation in my central nervous system which causes me extreme fatigue. Sometimes I can't even get out of bed and it makes me hate the person I have become. There is no known cause or cure and this scares me. The pain and fatigue that rheumatoid disease causes me is indescribable. The debilitating nature of the condition prevents me from doing the most basic of tasks and makes me so frustrated. I have been prescribed a number of treatments from my doctors to prevent permanent damage to my joints. My treatment is complex and have worrying side effects but I have to take them so I don't get worse. My disease also puts me at risk of having other illnesses and that causes me great stress. I will have Rheumatoid arthritis long-term and it makes me worry about my future. I am telling you this because I will need you to be understanding and to be there to listen. I will often complain about the pain because it will be unrelenting. I won't be the person I once was but hopefully my treatment will get me close. I don't want to be a burden but I will need help and support to get me through. I need a friend who will listen so I don't have to internalise my pain. My pain is both physical and mental so I will sometimes need physical help but mostly, I will need my friends for my mental health. I need reasons to smile and reasons to keep fighting because I do not want to be defined by my condition. I am still me. I am still the person who loves to dance, go to the movies and have a picnic at the beach but sometimes I won't be that person as much as I want to be.

Sincerely,

*Me*