



**Taking Our Mental Health
To
Heart**



CANADA
4-H Ontario



4-H Inclusion Statement

4-H in Canada is open to all* without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or, mental or physical disability.**

4-H is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive environment that allows for universal access and participation. Where barriers to participation are identified, 4-H will, with reasonable accommodation, adapt programs, rules, policies, or expectations to reduce or remove the barriers.

Any accommodations, changes or exceptions will be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the individual experience of the member and their family. The physical safety and emotional well-being of members, leaders, staff and volunteers is 4-H's highest priority, and is the ultimate consideration in final decisions.

4-H Canada and local 4-H organizations consider inclusion a priority. Leaders are encouraged to work with individuals and their families to identify and discuss accommodations as required, and to reach out to provincial or national office staff for help with unresolved concerns.

**This applies to youth members (ages 6 to 21), volunteers, leaders, staff and professionals.*

***Definition of discrimination as per Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

Déclaration sur l'inclusion des 4-H

L'adhésion aux 4-H au Canada est ouverte à tous les jeunes* sans discrimination fondée sur la race, l'origine nationale ou ethnique, la couleur de la peau, la religion, le sexe, l'âge ou le handicap mental ou physique. **

Les 4-H ont pour mission d'offrir un environnement sécuritaire et inclusif qui permet l'accès et la participation de tous. Lorsque des obstacles à la participation sont décelés, les 4-H adapteront, à l'aide de mesures d'adaptation raisonnables, les programmes, les règles, les politiques ou les attentes afin de réduire ou d'éliminer ces obstacles.

Toute mesure d'adaptation, modification ou exception sera évaluée au cas par cas, en tenant compte de l'expérience personnelle du membre et de sa famille. La sécurité physique et le bien-être émotionnel des membres, des animateurs et des animatrices, des membres du personnel et des bénévoles sont la priorité absolue des 4-H et constituent le facteur ultime à considérer lors de la prise des décisions définitives.

Les 4-H du Canada et les organisations locales des 4-H considèrent l'inclusion comme étant une priorité. Les animateurs et les animatrices sont encouragés à collaborer avec les personnes et leurs familles afin de définir et d'examiner les mesures d'adaptation, selon les besoins, et de communiquer avec le personnel du bureau provincial ou national pour obtenir de l'aide en cas de préoccupations non résolues.

**Ceci s'applique aux jeunes membres (âgés de 6 à 21 ans), aux bénévoles, aux animateurs, aux membres du personnel et aux professionnels.*

***Selon la définition de discrimination en vertu de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés*

Learn To Do By Doing

Apprendre en travaillant

Welcome to Taking Our Mental Health To Heart



Here you will find a variety of resources to support mental health awareness. They can be used in many different ways to support your personal mental health, to promote conversation and to even support club meeting activities. There is so much to explore, and we hope that you'll get great use out of them.

To help you find what might be most of interest, we have compiled these resources into the following sections:

Icebreakers

Opportunities to get to know people and start building connections.



Led Activities

Pick one of these activities to support discussions within groups and learn more together.



Reflection Pages

Created as a more independent resources, you can share these with people you work with or even complete them yourselves. They are filled with questions to get you thinking.



Information & Resources

This is comprised of general information for your learning, reference and support.



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The creation of these resources is thanks to support from the **Trillium Mutual Insurance**.



We hope that these will be a useful tool for you. Now it's time to explore!

4-H Ontario recognizes the work of the team that put these resources together:

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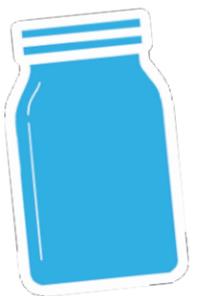
Editor: Autumn Unwin



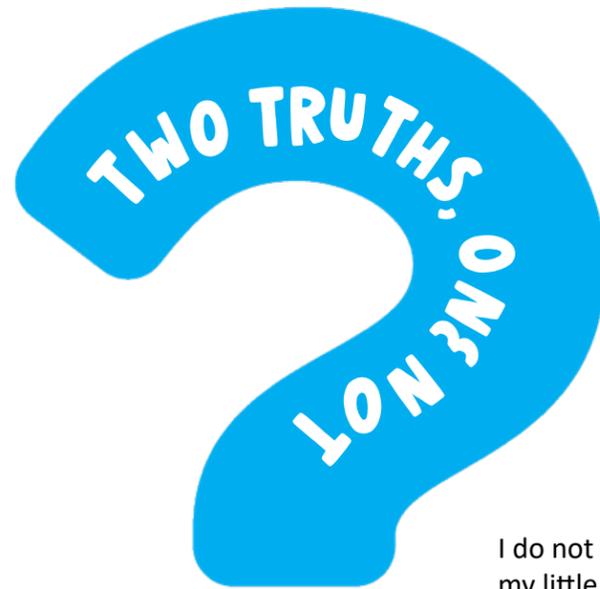
Icebreakers

Opportunities to get to know people and start building connections.

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ICE BREAKERS

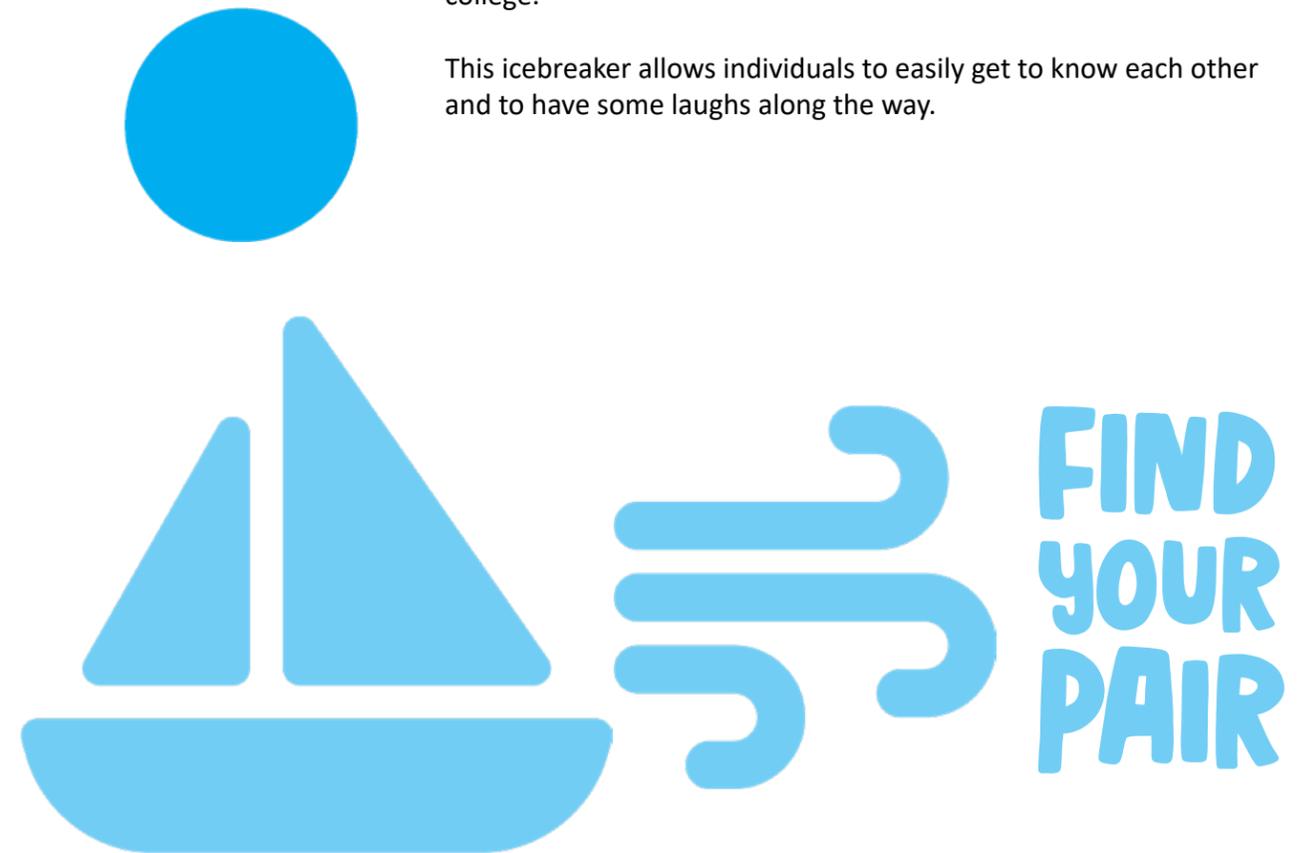


Start by asking each person to come up with two facts about themselves and one believable fib. Next, everyone shares their three statements and the group votes or discusses their guess for the lie. For example, here are three statements about me:

1. Growing up, my family called me “Sasa” as a nickname.
 2. I speak Mandarin.
 3. I have a pet turtle.
- Can you guess which is the lie?

I do not have a pet turtle! Yes, my family called me Sasa because my little sisters couldn’t say “Vanessa.” And I lived in China during college.

This icebreaker allows individuals to easily get to know each other and to have some laughs along the way.



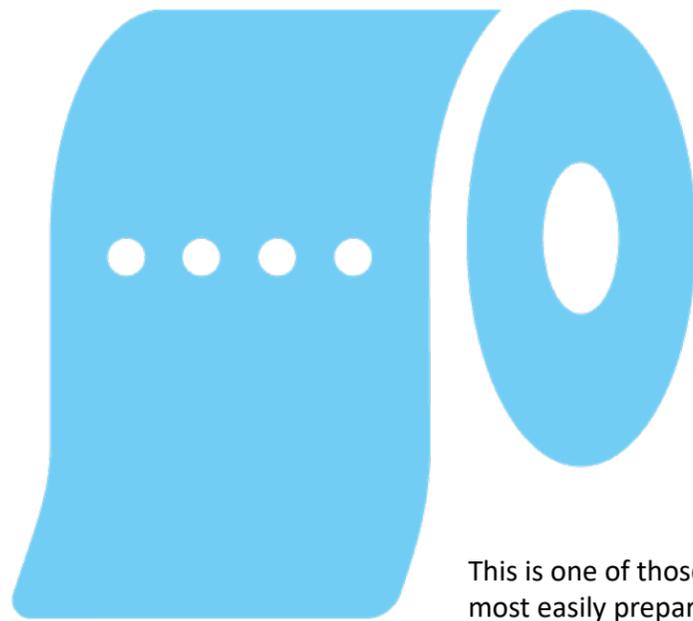
Prepare word pairs, like salt and pepper, milk and honey, sail and wind etc on separate pieces of paper. Tape one to each person’s back. People then have to walk around and ask closed questions (with a yes or no answer) to find out what their phrase is. Once they find out, they have to find their pair & by continuing to ask questions (these can be open or closed) they have to learn 3 new things about the other. The best icebreakers are often fun icebreakers that encourage people to think in new ways – find your pair is a great ice breaker game for smaller groups too!



Start this ice breaker game by having people write their funniest or weirdest story on a small piece of paper. It has to be a true one, no colouring! Then fold the paper up and drop it into a bowl or other container. The facilitator or the person leading the program randomly reads every story & the group has to guess who the writer is. This is a great way to get to know each other and find out new things, even if you’ve known each other for a long time.

This is a quick ice breaking game where players have to form an orderly line without any discussion, or any verbal cues or help at all. The line is formed by predetermined criteria (like height, or colour of each person’s eyes, shirt colour, shoe size). This icebreaker helps develop team collaboration and non-verbal communication.





TOILET PAPER ICE-BREAKER

This is one of those ice breaker activities that is most easily prepared – you only need one roll of toilet paper. Pass this around and have everyone rip off how much they would usually use. Everyone will feel awkward & will not really see the point at the beginning & possibly think you've lost it. When everyone has taken off a few squares, they should count them. The amount they have is how many fun facts they should reveal about themselves. A warning though: this is one of those fun icebreakers for meetings or workshops that is best suited for more lighthearted occasions.

FACT OR FICTION



Fact or Fiction is similar to Two Truths One Not activity, instead of being shared verbally by the person the responses are written down.

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper THREE things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

ONE MINUTE PLEASE



The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute.

Use a pack of cards to randomly select who goes first. For example: the person who draws the lowest number goes first.

Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and creative knowledge. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before drying up!

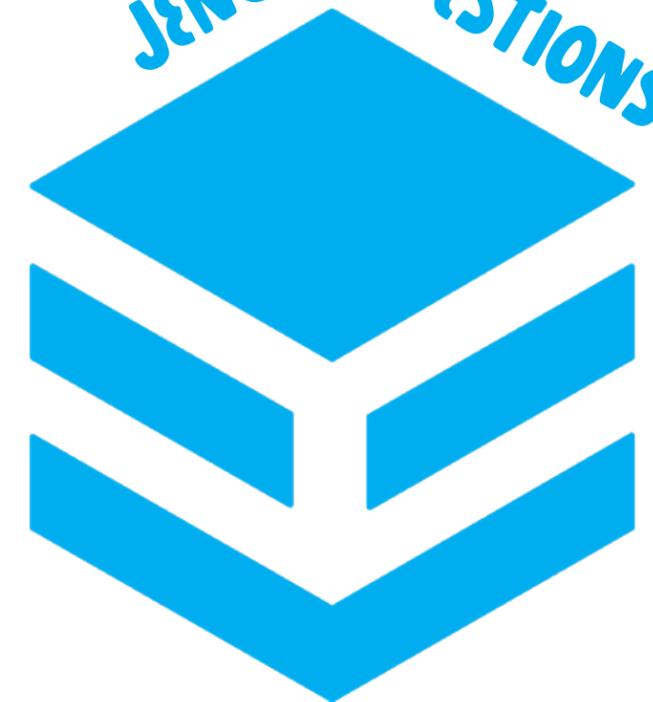
Subjects could include, my earliest memories, my favourite part of going to school, why self-care is good for you, 10 things you can do to relieve stress.....

Jenga is the starting point of many fun gatherings. It's a super easy ice breaker activity to explain and pick up & anyone can join any time. You can spice up a regular tower-toppling contest by writing intriguing questions on each block (or as many as you can).

Have participants draw a block, read the question out loud and answer before placing the piece on the top of the tower. This can ignite exciting conversations about everyday topics like:

- favourite downtime activities
- favourite stretch
- interesting hobby
- career goals
- biggest fear
- what makes you happy
- dream job
- favorite subject in school

JENGA QUESTIONS





1. Pick your favourite kind of multi-coloured candy—a bowl of M&Ms, Starbursts, Skittles or whatever you desire.
2. Next, pass around the bowl and ask people to take as many candy pieces as they like, but NOT to eat them.
3. Once the bowl of candy has been passed around, each person has to answer a question for each colour they take. For example, you can assign questions such as:
 - Red: What’s your favourite book?
 - Orange: What is your dream vacation location?
 - Blue: What’s your favourite kind of food?
 - Green: What TV show do you love and can recite lines to?
 - Brown: If you could have any superhero quality, what would it be?
 - Yellow: What was the best part of your week?



This is a great team-building exercise and also forces your teammates to cooperate with each other.

1. Divide your group into teams of four.
2. Hand each group these four things: 20 sticks of spaghetti, one foot of tape, one foot of string, and one marshmallow.
3. Set a timer for 18 minutes. After the 18 minutes, the team with the tallest standing structure that supports the weight of the marshmallow wins!

“IF”

1. Write 20 ‘IF’ questions on cue cards or slips of paper and place them (examples below) in the middle of the circle.
2. Ask the group to sit in a circle.
3. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.
4. This is a simple icebreaker to get young people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don’t play for too long. Write your own additional ‘IF’ questions to add to the list.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?

If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?

If you could be someone else, who would you be?

If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?

If you could watch your favourite TV show now, what would it be?

If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?

If you could watch your favourite movie now, what would it be?

If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?

If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?

If you could have any question answered, what would it be?

If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?

If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?

If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?

If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?

If you could eat your favourite food now, what would it be?

If you sat down next to Einstein on a bus, what would you talk about?

If you could learn any skill, what would it be?

If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowed to bring three personal items with you, what would they be?

If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?



Music is something most people enjoy talking about and feel connected through. This activity can provide valuable insights as you observe and gently ask questions about their choices in artwork, song titles, etc.

Supplies Needed:

- Cardboard cut to size of a vinyl album cover (maybe bring an example of a real album) or pieces of paper
- Scissors
- Writing tools (pen, pencil, markers, etc.)

Steps:

1. Start off by inviting everyone to share their musical tastes, favourite artists, and albums
2. Ask them to create an album title, playlist, and album artwork
3. Design a vinyl cover for their own music album
4. Show everyone finished album covers
5. Have a discussion about why they chose the type of music, what it means to them and why they chose their artwork

QUOTES

This fast-paced icebreaker activity allows participants to get acquainted with each other in a meaningful way. Prepare more quotes than the number of participants on individual slips of paper. Put the quotes in a pile in the center of the room. Each participant picks up one quote, then picks a partner and begins to discuss what the quote says to them, if it is meaningful, and how.

Then after a minute or so (very short) give a signal and have participants switch partners. They can switch quotes as well if they'd like. This can continue for 4-5 rounds for around 15 minutes. Ice breaking at speed is not only fun, but effective. See some quotes to use below.

"I understand your pain. Trust me, I do. I've seen people go from the darkest moments in their lives to living a happy, fulfilling life. You can do it too. I believe in you. You are not a burden. You will NEVER BE a burden." – Sophie Turner

"The experience I have had is that once you start talking about [experiencing a mental health struggle], you realize that actually you're part of quite a big club." – Prince Harry

"Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary." – Fred Rogers

"You look at me and cry; everything hurts. I hold you and whisper: but everything can heal." Rupi Kaur

"There is hope, even when your brain tells you there isn't." - John Green

"The humanity we all share is more important than the mental illnesses we may not." - Elyn R. Saks

"Life doesn't make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that, the better for us all." – Erik Erikson

"Mental health problems don't define who you are. They are something you experience. You walk in the rain and you feel the rain, but, importantly, YOU ARE NOT THE RAIN." – Matt Haig

"If you are broken, you do not have to stay broken." – Selena Gomez

"My dark days made me stronger. Or maybe I already was strong, and they made me prove it." – Emery Lord

"Sometimes the people around you won't understand your journey. They don't need to, it's not for them." – Joubert Botha

"You don't have to be positive all the time. It's perfectly okay to feel sad, angry, annoyed, frustrated, scared and anxious. Having feelings doesn't make you a negative person. It makes you human." – Lori Deschene

"This feeling will pass. The fear is real but the danger is not." Cammie McGovern

"But no matter how much evil I see, I think it's important for everyone to understand that there is much more light than darkness." Robert Uttaro

"Tough times never last, but tough people do!" – Robert Schuller

"Many survivors insist they're not courageous: 'If I were courageous I would have stopped the abuse.' 'If I were courageous, I wouldn't be scared.' Most of us have it mixed up. You don't start with courage and then face fear. You become courageous because you face your fear." Laura Davis

**"I keep moving ahead, as always, knowing deep down inside that I am a good person and that I am worthy of a good life."
- Jonathan Harnisch**

"Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." – Albus Dumbledore from Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

"Be patient and tough; some day this pain will be useful to you." – Ovid

"There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." - Leonard Cohen

"Increasing the strength of our minds is the only way to reduce the difficulty of life." Mokokoma Mokhonoana

"Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves" Henry David Thoreau

"I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship." – Amy March, from Little Women

"Sometimes you climb out of bed in the morning and you think, I'm not going to make it, but you laugh inside – remembering all the times you've felt that way." – Charles Bukowski

"Promise me you'll always remember – you're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

– Christopher Robin from Winnie the Pooh

"In the middle of winter I at last discovered that there was in me an invincible summer." – Albert Camus

"If you're going through hell, keep going." – Winston Churchill

"If you have been brutally broken but still have the courage to be gentle to other living beings, then you're a badass with a heart of an angel." – Keanu Reeves

"I found that with depression, one of the most important things you can realize is that you're not alone. You're not the first to go through it, you're not gonna be the last to go through it." – Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson

**"The advice I'd give to somebody that's silently struggling is, you don't have to live that way. You don't have to struggle in silence. You can be un-silent. You can live well with a mental health condition, as long as you open up to somebody about it, because it's really important you share your experience with people so that you can get the help that you need."
– Demi Lovato**



This activity leverages the familiarity with social media. You will discuss as much of the groups social media profile as they're comfortable with and then present a social media-style paper template with each of the components of an online social media profile.

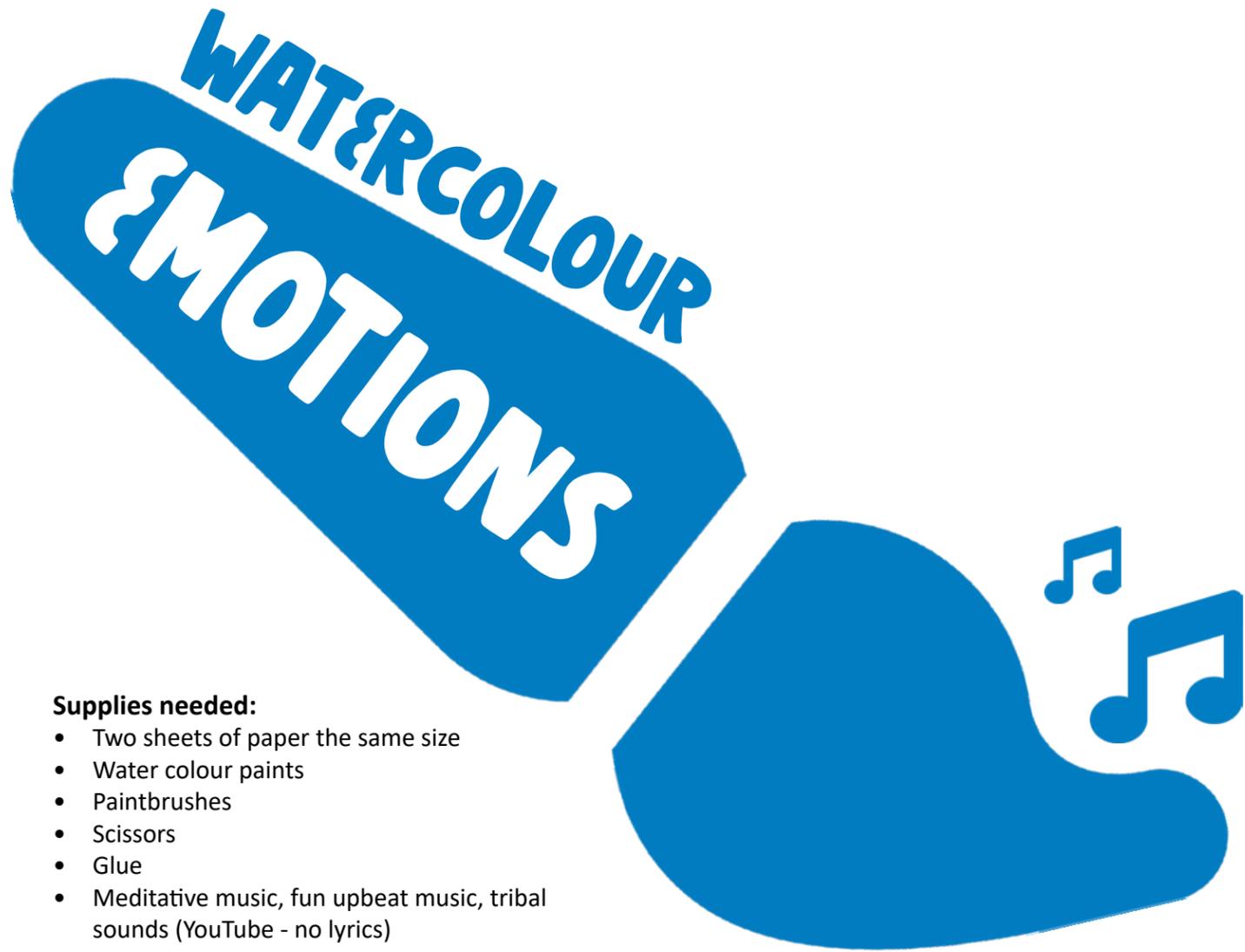
Supplies Needed:

- Large paper or cardboard
- Writing tools (pen, pencil, markers, etc.)

Steps:

In advance, create sections that prompt each person to describe some important belief they have about their life:

- The profile photo section, draw a vision of their future self, imagining what the future may look like for them.
- In the photos section, draw quotes, memes or photos that are important to them.
- In the intro, describe how they see themselves and how they believe other people see them.
- You can customize the prompts on the template to target individuals goals or a specific topic.
- Once everyone has put some thought into their template, have everyone create a Social Media Profile 'on paper.' This can be oversized or on a sheet of paper. The Social Media profile can be modeled after an existing one or even a made up/ created profile. Creating a fictitious one can be fun and creative.
- Have participants share as they are comfortable and discuss why they've chosen what they have.



Supplies needed:

- Two sheets of paper the same size
- Water colour paints
- Paintbrushes
- Scissors
- Glue
- Meditative music, fun upbeat music, tribal sounds (YouTube - no lyrics)

Creating your watercolour emotions art:

1. Put on a playlist of the chosen, group-appropriate, music.
2. While listening to the music, talk to the group and ask them to paint how they feel. Whether that's using certain colours to express a mood or the way in which you paint. Give the group some time to create their paintings.
3. Allow the paintings to dry. During that time, debrief with the group. Go around and ask the group - how did that feel? Does anyone want to share their painting? What were you thinking while you were painting? Were you surprised how the painting turned out?
4. Once dry, have the group cut up their paintings into strips to create a brand new painting.
5. Rearrange the strips and glue them onto the second sheet of paper. The strips can be laid out side by side or woven together.
6. When finished, do a show and tell. Have everyone show their painting and try to give it a cool name.

You could use different genres of music during this experience and then discuss how the changes influenced their art. How did your favourite style of music impact your art? What about music/songs that aren't your favourite to listen to? etc.



Supplies Needed:

- Brown paper bag
- Paint
- Paint brushes
- Paper
- Pencil, markers, pencil crayons

Steps:

1. Using paint, markers, or pencil crayons have participants create their self-portrait on one side of the bag
2. Use the other side of the bag to illustrate their dreams, fears, or life goals
3. Use the pieces of paper to write out how they would describe themselves or where they want to see themselves and put that inside the bag.
4. Once completed, encourage each person to fill the bag with things that either represent them or help describe the person they are such as photos, books, anything.

FLAGS



Flags is a get-to-know-you activity, designed to help people express what is important to them and share more about themselves. Provide participants with large sheets of paper, crayons, markers and paints.

Ask each person to draw a flag which contains some symbols or pictures describing who they are, what's important to them and/or what they enjoy.

Have them divide the flag into 4 or 6 segments. Then, identify options for what each segment could include (i.e. favourite emotion, favourite food, a hobby, a skill, where you were born, your family, your gender identity). Give everyone 20 minutes to draw their flags. Ask the group to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew.

EXPLODING BALLOONS

This engaging activity spurs some deep thinking about the importance of releasing pent-up anger in a healthy way. Exploring anger can create resilience and coping skills.

Supplies Needed:

- Safety goggles
- Balloons

Steps:

1. Have each person start by donning a pair of safety goggles and hand them a deflated balloon.
2. Ask them to think about a situation that made them angry when they weren't able to talk through how the situation made them feel.
3. Instruct them to blow a breath into the balloon.
4. Have them repeat the process slowly until the balloon explodes, or poke it with a pin when it gets very large.
5. Then, hand them a second balloon and instruct them to blow it up in the same way.
6. They will stop short of the exploding point this time.
7. Prompt them to talk through their feelings around the situation.
8. Instruct them to release a little bit of air as they talk, until the balloon is empty. This time, no explosion!
9. Brainstorm coping strategies they can use to release anger in healthy ways.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



When people first meet me, what do they say when they see my skin color, hair, smile, height, weight, etc.? How do the perceptions that others have of me affect my overall well-being?

GET TO KNOW ME

If you took a moment to get to know the real me, these are six things you would learn...

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7

THE QUESTION WEB



You need to have a spool of string, ball of yarn or wool for this game.

Ask the group to stand in a circle. Hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball/spool to another group member catch. They then choose a question by picking a number from 1-20 to answer.

Holding the string they then throw it to another member of the group. Eventually this creates a web while learning some interesting things about each other!

Once everyone has had the you could discuss how everyone played a part in creating this unique web and if one person was not in the web it would look different. In the same way it's important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special. To visually represent this change, you could have one of the group members let go of their string and step out of the circle to see the impact on the web.

See below for some sample questions. Adapt for your group.

If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?

If your house was burning down, what three objects would you try and save?

If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?

If you HAD to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?

If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

Do you have a pet? If not, what sort of pet would you like?

What is a gift you will never forget?

What's your favourite thing to do in the summer?

Name one thing you really like about yourself.

What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you would recommend? Why?

Does your name have a special meaning and or were you named after someone special?

Who's your favourite cartoon character, and why?

What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?

If you are at a friend's or relative's house for dinner and you find a dead insect in your salad, what would you do?

What is the hardest thing you have ever done?

If you had this week over again what would you do differently?

What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

If you could ask the universe to change one problem in the world today, what would you like to see change?

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about the universe?

GRATITUDE MAPPING



This engaging activity gives people a chance to be creative while expressing themselves. It provides them a chance to focus on positive emotions derived from positive aspects of life.

1. Make groups with three to five people each.
2. Instruct all the groups to take five minutes to remember some good things that they are thankful for in their lives. Each group creates a set of three to five of their favourite things and their reasons for gratitude.
3. Ask each group to write these things down along with the reasons why they were chosen.
4. Invite the next group to see what the previous group has written. This step is about drawing connections between the ideas they can see. For example, if the previous group wrote that their favourite thing is their house, and the gratitude is they feel loved and cared for there. The next group will have to write about things that remind them of love and care.

5. The group then also writes their favourite five things, and the next group then adds or “maps” the gratitude. Continue the activity until all groups have the chance to map gratitude and state their favourite things in life.
6. Once all participants have taken their turn, to share all of the information gathered and discuss:
 - What is gratitude?
 - Why do we feel gratitude?
 - How is gratitude helpful in developing positive self-esteem?

This activity creates a list of all the good things in life and the associated gratitude. It can help realize that there are so many wonderful things in life to feel happy about.



Supplies Needed:

- Paper
- Scissors
- Magazines
- Glue
- Markers, pencil crayons

Steps:

1. Have people cut out pictures of the things they love, words that describe them or stand out to them
2. Glue those words and images onto their paper
3. Use markers or crayons to fill in areas of their paper with other words or images that help describe their perfect day.
4. Encourage them to incorporate any quotes they love, quotes about positive mental health, quotes from memories, or even words they live by.
5. Time for show and tell. Discuss as a group why you chose to include the things you did.



According to research, when you do something artistic, such as painting an image, the brain produces more dopamine – a chemical that makes us feel nice. It is not uncommon for individuals to struggle with mental health related challenges such as low self-esteem and anxiety. Painting an image with a paintbrush or even your fingers will heighten dopamine levels and help us naturally feel better.

Materials:

- Paper/canvas
- Paint

How to paint/finger paint:

Choose your painting tools and a sheet of paper/canvas. Select the colours of paint that you will be using and paint an image that makes you feel happy or helps release negative feelings.

As a group:

When doing this as a group, create an art gallery to showcase individuals art and provide opportunities to share about their creation.

Led Activities

Pick one of these activities to support discussions within groups and learn more together.

Mountains & Valleys	Pg 34
Cross The Line	Pg 38
My Happy Place	Pg 43
Show Your Pride	Pg 44
Internal Vs External Stress	Pg 46
Stress & Social Support	Pg 51
My Support System	Pg 54
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LIFELINE GOAL MAPPING

In this activity, create a life timeline. This activity provides an opportunity to learn about someone's early life history as well as their goals for the future. Using collage or by drawing during this activity can be a way to help people tackle important life events and look at future goals and dreams without needing the words to describe the situations exactly.

Supplies Needed:

- Tools to draw with (pen, pencil, markers, etc.)
- Craft paper roll or whatever paper you have on hand
- String to make line with
- Tape, pushpins or glue to make marks on the timeline

Steps:

1. Each person lays out a long roll of craft paper or whatever paper you have on hand.
2. Draw a long line through the middle lengthwise the length of the paper.
3. Everyone marks their birthday at the very beginning of the line and choose where 'today' is and mark that on the line.
4. In pairs, have everyone talk about important events and milestones in their lives until today.
5. Take time to place life events on the appropriate spot on the lifeline.
6. In pairs, talk about important events that are coming, goals or future dreams(assign them dates/times).
7. Complete a future section on the timeline based on hopes and dreams for what lies ahead.
8. If they are on the wall, have everyone take a tour and look at each others timelines.
9. Have everyone identify 1 thing they learned about others in their group.



Supplies Needed:

- Paper
- Pencil crayons

Steps:

1. Ask the group to draw a valley with a mountain top on either side of the valley.
2. Once they have done this, ask everyone to think about one low point in their life, their week or month and draw it within the valley. Go around the group to those who are comfortable sharing and discuss these low points.
3. Next, ask each person to think of two high points in their life, week or month and draw them next to the mountain tops. Again, go around the group to those who are comfortable sharing and discuss these high points.
4. After creating these images of the highs and lows ask the group for a show of hands for which was more difficult to come up with, the highs or lows. Unfortunately it is often significantly easier to think of our low points in life in comparison to our high points.
5. Ask the group to think about their low point. If it were possible to build a bridge over the low point in order to have never gone through that challenge, would they? Why or why not? Was there an important lesson to be learned from going through that challenging event? Encourage those who are comfortable to share their reasons.

SPOT THE STRENGTH

This group activity aims to help a group to identify and recognize character strengths in others and enables them to receive feedback about their strengths from others.

Steps:

1. Form a group of five to eight people and have everyone sit in a circle.
2. Ask each person to share a positive story, one at a time. These stories could be any achievements or accomplishments in any area of life.
3. The listeners make notes of the strengths they identify in the story.
4. Once the story ends, ask all the group members to give feedback regarding the strengths observed and share the reason they chose it.
5. Once every team member has shared their story, have a discussion to share feelings about their stories, their observations, and learning.
6. This activity allows team members to know each other's strengths and ways to encourage them.

PRACTICING OUR 4H STRENGTHS

People who know their strengths and use them often tend to have higher self-esteem, better moods, and less stress. Learning to use your strengths is something anyone can achieve.

In this activity, you will create a plan to use your strengths every day, for one week. You may use your strengths in either new or in the way you often do. The key is to use your strengths intentionally and purposefully, rather than as part of habit or routine.

Step 1: Circle three of your greatest strengths, or write your own.

- TEAMWORK
- CREATIVITY
- CURIOSITY
- SELF-CONTROL
- GRATITUDE
- FLEXIBILITY
- KINDNESS
- PERSISTENCE
- APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY
- SOCIAL AWARENESS
- LOVE
- SPIRITUALITY
- LEADERSHIP
- FORGIVENESS
- ENTHUSIASM
- OPTIMISM
- BRAVERY
- HUMILITY
- HUMOUR
- LOVE OF LEARNING
- HONESTY

Step 2: For the next week, write a plan for using your chosen strengths.

Example:

DAY	STRENGTH	PLAN
1	Kindness	I will say one kind thing to each family member
2	Curiosity	I will learn one new thing
3	Creativity	I will do one creative thing today

Yours:

DAY	STRENGTH	PLAN
1		
2		
3		

CROSS THE LINE

Crossing the Line is a group activity that has a very strong impact on all participants. It is a quiet, meaningful experience of recognizing our similarities, and is a great way to reinforce a sense of community. Stress and anxiety are often caused or made worse by the feeling that we are alone in the world—that no one understands us or what we are going through, and that no one has had the same experiences we have had. Although sometimes this is true, usually there are many other people going through similar challenges. Knowing this can be a very reassuring and calming force in our lives. This is a group activity best done with eight or more people.

Steps:

Begin this activity by dividing into two groups and having people form two rows facing each other, about eight feet apart. Place a line (using string, masking tape, etc.) about three feet in front of each group. There should be one person who is the caller or director. When that person says a statement, anyone for whom that statement is true crosses the line into the middle. When you cross the line, take a moment to silently make eye contact with the other people in the middle, acknowledging your shared experience. Others who have not crossed the line can silently show their support (hearts with hands, I love you in sign language...).

This game can be as simple or as meaningful as you choose to make it. The statements on the next page are just suggestions, and you should change or add to them based on the needs of your group. Typically, 20-25 statements are read aloud. Always create a mixture of easy and harder statements. Be sensitive to any issues that may arise, and carefully match your choice of statements to your capacity to support anyone in the group.

Processing/debriefing the activity:

These are also suggestions only. Choose a few that feel meaningful and will encourage discussion within the group.

- What kind of feelings did you have as you participated?
- How did you feel when there were very few of you on one side of the room?
- What does this activity have to do with leadership?
- Did you find yourself making judgments of others?
- How did the movement of others influence you?
- What did you learn through this activity that can make our environment more welcoming?
- What did you learn through this activity that will make you a better person or leader?
- Through this activity, intentionally or not, did you share your values?
- Through this activity, intentionally or not, do you think that you learned about the values of others?

Following the activity, you can discuss what people learned about each other, what new connections did they make with others, or even give the participants an opportunity to connect one-on-one to chat about something they have in common.

With the participants quiet, the Director says “Cross the line if you _____”

Have brown hair
Can wiggle your ears

Love to read
Are an artist

Were born in New York

Like to play sports
Love animals

Feel peaceful today

Have helped someone this week

Speak more than one language

Are a big sister

Feel beautiful today

Have been embarrassed before

Have made someone feel bad

Have been afraid of another person

Have done something you are ashamed of

Have done something you are proud of

Have hugged someone today

Have someone in your family or a friend
who has a disability that you cannot see

Have cried this week

You're a boy and you've ever been told you shouldn't cry, show your emotions or be afraid

Have ever felt alone, unwelcome or afraid.

Have intentionally hurt someone's feelings

Ever felt pressure from your friends or an adult to do something you didn't want to do and felt sorry for it afterwards

People routinely mispronounce your name

Have ever been the only person of your race/ethnicity in a classroom

Biological parents have divorced, separated or never married

Have personally experienced or witnessed a homophobic action or statement

Were raised by a single parent

Know someone that has a physical or developmental disability

Feel that homophobia is an issue in this school or community

Feel there is a double standard or different expectations for guys versus girls

Would actively support the rights of people who are different from you

FRUSTRATION MENU

Menus are a convenient way to display available choices when dining out, and they work well in many different situations. When we create a frustration menu, it allows us the opportunity to talk about frustrations and ways to work through them.

Supplies Needed:

Piece of blank paper, coloured paper or cardboard
Tools to write with (pen, pencil, marker, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Fold menu in half and use marker to title it "Frustration Menu" on the outside
2. Decorate the menu with whatever feelings, colours and images you associate with frustration
3. Write "on the menu today" on the inside (left side) of folded paper
4. Brainstorm together what are some common frustrations for everyone day to day
5. Write down the different possibilities on the inside of the menu
6. On the right side of the menu, write "menu options and pairings"
7. Brainstorm together different options for expressing frustrations appropriately
8. Write good options on your menu

Review your menus as a group to show the artwork and creativity. Discuss the new ideas people learned about during this experience.

HOW WOULD YOU TREAT A FRIEND?

If someone is struggling and they have come to you with their problem, it can sometimes be hard to know what to say. You may be the best advice-giver but people sometimes need help seeing a different perspective and they need to come to see it on their own. This exercise is designed to help put things into a different perspective for someone.

Go through each of these steps with someone who is needing that help in changing in perspective. You can practice with a partner or even walk through the steps on your own to get a feel for how it could work. These can be discussed as a conversation or can be written out on paper.

- 1.** First, think about and share a time when a close friend who felt really badly about themselves came to you struggling. How did you respond? What did you say?
- 2.** Now, think about the times when you feel badly about yourself or are struggling.
 - How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations?
 - What do you typically do? Say?
 - And note the tone in which you often talk to yourself. Is there a difference?
 - What factors or fears come into play when you to treat yourself and others so differently?
- 3.** Finally, ask:
 - How do you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend?
- 4.** Now, to apply this to a real experience.
 - What if your closest friend came to you with (insert struggle here) What would you say to them to help them change perspective?
 - Are you as kind to yourself as you are your friends? Why or why not?

Use this strategy as a reminder to be kinder to yourself and a good way to help others see a different perspective. You didn't give them the answers, you made them think about good strategies to problem solve.



Supplies Needed:

- Paper
- Pencils, pencil crayons, markers, paint & paint brush

Steps:

1. Start off by encouraging everyone to think about their safe or happy place. A place that brings them a sense of calmness or ease. This place can be real or imagined. Maybe it's a place they visit quite frequently that they associate with tranquility or maybe they daydream about, perhaps somewhere they've never been that has everything they could imagine to create that relaxing feeling.
2. Ask them to, as they're picturing about their happy place, think about their 5 senses, what they see, hear, feel, taste, and smell.
3. Now that they have their happy place in their mind, have them draw themselves there and include all the pieces to the image that make their happy/safe place so unique
4. If comfortable, once completed, ask if anyone would like to share their artwork and describe their happy/safe place!

SHOW YOUR PRIDE



RED = LIFE

ORANGE = HEALING

YELLOW = SUNLIGHT

GREEN = NATURE

BLUE = SERENITY

PURPLE = SPIRIT

The rainbow flag is used to represent the LGBTQ+ community and symbolizes the need for peace within the community. Each of the colors reflect a different ideal of the movement.

Study the flag on this page, and then create a flag of your very own that represents your understanding of the LGBTQ+ community. Choose your own colors!

CREATE YOUR OWN FLAG

Title of my flag: _____

INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL STRESS

External stressors are often considered to be major life events, positive or negative. Internal stressors occur within us and are most often the main cause of stress.

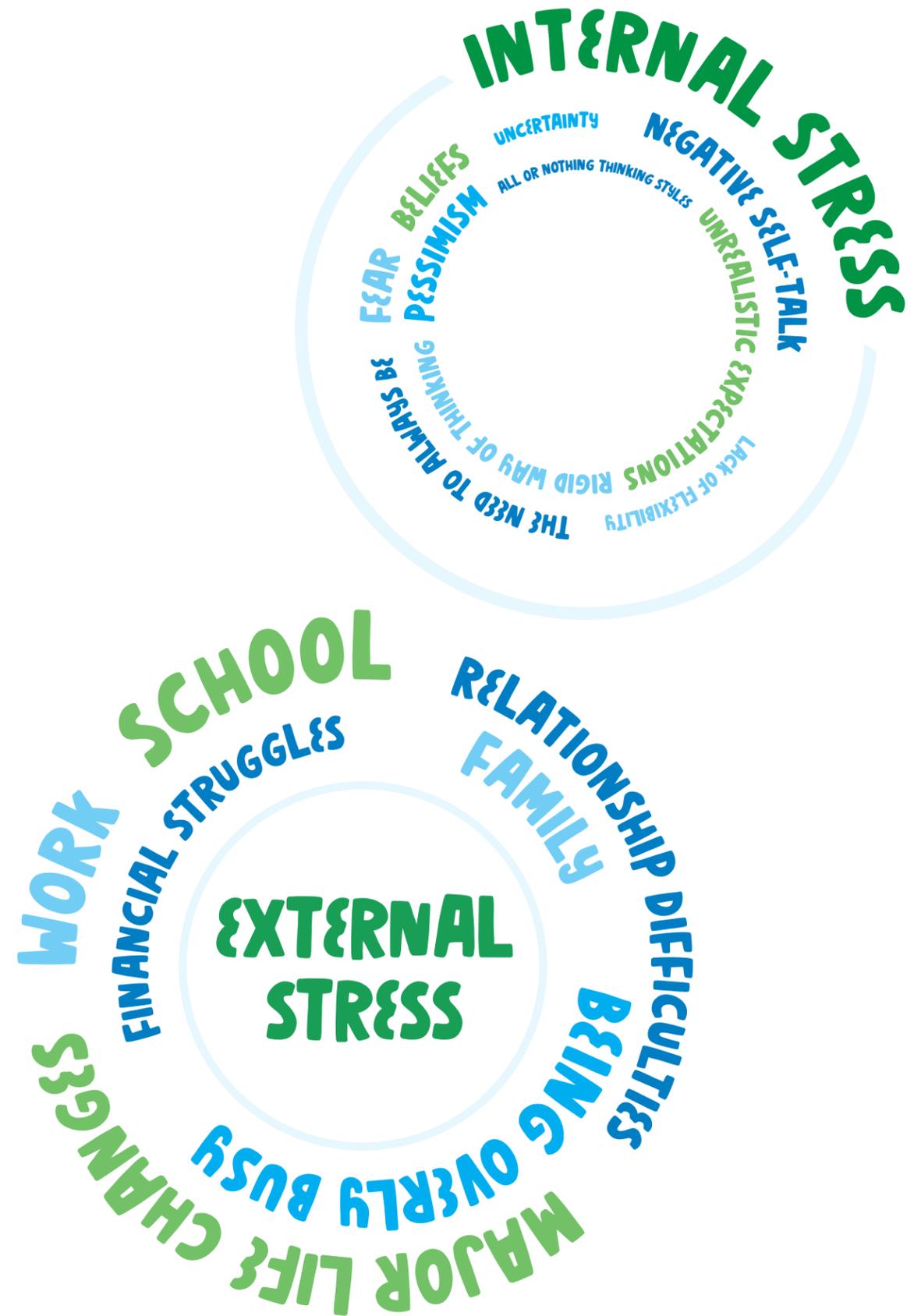
What do you think is considered to be an **internal stressor**?

What do you think is considered to be an **external stressor**?

What are some internal stressors you have **currently**?

What are some external stressors you have **currently**?

As you think back, what are some things you have done to effectively **reduce** your stressors?



WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT ME?

Use the space below to describe the positive things that others say about you.



STRESS & SOCIAL SUPPORT

Having a support network, no matter what the issue, can do a lot to alleviate stress. Talking about what's going on in our lives and connecting with others we can confide in causes our brains the release stress-easing hormones.

Identify 3-4 people you can turn to for support.

These people can be friends, family, co-workers, therapists, crisis lines etc.

Do you currently have any stressors in your life where you could use social supports to **ease or eliminate** them?

How can each of your social supports you have listed be helpful?

Name

How can they help?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Think back to the last time you experienced the **feelings of stress**.

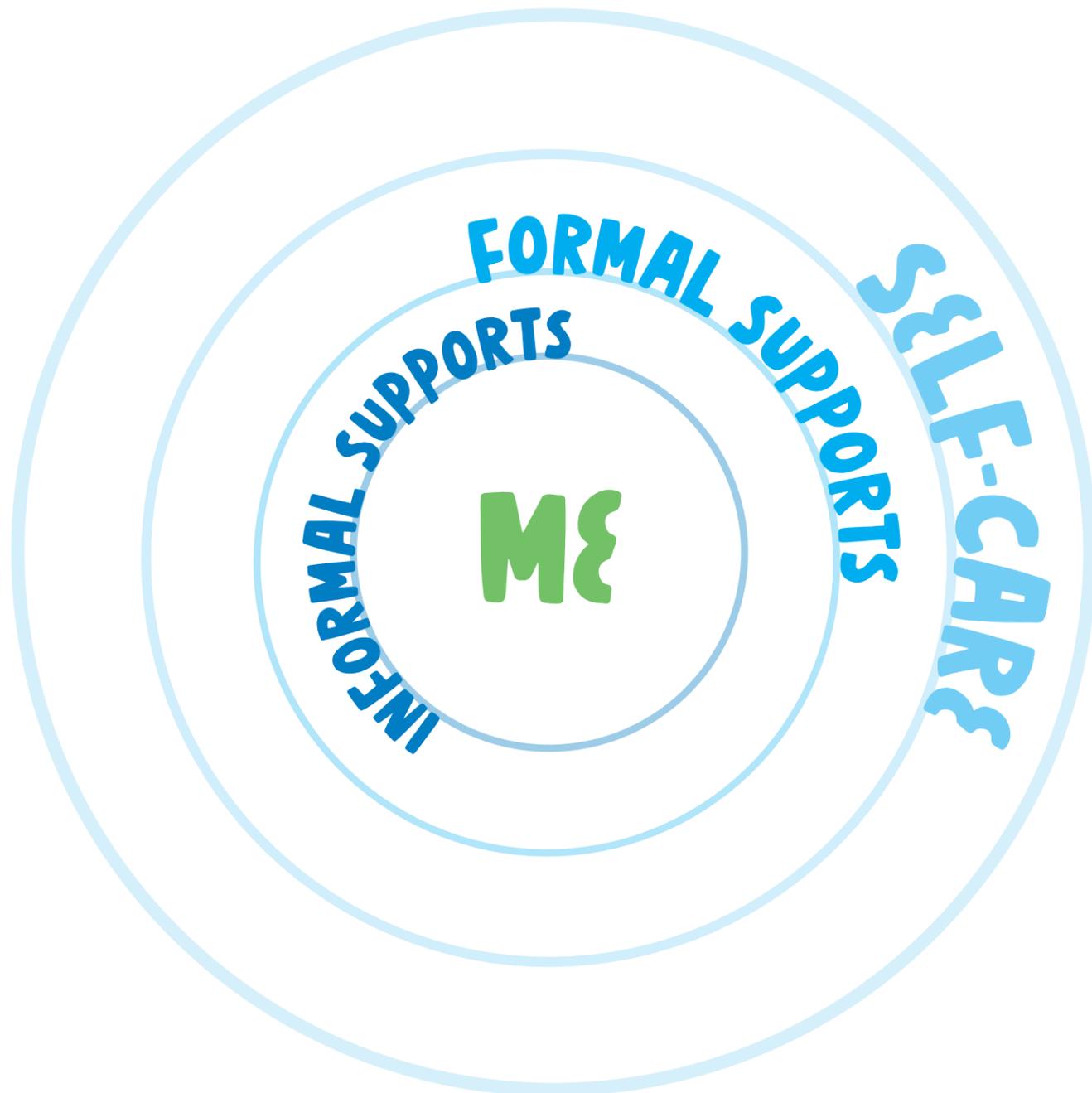
What types of **behaviours** did you express?
Did it heighten the situation or de-escalate it?

Did you experience any **psychological symptoms**?
(Such as nausea, dizziness, tension)

Thinking back to this situation, if you could have done anything **different** would you?
If yes, what would you have done differently?

MY SUPPORT SYSTEM

Think about who might support you. It is always good to surround yourself with different types of helpers. Make a list or write in the circles some people from each category.



LEGEND

INFORMAL SUPPORTS

Teachers, parents, coworkers, etc.

FORMAL SUPPORTS

Counsellors, distress lines, groups, etc.

SELF CARE

What do you wish people knew about you?

LGBTQ TERMS

Match the terms below with the definitions on the next page.

1. **ASEXUAL**
2. **CISGENDER**
3. **GAY**
4. **GENDER FLUID**
5. **HOMOPHOBIA**
6. **HETEROSEXUAL**
7. **INTERSEX**
8. **LESBIAN**
9. **NON-BINARY**
10. **PANSEXUAL**
11. **QUEER**
12. **GENDER DYSPHORIA**
13. **GENDER EXPRESSION**
14. **GENDER IDENTITY**
15. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**
16. **TRANSGENDER**
17. **TRANSPHOBIA**
18. **TWO-SPIRIT**
19. **BISEXUAL**

___ Umbrella term used to capture various types of biological sex differentiation. Variations in their sex characteristics, such as sex chromosomes, internal reproductive organs, genitalia, and/or secondary sex characteristics that are outside of what is typically considered as male or female.

___ The various ways in which people choose to express their gender identity. This could consist of hair, clothes, voice, make-up etc.

___ A person who lacks sexual attraction or interest in sexual expression.

___ Fear, hatred, and disgust of individuals who express same-sex attraction.

___ Derogatory term used as a slur towards LGBTQ2 individuals, this term has since been reclaimed by the LGBTQ2 community as a positive way to describe themselves. An umbrella term.

___ Individual who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

___ Typically a woman who is sexually/romantically attracted to other woman.

___ Medical diagnosis that is understood as discomfort or distress experienced by an individual who feels that their gender identity differs from their body.

___ An individual who is sexually/romantically attracted to individuals of the same sex or gender identity. This term was typically used to refer to men attracted to other men but is now used by people of all gender identities.

___ An individual who is sexually/romantically attracted to two or more genders. Typically this term was used to describe a male attracted to men and women or female attracted to woman and men.

___ Term used to capture concepts traditional to many Indigenous cultures. Culturally-specific identity used to express an individual who's gender identity, spiritual identity and/or sexual orientation consists of both male and female spirits.

___ An individual whose identity changes over time and may include of male, female, or other non-binary identities.

___ A persons whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

___ An individual who is sexually/romantically attracted to individuals of the opposite gender.

___ The expression of romantic and sexual attraction for people of the same or another sex/gender.

___ Also known as identifying as genderqueer. A person whose gender identity does not match the binary understanding of gender such as male or female. A gender identity which may include man, woman, androgynous, fluid, multiple, no-gender or a gender outside of male or female.

___ The fear, hatred, or disgust of individuals whose identity differs from the sex assigned at birth.

___ An individual who is not limited by the other persons sex, gender identity or gender expression. Attracted to personality.

___ The internal sense or feeling of being male or female, both, or neither. May or may not align with gender associated with their sex and may also change over time.

Answer Key:

- 1 Intersex
- 2 Gender Expression
- 3 Asexual
- 4 Homophobia
- 5 Queer
- 6 Cisgender
- 7 Lesbian
- 8 Gender Dysphoria
- 9 Gay
- 10 Bisexual
- 11 Two-spirit
- 12 Gender fluid
- 13 Transgender
- 14 Heterosexual
- 15 Sexual Orientation
- 16 Non-binary
- 17 Transphobia
- 18 Pansexual
- 19 Gender Identity



Many of us follow celebrity news and one of the primary ways celebrity lives are documented is with paparazzi photos. We live in a “life through photos” generation. In this activity, participants will create their own personal tabloid.

Supplies needed:

- Camera, or device to take photos with
- Printer to print photos taken
- Writing tools (pen, pencil, markers, etc.)
- Paper, cardboard

Steps:

1. Instruct the everyone to be their own paparazzi
2. They must take pictures of the important people, locations, and activities they connect with throughout the day
3. Once they’ve assembled a collection of photos that represent their day, they’ll create a “tabloid” magazine.
4. Instruct everyone to arrange the photos and label them by place, support people, and objects/events they consider important parts of their day
5. Share magazines with the group if you chose. This can be a great moment from a great event.
6. Create an opporutnity to showcase the tabloids they’ve created.

COMING OUT

What are your strengths?

What are your challenges?

How do you choose to identify?

What are your preferred pronouns?

What are the pros to coming out?

What are the cons to coming out?

What is something you wish people knew about you or what do you wish people knew about the LGBTQ2S+ community?

IDENTIFYING ASSUMPTIONS

What are some **behaviours** you engage in but notice it would be beneficial for you not to do?

If I _____

Then _____

If I don't _____

Then _____

If I _____

Then _____

If I don't _____

Then _____

What are some things you often **avoid**? How would things be different if you did not avoid them?

If I avoid _____

Then _____

If I don't avoid _____

Then _____

If I avoid _____

Then _____

If I don't avoid _____

Then _____

Identify specific times when you feel **emotionally overwhelmed**. Explain your reactions in these situations.

For example, someone is staring at you, you have to make a phone call, someone is not kind to you, being interrupted when speaking, you are late, someone else is late, etc.

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Reflection Pages

Created as a more independent resources, you can share these with people you work with or even complete them yourselves. They are filled with questions to get you thinking.

Grounding Exercise	.....	Pg 65
Make A List	.....	Pg 68
Mindful Walking	.....	Pg 72
Visualization Exercises	.....	Pg 76
Emtion Wheel	.....	Pg 80
Gratitude Journal	.....	Pg 83
Mandala Activity	.....	Pg 86
Create Your Own Stressball	.....	Pg 92
Gratitude Jar	.....	Pg 96
Coping Strategies	.....	Pg 102
Balancing Stress	.....	Pg 106
Identifying Stress	.....	Pg 115
Managing Stress	.....	Pg 122
What Are you Grateful For?	.....	Pg 129
Positive Experiences	.....	Pg 134
Self Awareness	.....	Pg 140



5, 4, 3, 2, 1 GROUNDING EXERCISE

When you experience a moment of anxiety or immediate stress, this can be a great way to distract yourself and calm your mind.

List (on paper, notes or in your head):

5 things you can **see**:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

4 things you can **feel**:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

3 things you **hear**:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2 things you can **smell**:

- 1.
- 2.

1 thing you can **taste**:

- 1.

This technique takes you through your 5 senses to help you to the present.

GROUNDING EXERCISES

Grounding exercises are things you can do to bring yourself into contact with the present moment – the here and now. They can be quick strategies or longer, more formal exercises or activities.

Quick and easy things to do to ground yourself to this moment:

Put your hands in water

Breathe deeply

Take a short walk

Pick up or touch items near you

Blow bubbles

Savour a scent

Blow bubbles

Savour a food or drink

Hold a piece of ice

Sing or dance

Repeat a comforting mantra or positive affirmation like "this feeling will pass", "I got this", "one step at a time"

Use a stressball

Hold a cold can or bottle

Sip a cool drink of water

Move your body

Remind yourself of who you are now

Take ten slow breaths

Turn on some music

Get a comfort item: colourful or smooth stone, a photo of a person/thing/scenery that you love, a small vial of a fragrance, a special piece of jewelry, a trinket, a stuffed animal, a blanket, a gift from someone you care about

Stamp your feet

Splash some water on your face

See specific example sheets for these activities:

5,4,3,2,1 exercise

S.T.O.P. Method

Create some lists

Tense and Release

Mindful breathing exercise

Visualization

Mindful walking

Grounding yourself isn't always easy. It may take some time before the techniques work well for you, but don't give up on them. Here are some additional tips to help you get the most out of these techniques:

PRACTICE

It can help to practice grounding even when you aren't dissociating or experiencing distress. If you get used to an exercise before you need to use it, it may take less effort when you want to use it to cope in the moment.

START EARLY

Try doing a grounding exercise when you first start to feel bad. Don't wait for distress to reach a level that's harder to handle. If the technique doesn't work at first, try to stick with it for a bit before moving on to another.

AVOID ASSIGNING VALUES

For example, if you're grounding yourself by describing your environment, concentrate on the basics of your surroundings, rather than how you feel about them.

CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

Before and after a grounding exercise, rate your distress as a number between 1 and 10. What level is your distress when you begin? How much did it decrease after the exercise? This can help you get a better idea of whether a particular technique is working for you.

Grounding techniques can be powerful tools to help you cope with distressing thoughts in the moment. But the relief they provide is generally temporary. Make sure you reach out to others to get the support you need.

Your voice is important. **YOU** are important.

MAKE A LIST

Creating lists can be a great way to re-focus in the moment. It will ground you, calm you and even distract you. You can do this on paper or in your mind.

List 5 positive things

Write or mentally list four or five things in your life that bring you joy, visualizing each of them briefly.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List your favourite things

List three things in each category:

FOODS

SONGS

TREES

MOVIES

BOOKS

PLACES

TV SHOWS

ANIMALS

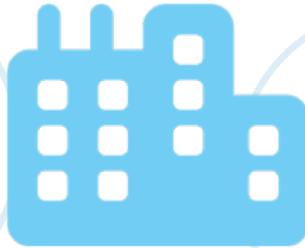
List weird names

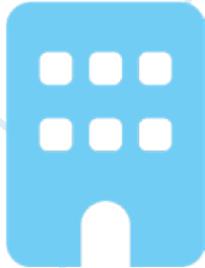
Make a list of the top 5 weirdest people names you've ever heard.

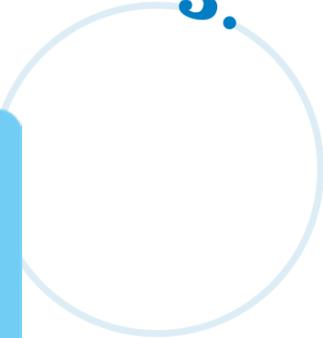
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List cities you've visited

Think about and list 3 cities you have visited and 1 think you liked about each.

1. 

2. 

3. 

List two things someone always says to you!

1.

2.

MINDFUL BREATHING

You want to focus all your attention on how you're breathing. When or if your mind starts to wander, or you notice different sensations in your body, redirect your attention back to your breathing.

1. Start out by ensuring you found a comfortable place to sit. Keep both feet planted on the floor in front of you and sit up nice and tall. Close your eyes and relax all the muscles in your body.
2. Place your hands on your stomach with fingertips touching in the center.
3. Take a deep breath on through your nose, and slowly exhale out through your mouth. Continue to repeat these slow deep breaths until you find yourself feeling calmer and more relaxed.
4. If and when you notice your mind start to wander, acknowledge that it has wandered and redirect your attention back to breathing really focusing on our inhales and exhales.
5. When you find yourself to be ready, you can open your eyes again.



This grounding exercise is best done outside, but it can be done inside as well. It works well when you want to experience quick results.

- Get up and walk around. Every time you take a step, count it.
- Concentrate on your steps.
- Notice how it feels to put your foot on the ground and then lift it again.
- Notice the surface you're walking on, the sensations you feel in your feet, and the weight of your body.
- Once you're done, sit back and relax.

A Mindfulness Walk in Nature

1. Choose a place in nature that makes you feel comfortable or a place you love.
2. Begin your walk, concentrate on each step.
3. Notice how it feels to put your foot on the ground and then lift it again.
4. Notice the surface you're walking on, the sensations you feel in your feet, and the weight of your body.
5. Look up, look around and take in the trees, grass, snow...
6. Take deep breaths to smell the natural scents in the air.
7. Re-focus on your steps on the ground.
8. Choose a place to sit, smile, take a deep breath and exhale.



This tool is to identify and reduce unwanted stress and anxiety. It can also aid in becoming more mindful helping you to focus on the thing you value and feel passionate about.

S - Stop! Just like the initials spell out, stop what you are doing and notice the presence of your stress or anxiety.

T - Take a slow, deep breath, or pause for a moment. Take a slow, deep breath of air in through your nose as you count silently 1, 2, 3, and then pause and hold it for the count of 1, 2, 3. Then slowly breathe out making your lips into a circle as if you are blowing out candles on the count of 1, 2, 3. Pause for 1, 2, 3, and then repeat the process 5 to 10 times.

O - Observe how your body feels inside, and what is going on in the world around you outside. Notice how your body changes during focused breathing. Think about what is influencing your feelings and things you could do to support yourself in feeling differently. You can always take a step back.

P - Plan & proceed mindfully as you step back or pause from this anxious moment. Pick an activity that fills your life with meaning or passion and focus all your energy and attention on that. For example, talking with a friend you can trust and confide in, spending time with your family, taking your dog for a walk, listening to music...

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS WRITING

Do some emotional writing. It will not likely make any sense and that's the point. Just get it all out on paper. Sometimes just getting thoughts out of your head with no fear can be enough to clear your mind

Write down, in longhand on a piece of paper whatever you are thinking, stream-of-consciousness style: Don't worry about wording, spelling or punctuation. Just get it out. Do this for 5-10 minutes.

"I don't know where to begin. I'm so angry because..."

"I am so overwhelmed because..."

TENSE & RELEASE

1. Choose a place where you won't be interrupted for at least 10 minutes. This exercise works best if you do it while you're lying down so it might be something you want to do right before bed. Sitting in a comfortable chair with your legs stretched out will also work for this exercise.
2. Start by laying down with your arms by your sides and your legs stretched out in front of you. Close your eyes. Start by squeezing your eyes tight and scrunching your nose as if you've smelled garbage. Next, force your mouth into a wide smile kind of like what would happen with g-forces in a fast car, and at the same time bite down to tense your mouth and jaw. Hold this position for about 5 seconds, or the count of 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Then slowly open your eyes, and let go of the tight position in your nose, mouth, and jaw. Let these parts of your face feel nice and relaxed for another 10 seconds. Notice how your face feels, how your cheeks feel, and how your tongue feels loose in your mouth. This can help you learn the difference between tension and relaxation, allowing your muscles to relax when you notice you're tense.
3. Now we will work on your neck and shoulders. Tuck your neck into your shoulders like a scared turtle. The muscles will feel tight but should not be sore. Hold this position for the count of 5 seconds, noticing the pull in your neck muscles and how uncomfortable it feels. Now slowly let your shoulders drop down and relax your head. You can roll your head in slow circles in both directions to help alleviate the stiffness. Stay in this relaxing state for the count of 10 seconds.
4. Next, your hands and arms. Make fists with your hands and cross your arms at the wrists. Hold your arms up in front of you and push them together as if you are arm wrestling with yourself. Hold your arms and fists in this position for 5 seconds. Slowly release your fists and drop your arms back to your sides. Stay in this position for 10 seconds.
5. For the lower half of your body, start by pulling your arms behind your back and trying to make your elbows touch. You will need to sit down for this step. Hold for 5 seconds and then release and relax for 10 seconds.
6. For your tummy and back, suck in your stomach as if there is a powerful magnet pulling your stomach in. Stay in this position for 5 seconds and relax for 10 seconds.
7. The last group of muscles is your legs and feet. Stick your legs out in front raised slightly off the bed or floor and point your toes to your nose as if there is a laser beam shooting at your nose. Stay like this for 5 seconds and relax for 10 seconds.

You can repeat these steps through as many times as you wish for further relaxation.

VISUALIZATION EXERCISES



If you feel upset or distressed, visualize someone positive in your life. Imagine their face or think of what their voice sounds like. Imagine them telling you that the moment is tough, and that you'll get through it.



Picture yourself:

- gathering the emotions and feelings, balling them up, and putting them into a box
- walking, swimming, biking, or jogging away from painful feelings
- imagining your thoughts as a song or TV show you dislike
- changing the channel or turning down the volume — they're still there, but you don't have to listen to them



Close your eyes. Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose...and breathe out slowly through your mouth.

Take another slow, smooth breath in through your nose for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold...and out through your mouth for 1, 2, 3, 4...and hold. And again, in for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold...out for 1, 2, 3, 4, and hold. Keep taking nice slow breathes in...and out.

Now, imagine yourself in a peaceful place. A place where you feel calm and safe. Maybe it's a special place that you've been before, or maybe it's somewhere you would like to go. Such as a calming beach, in a forest, beside a little stream, or sitting by a warm crackling fire. Something scenic or maybe just some sounds you find soothing.

Really focus on picturing yourself in this place.

Now, look around you...

Notice what you see...

Notice what you hear...

Notice what you smell...

Notice what you feel...under your feet...on your skin.

Really relax in this place.

Keep imagining yourself in this place while focusing on your breathing. Take a slow, smooth breath in through your nose...and breathe slowly out through your mouth.

Now, keep taking slow, long breaths.

AFFIRMATION BINGO

Throughout the day, try to complete as many of the small tasks listed on this “BINGO” card!
Place a checkmark in the box after completing a task. See how many you can get checked off through the day!

Thank someone for something specific.	Give someone a shoulder rub.	Share something you have with you (gum, etc.)	Tell someone you care.	Tell someone they are wonderful!
Compliment someone.	Recite a few lines of a nice poem or song.	Laugh at a joke someone makes (even if it's not funny.)	Hold a door open for someone	Applaud someone who does something nice for you!
Offer someone a chair to sit in.	Answer someone's questions about something.	BINGO	Share an encouraging thought or story with someone.	Compliment someone's taste in something (music, art, movies, etc.)
Offer someone something to drink.	Tell a funny joke.	Compliment someone on their cooking.	Tell someone what they add to the group.	Ask someone about what brings them joy.
Ask “How are you?” and really listen to the answer.	Say “I'm glad you are here!”	List three good things about someone.	Smile at someone.	State a positive wish for someone.

DRAW WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED

Take a moment to embrace your creative side - whether you believe it is a strength for you or not. Picture something in your mind (i.e. your pet, a sunset, a tree, etc.), close your eyes and draw!

Painting to music, drawing in sand, or drawing with your eyes closed are helpful for relaxation. Art is particularly helpful to your mental health because it stimulates your mind and engages both hemispheres of your brain.

Take a chance and see how well your closed eye drawing compares to the image you had in your mind. Do you think you could do it again with a more complex image and have the same results?



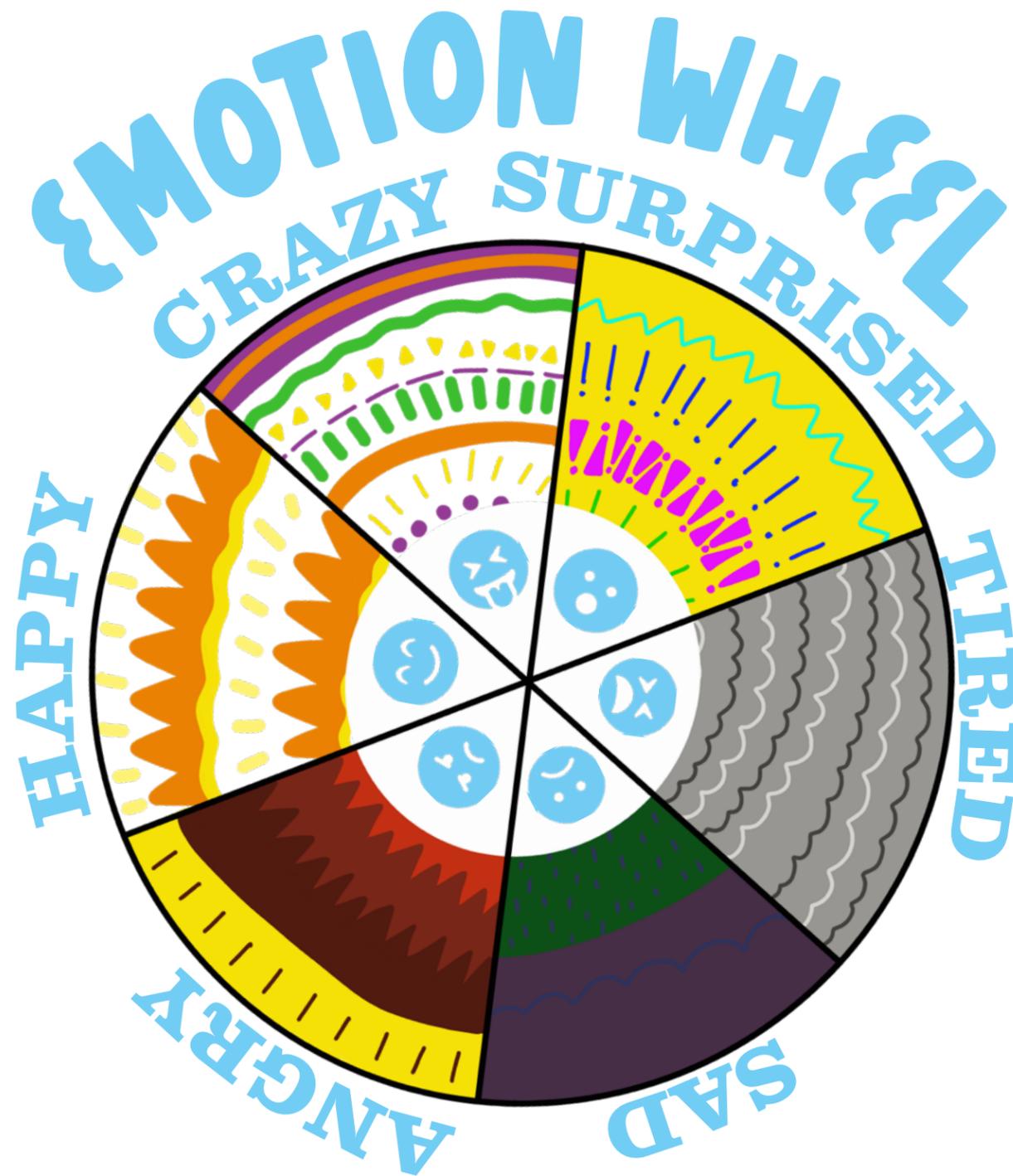
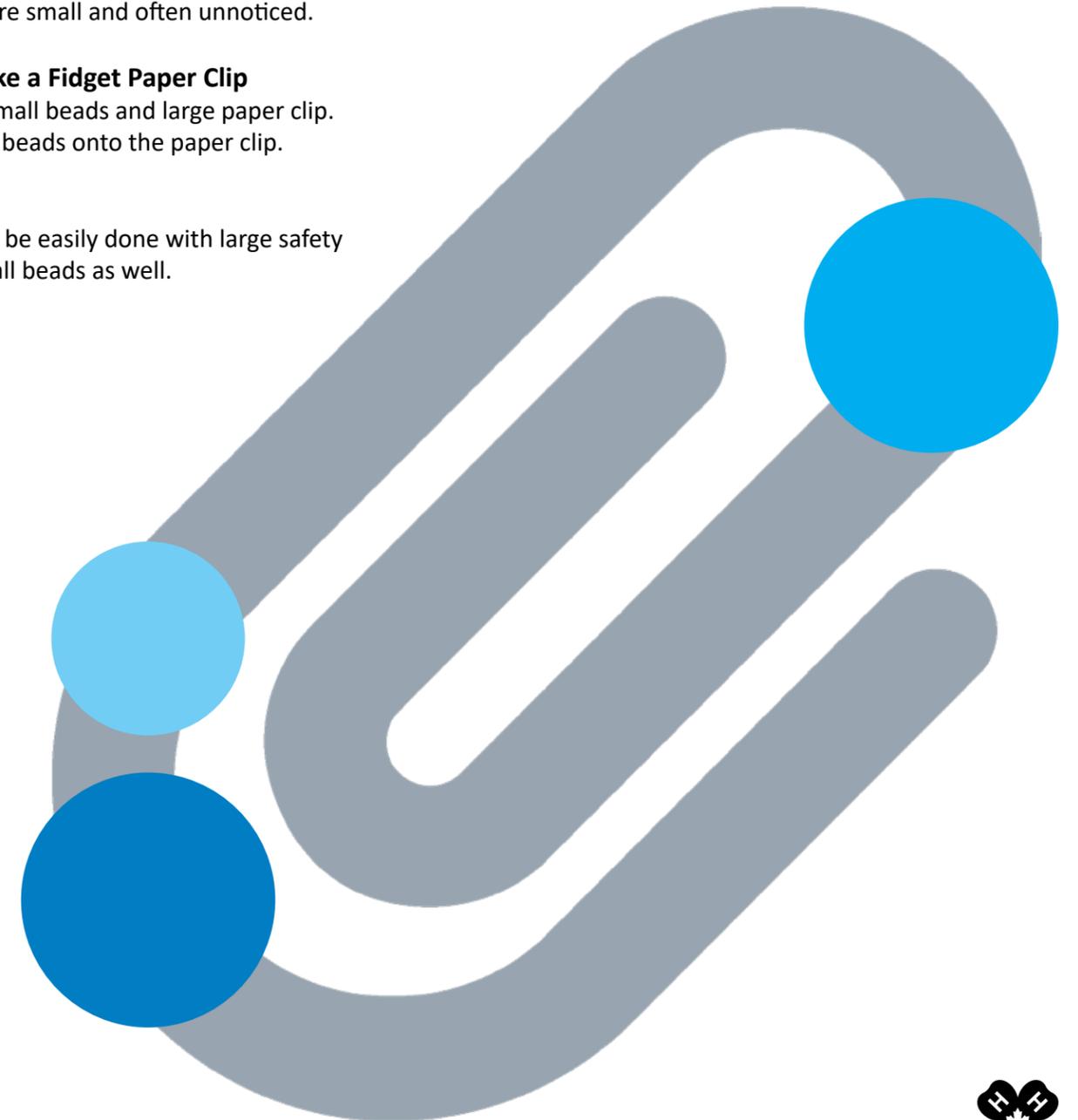
FIDGET PAPER CLIPS

Fidget paper clips are used to help change the mind from focusing on one task to another by spinning the beads and occupying your mind. Unlike many other fidget toys, fidget paper clips are small and often unnoticed.

How to make a Fidget Paper Clip

1. Gather small beads and large paper clip.
2. Slide the beads onto the paper clip.
3. That's it!

This can also be easily done with large safety pins and small beads as well.



Emotion wheels allow one to express their emotions in a different way. For example, when someone is feeling “angry” and not wanting to vocalize how they are feeling, an emotion wheel can help express current emotions being felt. Emotion wheels are useful for many people, and they are simple to create.

How to create an Emotion Wheel

Grab some paper or cardstock, cut out a circle and then write emotions or draw faces with different emotions all around it. These emotions can include happy, calm, nervous, angry, sad, whatever you can think of. Then cut out a little arrow and attach it with a fastener.

FIDGET PUTTY

Stress balls, putty, and other squishy items are beneficial because they are relaxing, stimulating, and fun to fidget with. These items can help people cope with fear, increase attention/ability to concentrate, and even calm down while a burst in feelings such as intense anger or frustration is being experienced.

Putty Ingredients:

1 cup of flour
 1/4 cup of salt
 1/2 cup of water
 Food colouring – a few drops

How to make Fidget Putty:

1. Combine the flour and salt in a mixing bowl.
2. Stir a few drops of food colouring into the water and stir until it's well mixed.
3. Slowly drizzle the dyed water into the flour mixture while stirring.
4. Knead the ingredients with your hands until it forms a nice, smooth putty that feels like "Silly Putty."

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Keeping a journal of the things you're grateful for has been shown to have a powerful effect on mental wellbeing. It can reduce stress, increase happiness, and improve self-esteem.

Instructions: Two times a week (or as often as you'd like), write a detailed entry about one thing you are grateful for. This could be a person, a job, a great meal with friends, or anything else that comes to mind.

JOURNALLING TIPS

- Don't rush to write down the first thing that comes to your mind. Take time to truly think about what you're grateful for. Expect each entry to take between 10-15 minutes.
- Writing about the people who you're grateful for tends to be more powerful than writing about things.
- Explain, in detail, why you're grateful. For example, if you're grateful for a friend who is nice, describe what they do that's nice, and why that makes you grateful.
- Aim for two solid entries each week. Keep your journal somewhere you'll see it, and plan when you can write. You could even set an alarm on your phone to help you remember!

JOURNALLING PROMPTS

Here are some prompts to get you started. Feel free to write about anything for which you are grateful.

Someone whose company I enjoy...

A valuable lesson I learned...

The best part about today...

An unexpected good thing that happened...

Something beautiful I saw...

Someone who I admire...

A reason to be excited for the future...

A fun experience I had...

An act of kindness I witnessed or received...

Someone I can always rely on...

An experience I feel lucky to have had...

Something I can be proud of...

JOURNALLING

Journaling aids in the monitoring of conditions and the improvement of morale by assisting in prioritising challenges, worries, and concerns. Tracking how you feel on a daily basis allows you to identify causes and understand how to best monitor them.

To begin journaling:

1. Keep your personal information private
2. All entries should be dated
3. Remember to keep what you write neat so that you are able to re-read it if needed
4. Write quickly
5. When you start writing, continue to write until current feelings are released
6. Be truthful to yourself when writing
7. Write in a relaxed manner

LINE ART



Line Art by Jeanette Sunday

Line art will raise our self-esteem and allows us to feel more committed and resilient. Aside from these advantages, line art is known to reduce stress and alleviate depression and anxiety.

All you need to create line art is a piece of paper, a pen and a vision for what you want to create.

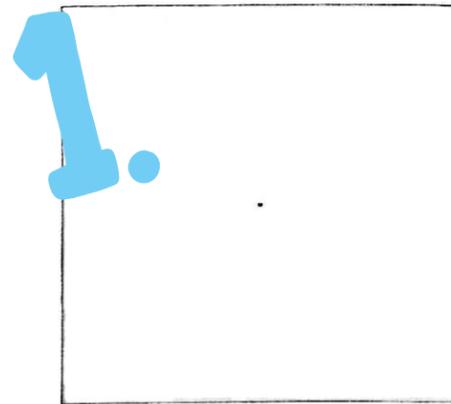
How to create line art:

1. Get your piece of paper and pen (pencil crayons, crayons, etc. are all great options!)
2. Have an image in your mind of what you want to create. Don't have an image in mind, that's ok too!
3. Start drawing - be sure to keep your pen on the paper!

To see someone creating a one line art piece you can visit:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_q9aTKCpKi0

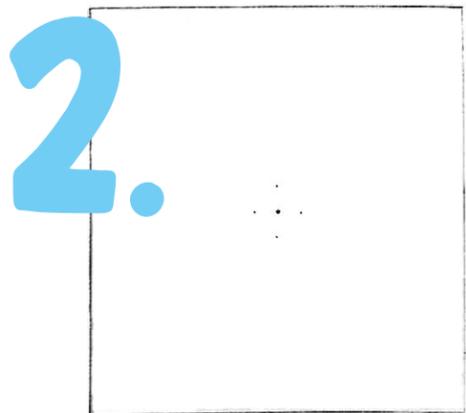
MANDALA ACTIVITY

Creating a mandala can be a calming activity that allows fluid thought, creativity and focus. This activity is adapted from www.art-is-fun.com.



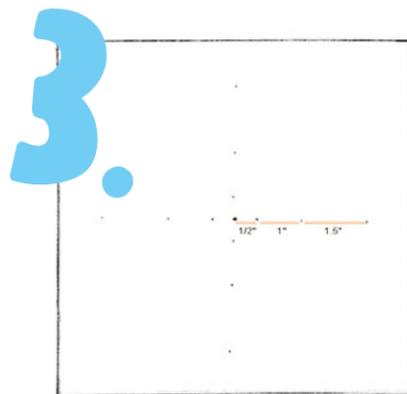
To start your mandala, measure your paper into the shape of a square. The square can be as big or as small as you would like. Smaller squares will have less detail than larger squares. You could use a piece of printer paper and cut it down to an 8"x8" square or you could use 12"x12" scrapbook paper and not cut at all!

Next, use your ruler and a pencil to draw a dot in the very center of the square, as shown here.



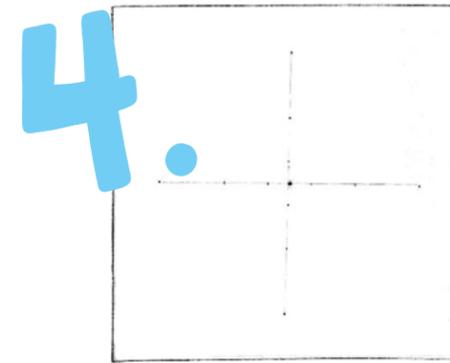
Next, draw a series of circles around this dot. Once you've drawn the dot in the center of your square, one easy way to draw circles is to use a compass. If you don't have a compass, don't worry - drawing circles is easy if you follow these steps:

1. Using your ruler, measure out 1/2" (or more or less - depending on your preference) from the center dot.
2. Make a mark 1/2" above, below, to the left and to the right of the center dot, as shown here.

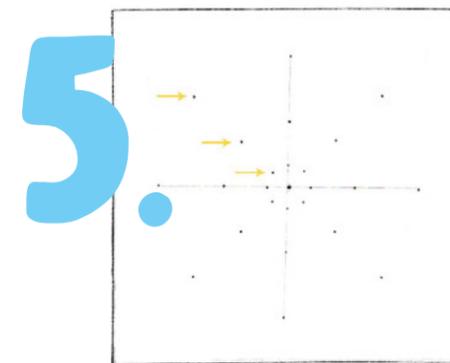


Next, measure out another distance from the center dot, for example 1.5" from the center dot. Using the same process as before, make a mark at this same distance on top, below, to the left and to the right of the center dot.

You can continue making as many rows of these dots as you like. I chose to make 3 rows of dots, as you can see above. The important thing is to make sure that the dots you make are all equidistant from the center dot.

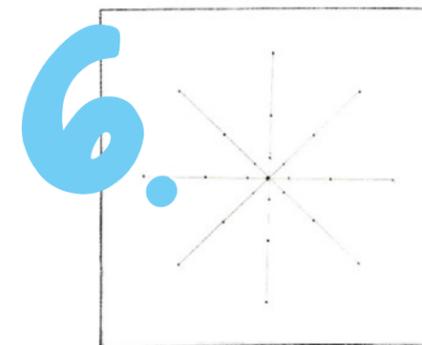


Now that you've drawn your dots, it's time to connect them. Draw a straight vertical line connecting the dots that go up and down, and a straight horizontal line connecting the dots that go one either side. See left for an example of this step in how to draw a mandala.

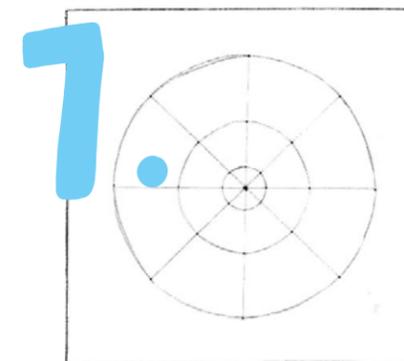


Next, draw another series of dots at the same distances from the center as your first series of dots. Try to make them at a 45 degree angle to the perpendicular lines.

Draw four rows of dots, making a large x shape. See the example here.



Next, use your ruler to connect the dots you just made. Now your picture should look like the picture to the left.

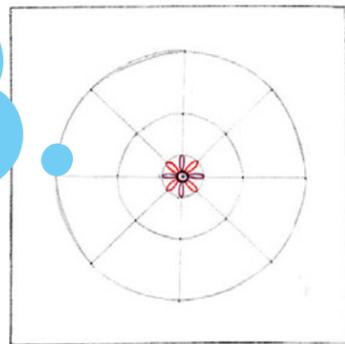


Now you'll want to connect the dots into circles. To do this, start at one dot, and draw a curved line to the next dot, and so on.

Don't worry about making the circles "perfect". We're not worried about perfection here! Just take it one step at a time, going from dot to dot.

It's okay if it is not perfect as it adds to the originality of your design. If you're worried about mistakes, just draw lightly enough that you can erase what you want to change.

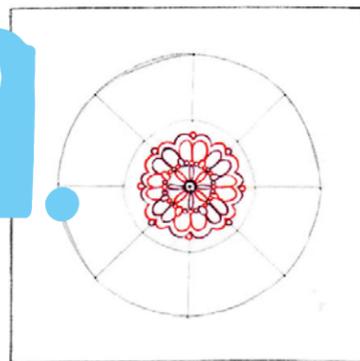
8.



Now that you've drawn the basic outline for your mandala, you can begin drawing designs in your mandala! You can use a pencil, coloured pencils, ink, crayons, or whatever you choose.

You can start from the center, or you can start from anywhere where you feel inspired to make some marks.

9.

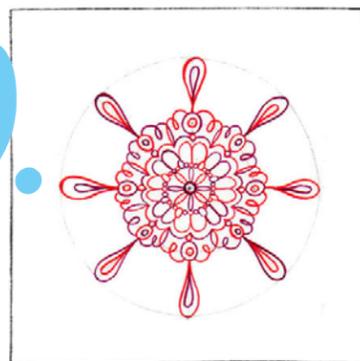


Using the lines and circles you drew as guidelines, you can draw shapes like circles, triangles, raindrops, loops, etc.

The important thing is to repeat your pattern. For example, if you draw a circle on one of the lines, be sure to draw it in the same spot on the other lines.

This creates repetition, which is a key element in creating a mandala.

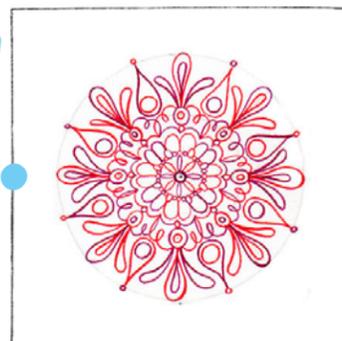
10.



As you draw more and more designs, your mandala will start to look more complex.

The key is to take it slowly, drawing one shape at a time and going around the whole circle drawing that one shape in the right place. Then you build on that shape by drawing other shapes around the circle in the same manner until you are happy with the end result.

11.



And you're done! Now you can colour it and make your mandala your own! Enjoy your art!



A mindful jar is normally used to help individuals who experience anxiety or stress. The goal is to help people calm their mind and refocus their thoughts. When looking at the objects inside the mindful jar, we are distracting our minds by letting go of our present thoughts and focusing on the activity.

Materials needed:

1. Jar or bottle (mason jars work well)
2. Warm water
3. Glitter, glitter glue or other embellishments you would like to add

How to make a mindfulness jar:

1. Add warm water to your jar or bottle. Pour the water until it reaches around a third of the way up.
2. Add the glitter glue and/or glitter.
3. Top up your jar with the rest of the warm water.
4. You're ready to watch.



Creating a visual representation of your goals allows you to construct a mental roadmap to reach your destination. A vision board, in particular, will assist you in three major ways: Narrow your focus down to specific goals, visualize goals, and practice ways to achieve selected goals.

Supplies needed:

- Magazines, photos, newspapers, etc.
- Scissors
- Paper
- Pen
- Board (could be a bulletin board, a cardboard cutout or other item)
- Glue, tape, etc.

How to create a vision board:

1. Create a list of goals that you would like to achieve within the next year.
2. Collect a selection of your favourite magazines with beautiful pictures.
3. Find pictures that represent your goals and inspire you.
4. Make a collage out of the selected photos.
5. Add motivational “affirmation words” that represent how you WANT to feel.
6. Take time to look at your vision board every day.



Zentangle Art is a meditative art form that uses repetitive patterns to focus your brain on the current task rather than the many other thoughts that go through your head. It is intentional, every step in this process has a meaning, there are no mistakes, just the end creation of the art. This type of art can be very relaxing and thought provoking.

Supplies Needed:

- Pencil
- Pen
- Paper
- Access to patterns (personal creativity or you can google Zentangle to find many pages of step-by-step instructions)

Steps to create Zentangle Art:

1. Get comfortable, take a few deep breaths and feel gratitude and appreciation – for this paper, for these tools, for this opportunity to create something beautiful.
2. First, create a frame on the paper by placing four light pencil dots near the corners of the paper (or where ever you would like!).
3. Next, create a border on the paper by connecting the dots with a light pencil line. Lines can be straight or curvy, as long as they connect to create a square or shape you are good to go.
4. Inside the border, draw a light pencil line or lines to make what is called a “string.” The string separates your art into sections, in which you draw your tangles. A string can be any shape. It may be a curvy line that touches the edge of the border now and then, or series of straight lines that go from one side of the border to the next.
5. Now it’s time to tangle. A tangle is a sequence of simple strokes that make up a pattern. Draw your tangles in pen inside (usually) your strings and borders.

Tangle is both noun and verb. Just as you dance a dance, you tangle your tangles. Draw your tangles with deliberate strokes. Don’t worry about what it’s going to look like. Just focus on each stroke of the pen as you make it. There is no up or down to Zentangle art so feel free to rotate your tile in any direction that is most comfortable for your hand as you draw.
6. When you’re happy with your tangles, it’s time to add some contrast or dimension to your piece by shading using shades of gray with a graphite pencil. The black and white two-dimensional tangles transform through shading and appear three-dimensional.
7. This is your art! Be sure to sign and date it. You could put your initials on the front and your full name, date, comments and observations on the back.
8. Appreciate your Zentangle Art. Hold your piece at arm’s length and look at it from all perspectives. Celebrate and appreciate what you just created.

For videos of this process, you can check this out:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3QuS4Qah60&t=154s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyBeN9RCh7k>



Supplies needed:

- Balloons
- Rice or flour
- Funnel
- Scissors
- Bucket

Steps:

1. Stretch out your balloon
2. Choose your filling (rice or flour)
3. Place a funnel into the neck of the balloon
4. Slowly fill the balloon
5. Remove the funnel from the balloon and let out as much air as possible
6. Tie the neck of the balloon tightly
7. Snip off the excess rubber
8. Add 2 more layers of balloons to each stress ball for added strength

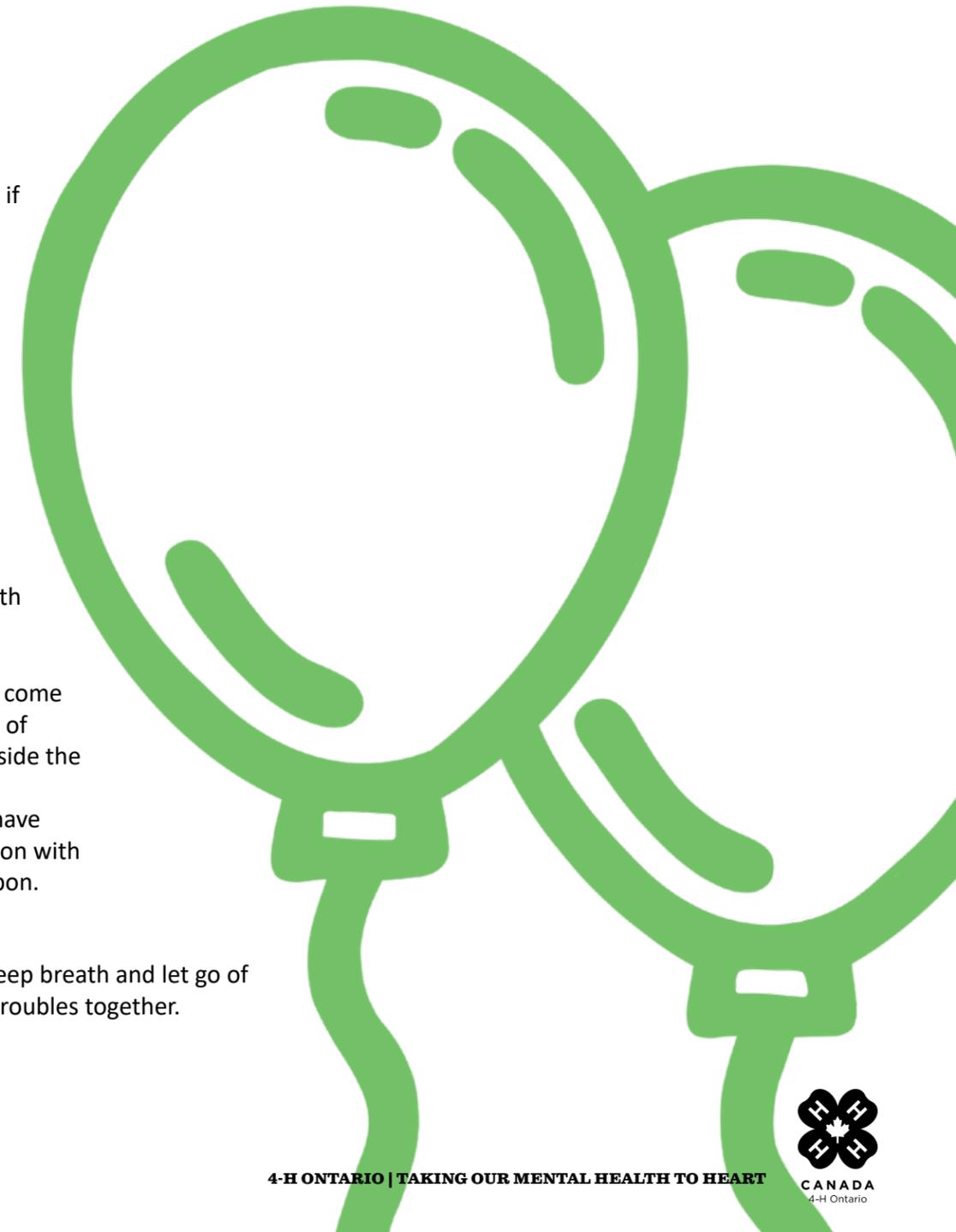
BALLOON RELEASE

Supplies Needed:

- Pieces of paper
- Pencils
- Balloons - eco-friendly if possible
- Helium tank
- Ribbon

Steps:

1. Think about your hardships, stressors, and most challenging life events. This could be anything from discovering mental health struggles, loss, anxiety, depression etc.
2. Write the thoughts that come to mind onto the pieces of paper and stick them inside the balloon.
3. Once you are finished, have the leader fill your balloon with helium and attach a ribbon.
4. As a group you venture outdoors
5. Have everyone take a deep breath and let go of all of your worries and troubles together.



BODY SCAN SCRIPT

Taking a moment to ground yourself can change your whole day. If you are anxious or nervous, angry or frustrated, happy or excited, purposely taking 5-10 minutes can allow you to settle yourself. This is also a great way to relax the body and mind.

You can do this exercise on your own or with a friend. The most effective way to do this meditation is be 'guided' by another person. One person reads aloud, while the other person gets comfortable and follows instructions.

If you are doing this on your own, you can record the script and play it back or after practice, you will remember it and be able to just go through it in your mind.

Get comfortable in a quiet space...

Close your eyes. Let your shoulders drop down and away from your ears.

Focus on your breathing. Take a nice slow deep breath in...and then release... keep focusing on your breathing.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you notice different things happening throughout your body. Try not focus on whether things in your body feel good, bad, uncomfortable, painful etc.

Just pay attention to what you're feeling – example, do you notice tingling, warmth, tightness, or something else.

Continue to breathe in...and out... Notice your lungs filling up with air when you breathe in and slowly go back down as you breathe out. Imagine a balloon when you blow it up and then slowly let the air out.

Now, focus on the parts of your body touching the floor, couch or bed. Every time you breathe out, let your body sink a little deeper into the surface below you.

Focus on your left foot and notice what you feel. You don't need to do anything about those sensations, just acknowledge them. Now focus on the bottom of your

left leg or calf. Notice any sensations. Don't need to do anything about them, just let them be there.

Now, focus on the upper part, or thigh, of your left leg. Whatever sensations you feel, just let them be there. If you don't feel anything at the moment, that's okay too.

Now, focus on your right foot and leg. Simply notice all the feelings and sensations. Just notice. You don't need to do anything about them.

Our minds often wander and we start thinking about other things. When you notice your mind has wandered just bring it back to your breath. Just focus on your breathing.

Now focus on your stomach. Feel it rising as you breathe in. Sinking as you breathe out. Nice and slow. Keep breathing in... and out... Continue to notice any feelings or sensations in your stomach.

Now focus on your left hand and arm. Notice what you feel. Again, if you don't feel anything at the moment, that's okay.

Now focus on your right hand and arm. And just notice what you feel.

Now focus on your chest, neck, and face. Feel the sensations in your jaw, and your throat. Notice how the back and the top of your head feels.

Now, take a moment to notice your whole body and how every part is connected. Notice what you feel – tingling, warmth, coolness, heaviness... Notice what you feel without thinking about it as being good or bad, or that you have to do anything about it. Just notice.

Now focus again on your breathing. Notice your lungs fill up and come down as you breathe in and out. Keep focusing on your breathing and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

You should get up slowly after opening your eyes. You will likely feel calm and rested.

Taking a moment to ground yourself can change your whole day. If you are anxious or nervous, angry or frustrated, happy or excited, purposely taking 5-10 minutes can allow you to settle yourself. This is also a great way to relax the body and mind.

You can do this exercise on your own or with a friend. The most effective way to do this meditation is be 'guided' by another person. One person reads aloud, while the other person gets comfortable and follows instructions.

If you are doing this on your own, you can record the script and play it back or after practice, you will remember it and be able to just go through it in your mind.

BODY SCAN

CREATE YOUR OWN GRATITUDE JAR

Gratitude Jars are a fun, artistic, and hands-on way to practice gratitude. In this activity, you will create a special jar where you save gratitude statements at the end of the day.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Clear Jar (glass or plastic)
- Art Supplies (ribbons, stickers, magazine cutouts, etc.)
- Gratitude Slips (blank strips of paper, or slips with gratitude prompts)

INSTRUCTIONS

Start by personalizing your jar with decorations. Use ribbons, stickers, magazine cut-outs, items found in nature, or anything else you can imagine.

After decorating your jar, it's time to add the first three gratitude statements!

A gratitude statement acknowledges something that a person appreciates or is thankful for. You can use the prompts on the next page, or you can write your own gritudes on blank slips of paper. Here are some examples:

"I am grateful for my cat because she makes me laugh."

"I am thankful for the dinner I had tonight. It was my favorite: pizza!"

"I appreciate my grandma because she visited me when I was sick."

Once you have written down three gratitude statements—one per slip of paper—spend a moment discussing each one. Finally, fold the gratitude statements, and add them to the jar. Plan to write three gratitude statements, and add them to the jar, each day. This activity works great as part of an evening or bedtime routine.

GRATITUDE JAR PROMPTS

Today was special because.. ✂

I appreciate (person), because..

Something I accomplished today..

Something I'm looking forward to..

Something I like about my family..

Three people who make me happy are..

I felt happy today when..

Something little that makes me smile..

Today I had fun when..

Today was special because..

I appreciate (person), because..

Something I accomplished today..

Something I'm looking forward to..

Something I like about my family..

Three people who make me happy are..

I felt happy today when..

Something little that makes me smile..

Today I had fun when..

Something about today that I'll always want to remember..

I am proud of (person), because..

Something I appreciate about my past..

Today was special because..

I appreciate (person), because..

Something I accomplished today..

Something I'm looking forward to..

Something I like about my family..

Three people who make me happy are..

I felt happy today when..

Something little that makes me smile..

Today I had fun when..

Something about today that I'll always want to remember..

I am proud of (person), because..

Name some of the things that you can trust the people in your bubble with?

Can you list the people inside of your bubble?

List some of the activities that you do with people in your bubble.

MY BUBBLE

What are the benefits of having these people in your bubble?

Do you feel safe with the people in your bubble?
Why or why not?

Why do we need our bubbles?

MY BUBBLE

Why I like my bubble

How i respect other's bubbles.

COPING STRATEGIES

Take deep breaths

Play sports Think of something funny

Dance Take a quick walk

Use positive self-talk Get enough sleep

Listen to music Stand up and stretch

Talk to a friend Talk to an adult

Visualize your favorite place Say, "I can do this"

Close your eyes and relax

Think of something happy Jog in place

Think about someone you love

Set a goal

Write a letter Colour a colouring page

Draw a picture Clean something

Look at pictures you've taken

Meditate Put a puzzle together

Build something

Do something you love Play with clay

Rip paper into pieces

Garden Do something kind

Watch a good movie

Blow bubbles

Write a story Paint your nails

Read a joke book Write a poem

Write a positive note

Drink cold water Draw cartoons

Read a magazine

Chew gum

Write a thank you note

Blog Read inspirational quotes

Visualize a stop sign

Smile in the mirror Compliment yourself

Count to 100

Make a list for the future

Smile at others Look at animal pictures

Paint with watercolours

Hyperfocus on an object

Laugh Drink some tea

Plan a fun trip

Cook or bake

Do schoolwork

Use a relaxation app

Identify a positive thought

Notice 5 things you can see

List 10 positives about you

Identify your emotions

Watch a funny video

Express your feelings to someone

Use an I-statement

Write down your thoughts

Make your day's schedule

Ask yourself, "What do I need right now?"

Pet an animal

Make a list of choices

Tell someone you are thankful for them

Organize something Ask an adult for help

Play a card game

Listen to nature sounds

Sit and relax all your muscles

Write a list

Ask for a break Give someone a hug

Keep a positive attitude

Hug a stuffed animal

Take Pictures



ABOUT ME

Thinking about our strengths and accomplishments is sometimes difficult but so very important.
Finish these sentences:

I was really **happy** when...

Something that my
friends like about me is...

I'm **proud** of...

My **family** was happy
when...

In **school**, I'm good at...

Something that makes me
unique is...

BALANCING STRESS

This worksheet requires you to take a moment to describe your biggest life stressors in each of the following categories. Choose four stressors you are feeling in each category and rate them from 1-10 (1 being least stressful – 10 being the most stressful).

DAILY HASSLES

Common problems or strains that you deal with in your daily life.
Ex: chores, work, school work, arguments, feelings of exhaustion, parents, family...

Stressor	Rating (1-10)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

MAJOR LIFE STRESSORS

Significant life events, positive or negative that require you to make changes
Ex: new job, new chores, family separation, new school...

Stressor	Rating (1-10)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

Permanent or long-term changes causing difficulty in life.
Ex: financial stress, disability, illness or injury, discrimination, new sibling, fear of safety...

Stressor	Rating (1-10)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

PROTECTING AGAINST STRESS

Describe the positive things in your life that you use or can use to prevent stress from taking control over your mental health.

DAILY UPLIFTS

Positive things in life that brighten your mood or relieve stress.
Ex: Healthy meals, staying connected with friends, hobbies, nature...

1.
2.
3.
4.

HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES

Positive actions or activities that help you manage your stress or uncomfortable emotions.

Ex: exercise, music, walking, Breathing exercises, journaling, relaxation techniques...

1.

2.

3.

4.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Personal characteristics or traits that protect you from stress.

Ex: not worried about finances, supportive friends/family, good physical health, motivation, love...

1.

2.

3.

4.

ANXIETY:

CONNECTING OUR THOUGHTS & BEHAVIOURS

We all have automatic thoughts which influence our behaviours. Consider some of your daily automatic thoughts that cause you anxiety and list them in the thoughts column below. Next, list the behaviours that occur as a result of those thoughts.

THOUGHT

BEHAVIOUR

If I don't go now, they'll run out of food



Rushing out to the store

My grandfather looks too unsteady to carry a plate



Going over and grabbing the plate

Your turn:

Thought

Behaviour



IDENTIFYING ANXIETY

Take a moment to really think about your **anxiety** and the way it makes you feel.

When did you **first** have anxious feelings?

How **often** do you feel anxious?

Would you describe your anxiety as (circle one):

mild **moderate** **severe**

Do you feel anxious **daily**, or during **particular times**? Explain.

What do you **avoid** as a result of anxiety?

Circle the symptoms that you experience when you are feeling anxious:

DIARRHEA OR STOMACH PAIN

FATIGUE

RESTLESSNESS

UNABLE TO COPE

DIZZINESS

SWEATING

DRY MOUTH

RAPID HEARTBEAT

MUSCLE ACHES

EASILY STARTLED

FEELING ON EDGE

AVOIDING PEOPLE OR PLACES

HOT FLASHES OR CHILLS

WORRY

IRRITABILITY

TROUBLE SWALLOWING

TROUBLE FALLING ASLEEP OR STAYING ASLEEP

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

THINKING BAD THINGS WILL HAPPEN

NAUSEA

NERVOUSNESS

TREMBLING

BECOMING TIRED EASILY

WHAT COULD HAPPEN VS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN

It's easy to think about the worst possible scenario of what could happen, especially when you're worried. The good thing is, our worries don't always come true. Just because we think about what could happen does not mean it will happen.

What is something you're worried about?

Thinking about what will happen, instead of what could happen, can help you ease your worries. Whenever you start to worry, answer these questions:

What are some clues your worry will not come true?

If your worry does not come true, what are the other possible **outcomes**?

If your worry does come true, how will you **handle** it?
Will you eventually be okay?

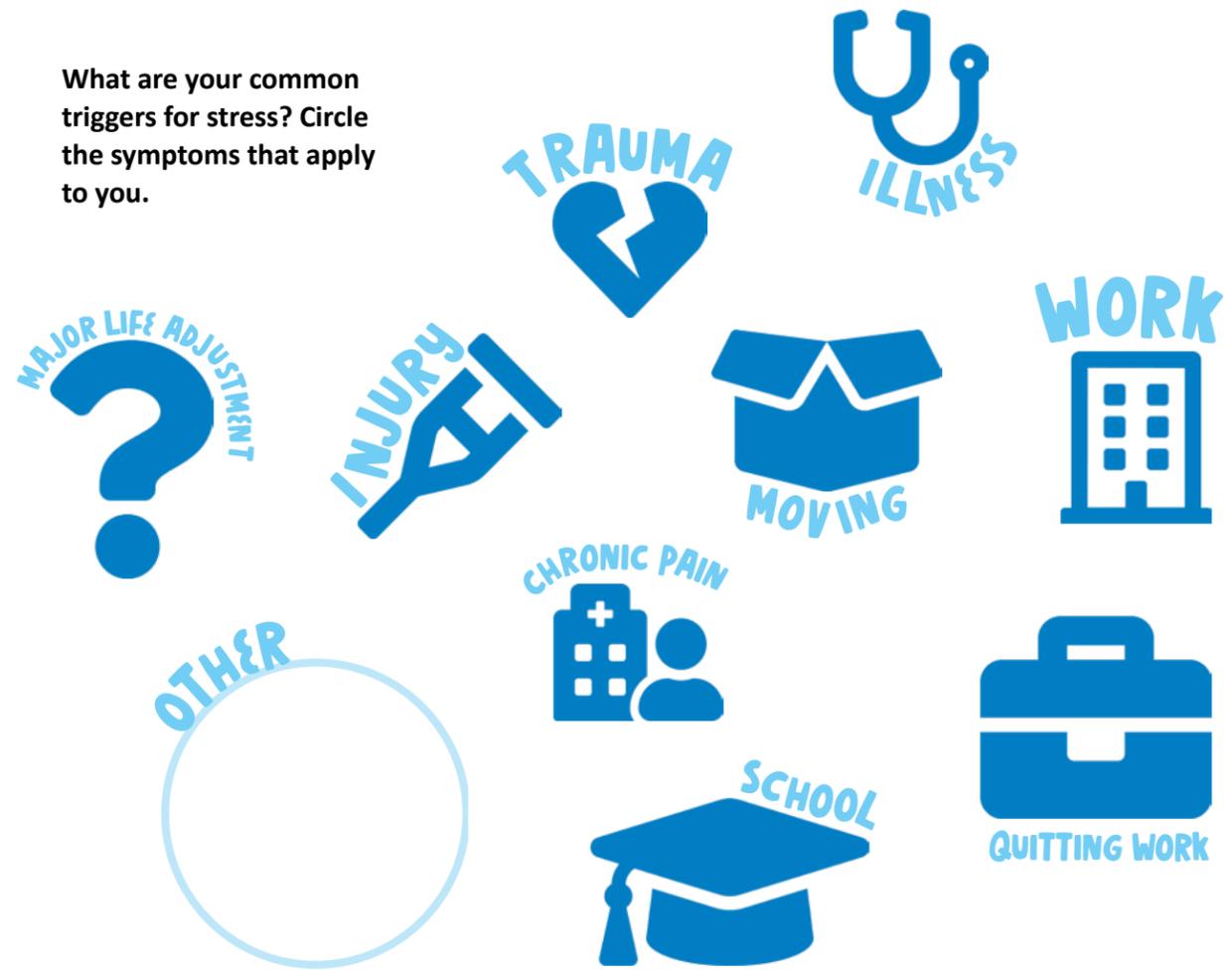
After answering these questions, how has your worry **changed**?

IDENTIFYING STRESS PART 1

What does your stress look like? Circle the symptoms you most commonly encounter.

HEADACHES INSOMNIA SWEATING
NIGHT TERRORS MUSCLE TENSION
STOMACH PAIN NAUSEA
SHAKING TINGLING IN FINGERS, TOES, ARMS, OR LEGS
LOW SEX DRIVE
COLD SWEATS
FLUSHED CHEEKS
WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEM RESTLESSNESS
NUMBNESS NIGHTMARES
FATIGUE NAUSEA
CONSTIPATION
PANIC ATTACKS

What are your common triggers for stress? Circle the symptoms that apply to you.



What is **bothering** you the most today?

Why is it important for you to **manage** your stress?

IDENTIFYING STRESS PART 2

How do you know if you are feeling **stressed**?

What are some of your **warning signs** that suggest you are stressed?
What are the first signs that occur due to stress?

What are some of your more **persistent** or **longer lasting** symptoms of stress?
Do you have any of these symptoms often?

What are some ways you **cope** with stress?
List your most common strategies.

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not helpful and 10 being extremely helpful) how effective are these coping strategies? Circle one.

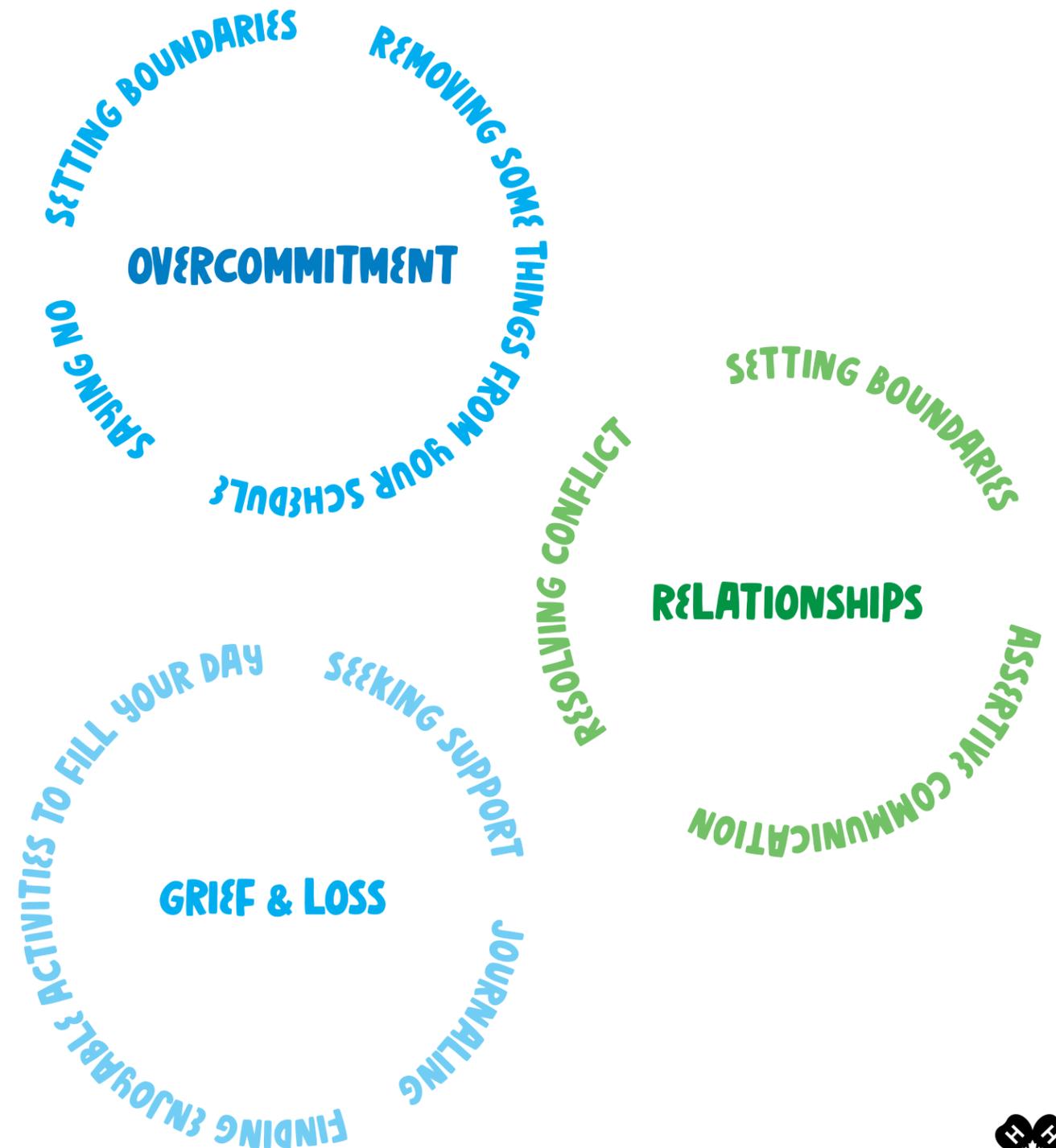
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do these strategies **reduce/eliminate** the stress or do they only **mask** it?

What are some coping strategies you have used in the **past** but are no longer using currently? Why?

Identify one of your causes for stress:

How can this situation be changed or improved? Some examples include:



Write about what your **stressful situation** is.

Blank writing area for describing a stressful situation.

How can it be **changed or improved?**

Blank writing area for discussing how the stressful situation can be changed or improved.

Envision what you want your **life will look like in one year:**

Blank writing area for envisioning life in one year.

MANAGING STRESS

What is stress?

Stress is an emotional and physical response to demanding situations such as limited time frames, loss, overwhelming school or workload etc. Stress can lead to symptoms of worry, increased heart rate, headaches, muscle tension, sleep difficulties, procrastination and more.

Take a minute to think about what is really stressing you out.

Did you know?

Stress can be both positive and negative. Stress is used by your body to increase your odds of overcoming obstacles. It's when stress becomes too intense, or lasts for too long, that it becomes a problem.

Take a minute to think about what is really stressing you out.

What is your largest stressor right now?

Describe it in detail.

List two other stressors in your life that are affecting you right now

Circle what you feel when you are stressed.



Managing Stress

How do we manage stress in our lives? Are there some things that you find stressful but think should be easily managed? Take a moment to create a plan to manage your stress.

Social Support

Sometimes just having someone to talk to can be enough. When we talk about our problems, hormones are released inside our brains that ease the undesirable symptoms of stress.

List three people you can turn to for support, and how they can help:

1

2

3

How can you use **social supports** to ease one of your current stressors?

Emotional Management

Stress can trigger many emotions such as anxiety, self-doubt, and anger. When these feelings are ignored, they can make the original stress feel worse. Remember, managing stress isn't about eliminating emotions, it's about dealing with them in a healthier way.

When faced with **emotions** in stressful situations, do you have any **habits** that make it worse?

1.

2.

3.

List two ways that you have **successfully** handled stress in the past.

1.

2.

Now What?

You have looked at what stresses you, how you feel when you are stressed, and who you can turn to for help. Are there any other things you can do, in the moment or daily to manage your stress?

List some of your **ideas** here.

List 3 **copied strategies** that have worked for you previously that you would like to regularly implement:

1.

2.

3.

Here are some other quick ideas that may help:

Word cloud of coping strategies:

- Eat well
- Find hobbies you enjoy
- Exercise
- Breathe
- Sleep
- Go for a walk
- Laugh
- Try some yoga
- Stretch
- Stay calm, be aware
- Set reasonable goals
- Learn to relax
- Write it out
- Chew gum
- Think baby steps
- Take a technology break
- Use your support systems

List 3 new coping strategies you would like to **try**:

1.

2.

3.

When will you use these coping techniques?

How will these 6 coping strategies affect your **stress levels**?

What are some of the changes you will notice as a result of incorporating these techniques?

WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?

This sheet will serve as a way to form miniature goals while also reflecting on the things in your life that you are grateful for.

Some things I am grateful for...

Some things I am proud of...

Some things I enjoy doing...

This week, I **plan** to...

When I get home, I **will**...

I'm really looking forward to it!

This year, I am really **excited** for...

WHAT'S GOING ON?

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not stressed at all – 10 being extremely stressed) how stressed have you been feeling in the last two weeks? Please circle one.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What's going on in your life that contributes to you feeling this way?

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

LOOKING BACK AT THIS YEAR

One thing I wish I did this year
but didn't because I was **afraid**:

One thing I did this year
that I **wish** I did not:

The best
decision I
made:

The biggest
lesson I
learned:

My most
rewarding
moment:

I am most
proud of:

The people
who have
influenced
me the most:

The people
I have
influenced
the most:

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

It can be so helpful and empowering to simply put some thought into some of our great qualities. We can all be kind, courageous, determined, etc. Just thinking about all the good ways you live your life can create joy and happiness within you.

Write a little about times when you have displayed each of the following qualities:

Courage

kindness

Selflessness

Love

Sacrifice



Wisdom

Happiness

Determination

See! You have some amazing qualities. As you move through the next week, if you are feeling defeated, try to remember one thing you have just written down. It will help you remember what a great person you are.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Identify the problem

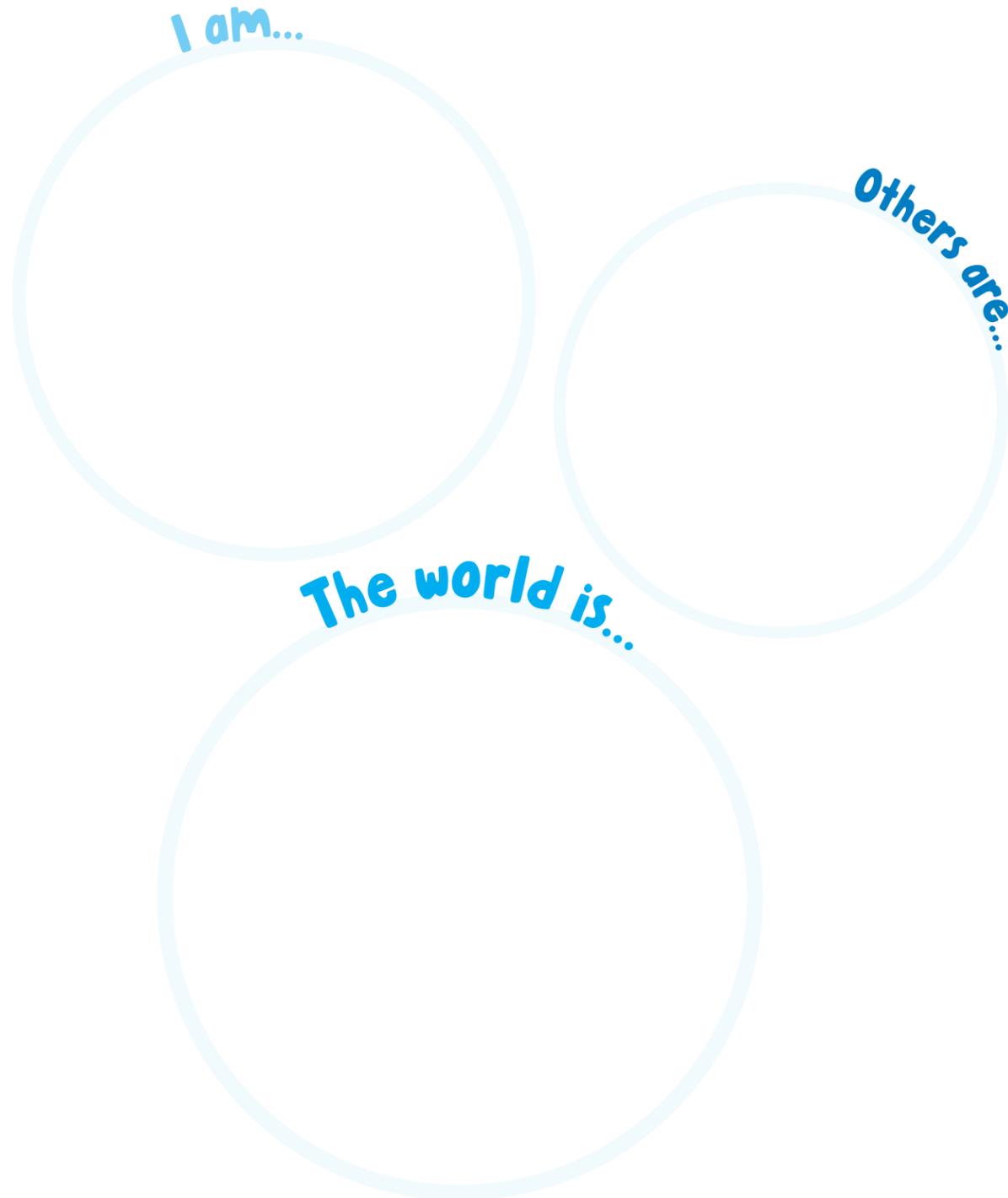
Brainstorm possible solutions

Pros & cons of possible solutions

Pick one solution to **try** and identify it

Identify possible **obstacles**

RECOGNIZING YOUR CORE BELIEFS



Think back to something that you went through recently that has created a negative change for you. Think about the situation so vividly and allow yourself to relive it. How do you feel about yourself, others and the world?

Situation

What does this mean?

If this is true, what does this say about me?

SELF AWARENESS

Taking some time to think about yourself, your goals and your accomplishments can be more powerful than you know. It can help us feel good about ourselves and boost our confidence.

Things I am
good at:

Things that make
me **happy**:

Something I want
to **learn** to do:

Things I would like
to **improve** on:

Something I am
proud of:

What do you **love** about your life?

Empty rectangular box for writing.

Name some things you are **good** at.

Empty rectangular box for writing.

Name something you couldn't
imagine living **without**.

Empty rectangular box for writing.

List some good **quotes** you know.



COMMON HELPFUL & UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS TOOL

Feeling sad, down, irritable or depressed has a lot to do with how we think. Please check the box next to the Unhelpful and Helpful thoughts you sometimes have. Add to the list as well. Sometimes we have one or more of these thoughts, and think this way quite often. Some of us have none of these thoughts.

Move over to the Common Helpful Thoughts Column to see if any apply.

COMMON UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

- I can't do anything well
- No one really cares about me
- I can't make a difference in what happens in my life
- Nothing is going to change for the better
- There must be something wrong with me
- I'm lazy
- I can't handle it
- I'm not a good person
- I'm unlovable

Other depressing/sad thoughts you have:

-
-
-
-
-

COMMON HELPFUL THOUGHTS

- I can do some things pretty well
- There are people who care about me
- When I put my mind to it, I can change my situation
- I know I am a good person
- Nobody is perfect. I have some good qualities
- I can learn from my mistakes and be a better person
- I deserve to be respected
- I like to be challenged
- I am lovable

Other helpful thoughts you have:

-
-
-
-
-

For unhelpful thoughts that you have a lot, try filling out the working tool below.

IDENTIFY AND RATE A SINGLE EXTREME AND UNHELPFUL THOUGHT

Choose just one thought to question at a time. You can then use the tool multiple times, for different thoughts. Clearly identify and write down what the thought is. For the time being, avoid thoughts such as "I am..." "people are..." "the world is..." because these sorts of thoughts are often very difficult to challenge at first. Once you have picked out a thought write it here:

At the time you felt worse: Rate how much you believe the thought:



Rate how much worse it makes you feel emotionally:



Rate the impact it has on your behaviour/activity level:



IDENTIFYING ASSUMPTIONS

What are some **behaviours** you engage in but notice it would be beneficial for you not to do?

If I _____

Then _____

If I don't _____

Then _____

If I _____

Then _____

If I don't _____

Then _____

What are some things you often **avoid**? How would things be different if you did not avoid them?

If I avoid _____

Then _____

If I don't avoid _____

Then _____

If I avoid _____

Then _____

If I don't avoid _____

Then _____

Identify specific times when you feel **emotionally overwhelmed**. Explain your reactions in these situations.

For example, someone is staring at you, you have to make a phone call, someone is not kind to you, being interrupted when speaking, you are late, someone else is late, etc.

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

Situation _____

Reaction _____

What does this mean? _____

LOOKING AT STIGMA

What does **stigma** look like?
Feel like?

How does stigma **affect** you?
Your family, your friends?

What **impact** does stigma
have on your life?

PHYSICALLY

MENTALLY

EMOTIONALLY

How do you **cope** currently?

HEALTHY

UNHEALTHY

What **changes** can you
make to your coping?

What are some **challenging**
feelings associated with stigma?

Information & Resources

This is comprised of general information for your learning, reference and support.

Language Matters	Pg 152
Negative Thinking	Pg 156
LGBTQ Terms	Pg 160
Stigma Quick Facts	Pg 163
Disorders	Pg 165
Positive Affirmations	Pg 179
Making Friends Tips	Pg 182



LANGUAGE MATTERS IN MENTAL HEALTH.

Language shapes how we see the world. The words we choose and the meanings we attach to them influence our feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Our language choices have a powerful effect on how we view mental health and people living with mental health concerns.

Respectful language is important.

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Respectful language emphasizes the person, not the condition or disability. It's a way to demonstrate respect for a person's dignity and worth. This is sometimes called person-first language.

We talk about the health condition only when necessary. Before choosing your words, ask yourself if labeling someone with a mental health condition matters in the conversation. A person's mental health is only one aspect of who the person is. If the information doesn't contribute to the conversation in a necessary or meaningful way, why mention it at all?

Labelling can be harmful, but in some circumstances it may be necessary. If it is important, then use respectful language, which literally means putting reference to the person first in a phrase. For example, instead of calling someone "mentally ill," a more respectful, people-first way of phrasing it is to say "a person living with a mental health condition."

Don't say this:

That's crazy,
psycho, insane,
nuts

Say this instead:

That's wild,
bizarre,
odd, eccentric

Patient,
client,
case

An individual
needing
mental health
services

It drives
me crazy

It annoys
me

He is a
paranoid
schizophrenic

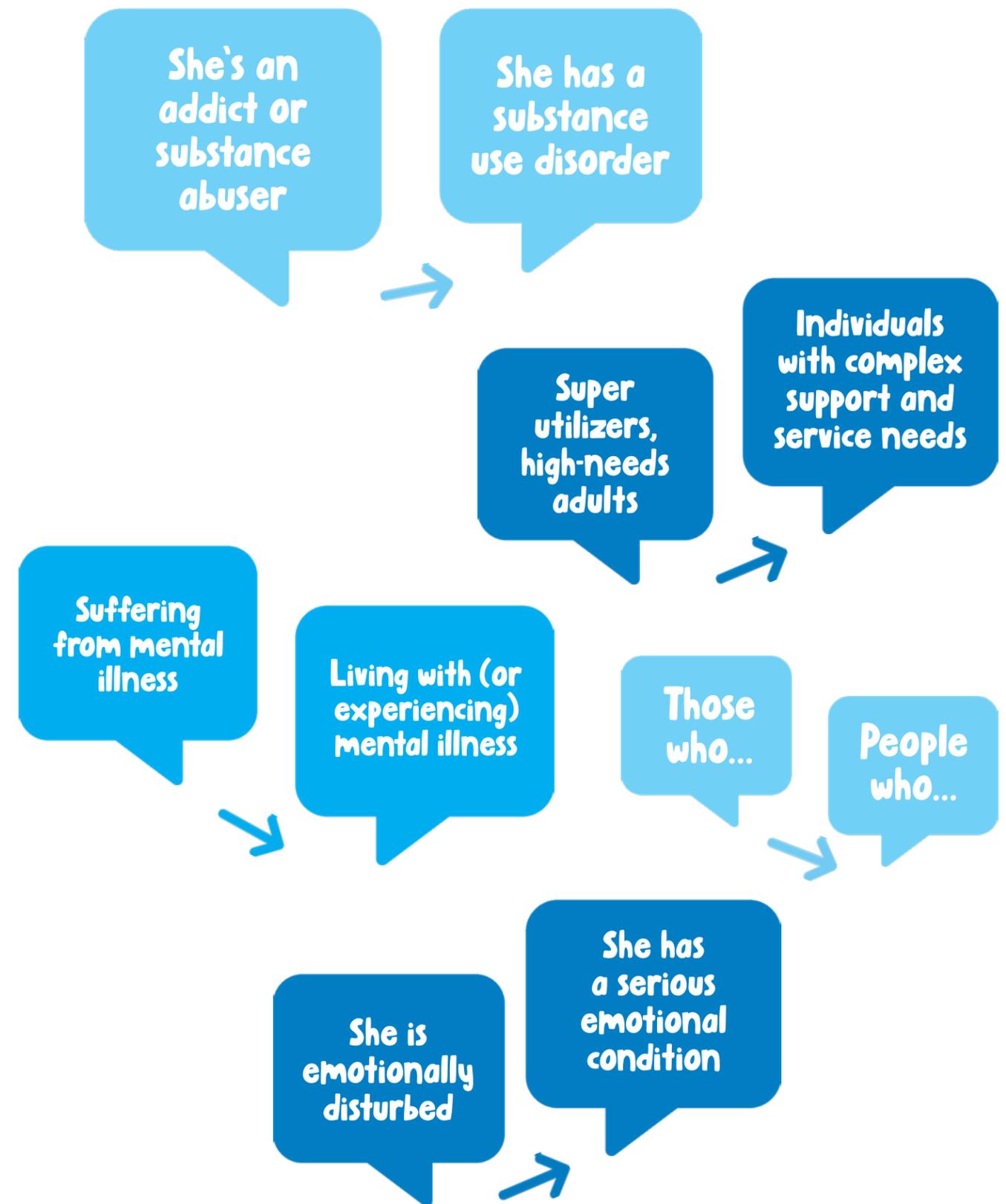
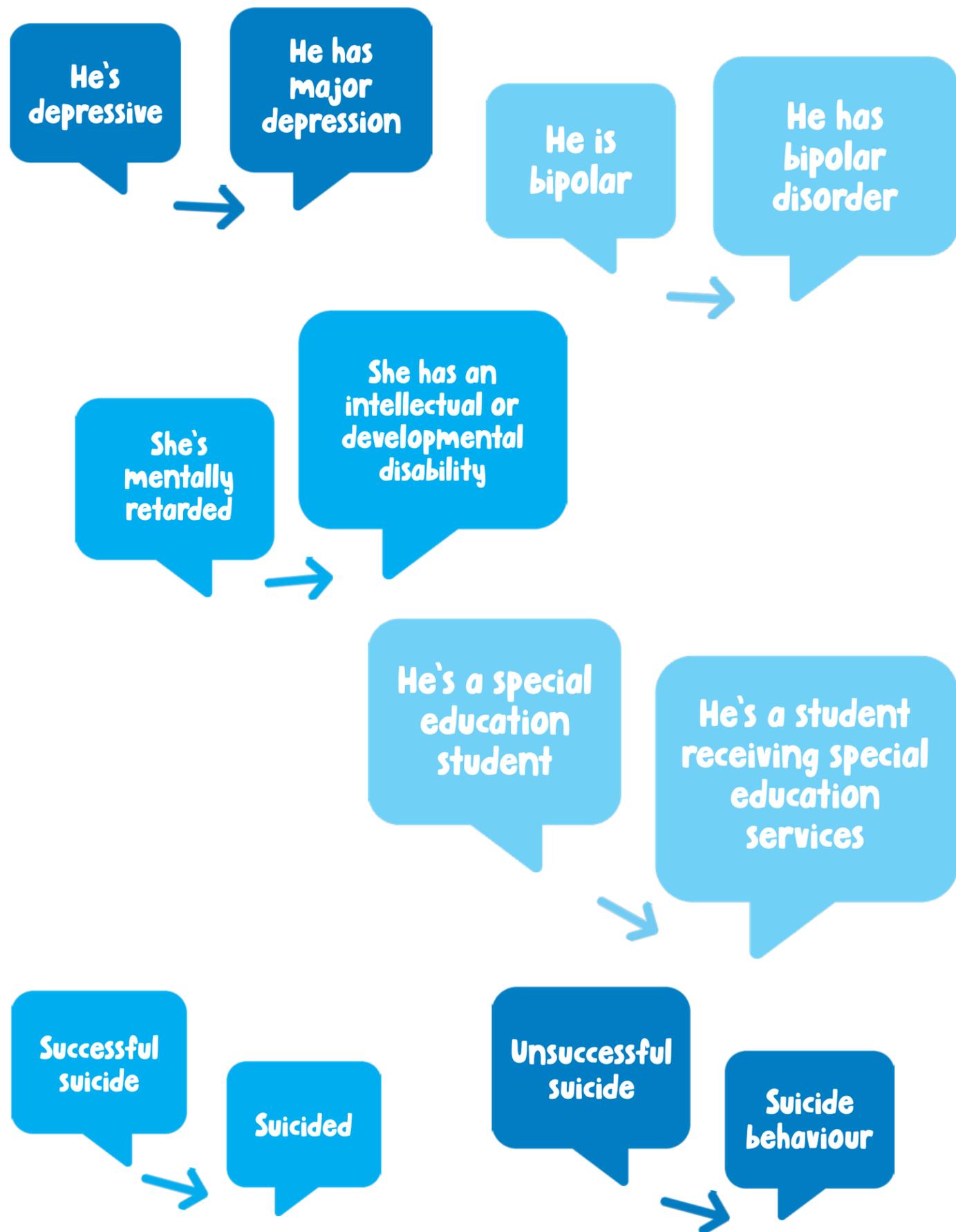
He has
paranoid
schizophrenia

She is an
anorexic

She has
anorexia
nervosa

She's
OCD

She has
obsessive-
compulsive
disorder



Language is constantly evolving. As times change, the words people prefer also change. To show respect in conversations with others, be mindful of the impact your word choices have. If you need to use a descriptive term but are unsure of the words to use, ask the person how he or she would like to be addressed or referred to.

Catastrophizing:

- Your friend doesn't call when he says he will. You think the friendship must be over.
- You forget to turn in an assignment or work project, you think you're going to flunk out of school or get fired, and never get any further in life.



Perfectionism/ Setting Unrealistic Expectations:

- Asking yourself to be perfect, not allowing yourself to make mistakes.
- This makes you feel like a failure when you do make mistakes and discourages you from trying anything new, making it hard to get a sense of achievement and preventing you from doing things you might enjoy.

NEGATIVE THINKING TRAPS



Focusing on the Negatives/Negative Filter:

- Focusing in on the negative, scary, or unfair things, ignoring anything good.

Personalization:

- Everything is about you. Your friend looks upset, you assume it must be your fault. Your father doesn't agree with you, you assume he's trying to make you mad.

Overgeneralization:

- A failure means you'll never succeed in anything
- One bad interaction and you decide someone is a jerk. Something bad in one area means something about all areas; something tough about right now means your whole future will be tough.

Black and White/ All-or-Nothing/ Dichotomous thinking:

- Things are good or bad, safe or dangerous. No middle ground.
- Things are perfect or they are a total failure, nothing in between.

Mind Reading:

- Acting like you can tell what people are thinking about you. Getting very negative or angry when often it is only your imagination. Sometimes you might be right, but most of the time you got worried or upset over a situation that never really existed.

Blaming:

- You focus on the other person as the source of the problem, when you may have had some part in it. You expect the other person to change or fix things when they are things you could do.

Minimizing/Discounting:

- You maximize your failures and minimize your success. You discount positive events and allow negative events to count more.
- Even though I hit a home run earlier in the game, I let my team down when I struck out later in the game.

REPLACING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS TOOL

Identify some thought that you think are realistic to change. What do you tell yourself that is unhelpful? Challenge yourself to think about how you can change the words to replace that thought. Use this tool for at least three negative thought that you commonly have.

I **tell** myself:

I'll **change** my thoughts and tell myself:

WHAT GETS IN YOUR WAY?

Internal Barriers

Things that are “inside of us,” like thoughts and feelings that prevent or stop us from completing our goals:

- Just don't feel like it/unmotivated
- Let yourself get distracted (video games/facebook/TV)
- Start worrying too much about what might happen
- Feel too self-conscious to try

I will get **around** this by:

External Barriers

Things that are “outside of us,” that prevent us from achieving our goals: not having enough time, money, or the necessary tools. Examples:

- Not having the necessary “tools” (e.g. cleats for soccer, can't get the book, can't work from home)
- Need help from others to carry out the plan (e.g. ride, quiet time, better sleep)
- Other people changing plans or not following through
- Need money

I will get **around** this by:

UNPLEASANT EMOTIONS - AFFIRMATION TOOL

Remember, your feelings can effect your behaviours. Write down what you were feeling and what action you took to make yourself feel better.

Actions I took to try and feel better:

I felt _____, so I _____

I felt _____, so I _____

I felt _____, so I _____

LGBTQ TERMINOLOGY

Many terms are associated with sexual and gender identities, and terminology continues to evolve. Below are some of the terms currently used in Canada today. This list and the definitions may change over time.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted to both people of their own gender and other genders.

Cisgender: Individuals whose current gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gay: A person who is attracted primarily to members of the same gender. Gay is most frequently used to describe men who are attracted primarily to other men, although it can be used for men and women.

Gender: The cultural roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes expected of people based on their sex.

Gender Expression: How an individual chooses to present their gender to others through physical appearance and behaviors, such as style of hair or dress, voice, or movement.

Gender Identity: An individual's sense of their self as man, woman, transgender, or something else.

Gender Minority: Individuals whose gender identity (man, woman, other) or expression (masculine, feminine, other) is different from their sex (male, female) assigned at birth.

Gender Nonbinary: Individuals who do not identify their gender as man or woman. Other terms to describe this identity include genderqueer, agender, bigender, gender creative, etc.

Gender Nonconformity: The state of one's physical appearance or behaviors not aligning with societal expectations of their gender (a feminine boy, a masculine girl, etc.).

Heterosexual or Straight: A man who is primarily attracted to women or a woman who is primarily attracted to men.

Lesbian: A woman who is primarily attracted to other women.

LGBTQ: Acronym that refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning community.

Queer: An umbrella term sometimes used to refer to the entire LGBT community.

Questioning: For some, the process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Sex: An individual's biological status as male, female, or something else. Sex is assigned at birth and associated with physical attributes, such as anatomy and chromosomes.

Sexual Minority: Individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or who are attracted to or have sexual contact with people of the same gender.

Sexual Orientation: Refers to a person's sexual and emotional attraction to another person and the behavior and/or social affiliation that may result from this attraction (lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.).

SGM: Acronym for sexual and gender minorities

SGMY: Acronym for sexual and gender minority youth.

SMY: Acronym for sexual minority youth.

Transgender: Individuals whose current gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

STIGMA

QUICK FACTS

Stigma is when someone sees another in a negative way because of a particular characteristic or attribute (such as skin colour, cultural background, a disability or a mental illness). When someone treats others in a negative way because of mental illness, this is discrimination.

Stigma happens when a person defines someone by their illness rather than who they are as an individual. For example, they might be labelled 'psychotic' rather than 'a person experiencing psychosis.'

For people with mental health concerns, the social stigma and discrimination they experience can make their problems worse, making it harder to recover. It may cause the person to avoid getting the help they need because of the fear of being stigmatised.

Some of the effects of stigma include:

- feelings of shame, hopelessness and isolation
- reluctance to ask for help or to get treatment
- lack of understanding by family, friends or others
- fewer opportunities for employment or social interaction
- bullying, physical violence or harassment
- self-doubt – the belief that you will never overcome your illness or be able to achieve what you want in life.

ANXIETY DISORDERS

What is anxiety? Anxiety is a feeling everyone experiences at some point in their lifetime. Nervousness and worry are common themes for anxiety, but an anxiety disorder causes unexpected and unhelpful anxiety possibly impacting our day-to-day lives. So, when feelings of intense fear and distress become overwhelming and impact our everyday activities, an anxiety disorder may be the cause.

Anxiety disorders describe a group of related mental illnesses. A very common myth is that anxiety disorders are the same thing as problems with stress. Anxiety and stress problems can have a lot in common. The difference is that in an anxiety disorder, the symptoms are extreme and don't go away once the stress is over.

What does it look like? Anxiety disorders are among the most treatable mental illnesses. Anxiety is our body's response to stress and danger, but in today's world most of the 'dangers' we face day-to-day are not ones we can fight with our fists or run away from easily. These modern 'dangers' are many and can be anything from a heavy workload to family conflicts, aggressive drivers or money troubles. Some anxiety from time to time is normal and healthy; it can help motivate us and help get us out of tough situations. But when anxiety lasts for weeks or months, develops into a constant sense of dread or begins to affect everyday life, this could mean an anxiety disorder.

There are several different types of anxiety disorders:

PHOBIAS

Being irrationally scared of something so much so that it disrupts your life. If you are changing the way you live to avoid the thing you fear, it could be a phobia.

PANIC DISORDER

Involves repeated and unexpected panic attacks. This is often mistaken for a heart attack because it causes a lot of physical feelings like a racing heart, shortness of breath, or nausea. Sometimes this can happen to a person in a situation that makes them nervous. But when this happens unprompted, this could mean an anxiety disorder.

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

An excessive worry around a lot of everyday problems for a long period of time. This anxiety is often far greater than expected—for example, intense anxiety over a minor concern.

SOCIAL ANXIETY

Involves intense fear of being embarrassed or evaluated negatively by others. As a result, people avoid social situations. It can have a big impact on a person's life at school or work.

Get the mental health treatment needed.

Try not to let the fear of being labelled with a mental illness stop someone from getting help.

Do not hide away.

Many people with mental illness want to isolate themselves from the world. Reaching out to people we trust – family, friends, coaches or religious leaders – can mean you get the support you need.

Connect with others.

Joining a mental health support group – either online or in person – can help you deal with feelings of isolation and make you realise that you are not alone in your feelings and experiences.

WAYS TO REDUCE STIGMA

You are not your illness.

Do not define yourself by your illness as other people might. Instead of saying 'I'm schizophrenic', say 'I have schizophrenia'. There is power in language.

It's not personal.

Remember that other people's judgements often come from a lack of understanding rather than anything else. These judgments are made before they get to know you, so do not believe that their views have anything to do with you personally.

Do not believe it.

Sometimes, if you hear or experience something often enough, you start to believe it yourself. Try not to let other people's ignorance influence the way you feel about yourself. Mental illness is not a sign of weakness and is rarely something you can deal with on your own. Talking about your mental health issues with healthcare professionals will help you on your road to recovery or management.

How can I help others? It is important to be patient when someone you know experiencing anxiety. These are feelings that can be frustrating to the person experiencing them as well as those around them.

As always, being knowledgeable about anxiety disorders helps everyone involved and can lead to them having a greater support system.

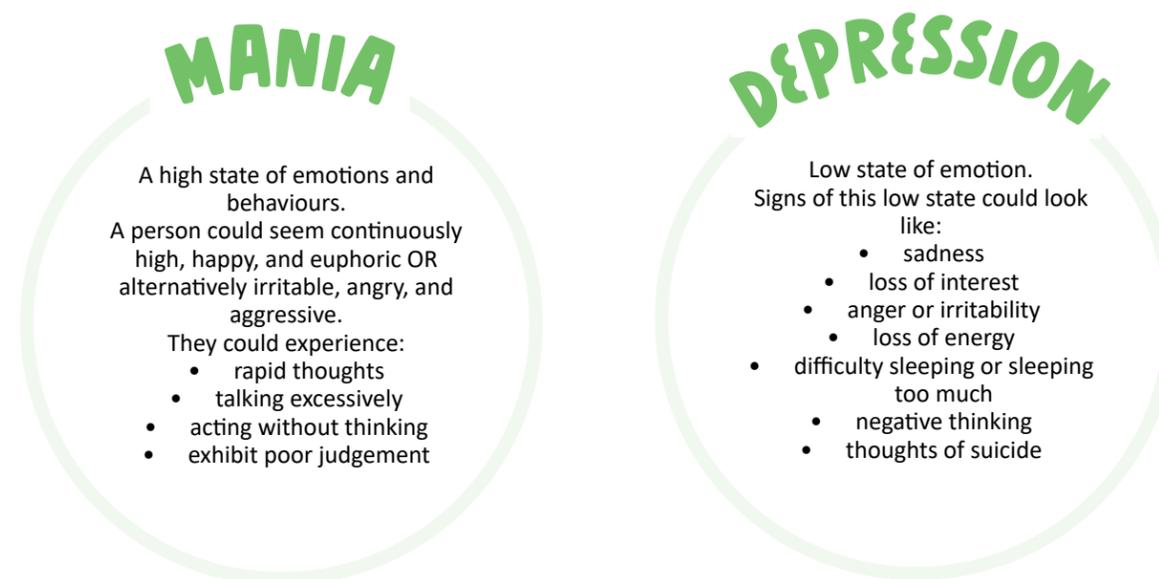
What can be done about it? It is important to acknowledge the seriousness of anxiety. Some people tend to brush off their symptoms thinking they will get over it and don't seek help. Talking to a doctor when experiencing these feelings can lead to getting the right help. This could mean medication, counselling, support groups, or self-help strategies.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

BIPOLAR DISORDER

What is bipolar disorder? Bipolar disorder is a mental illness that causes dramatic shifts in a person's mood, energy, and ability to think clearly. People with bipolar disorder experience high and low moods—known as mania and depression—which differ from the typical ups-and-downs most people experience.

What does this look like?



How can I help others? When someone you know is diagnosed with bipolar disorder, you may be wondering what you can do to help. You can offer emotional or practical support to help make their experience with bipolar disorder less difficult. Watching for signs of relapse is super important. Educating yourself on this illness is important when helping someone dealing with it. Try not to take their episodes personally; allow them their time and space if they need it to sort through their frustrations with their emotions.

What can be done about it? Sometimes people experiencing episodes of mania or depression may not know how to seek help and the idea of seeking help may feel a little intimidating. It can, however, be managed. Once a person has sought treatment of some kind and found support, they will be on a great path to start dealing with bipolar disorder.

Psychotherapy, medication, and self-management strategies are steps towards managing this illness.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER (BPD)

What is BPD? Borderline personality disorder, or BPD, is a mental illness that causes difficulty regulating or handling emotions and controlling impulses. This often means people who experience BPD feel emotions intensely and for long periods at a time. It is often more difficult for them to come back down from these feelings after a triggering event.

What does it look like? People with BPD's moods might be extreme and change often and might have a more difficult time controlling urges and impulses. The biggest indicator is often the constant feeling of worry and rejection by others.

Thinking about suicide, self-harm, or substance abuse all could be experienced by someone with BPD. These experiences could also be accompanied with feelings of anxiety or irritability, intense anger and difficulty controlling it, or having unstable relationships.

Often, people with BPD have a difficult time with their relationships with others and themselves. This could mean their relationships seem to be "all good" or alternatively, "all bad", most of the time. People with BPD tend to experience mixed feelings of self-worth, often leaving them feeling alone or empty and not knowing how they feel about themselves.

How can I help others? Helping your family or friends feel comfortable seeking help with their BPD is important. Being an emotional support while someone helps themselves towards recovery is the best thing you can do to help. Remember to become knowledgeable about what this person may be going through.

When helping someone with BPD, it is important to remember that it is often their Mental illness speaking. Focus on how they are feeling rather than the words (maybe hurtful) that they say. Generally their brain and thought patterns are encouraging conflict and helpers can easily engage in an argument without even realizing.

Be honest, be clear and understand that they may be struggling to see things from your point of view.

What can be done about it? Talking to a family doctor about what options will suit best is incredibly important if someone is experiencing feelings associated with BPD.

Different routes are taken depending on the person:

MEDICATION

DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY (DBT)

SELF-HELP STRATEGIES TO
HELP REGULATE EMOTIONS

THE THERAPY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

BPD can take a long time to treat; it's important to continue being honest and open about emotions and that they stay committed to your long-term treatment plan.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

DEPRESSION

What is depression? Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way a person feels and can leave them with mental and physical symptoms for months. Clinical depression, or major depression, is more than just feelings of temporary sadness and feeling down. It refers to lasting emotions that negatively affect their mental well-being, physical health, relationships, and behaviour.

What does it look like? Sadness is a natural part of being human and feeling this way for a few days is normal. A main indicator for depression is a sad feeling and hopelessness that lasts most of the day and lasts for more than two weeks.

It can look quite different from person to person. Depression can be triggered by a life event such as the loss of a job, the end of a relationship or the loss of a loved one, or other life stresses like a major deadline, moving to a new city or having a baby. Sometimes it seems not to be triggered by anything at all. One of the most important things to remember about depression is that people who have it can't just "snap out of it" or make it go away. It is a real illness, and the leading cause of suicide.

Depression has a lot of physical and emotional impacts on a person, such as:

CHANGES IN SLEEP

LOSS OF ENERGY

OTHER PHYSICAL PAINS

THOUGHTS OF DEATH AND SUICIDE

CHANGES IN
APPETITE OR WEIGHT

LOSS OF INTEREST IN THINGS
THEY USED TO ENJOY

FEELING SLOWED DOWN IN LIFE

How can I help others? Much like with any other mental illness, it is important to learn about it and its affects before helping your family and friends that may be experiencing depression. It is especially important to make sure you are in the right headspace with your own mental health before you attempt to be there for your family or friends experiencing depression.

Listening and practicing healthy coping techniques with that person can help ease their experiences with depression. Learning about various coping strategies specific to depression can help in many ways.

What can be done about it? It is important when someone identifies any of the feelings that are listed above, that you do not ignore them or feel they need to "get over it." Acknowledging the way they are feeling and seeking help is the first step to recovery. Many people manage their feelings of depression with the help of professionals with medication, therapy, self-help, or physical activity. It is important for them to figure out which is best for them. Everyone is different and some strategies will work better for some than others.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

EATING DISORDERS

What are eating disorders? Eating disorders are a group of mental illnesses that affect the way people feel about food, their weight and appearance, and self-worth. These views on food may have a negative effect on your physical and mental health, relationships, and way of life. While these are called eating disorders, it's important to remember that these disorders are about much more than food. They also about how people feel about themselves, how they cope with feelings and likely other deeper factors.

What does it look like? There are three main types of eating disorders: anorexia nervosa disorder, bulimia nervosa disorder, and binge-eating disorder.



How can I help others? You may not notice right away that someone is struggling with an eating disorder, as it can be discreet changes in their diet at first. Avoid focusing on the dietary aspect alone, as eating disorders are signs of bigger problems. It's important to be mindful of your own attitude towards food and diets and not to project those onto someone who is suffering from an eating disorder. Talk with them about what you have noticed and ask questions about how they are feeling. Encouraging them to seek help could be a great step towards their recovery.

What can be done about it? There are a lot of physical and emotional risks of eating disorders, so it is important to seek professional help. Some of these approaches may include therapy or counselling, including nutritional counselling and weight restoration monitoring. Different strategies work for different people. Some may be more inclined to do support groups as it brings a sense of understanding from others going through it, or a one-on-one nutritional therapy approach might be a better fit. But either way, recognizing the mental and physical health risks is an important first step in recovery.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

What is PTSD? Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is an anxiety disorder that can happen after a traumatic event, which can cause a person great distress throughout their life even well after the threat of danger has passed. These traumatic events could be an accident, an assault or violence, military combat, difficult and traumatic breakup, or natural disaster and can have a lasting effect on someone's mental health.

What does it look like? It's normal to feel stressed, anxious, shocked and overwhelmed immediately after a traumatic event. It's also normal to feel different things or not much of anything at all. All people respond differently to different situations. Most people who experience trauma won't develop post-traumatic stress disorder however many do and it is very difficult to understand all the complexities of PTSD.

These are some of the things people with PTSD experience months, or even years, after their traumatic event:

It can look quite different from person to person. Depression can be triggered by a life event such as the loss of a job, the end of a relationship or the loss of a loved one, or other life stresses like a major deadline, moving to a new city or having a baby. Sometimes it seems not to be triggered by anything at all. One of the most important things to remember about depression is that people who have it can't just "snap out of it" or make it go away. It is a real illness, and the leading cause of suicide.

Depression has a lot of physical and emotional impacts on a person, such as:

RELIVING THEIR TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE

NIGHTMARES OR FLASHBACKS

MOOD SWINGS

CONSTANT WORRY

AVOIDANCE OR DETACHMENT

DIFFICULTY CARING FOR OTHER PEOPLE

BEING EASILY STARTLED OR ANGERED

GAPS IN MEMORY OR NOT BEING ABLE TO RECALL CERTAIN PARTS OF THEIR TRAUMATIC EVENT

How can I help others? Support is super important for those who are experiencing PTSD. A better support system from caregivers, family and friends after a traumatic event can reduce the risk of developing PTSD or lessen the severity of it. Being there for someone and offering a listening ear after a traumatic event is an important step in someone's recovery.

Patience is important when being there for someone experiencing PTSD, as recovery looks different for everyone, so if this person is taking longer than others, that is okay.

It is very common for people who have been diagnosed with PTSD to also have other mental health concerns or mental illnesses. All you can do to help them is to listen, be supportive and if possible, point them in the right direction for help. Starting with a family doctor or a counsellor is always a good approach.

What can be done about it? People often recover from their PTSD and there are plenty of resources available to people who are experiencing symptoms of PTSD. Everyone's experience with PTSD is different and some people's recovery takes a few months while others take years to cope with their trauma. Having a coping strategy or way of getting through the traumatic event could help the severity of possible PTSD.

Trauma counselling or therapy can be very helpful for those experiencing PTSD, while others respond better to medication or support groups. Talking to your doctor about what avenue is best suited for you is important for recovery.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

SCHIZOPHRENIA

What is schizophrenia? Schizophrenia is a complex mental illness that affects how a person thinks, feels, behaves and relates to others. It causes people to lose touch with reality and sometimes makes it difficult for them to think and speak in an organized way. It isn't known exactly what causes schizophrenia, but it's likely a combination of several factors, such as the way your body works, your family history, your environment, and your life experiences.

What does it look like? A person with schizophrenia could experience hallucinations, delusions, cognitive issues/disorganized thinking, social withdrawal, disturbed thinking, and even psychosis. People with schizophrenia are affected by:

HALLUCINATIONS (sensory experiences, such as hearing voices talking about them when there is no one there)

SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

DISTURBED THINKING

DELUSIONS (fixed false beliefs that can be terrifying to the person experiencing them)

How can I help others? Doing more to understand schizophrenia is the best way to help those in your life who may be suffering from it. It's best to avoid arguing with delusions or hallucinations. A more helpful strategy is to focus on the feelings that delusions or hallucinations bring up.

As schizophrenia usually starts in the teen or young adult years, it can interfere in your development and interrupt your goals in school or work. Early treatment can help them get back on track with fewer delays. Supporting someone can be hard. It can be difficult to understand what they are experiencing, and their behaviour may be confusing at times. But remember that your support and knowledge can go a long way.

What can be done about it? Identifying it as early as possible greatly improves a person's chances of managing the illness, reducing psychotic episodes, and recovering. Many people with schizophrenia may need to be admitted to hospital in certain high risk situations. When admitted, professionals can assess the situation to see what treatment is needed for recovery. This could mean medication, therapy, physical activity, or other approaches.

You can talk with them about your concerns and encourage them to seek help.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER

What is substance abuse disorder? Substance abuse disorder is the usage, or over usage, of harmful substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) for mood altering reasons. Someone with a substance abuse disorder, or addiction, seeks out the effects of harmful substances as a coping mechanism or to alter their current mood.

Substance use is more complicated than just "good" or "bad." It's helpful to think of substance use along a continuum, from beneficial use to harmful use. Along the middle of the continuum, substance use may be both beneficial and harmful. When someone turns to substances to cope, this could be an indication of addiction.

What does it look like? People who experience substance abuse disorder or addictions may experience a dependency on various substances, which may also be accompanied by withdrawal when a substance has stopped being used.

Most people with a substance abuse disorder or addiction cannot control their desire for their craving of the substance; they use despite its consequences which could be minor or incredibly severe.

People who experience substance abuse disorder are at risk of:

INJURING THEMSELVES WHILE UNDER USE

OVERDOSING

PHYSICAL PAIN IN BACK,
STOMACH OR LIVER AND KIDNEYS

THE EFFECTS THEIR
SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR
ADDICTION WILL HAVE ON
THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

HIDING AND LYING BEHAVIOURS

FINANCIAL STRUGGLE AND PROBLEMS

How can I help others? Watching someone you care about suffer from substance abuse disorder or addiction is extremely difficult and could often leave you feeling helpless. It is important to remember that they are more than their addiction.

Getting informed about substance abuse and addictions can help you better understand what someone may be going through. Acknowledging the harm, risks and the pain caused can help you make decisions that could potentially save the life of someone struggling with addiction.

What can be done about it? Many people can be aware that their substance abuse or addiction causes problems within their lives, but do not feel in control of what to do about it. Others may not realize that their disorder is an issue and continue to ignore it and allow it to cause more problems in their life.

No single treatment plan for substance abuse will work for everyone. Each substance abuse disorder and addiction is different and requires different levels of treatment. It all depends on the severity and type of addiction. This could range from cutting down on use, to cutting out the substance completely.

Substance abuse disorder can be the most difficult and lifelong mental health concern that anyone can deal with.

For more in-depth information, download the brochure at The Canadian Mental Health Association - National: <https://cmha.ca/document-category/mental-health>

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Believe it or not, positive affirmations can keep you on track and change your thinking patterns without you even realizing it.

When you feel like you need a little inspiration:

- read through the affirmations below
- circle the ones you really like
- use them to create an inspirational quote to post or print for yourself
- when one speaks to you, try to think about why. Has it worked for you? Does it remind you of something good?

I allow myself to feel this fully, to be here.

I let go of my resistance to this situation.

I'm so grateful our paths crossed.

I'll never be the same person again, yet, that is okay.

I'm surrounded by support, seen and unseen.

I'm not going to hold back.

I'm moving through this feeling, and on to other emotions.

I choose to heal my hurt spirit.

I can hold onto the love, and let go of the grief.

I can pay tribute by living my own life in a beautiful way.

I can accept help when it's offered.

I can still see the love in the world.

Today, I choose to heal.

The universe lifts me, supports me, guides me.

I am gentle with myself as I heal.

I focus on my blessings, goals and memories.

I heal with curiosity, presence, and hope.

My life is a celebration.

I trust the process of life.

It's only a thought, and a thought can be changed.

I am always healing, and never alone.

All is well in my world. Everything is working out for my highest good. Out of this situation only good will come. I am safe!

The point of power is always in the present moment.

Every thought we think is creating our future.

I am Divinely guided and protected at all times.

My happy thoughts help create my healthy body.

I deserve all that is good.

Today is a sacred gift from Life.

I experience love wherever I go.

I do not have to prove myself to anyone.

Deep at the center of my being is an infinite well of love.

I am loved, and I am at peace.

It is safe for me to speak up for myself.

I now live in limitless love, light, and joy.

I cross all bridges with joy and ease.

I trust my intuition. I am willing to listen to that still, small voice within.

I forgive myself and set myself free.

I have compassion for all.

I love and approve of myself.

I forgive everyone in my past for all perceived wrongs. I release them with love.

I am greeted by love wherever I go.

I am in the process of positive change.

Whatever I need to know is revealed to me at exactly the right time.

Life is very simple. What I give out comes back to me. Today I choose to give love.

I am more than my depression.

I am becoming more resilient each day.

I am strong.

I appreciate my life.

I love myself.

I am enough.

I am not broken.

The past is over.

I am working towards making a life I love.

I am confident.

I am becoming more resilient each day.

I am strong.

I will let other people into my life.

I do not have to compare myself to anyone.

I love my imperfections.

My future will be what I choose to make it.

I am becoming a better person each day.

I forgive myself for not being perfect.

As I say yes to life, life says yes to me.

I forgive myself for everything.

All is well in my world. I am calm, happy and content.

I am in charge of how I feel and today I am choosing happiness.

I listen with love to my body's messages.

Today is a new start.

I am at home in my body.

I can choose how much or little I want to accomplish each day.

I welcome miracles into my life.

Nourishing myself is a joyful experience, and I am worth the time spent on my healing.

I deserve to be happy.

I am in full control of my life.



SMALL TALK & FRIEND MAKING TIPS

Small TALK TIPS

Be a good listener.

The most likable kids are the ones who listen and actually hear what others are saying. The key is to really be interested in the other person and focus more on them than on yourself when talking. Practice listening noises (“uh huh,” “oh,” “that’s cool”) or statements to show you heard them (“so you like horses”). REMEMBER what you’ve heard and ask about it later (“How was the concert you went to?”).

Be positive and kind.

When you’re nice to people, they will usually be nice back. Also, people are drawn to those who are upbeat and positive.

Ask questions.

Almost everyone likes to talk about themselves, or to feel like others are interested in them. Safe questions include, “What kind of music do you like?” “What do you like to do for fun?” “What school do you go to?” “What class do you have next?” Try to identify a common interest or experience!

Make eye contact when listening.

If you don’t, people will think you aren’t interested or aren’t paying attention. Plus, you get information by watching people when they talk (like how interested they are). You don’t have to have a staring contest, but try to make some eye contact.

Be yourself.

Trying hard to impress others rarely works out. Be genuine, and try to appear calm, confident and positive.

MAKING friends TIPS

Find common ground.

Ask about or point out common interests or experiences. (“I think you’re in my homeroom.” “You like [band name from shirt]? Me too!”).

Invite them to hang out and do something together.

Plan to meet up or do something fun.

Say hi.

When you see them, say hi! Try to use their name (“Hi, Sara!”), ask how they’re doing (“How’s it going?”) and check in on things you know are important to them (“How did your track meet go?”).

Take turns with games and activities.

Letting other people go first or calmly waiting until they have taken their turn makes activities way more fun for kids. They will like to do things with you.

Join a group or organization.

This is truly one of the best and easiest ways to make friends. Join a group related to one of your interests (art, sport, church) or a youth group of some kind. When you see the same people regularly and do fun things together, it can be easier to spark a friendship (though you’ll still need to talk to them and invite them to spend time outside of a group at some point to cement the friendship).

GENERAL TIPS

Give compliments.

“I like your drawing/shirt/haircut.” “Nice kick.” “You’re good at this – could you show me how to do it like that?”

Be polite.

Please and thank you. Taking turns. Being patient. Respecting personal space. Not being rough.

Don’t be too bossy - let friends make some decisions.

“What do you feel like doing?”



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