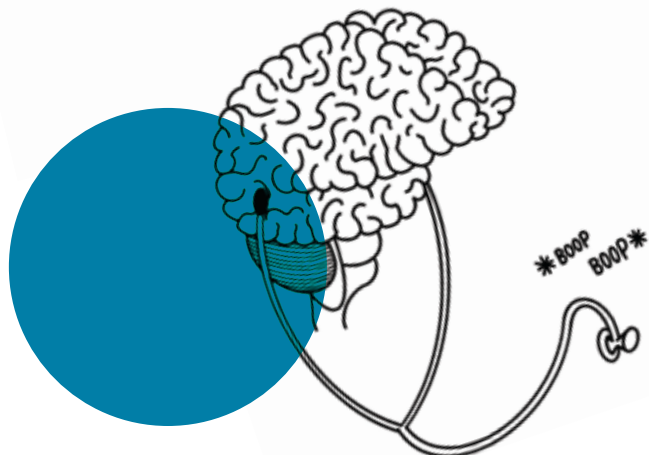




# Mindfulness Activity Manual

YOU'RE WORTH IT!



# Acknowledgments

**Developed by:**

Graffiti Art Programming Inc., Gillian Roy 1st edition, 2021

**Funded By:**

The Mindfulness Manual is funded by Canada Service Corps, a national movement that empowers youth aged 15–30 to gain experience and build important skills while giving back to their community.

Learn more at [Canada.ca/CanadaServiceCorps](https://Canada.ca/CanadaServiceCorps)

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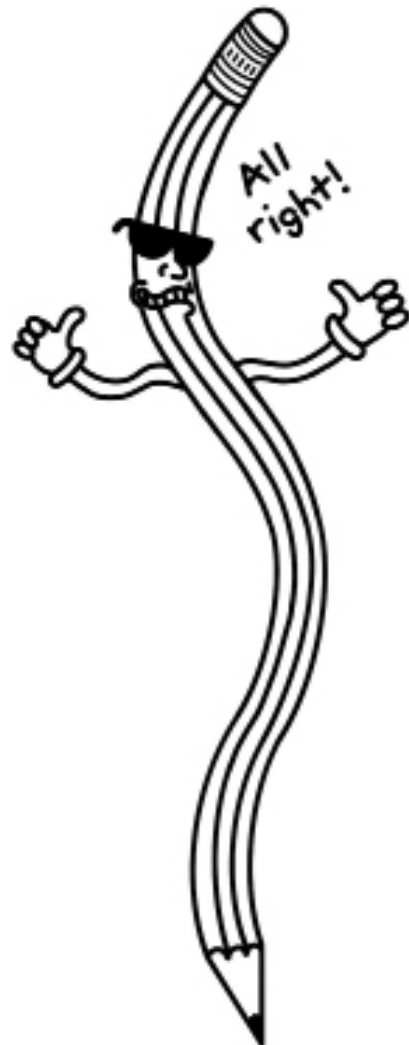
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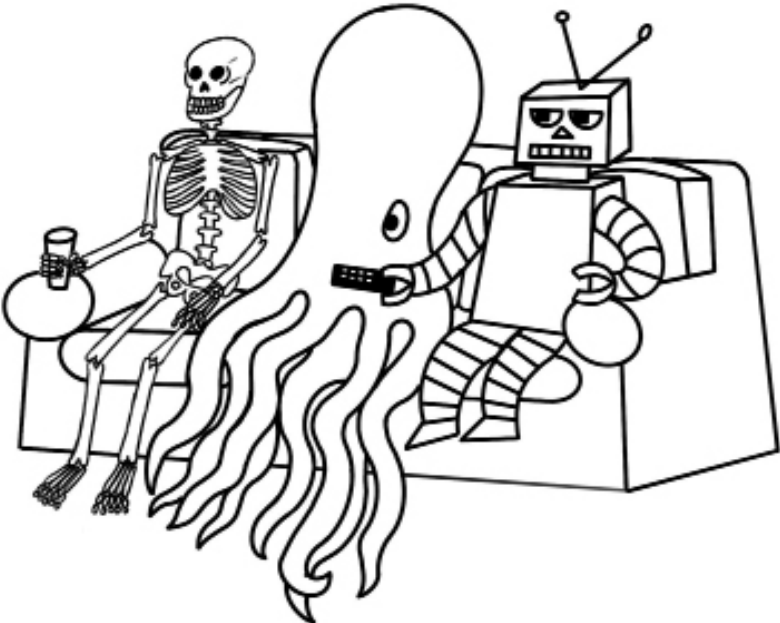
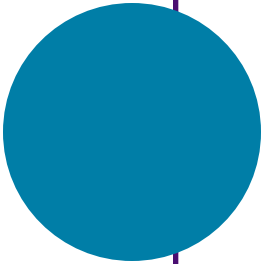
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# Introduction

GAP received funding to incorporate Mindfulness and Wellness Activities in our Work. Our goals are to recognize the role that mental health plays in our over-all well-being, and to support our facilitators, participants and community.

The Mindfulness Manual is intended for Facilitators to use during sessions with Participants of GAP programming.



# Introduction to Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a state of mind that allows you to be present and recognize life as it is in any given moment.

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus your awareness on what you're sensing and feeling in the moment and accepting it without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness can involve breathing methods, guided imagery, and moving in ways that relax the body and mind. Practicing mindfulness can help reduce stress.

Most people spend a lot of time thinking, planning, problem-solving or daydreaming. Many have symptoms of stress, ADHD, anxiety, depression or other mental health concerns. These can include random thought patterns as well as negative, repetitive or intrusive thoughts. All of this thinking can be draining. Practicing mindfulness exercises can help you direct your attention away from thinking by engaging with your mind, body and the world around you.

Mindfulness activities for youth help them concentrate on what is actually happening, recognize their feelings, and enjoy life as it is.

## **Mindfulness for youth :**

- Promotes happiness
- Reduces stress
- Helps overcome anxiety
- Helps with ADHD symptoms
- Enhances learning ability
- Raises body awareness
- Grows patience
- Encourages considerate actions
- Helps defeat depression
- Builds tolerance
- Sharpens memory
- Increases focus and attention
- Builds social intelligence
- Helps evaluate and control behavior
- Helps manage emotions
- Supports mental health

***“Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us.”***

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***“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”***

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness for Beginners

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# Using the Mindfulness Activity Manual

The Mindfulness Manual includes a variety of tools facilitators of youth programming can incorporate into group sessions. This manual has discussion prompts, wellness and mindfulness activities and includes several resources for further exploration.

This manual was designed so facilitators can mix and match activities to create mindfulness sessions, or simply pull out an activity or prompt to try out with a group of youth. While there are ideas about the methods and key messages listed with each activity, there are many possibilities you can explore. Think of what's written here as guidelines that can help you more confidently lead some mindful concepts and practices with youth.

## Check ins and Check-out's

A check-in / out can be used at the beginning or end of a session and generally include questions that each participant is encouraged to answer. All check-ins can also include a go around of names and pronouns; this is especially helpful for new groups. Take care to remind participants that what they share is up to them, and they always have a right to pass. You can ask for a volunteer to go first or lead the activity yourself.

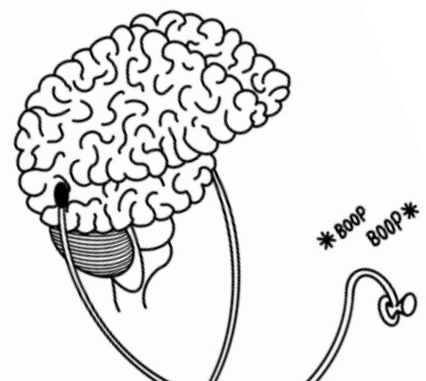
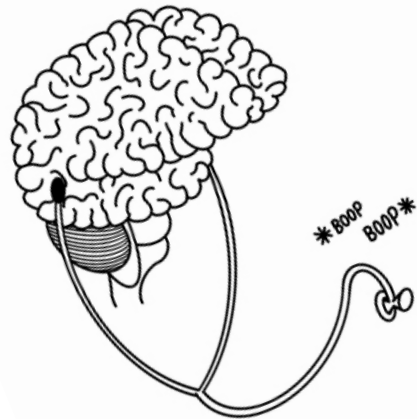
Including a check-in and check-out in youth sessions allows youth to connect with how they are feeling, encourages them to share how they are doing, and practice listening to the feelings of others. They are helpful for relationship building, and they give facilitators a sense of how things are going in a group or session.

## Activities:

Some of the activities in this manual are physical and might be best suited to groups who have more engagement. These can be done anytime during a session, including when the facilitator wants to change up the energy. All activities can be done online with minimal supplies, such as a paper and pen. Activities can also be done with in-person groups.

## Debriefs:

Most of the activities in this manual include suggested ways to debrief them. Debriefing is when facilitators explore meaning or messaging behind a certain activity, or how the group is feeling about an activity. It can be helpful to stick to what is written if you



are newer to facilitating mindfulness and wellness content to build confidence. Over time you might find new ways to talk about the activities.

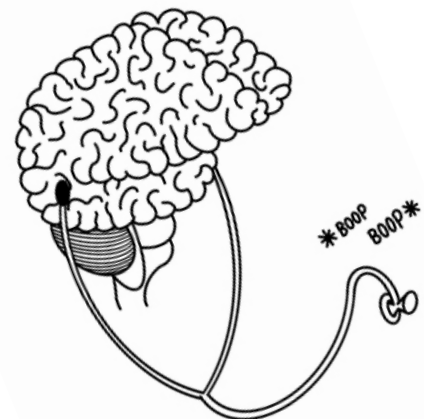
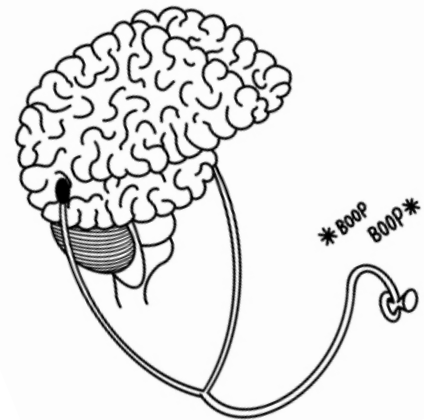
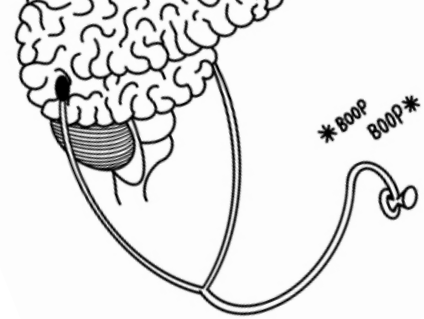
### Resources:

There are many resources on mindfulness and wellness at the end of this manual, as well as counselling and crisis support references. You can use these to learn more, or share them with youth who are seeking more information and support.

### Tips for Engagement:

Every participant and group have different needs and different ways of participating. There are many ways that activities can be done in groups, and you might have to change your approach depending on what your group responds to best. Some alternatives to talking in a large group during activities can include:

- Small group flip chart brainstorms
- Individual reflection activities using writing or drawing prompts
- Having youth write their ideas on post it notes, then posting them onto larger flip chart paper
- Using polling, quizzes, games, jam board, etc. for digital workshops
- Involving expression through moving our bodies, art, music etc.
- Relay races- post the flip chart and have youth line up, first person takes the marker, writes and answer then passes the marker to the next person and so on. Time the activity to keep it short.
- Incentives like candy or draw tickets for a prize- have participants share their ideas to receive the incentive. This works well for large group brainstorms and check-ins.
- Snow balls- distribute small papers and pens to participants. Have them write out their answer then crumple the paper up into a small ball. Have participants stand in a circle. Instruct them to toss their balls, pick up ones near them and continue to toss, pick up, toss for a couple of minutes. When finished ask each participant to grab a ball, open it, and share what it says.





# Check-ins & Check-outs

## Super Hero

**Instructions:** Ask participants “what super power would you want if you could choose or make up anything?”

**Debrief:** This question can help think big, or dream for a minute. This can be helpful when we feel stuck or without a lot of control in our lives.

## Recent Life Win

**Instructions:** Have participants share one good thing that has happened to them recently, big or small. Could be the past week, this year etc.

**Debrief:** Sometimes we aren't mindful of the successes we do have. Reflecting on these things is important to our mental wellness.

## Compliments

**Instructions:** At the beginning of the session ask youth to give at least 1 compliment to the next person to check in. The compliment should be something about who they are, what they do, etc. and not necessarily about what they are wearing or how they look.

Tell them that at the end of the session you will go around and everyone can share one compliment they received that felt good. It can be one they heard that session or one they heard before that stuck with them.

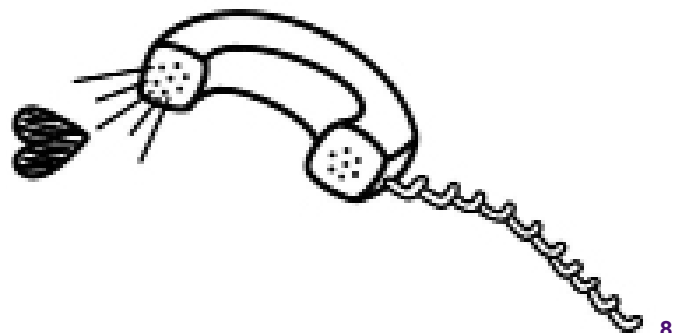
Make sure you give everyone at least 1 compliment as well.

**Debrief:** Compliments can be important to our self-esteem, motivation, and mental wellness. We shouldn't only focus on looks, compliments can be about someones talents, a thing they said, a way they were supportive or a good friend to someone, sports skills, dance moves, a part of their style etc.

**In-person Alternative:** If meeting in person distribute a small scrap paper and pen. Have participants right down one compliment they received that felt good (no names). Have them crumple up the papers into small balls. Instruct the group to stand in a circle and begin tossing the balls, picking them up and tossing again, snowball style. After a couple minutes have them grab one and read it out to the group.

## Finding Strength

**Instructions:** For the check-in or check-out go around and have youth share one thing that gives them strength, it can be a person, place, animal, activity etc.



**Debrief:** We all have people, places, things we do, and parts of ourself that can give us strength. Focusing on these strengths can help us when we are going through hard times or when we want to feel better.

### **Fun Things to Do While Single**

“Single” can be swapped out for “quarantined”, or “socially distancing”.

**Instructions:** Ask participants “what is one thing you like to do while single, and if you aren’t single, what is one thing you like to do while not with your partner?”

This helps normalize that not everyone is in a relationship or even wants to be.

**Debrief:** There is importance in recognizing that we can enjoy things on our own and have fun while single.

### **What’s Around?**

**Instructions:** Have everyone choose an object that they believe represents them, or how they are feeling that day. It can be anything they have on them, or that’s in the space around them. Have them show everyone the object and share how it represents them.

**Debrief:** Looking at our surroundings in new and different ways can help us feel inspired or more connected to our surroundings and our feelings in any given moment.

### **Activists I Admire**

**Instructions:** Ask youth to think of an activist or community leader they look up to. Have youth share about their person, and some of the qualities they admire about them.

**Debrief:** The qualities we most admire in others are often the qualities we carry in the world. Celebrate yourself for all that you are, and all that you bring to the world. Collectively, we can create so much good when we work from these strengths.

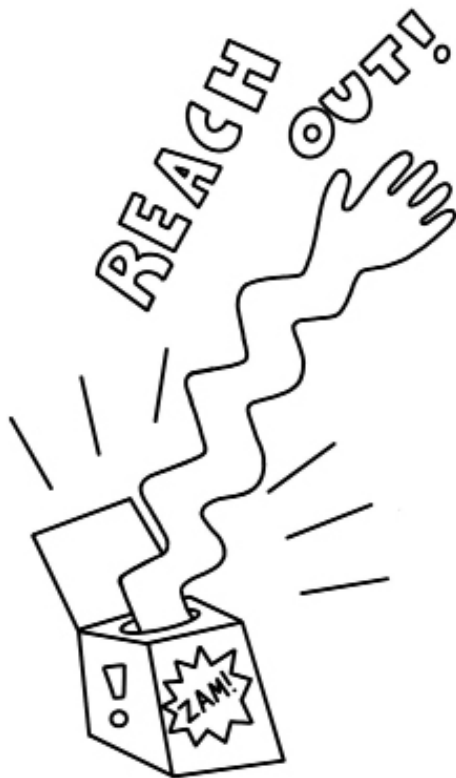
### **Communication Practice**

**Instructions:** In pairs, participants share with a partner how they are feeling for one minute. During the go-around the partner introduces the other person and shares how they are doing with the rest of the group.

## Additional Check-in Prompts

Here are some self-esteem related prompts for check-in / out.

- What is something you do better than most people?
- What is a skill or ability you would like to improve or work on?
- When was a time you turned a setback into a triumph?
- What is something you are proud of?
- What are three of your best qualities?
- An important relationship in my life and why
- What is the key to feeling good about yourself for you?
- What is something you are really good at?
- Tell us about a promise you made to yourself and have kept.
- What is a talent you would like to develop this year?
- What is something you want to be complimented on?
- Tell us about an important achievement you have had in your life.
- What are some ways you show yourself respect?
- What's your favourite life hack?
- What is an important life lesson you have learned?
- What would you try if you knew you could not fail?
- What is the best thing you have ever done for yourself?
- What is the best thing you have ever done for another person?



# Icebreakers & Energizers

## Name Catch

**Materials Needed:** 2-3 Balls

**Instructions:** Have youth stand in a circle. When someone has a ball, they will say their name, and then the name of someone they will throw the ball to. There doesn't have to be a pattern. If you feel like making some funny chaos, you can pause and add more balls!

## Write Your Name

**Instructions:** Ask the youth to pretend to write their name using various body parts, for example: Finger, Elbow, Stomach, Head, Foot, Nose, Bum. This is an activity that can be done anytime you need to change up the energy in a group.

## Winds of Change

**Instructions:**

**Option 1 (in person):** Have youth sit in a circle. The facilitator stands in the centre of the circle and plays the activity with the youth. Whomever is in the centre of the Circle will say "the winds of change blow for anyone who (Insert a statement)." Everyone that identifies with that statement stands up and runs to a new spot. They cannot sit back in the spot they just left, and if it's a large group, they also can't sit in the chairs directly beside the seat they just left. Repeat until it feels like the game is done.

**Option 2 (digital or in person):** Facilitator will say "Anyone who (Insert a statement) (do an action)." Everyone that identifies with that statement then performs whatever action is called for. Facilitator repeats with another statement, until the game feels done. After a few rounds, youth can also take turns leading statements.

### Examples of statements and actions (if doing option 2):

- Has more than 2 siblings - hop on one leg
- Ate cereal today - rub their belly
- Heard a song today - play air guitar
- Has a piercing/new hair cut - make a thumbs up
- Learned something new today - give the person next to you a high five
- Has gone for a bike/boat/skidoo ride - clap your hands
- Is wearing (black/white/striped, etc.) socks - show us
- Has gone hunting/fishing - turn around in a circle
- Makes music - pump your fist
- Plays sports - air dribble a basketball
- Runs fast - run on the spot
- Writes in a journal - write your name with your finger
- Has more than 2 siblings - hop on one leg
- Create your own - create your own

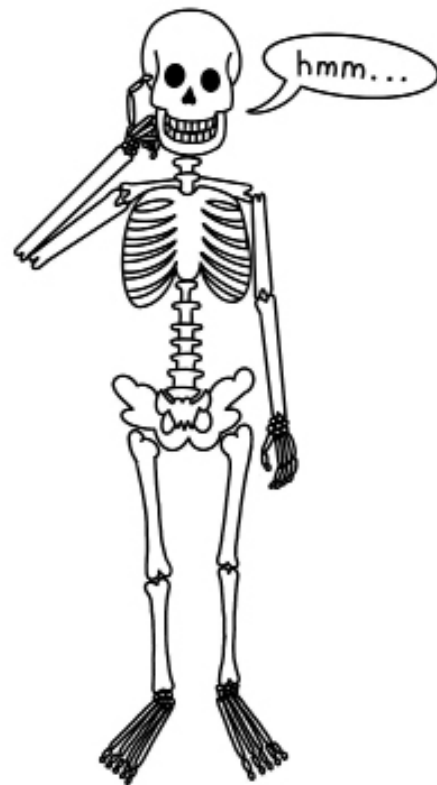


## Step In

**Instructions:** Have participants stand in a circle, explain that you will ask a statement like “Step into the circle if...” and if what is said applies to them, they step into the circle. Tell them that they do not have to step into the circle if they do not want to let people know their answer to your statement. To create more movement, this could be done in a larger circle, and youth can dance, jump, shuffle, or move in whatever way they want to.

**\*Virtual alternative:** have participants use the emoji reactions, sitting and standing or other body movements to react to each statement.

**Notes to Facilitator:** use statements about things like hobbies, what they like to eat, favourites, etc. Avoid asking questions that are too personal or potentially triggering. For youth who may be impacted by gangs, avoid asking about things like favourite colours, neighborhoods, etc.



# Body and Breathing Activities

## Robot-Ragdoll- Stress Relief and Tension Buster

**Instructions:** Introduce the activity by letting participants know you will be doing a quick de-stress activity together as a group. Do each of the tension and release moves for 10 seconds.

“We are going to be robots and ragdolls. This activity can help us de-stress quickly if we ever need to. Starting from a seated position, when I say Robot, tense up all your muscles like a robot (exaggerate the movements) then when I say Ragdoll, flop over relaxing all those muscles.” Repeat 2 more times. Robot-Ragdoll- Robot-Ragdoll.

**Debrief:** This activity can help release any stress or tension we might have; it can be fun too.

## Balloon Breathing- Deep Breathing Activity

This is a breathing activity. Do this 3 times in a row for best results.

**Instructions:** Participants can be seated or standing. Start with your hands in front of you, as you breathe in deep open your arms wide as if you are a balloon filling with air. Slowly exhale and slower your arms back down as if you are deflating your balloon.

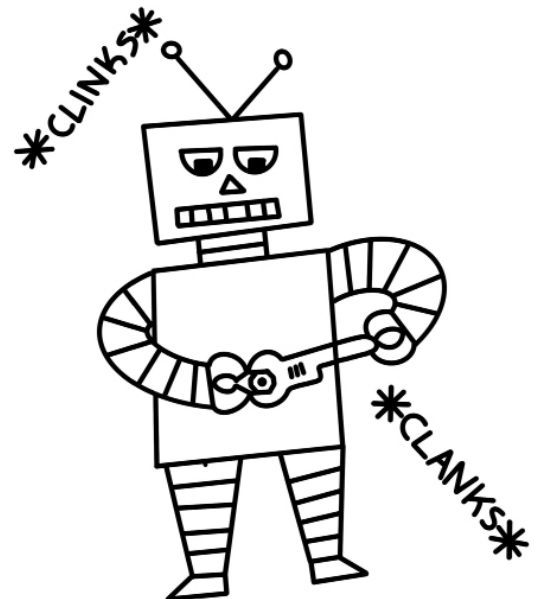
**Debrief:** A few minutes of deep breathing can help reduce anxiety. By increasing oxygen flow we can release tension and help to clear our minds.

## Body Check-In

**Instructions:** Have participants take a moment to feel everything (muscles, energy, gravity, bones, etc.) holding them up right now. Ask “How would you describe your breathing?”.

Gently turn your body to look over either shoulder. How far you can see easily? Are you holding onto any part of your body that doesn't seem necessary? Is there any particular sensation that stands out for you?

This can be done any time (right now, sitting at the computer; at work, home, waiting in line) whenever you notice your body feeling a little tense—or particularly good!



## Feel Your Heartbeat

**Instructions:** Put on some music and ask all of the youth to move around in a way that feels good for them- running, jumping, dancing, air punches, whatever they want. Do this for at least a minute, up to the duration of a song. Once done, have the youth sit comfortably where they are. Have them close their eyes put a hand over their heart. Instruct youth to focus all of their attention on their heartbeat. How does it sound, how does it feel, can you feel it changing?

**Debrief:** We always have our heartbeat with us. When we feel overwhelmed, it can help to sit and pay attention to our heartbeat and breathing. It can give us something steady to focus on. You can also learn from your heartbeat- the longer you relax while you do this, the more likely your heartbeat will slow down. This can be a good reminder that even when we are really overwhelmed, our feelings will change or become calmer if we give ourselves time to feel them.

## Toes to Nose

This is a body scan activity that can encourage youth to bring some awareness to their bodies.

**Instructions:** Have participants lay or sit comfortably. Ask participants to flex and focus on their toes. Slowly move up from toes to nose, repeating the flexing and focusing on a new area of the body one at a time. After each body part, intentionally release the focus of attention before shifting to the next area to scan.

**Debrief:** One of the points of a body scan is to be curious and open to what you are noticing and feeling the sensations as fully as possible. This can be helpful anytime you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or when you just want to check in with your body.

## Five Steps to Feeling Calm

**Instructions:** Have participants spread one hand and stretch their fingers out like a star.

You can choose your left hand or your right hand. Pretend the pointer finger of the other hand is a pencil and imagine you are going to trace around the outline of your hand and fingers. Start at the bottom of your thumb and slide your finger up your thumb, pause at the top, and then slide your finger down the other side.

Now slide your pointer up your second finger, pause, and slide down the other side.

Continue tracing your fingers up, pause, and down. Slide your finger slowly, watch your finger move and notice how it feels. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fifth finger (pinky).

Now you are ready to add some breathing. Breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Remember to keep it slow and steady.

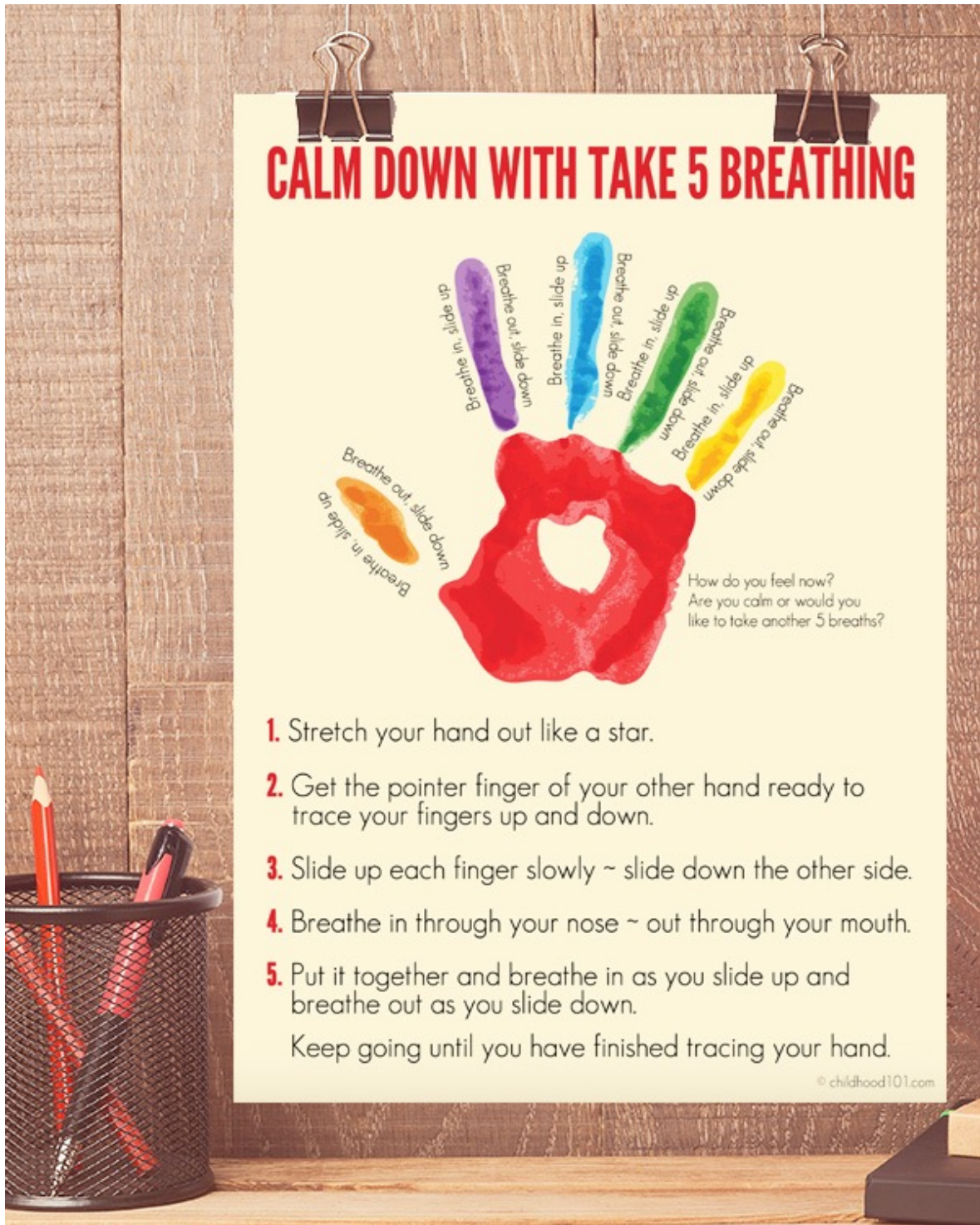
Place your pointer finger at the bottom of your thumb, and breathe



in as you slide up. Breathe out as you slide down.  
Breathe in as you slide up your second finger, and breathe out as you slide down.

Keep going until you have finished tracing your fingers and you have taken five slow breaths.

**Debrief:** How does your body feel now? Do you feel calm or would you like to take another five?



# BIG EMOTIONS PRINTABLE POSTER SERIES



# Relationships With Ourselves and Others

## Our Life Tree Activity

**Goal:** To encourage youth to explore the strengths and gifts carried within their relations in the hopes it may be helpful in identifying supports and their own strengths.

**Have Ready:** Flipchart paper, markers, pictures, and tape.  
Instructions: Instruct the group to make a tree or collage of names and talents of those close to them in their lives. This can be birth family, aunts, grandparents, cousins, chosen family, those they live with, best friends, mentors, siblings, youth workers, class mates etc.

Look for the leaders, artists, caretakers and educators. Have the youth think of the jobs they do, the employment they work at but also all the skills and unpaid “real life” work that their connections do.

Once completed and if youth are willing, ask them to share the strengths and gifts of their connections with the group. Family can be defined as blood relatives as well as “family of our choosing.” For those without close ties to family ask them to think of people in their lives who they trust or who they admire and want to be like.

### Probing Questions:

- “Who’s in charge when something big happens in the family?”
- “Who do people go to for advice or help?”
- “Who teaches us special skills like how to cook, drive, hunt, fish, sew, use the computer, dance, fix stuff, etc.?”
- “Who is well known and active in your community?”
- “Who is always making people laugh?”
- “Who is always feeding everyone?”
- “Who is special to you? How come?”
- “What about generations back, what are the special stories you’ve heard about people who have passed on?”

**Debrief:** Participants get to keep their art and ask them to share as much or as little as they like.

## Qualities Of a Healthy Relationship

**Goals:** To identify characteristics of a healthy relationship.  
Instructions: Ask, “What are we looking for in a healthy relationship?”

Get the youth to brainstorm the things that they would want in a healthy relationship and ask everyone to share one quality.  
\*If facilitating on-line, this can be done with a white board, in the chat box or verbally.

This activity may work well as a whole group brainstorm or go around where each person gets to add a quality to the list.



With a quiet, smaller group this activity can be done as a drawing activity. Ask participants to draw or write out their version of a healthy relationship, or write a letter to their future or current partner (everyone needs a paper and pencil). Invite anyone to share what they have created and explain their drawing to the rest of the group.

## Sample

### What Are Qualities of a Healthy Relationship?

#### Respect

Partner has the right to make their own decisions.

Treating each other well even in disagreements.

Supportive partners honour our relationships with ourselves.

Like/love/care - Genuinely liking, loving or caring for each other

Acceptance - Being able to be yourself/ Accepting your partner for who they are  
Communication - Use open, honest and assertive communication

Affection - Flirting, holding hands, making out, sex (definition is mutual)

Using consent - happens all the time in healthy relationships

Listening - to try and understand each other

Time together and time apart - creating a balance

Equality - Each having equal say in the relationship

Freedom - To have own friends, interests, goals and supports

Boundaries - What we do and don't want around sexual activities, time, privacy and space

Healthy Conflict

Doing activities that are fun together

Helping each other feel safe

Trust - Develops throughout the relationship

Sense of humour

Support etc....



**Debrief:** Look how many qualities can be part of a healthy relationship.

Acknowledge that we may not be seeing these things in all the relationships we see in the media or in our lives, but we can still plan to expect these things from a partner.

If we haven't learned how to have a healthy relationship from our family or friends then we can try and find people or couples who can teach us these qualities. Look for people who can teach you how to be a good partner, find positive role models.

To build a healthy relationship and receive the qualities on our lists, we must also be willing to offer them to our partner as well.

One of the best ways to have a healthy relationship is to know what one looks like for you and to expect one.

Healthy relationships take work and practice. Mention that we are all responsible for our actions and for the way we treat others.

We can all expect these things of our partners and from ourselves.

Ask participants, "Who deserves these qualities in a relationship?"  
" Everyone.

If we decide to date, we all have the right and the responsibility to develop healthy relationships. Expecting a healthy relationship is the best thing anyone can do to prevent being in an abusive relationship. Remind participants that you can be just as happy and fulfilled whether you are single or in a relationship.

**In-person Alternative:** Hand out a marker and paper or Post-it Notes to everyone to participate.

## Exploring Your Name

**Goal:** To get youth to explore a piece of their identity and engage the power of their name.

This activity can have many positives by getting youth to explore their identity. Other positives often include being named after or by someone, funny stories, knowing who named you, nicknames and hopes that were given with the name or even something simple as a different spelling to a name. This activity can be open and inclusive of naming practices from all cultures and can be an opportunity to introduce Spirit Names for those who have not heard of such teachings.

**Instructions:** Ask youth to go around answering the following question(s): “What is your name?” “Do you have any story about your name?” “Can you share one thing about your name?”

**Probing Questions:** “Where did your name come from?” “Who named you?” “Do you have more than one name?” “How did you get it?” “Is there a meaning to it?” “How do you spell it?”

Try not to ask for nicknames as they are neither always positive nor appropriate. When they do come up, even if inappropriate, take it as a learning opportunity and talk about how we all have the right to be respected and called by what we choose and more importantly we have the power to choose what names we answer to.

**Debrief:** Thank everyone for sharing their name. Our names are powerful. It is good to say our names aloud because there is power in acknowledging who we are and drawing on the power within each of us.

This exercise was created by Vanessa AnakwudwabisayQuay from Peguis First Nation for the Teen Talk Activities Toolkit. The information is one understanding of many teachings from diverse populations of Indigenous Nations.

## Helping a Friend

**Instructions:** Have all participants find a partner and sit facing each other. Take a quick look at your partner, notice what they are wearing, what their hair is like, what shoes they are wearing, etc. Now, turn around and quickly change 3 things about yourself; you could pull out a pocket, untie your shoes, tuck your hair back, roll up a sleeve etc. Once you are done, turn around and your partner will try to notice what you have changed.

To do this in an online meeting, have everyone choose a partner, or create breakout rooms of 2. Then have them turn their cameras off or leave for a moment to change their appearance, turning them back on to guess.

**Debrief:** There are many things we do/can do to support each other. Listening, being there for someone, and showing them that you care can be very helpful. If your friend is really struggling, they may need help and support from a trusted adult (counsellor, teacher, guidance counsellor, coach, uncle, auntie, Elder, etc.). You could say something like, “this is bigger than the both of us and I need to make sure you get all the help you need.” Taking care of yourself is also important when supporting a friend through a hard time.

### Note to Facilitators: Spirit Names

For a non-Indigenous person, it is essential to remain culturally humble i.e., respectful and reflective when sharing knowledge from a culture that is not our own. This means sharing where the knowledge comes from, acknowledging the limitations of our knowledge of that worldview, continuously listening and learning, apologizing when misunderstanding, and prioritizing Indigenous presence and voices. With Indigenous youth in particular, A Spirit Name or knowledge of names that are used in Indigenous cultures (sometimes still called an “Indian name”) can be shared. Part of the teaching is every human being has a Spirit Name that tells us a lot about who we are, our gifts, and the spirit we carry. It is said we all have a Spirit Name that is with us whether we know it or not. If we wish to learn more about ourselves, it can be helpful to find out the name of the spirit that carries us. A way we may find our name is by using our Tobacco, as the sacred Medicine it is meant for, and offering it directly to Creator either by putting it in a Sacred (blessed) Fire or Water or out on a clean spot on the Earth, (usually by a tree is good). Then we ask Creator for our name. Often when we ask directly our answers come in mysterious ways or through our dreams and we have to be open to receiving our answers this way. A common way to get our name is to offer Tobacco to an Elder or Mvedicine person who has the Gift to have names revealed to them from the Spirits. Usually this happens in a ceremony the Medicine person has been given and they can translate our name to us. Often the name our spirit carries has to do with nature and animals, so we watch that animal or specific part of nature to see what it does, how it reacts and what it goes through. By learning about the name of our spirit we can learn lots about our own qualities, characteristics and responsibilities in life. The more we understand our spirit the better we understand ourselves.

# Wellness and Coping

## Wellness Reflection

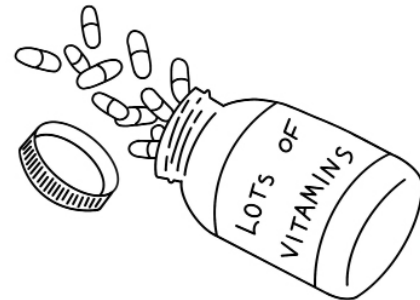
**Instructions:** There are many ways to facilitate this activity. It could be given as a reflective activity, where youth are given these questions to write or make art about. These questions could be written on flipcharts and put around a space, and then youth can individually write on each flipchart. These reflective questions can also be used individually for check-ins or check-outs. What is something that makes you happy?

What is one thing you are grateful for?

What makes you smile?

Who is one person that you feel good around?

What is something you are good at?



## Coping

**Instructions:** Have youth generate a list of coping activities and have youth reflect on the things they are already doing to cope with life. Ask participants “what is one thing that gets you through a hard time?” or “what is one way you are surviving Covid?”.

**Debrief:** We all need things that help get us through hard times.

## Wellness Ball Activity

**Materials Needed:** 2- 4 similar small balls (depending on size of the group), 2 larger beach or volleyballs, and one, special ball that looks different from all the others.

**Instructions:** Ask youth to stand in a circle, in a clear area. Tell youth to raise one hand, and leave that hand up until you have been passed a ball. Beginning with one of the smaller balls, have youth throw the ball in a pattern, remembering who throws you the ball, and who you throw the ball to. Encourage everyone to throw softly and remember this isn't a race.

Once youth have the hang of the activity, add another small ball and have youth throw it in the same pattern. When all 2- 4 small balls are in rotation, add a large ball. The large balls will be passed around the circle to the side. After a few rotations of that large ball, add the other large ball, passing it in the other direction. You may need to ask youth to slow down or concentrate on the activity if balls are flying or dropping often.

After a few more rotations of all those balls, pause the game and explain what will happen with the final ball. The last ball is the most important ball, the one that cannot be dropped, this ball will

### Note to Facilitators: Addressing Substance Use and Self-Harm

Some helpful ways to talk about substance use or self-harm if it comes up:

Address substance use and non-suicidal self-injury without judgement. Begin by validating the intended effect of using substances / self-harm. For example:

“It’s natural to want an escape from painful feelings.”

“It’s understandable to want a distraction from problems.”

However, it’s important not to normalize the behaviours, or make it seem inescapable. Avoid sharing statistics and avoid saying things like “It’s normal to use substances to get through hard times.”

Once you’ve validated why someone might use substances/ self-harm, talk about the importance of adding in healthier ways of coping, and taking breaks from using substances / self-harm as much as possible. Remember that with all activities that come risk there also comes ways of reducing those risks or harm reduction.

Sample Debrief:

“It makes sense that someone might drink to distract themselves from their hard feelings. However, using substances may lead to other hard situations and keep us from dealing directly with what is going on.

Emphasize that finding support is important for all of us, especially when we are having a hard time coping, or having a hard time reducing our use of substances or self-harm.”

follow the same rotation as the other small balls. After a couple more minutes end the activity and ask youth to sit down where they are standing to debrief.

**Debrief:** Ask youth how they felt during the activity, and what it reminded them of. Stress, life, anxiety. The little balls represent everyday tasks, routines and stressors. The bigger balls are bigger events that happen that you can't foresee, like death in the family, break ups, shows, tests, etc. The special ball represents you. You are the most important and special thing there is. Ask the group what helped them keep all the balls in the air. Answers could include help from others, cooperation, pausing when you need to, or using people's names before you threw it etc. This game can represent our lives, how we can support ourselves and each other. Sometimes we need to drop some of our responsibilities or commitments in order to take care of ourselves, or get help to cope with the pressure we are under. This could be saying no to babysitting, skipping a party, turning off our phone, going to bed early etc.) Everyone needs to have limits and boundaries in order to take care of ourselves. We might not be able to stop stressful things we are not prepared for from happening, but we can ask for help when we need it.

### **Sources of Strength Art Activity**

**Instructions:** Have participants draw an outline of a person on a blank paper. You will go through the instructions then provide a few minutes to complete.

This can be a long, guided activity taking up to an hour if you want to include more art and reflective time.

Have participants write about things they do to take care of and nourish the different aspects of themselves.

There are 4 areas: the head, heart, the rest of the body, and the space outside of the person.

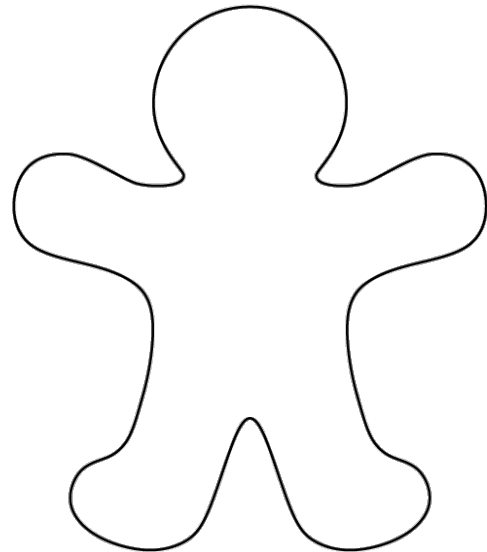
The head: represents your mental health.

The heart area: represents your emotional health.

The rest of the body: represents your physical health.

The space around you: represents your spiritual health.

**Debrief:** All of the different parts of ourselves connect and can affect each other. For example, getting regular sleep and exercise (moving our bodies in ways that we enjoy) is good for our physical health, but it also nourishes our emotional health and our spirit.



# Mindful Arts

## Musical Mindfulness

**Instructions:** For this activity, introduce that you will be playing a song and ask youth to notice their feelings as the song is playing. When the song is complete go around the group and ask everyone to share one feeling that came up during the song.

**Debrief:** Music can have a huge impact on our emotional well-being. Remind youth that music can be very powerful for us, and it's good to take pause and notice the impact of music has for us. Mindfully listening to music can help people to overcome negative emotions, self-regulate, and work to reduce stress and anxiety.

Facilitators seeing youth over multiple sessions may consider having mindful music at each session, and even encourage a different participant to choose a song each time.

## Mindful Colouring

Colouring can be a creative mindfulness activity. Add this to existing art activities.

**Instructions:** Ask participants to start coloring/creating as they want or are instructed.

During the session ask participants to pay attention to their breathing and how they feel with each color or step in the art activity.

Remind participants that when they begin to wander off in their mind to focus on their breathing and the art.

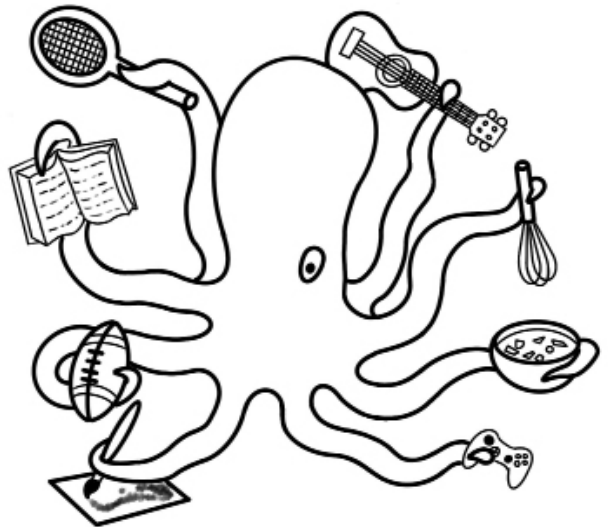
## Draw It Out

**Instructions:** Tell everyone that they will need a scrap paper and pen, or distribute if in-person.

Ask participants to draw a picture of how they are feeling. It can be a picture of their expression, a number of small graphics that represent their feelings or anything abstract to capture their mood. Have Participants share their drawing or share how they are feeling today. This can be done as a check-in, or as an activity anytime in the session.

## How Do You De-Stress?

**Instructions:** Ask participants to think of ways to de-stress. One person mimes (pretends without props) an activity they like to do to de-stress. For example, if your activity is reading a book, pretend to be holding a book, turning pages, etc. Someone else will ask "How do you de-stress?" and instead of answering with what they are actually doing, they say another way to de-stress.



The person who asked will then begin modelling that activity, and the next person will ask “How are you de-stressing” and so on until everyone has had a turn or two. It can be helpful for the facilitator to demonstrate first.

If examples are needed first, here is a list of some common answers:

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Hang out with friends | Video games     |
| Cry                   | Laugh           |
| Play sports, exercise | Watch movies    |
| Dance                 | Listen to Music |
| Draw/art              | Write/journal   |
| Shop                  | Eat             |
| Talk to someone       | Sleep           |

This could also be a large or small group brainstorm, or be used as a prompt for check-in/out.

**Debrief:** We all have stress in our lives. It’s important to have ways to relax and reduce our stress whenever we can.

### **Mindful Dance Moves**

This activity can be easily incorporated into existing dance and movement sessions. It can also be a check-in or check-out. You can dance for as long as you want, but aim to go through at least one song.

**Instructions:** Play on a song. Ask participants to close their eyes, listen to their body and dance with the rhythm. Tell participants to pay attention to how their body responds or adapts to the song. While people dance ask them to focus on their moves and the music only.

If participants feel too uncomfortable during the group ask them to do this on their own later.



# Resources

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## Websites

Manitoba Trauma Information and Education Centre [www.trauma-informed.ca](http://www.trauma-informed.ca)

[Mindyourmind.ca](http://Mindyourmind.ca)

[Stresshacks.ca](http://Stresshacks.ca)

[Reasonstolive.ca](http://Reasonstolive.ca)

Canadian Mental Health Association [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

[Calminthestorm.ca](http://Calminthestorm.ca)

[Stopbreatherthink.org](http://Stopbreatherthink.org)

[www.teentalk.ca](http://www.teentalk.ca)

<https://mindfulness.tribalinformationexchange.org/index.html>

[www.anxietycanada.ca](http://www.anxietycanada.ca)

[www.mentalup.co](http://www.mentalup.co)

[Mindful.org](http://Mindful.org)



## Apps

Stop Breathe Think App

Calm in the Storm App

## Mindful Dance Moves

Here is a list of phone lines that offer support and information. 1-800, 1-888, 1-877, 1-866 and 1-855 numbers are FREE to call. Numbers are 24 hrs unless otherwise listed. Always call 911 in an Emergency.

**Kids Help Phone:** Text CONNECT to [686868](text:686868) or call [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868) to talk to a counselor who can help you with any issue – big or small.  
[kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)

**Trans Lifeline:** [1-877-330-6366](tel:1-877-330-6366)

Free hotline staffed by transgender people for transgender people. Trans Lifeline volunteers are ready to respond to whatever support needs members of our community might have.  
[translifeline.org](http://translifeline.org)

**First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line:** [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310)

Mental health counselling and crisis intervention for Indigenous peoples across Canada. Available in English, French and some Indigenous Languages.  
[hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca)

**Klinic Crisis Line:** [1-888-322-3019](tel:1-888-322-3019) or [204-786-8686](tel:204-786-8686)

Counselling, support and information.  
[klinik.mb.ca](http://klinik.mb.ca)

**Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line:** [1-877-435-7170](tel:1-877-435-7170) TTY: [204-784-4097](tel:204-784-4097)

Support for people thinking about suicide or affected by another's thoughts/ attempts of suicide.  
[reasonstolive.ca](http://reasonstolive.ca)



**Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-844-333-2211**

Support and counselling to anyone who has been impacted by trafficking, and anyone who knows or suspects someone has been trafficked.

[klinik.mb.ca/crisis-support/human-trafficking-hotline](http://klinik.mb.ca/crisis-support/human-trafficking-hotline)

**Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Line: 1-888-292-7565 or 204-786-8631**

Counselling, information and support for sexual violence.

[klinik.mb.ca](http://klinik.mb.ca)

**Manitoba Farm & Rural Support Services: 1-866-367-3276**

10am-9pm, Monday-Friday.

Counselling and support for farm, rural, and northern youth.

[supportline.ca](http://supportline.ca)

**National Eating Disorders Helpline: 1-866-633-4220**

8am-8pm, Monday- Friday.

Eating disorders and disordered eating counselling, info and support.

[nedic.ca](http://nedic.ca)



**Counselling Programs**

**Klinik Drop-In Counselling Program: 204-784-4067**

870 Portage Ave.

Free Counselling for any issue.

[klinik.mb.ca](http://klinik.mb.ca)

**Children's Advocate: 204-988-7440 or 1-800-263-7146**

Get support/ share concerns about experiences with CFS/ foster care.

[childrensadvocate.mb.ca](http://childrensadvocate.mb.ca)

**Women's Health Clinic Eating Disorders Program: 204-947-2422, ext. 137**

Programming and support for people of all genders age 16 and older. Call to get on the wait-list and to receive resources and information.

[womenshealthclinic.org](http://womenshealthclinic.org)

**Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Program: 204-958-9660**

Eating disorders treatment for people under 18.

[eatingdisordersmanitoba.ca](http://eatingdisordersmanitoba.ca)

**Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre:**

Mental Health Centralized Intake: 204-958-9660

Call to get connected to in-person mental health programs. \*They will also contact a parent or guardian.

**Youth Addictions Centralized Intake Services: 1-877-710-3999**

Call to find addictions counselling and programs in the community.

[matc.ca](http://matc.ca)

**Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Youth Services: 204-958-9660**

Substance use and addictions resources for youth and families, counselling, treatment and support groups.

[afm.mb.ca](http://afm.mb.ca)

**More Information for Facilitators:**

**Manitoba Trauma Information and Education Centre**

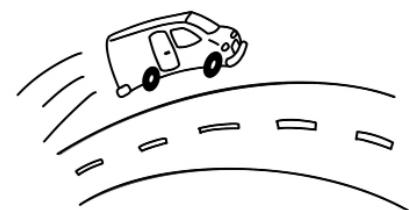
Information and resources for providing trauma informed services.

[www.trauma-informed.ca](http://www.trauma-informed.ca)

**7 Natural Healing Ways**

Learn 7 Natural Healing Ways from elder Margaret Lavallee, Traditional Ojibway Kwe, from Sakgeeng First Nation, Manitoba.

Posted on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soahac/posts/979225962190194>.



**Decolonizing The Mind**

Dr. Michael Yellow Bird shares his research on decolonizing the mind through indigenous mindfulness practices.

[http://www.aihec.org/our-stories/docs/BehavioralHealth/2016/NeurodecolonizationMindfulness\\_YellowBird.pdf](http://www.aihec.org/our-stories/docs/BehavioralHealth/2016/NeurodecolonizationMindfulness_YellowBird.pdf)  
[vimeo.com/86995336](https://vimeo.com/86995336)

**What is Mindfulness? Definitions and Benefits**

Positive Psychology

[positivepsychology.com/what-is-mindfulness](http://positivepsychology.com/what-is-mindfulness)

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