

I'M TAKING A  
MENTAL  
HEALTH DAY

1N5.org | STOP THE STIGMA.  
START THE CONVERSATION.

# Mindful Activity Book

## What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness<sup>1</sup> is being **present** in the moment. This means we are **aware** and in tune with our **body**, our **thoughts**, our **feelings**, and our **environment**, all with our full attention and **without judgment**.

## Why is mindfulness important and how does it help us?

Mindfulness can have a **positive effect** on our **brain and body!** Practicing mindfulness can help us learn how to notice and **shift our thinking** while helping us better control our feelings. Mindfulness can help us **decrease our stress and anxiety** levels, teach us ways to **cope with strong feelings**, and help us grow in our **grateful practices**.



1- "What Is Mindfulness?" Greater Good Magazine, The Greater Good Science Center.

# Activity List



Breathing Exercises



Mindful Coloring  
& Drawing



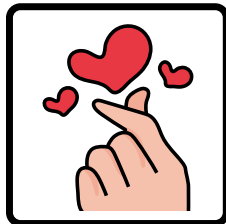
Positive Affirmations



Accupressure



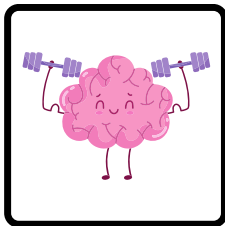
Grounding Skills



Gratitude & Spirituality



Mindfulness & Music



Strengths Check-In

## Diaphragmatic Breathing:

Breathing exercises can **help calm our mind and body**. One of the simplest breathing exercises is diaphragmatic breathing<sup>2</sup>, also **known as belly breathing**, which can help **reduce stress** and increase energy by **slowing down our rate of breathing**. When we breathe, our stomach should rise and fall and our **shoulders should only move slightly**. Breathing from our stomach ensures we use the **correct muscles to fill our lungs** to their full capacity. Try it out below!

1. Sit or lie down. Place **one hand** on your **stomach** and one hand on **your chest**.
2. **Inhale deeply** through your nose, feeling your **stomach expand** as you breathe in.
3. **Exhale slowly** through your lips, feeling your **stomach return** as you breathe out.
4. **Repeat** these steps for **10 total breaths**.

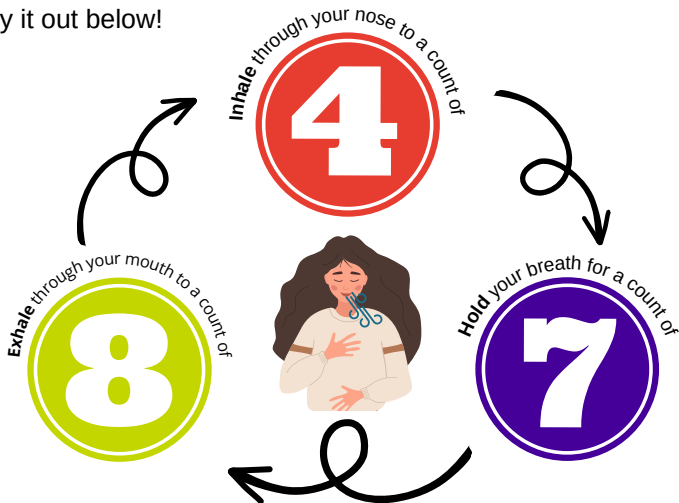


2 - Jewell, Tim. "What Is Diaphragmatic Breathing?" Healthline, Healthline Media, 5 Nov. 2021.

# Breathing Exercises 1N5

## 4-7-8 Breathing:

Just like belly breathing, this exercise can help **calm our mind and body**. The 4-7-8 breathing<sup>3</sup> exercise helps **regulate our fight or flight system**, which is triggered by cortisol, the primary stress hormone in our brain. Regulating this system through breathing **decreases** our risk for **anxiety, depression, and sleep problems**. When we breathe, our stomach should rise and fall and our **shoulders should only move slightly**. Try it out below!



This is 1 breath. **Repeat** this cycle 3 more times for a total of 4 breaths.

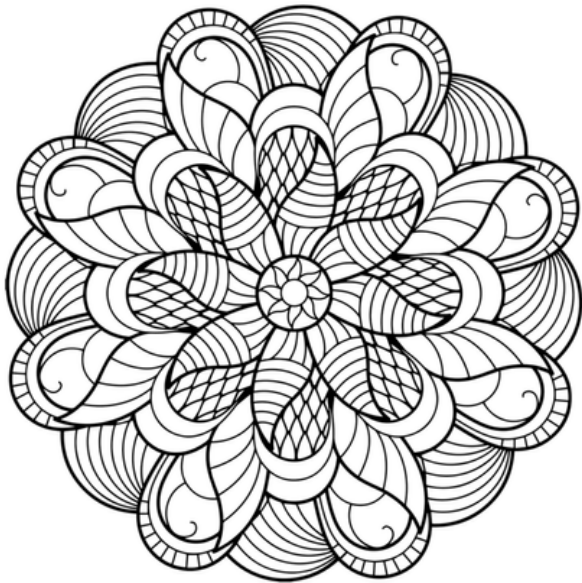
3 - Gotter, Ana. "What Is the 4-7-8 Breathing Technique?" Healthline, Healthline Media, 20 Apr. 2018.

# Mindful Coloring



Mindful coloring<sup>4</sup> can help promote **creativity, increase focus, and reduce stress**. Other creative outlets, such as doodling, drawing, crafting, and photography, can improve our mental well-being also!

**Grab your favorite supplies** and color the mandala pattern below!



4 - Lane, Ashley. "Mindful Coloring: Mandala." Healthline, Healthline Media, 27 July 2018.

# Mindful Drawing



Just like mindful **coloring**, mindful drawing can **help us relax and de-stress**. Grab your **favorite drawing supplies** and favorite colors, then **take your time drawing your answers** to the questions below.

**Draw the people, places, or things that:**

make you feel **JOY** ☀️

make you feel **RELAXED** zzz

make you feel **LOVED** ❤️

make you feel **EXCITED** !!

# Positive Affirmations 1N5

Positive **affirmations**<sup>5</sup> are statements we tell ourselves that **build us up** and can help **change** negative or **unhelpful thoughts**. **Repeating** these affirmations **out loud** in a mirror can help us **believe** more positive, wonderful things about ourselves and encourage us to believe those **positive words** are our **truth**.

1. Start by thinking, "**What positive, feel-good words do I need to tell myself today?**" Write those affirmations in the bubbles below.
2. When you're ready to take the next step, **stand in front of a mirror** and **read your affirmations out loud** as many times as you need to.
3. **Keep trying** this activity **every day** until you believe all the words you're saying about yourself are true.  
(because P.S... they totally are all true!)



5 - Kristenson, Sarah. "125 Mirror Affirmations That Will Boost Your Confidence." Happier Human, Happier Human, 27 June 2022.



# Acupressure



Acupressure<sup>6</sup> is a physical practice to **help reduce stress** by **applying pressure to specific points** on our body. Acupressure helps **restore** a natural **flow of energy** throughout our body which can help **increase our well-being** while **decreasing** feelings of **anxiety and depression**. Try it out below!

**Forehead:** Press in-between your eyes in a **circular motion** to **relieve pressure**, reduce stress, and calm your mind. Continue this for **5-10 minutes**.



*Great for people who wear glasses or look at a screen for long periods of time!*



**Hands:** Press the muscle in-between your **thumb** and **index finger** in a **circular motion** to **relieve pain**, especially pain near your face or head. Do this for **5 minutes** and repeat on your other hand.

*Great for people typing, writing, or working with their hands a lot!*

**Shoulders:** Reach your **right hand** over to **hold your left shoulder** & your **left hand** over to **hold your right shoulder** (like you're giving yourself a hug), then **squeeze both shoulders** tightly for **5 seconds** to release stress, worry, & tension.



*Great for people who do a lot of physical labor or hold tension in their shoulders!*

6 - Tan, Elisa. "Self Care Series #21 - 7 Acupressure Techniques for Better Mental Health." GingerChi, 21 May 2022.

# 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Grounding<sup>7</sup> techniques are exercises that can help us **refocus on the present moment** and **distract** ourselves from negative or **unhelpful thoughts** and/or feelings. 5-4-3-2-1 grounding requires use of our frontal lobe, which helps **quiet our sympathetic nervous system** that gets activated **when we're stressed**. Try noticing all five senses, **one at a time**, in the order below.



5 things you can **SEE**



4 things you can **TOUCH**



3 things you can **HEAR**



2 things you can **SMELL**



1 thing you can **TASTE**

7 - Hahn, Lauran. "54321 Grounding ." Mindful Living Counseling Orlando, Mindful Living Counseling Orlando, 6 June 2022.

# Gratitude



Showing gratitude<sup>8</sup> means being **thankful** for the **good things** in our life. Thanks to neuroplasticity, **gratitude** can **help rewire our brain** to make us **see** more of the **good** around us. **Writing** down something we are **grateful for every day** can help **shift** our thoughts from focusing on the negative in the world to **noticing the positive around us**. Try **writing down 10** things you're grateful for in the hearts below, **no matter how big or small**.

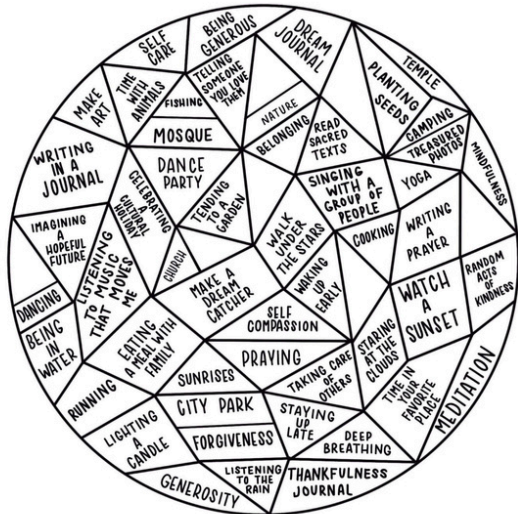


8 - Rogawski, Hannah. "The Neuroscience of Gratitude." Cobb Psychotherapy LCSW, 17 May 2019.

# Spirituality



When we talk about spirituality, we are focusing on the **root word spirit**. What **lifts our spirit** can be a **variety of activities** ranging from a walk through nature, yoga, meditation, a traditional faith-based practice, or even watching a beautiful sunset. **Explore how you practice spirituality** below!



CHOOSE THREE COLORS TO REPRESENT THE DIFFERENT PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PRACTICES WHERE WE EXPERIENCE SPIRITUALITY FOR

- MYSELF
- PEOPLE I KNOW
- OTHER PEOPLE IN THE WORLD



# Music & Mindfulness 1N5

Being mindful with music<sup>9</sup> can help decrease our stress levels, regulate our breathing through following the beat, and uplift our spirits through music's joyful properties. Mindful music includes listening, singing along with, or dancing to music; it can even include playing a musical instrument!



## Practice

## &

## Think

1. **Grab** a speaker or some **headphones**.
2. Find a quiet, **safe space** where you **won't be interrupted**.
3. Pull up your **favorite song** on Youtube, Spotify, Apple Music - whatever you enjoy best!
4. Start **playing your favorite song** & turn the volume up.
5. Try to listen with your whole body & **let the music move you!** You can dance or simply sway to the beat.
6. **Notice your thoughts** & feelings **without judgment** as you try to focus on the music. If you feel your **thoughts wandering**, notice them and **refocus on the music**.

After listening, ask yourself these questions:

1. **How** did my **body feel** when I practiced mindful music?
  2. **What** different **sounds** did I hear?
  3. **What thoughts & feelings** did I have? Did I feel relaxed, happy, clear-headed?
- 
- 

9 - "Listening to Music Mindfully." Greater Good In Education, Greater Good In Education, 3 Feb. 2022.

# Boundaries



By utilizing your mindfulness skills and being **in tune** with your brain and body, you can **begin to notice** when you're starting to feel tired, burned out, or overwhelmed. Noticing those feelings through **mindfulness can help us** to then **take next steps** in creating boundaries to **protect our mental and physical bandwidth**.

**Take a mindful moment** to listen to your body and **reflect** on your current emotional needs. Using the template below, create a **list of boundaries** that will help you in **protecting your peace and wellbeing**.

## I Value

*Emotional stability*

---

---

---

---

---

## So I Need

*Time by myself to recharge*

---

---

---

---

---

## & Honor This By

*Reminding myself it's okay to say no to plans if I do not have the mental or emotional capacity*

---

---

---

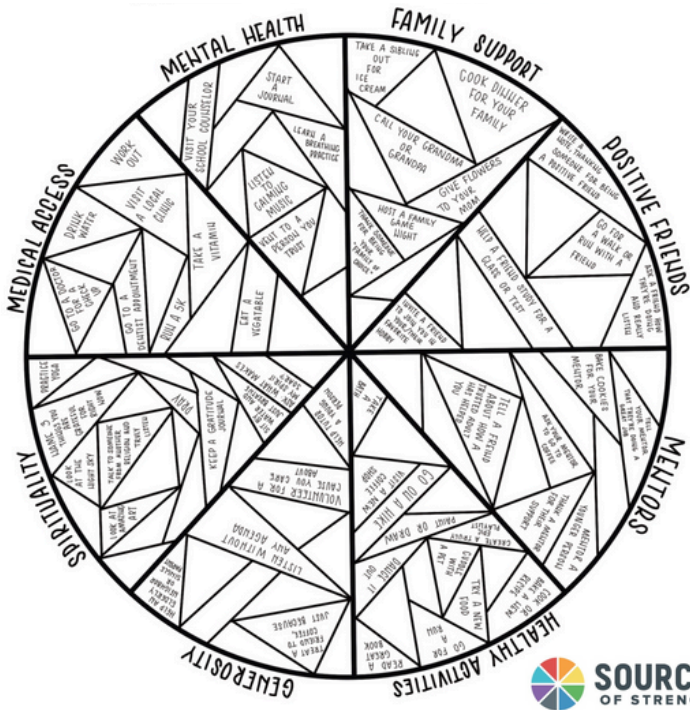
---

---

# Strengths Check-In

Stress is inevitable. Building into our **protective factors** can **increase our resiliency** when we come across hard times.

**Write in and try out** activities from **each piece** of the Sources of Strength<sup>10</sup> Wheel and see how you can **weave** these protective factors into your **daily life!**



**Stop** the stigma.  
**Start** the conversation.



For **more resources**  
and activities, **check out**  
our self-care page using  
this **QR code!**



Download 1N5's Reach Out app for quick access to  
mental health information and resources, including  
direct connections to emergency services.

