

EQUIPPED

mental health training & tools for young adults

Mental Health Awareness Workbook



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Calgary
Mental health for all



In Memory

The EQUIPPED program has been initiated by a grant that was provided to CMHA Calgary in memory of Phillip Thomas.

"On Friday, September 13, 2019, at the age of 25 years, Phillip Thomas of Calgary, AB, passed away gracefully in his home. He was a son, a brother, a student, a teaching assistant (TA), and a friend.

From a young age, Phillip displayed a natural talent for tennis and a passion for fitness. Over the years, he competed in many tennis tournaments, was a member of the Dinos tennis team, and held the Deadlifting record at the University of Calgary gym. He also loved competing (winning) against his family in Ping Pong, cooking healthy food, and watching/critiquing new movies and television shows with his family and friends. He is most remembered for his incredible intellect, his countless inside jokes with so many people, and his innate ability to make everyone laugh.

Phillip had a selection of goofy looks he would make that could make anyone laugh and could roast just about anyone – anytime. He also had this innate ability to create inside jokes with just about anyone whether it was in the form of hilarious comedy skits like Key and Peele, slightly offside comments, expertly executed pranks or witty remarks; he knew exactly what to say. He would always joke around making everyone laugh so hard, and always managed to put a smile on our faces.

He demonstrated a curiosity about the great mysteries of the world that was evident in his favourite shows and truly developed a passion for research, which eventually propelled him to pursue his master's degree in Maths + Computer Science. His passion for research and his natural teaching ability were evident as he had received an award for being an exceptional TA. We would sit in awe as he explained what can only be described as "the matrix" that he called algorithms or something; honestly it went over our heads, but we loved how he lit up talking about it.

He was an incredibly bright and talented young man and was able to brighten many of his fellow students' days. He was one of the most perceptive and unique minded people some have ever met, he was accomplished, supported and loved, and yet he battled anxiety and depression most of his adult life.

His mental health struggles started when he was a teenager and progressed throughout the years.

He felt it was only a temporary solution and was too tired to keep trying to figure it out. He felt alone, he felt that he would never support himself with a job, that he would never find a partner and that he would never find a permanent solution. He didn't drink or do any drugs, he was physically healthy, and he was loved and supported, but he still felt that he couldn't cope and was too tired to keep fighting. It breaks our hearts that he left us so soon, but he lives on in our memories and stories, and in what all of us have and will become because of him.

Our hope is that this program equips teens and young adults with the tools and resources they need to cope with mental health struggles, build resilience, and end the stigma around mental health. CMHA Calgary has helped our family survive this terrible tragedy, and we hope this program can help prevent another one."

The Thomas Family



PRACTICE

In Phillip's honour, this symbol will be used throughout these courses to help emerging adults practice mental health tools and build their own resiliency.



Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that the people of CMHA Calgary live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, and the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations, more commonly known as the Stoney Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta. This Land Acknowledgement reminds us of the histories that precede us, highlights our responsibilities going forward, and helps bring us together on a shared journey of Truth and Reconciliation.



Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region

Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary) builds awareness and provides education and support for individuals and families living with mental health or substance use concerns, and a loss by suicide. CMHA Calgary works closely with other community organizations to bridge gaps in mental health care system and facilitates access to important services and resources.

YouthSMART

CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART (**Youth Supporting Mental Health And Resiliency Together**) integrates collaborative, youth-led mental health learning opportunities in local junior and senior high schools. YouthSMART knows that students are incredibly influential amongst their peers, within their schools, families, and communities. As such, YouthSMART values youth as peer contributors, actively involved in the programming and opportunities that directly impact their wellness, and works with SMART School Leaders to transform the culture of their school surrounding mental health. For more information about CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART, check out YouthSMART.ca.

EQUIPPED

EQUIPPED offers mental health training and tools for young adults. It builds on the basic concepts taught in YouthSMART, but expands knowledge for a slightly older audience of emerging adults ages 16 to 24. The program is an online, self-directed mental health education platform that offers a variety of courses. The EQUIPPED name indicates that these educational courses will help to equip a young person with foundational mental health concepts and the skills necessary to practice self-care.



How to Use this Workbook

Emerging adults are dealing with a unique balance of stress due to many life changes. Throughout this period, emerging adults may experience the following challenges: pursuit of educational or career goals, moving out of childhood home, establishing financial independence, establishing new relationships, and developing their sense of identity (who they will be).

The aim of this workbook is to equip you with mental health knowledge and skills to understand the things you can do to help support your mental health. This workbook is primarily designed for those who are 16 to 24, also known as emerging adults.

This workbook was designed alongside the online module *Mental Health Awareness*, available at equipped.youthsmart.ca. Although it can be used independently, you may wish to check out the online module for additional information and resources.

Materials needed:

There is not much required for this workbook other than an open mind and some curiosity. A pen and coloured pencils would be helpful.

If you don't have access to a printer, recreate the activities on any blank paper.

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Emerging Adulthood



Emerging adulthood is the term for the distinct life stage between being an adolescent and being an adult. Young adults today face a different set of expectations and realities than adults in the past.

This life period can entail many life transitions in living arrangements, education, employment, and establishing independence.

Mental health and the emerging adult experience

The transition between being a youth and an adult is tough! This time can be exciting, stressful, challenging, and everything in between.

Mental health exists at every point of life, but this time period brings specific new challenges to stress and mental well-being. Plus, the habits you develop now will often stick with you for a long time. Let's make these habits good ones!

Features of emerging adulthood

Emerging adulthood is unique because it contains the following five features:

- **Identity exploration:** Emerging adulthood is a time to try out various possibilities for what kind of person to be, and what kind of life you want to live. This time helps to answer the question of 'Who Am I?' and occurs especially in the area of relationships, work, and life values.
- **Instability:** The exploratory nature of this time period leads to many changes within the areas of relationship, work, and residence.
- **Self-focus:** This is a time for self-focus as you are discovering who you are and what your worldviews will be. There are a lot of changes in your life that require attention and your obligations to others may be changing. Emerging adults focus on themselves as they develop the knowledge, skills, and self-understanding they will need for adult life.
- **Feeling in-between:** During this transitioning stage, emerging adults tend to view themselves as neither adolescents nor grown adults.
- **Possibilities and optimism:** Although emerging adulthood can bring a lot of stress and challenge, ultimately many emerging adults believe their future is bright.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is the state of well-being in which every individual realizes their potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, do well, and fully enjoy life.

Mental health means having the capacity to be able to successfully adapt to the challenges that life creates for people.

>> KEY CONCEPT Everyone has mental health

Everyone has mental health, just as everyone has physical health. Our physical health involves our body and how it functions. Our mental health involves our brain and how it functions.

Having good physical health is not just about avoiding colds or getting sick. Physical health involves eating well, good hygiene, exercise, etc.

Similarly, mental health is not the absence of mental illness. Our emotions, thoughts, and behaviours can change at any time and this affects how our mental health is doing.

Mental health pyramid

- **Mental Disorder:** A mental disorder or illness is a medical condition with specific criteria diagnosed by trained health professionals. For example, having an anxiety disorder.
- **Mental Health Issues:** Facing a situation that challenges your ability to adapt. This may be a time when it is important to reach out to others for help. For example, dealing with the death of a loved one, or experiencing a breakup.
- **Mental Distress:** Common, expected, and normal responses to the stresses of everyday life. These experiences are necessary to learn how to build resilience. For example, writing an exam or having an argument with a friend.
- **No Distress, Problem or Disorder:** Everything is going fine and you are generally enjoying life.



Mental Health Literacy. (2020). Mental Health Pyramid. <https://mentalhealthliteracy.org>

What is Mental Health?

It is important to understand the characteristics that support mental well-being in order to reach your full potential.

Characteristics of mental well-being:

- **Ability to enjoy life:** The degree to which you appreciate the aspects of your life
- **Resilience:** Capacity to recover quickly from difficulties
- **Balance:** Feeling like all areas of your life get some attention and you are able to return to equilibrium after a weight is placed on one aspect of life
- **Self-actualization:** Realization of one's potential and developing your abilities
- **Flexibility:** Ability to cope with change and adapt

>> KEY CONCEPT Mental well-being is always changing

Mental well-being is always changing, depending on the day and what situations you are facing, as well as the strength or resiliency you have built up.

Self-assessment

No one will do these things perfectly all the time – use the assessment on the next page to better understand the areas you are doing well in most of the time.

Remember that wherever you are today is great. You can also use these different categories and statements as starting places to work on ourselves and our mental well-being.



Want to improve in one particular area?

See the corresponding activities for a good place to start.

- **Ability to enjoy life:** Gratitude
- **Resilience:** Resiliency
- **Balance:** Healthy Mind Platter
- **Self-actualization:** Two Hands
- **Flexibility:** Change Action Plan

See the Table of Contents for page numbers for each activity.

What is Mental Health?

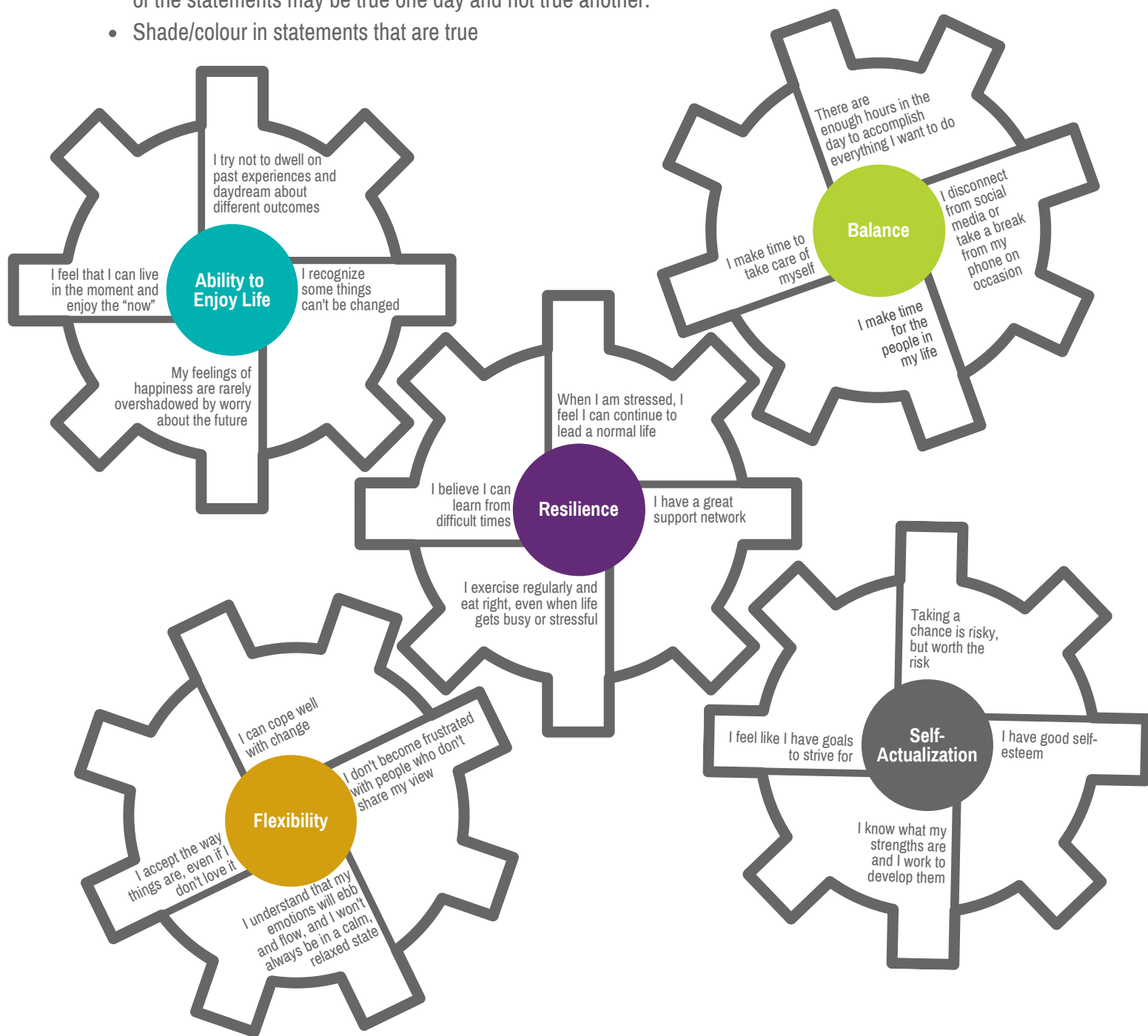


PRACTICE

Mental Well-being Self-Assessment

Activity instructions

- Read the statement and assess whether you agree with the statement and whether it is true for you. Some of the statements may be true one day and not true another.
- Shade/colour in statements that are true



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What is Mental Health?



PRACTICE

Identifying Support

Wherever you are in your mental health journey, it is important that there are people in your life that you can draw on for support.

Humans are social creatures and need to have people around them. Positive social relationships are key to resilience. They help us manage stress reactions, offer encouragement and reassurance, and when we are in trouble or upset, we naturally look to our social networks for support.

Activity instructions

Take some time to answer the following questions:

Who in your life can you go to for support?

How can they best support you?

Who else might be able to provide support to you?

It is important to have a variety of supports. A friend who makes you laugh is important, but they may serve a different purpose than a friend or therapist you can talk about your struggles with. Some people may serve more than one purpose!

Who can you add to your support network? See the following list for suggestions:

- Peer Support
- CMHA Calgary
- Therapist
- Doctor
- School counsellor
- Coach

Remember, it is not about the quantity of people in your life, but the quality.

What is Mental Illness?

Mental illness is a change in thinking, mood, or behaviour, and is accompanied with distress and impaired functioning over time.

>> KEY CONCEPT Mental illness is a medical condition

Mental illness is a medical condition with specific criteria diagnosed by qualified mental health professionals.

At any given year, 1 in 5 people will experience mental illness and this jumps to 1 in 3 if you include substance related disorders. It is important to note that with recent global events, this number may be even higher, and there is an increased need for mental health supports.

Causes of mental illness:

Neurotransmitters	Genetic Predisposition	Environmental Factors
<p>The brain contains billions of neurons that communicate with each other through chemicals called neurotransmitters. A mental illness can occur when there is an imbalance between neurotransmitters that affect the brains ability to communicate or send messages.</p>	<p>Each person has genes that are passed onto them from their parents that determine features such as height or eye colour. If a family member has a mental illness they may pass on the susceptibility of the disease through genes. Not all mental illnesses have a genetic link, and those that do vary in the degree of how much can be attributed to genes.</p>	<p>Some events or experiences can trigger mental illness. These factors alone may not cause a mental illness, but can make an existing one worse. Factors include: Alcohol, drugs, abuse, loss, bullying, isolation, stress, trauma, physical illness, natural disaster, extreme poverty, and personal resilience.</p>

What is Mental Illness?



PRACTICE

Impacts of Mental Illness

Activity instructions

Mental illness can affect someone's thinking, mood or behaviour.

Brainstorm how you think someone might be impacted by mental illness, or some common signs you may see:

THINKING

MOOD

BEHAVIOUR



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Identity Exploration

Who are you... no really, who are you?

This time of your life is an important time to figure out just who you are, or as some would say – explore your identity.

Identity – beliefs, personality, how you express yourself, gender expression, religion, and much more.

A sense of identity means you are aware of who you've been in the past, who you are right now, and how you think you'll be in the future.



Some specific things you may consider about your identity include role in the family (i.e. sister, daughter), hobbies and interests (i.e. guitar player, football fan), background (i.e. nationality, race, place of birth), and attributes about yourself (i.e. kind, intelligent).

A key feature of the emerging adulthood life stage is identity exploration. Emerging adulthood is a time to try out various possibilities for what kind of person to be and what kind of life you want to live, especially in the area of relationships, work, and life values.

>> KEY CONCEPT

Identity exploration is a key feature of emerging adulthood

Ready for some identity exploration?

Use the activities in the following few pages or check out this website:

<https://alis.alberta.ca/careerinsite/know-yourself/>

It has quizzes to help you understand yourself better to help plan your career path. Even if you aren't looking for career advice, these quizzes can help you identify your interests, abilities, and personality strengths.

It can be challenging knowing what the future may hold for us. Don't let this section overwhelm you.

Identity Exploration



PRACTICE

If you have already completed the *Stress Management & Healthy Coping Workbook*, you may have seen this activity before. If you have already completed this activity, take some time to review the original. Has anything changed?

Identity Web

Activity notes


- Write your name in the middle of the page on the grey brush stroke
- Brainstorm some things that make you 'you' or are unique to you as a person
- You can create different categories leading off of your name, or just write ideas as they come to you
- In another colour, add things you hope are a part of your identity in the future. Some things could include career aspirations, goals, or just even traits you hope to be known for.



Name

Core Values

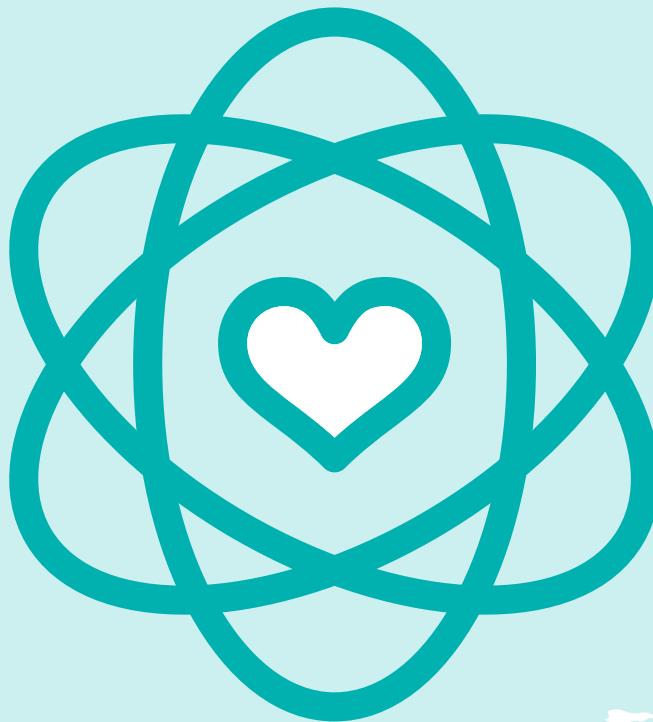
Personal values are what you consider important in the way you live, and it helps you determine your priorities.

 **KEY CONCEPT** Personal values are what **you** consider important in the way you live

Life is easier when you acknowledge what is important to you, and when you make plans and decisions that honour them. Values can help you set boundaries, find your purpose, and make important decisions.

Values can change throughout our lives, and the emerging adulthood life period can be an important time to clarify the values that are important to you going forward.

When a stressful event occurs, it can be difficult to stay connected to our values. The stress absorbs so much of our attention, that we lose track of what is truly important to us.





If you have already completed the *Stress Management & Healthy Coping Workbook*, you may have seen this activity before. If you have already completed this activity, take some time to review the original. Has anything changed?

Identifying Your Values

Think of a person you respect or look up to. What strengths or qualities do they have that you admire?

Think of situations with others, and the behaviours you appreciate from others. Also, think about any behaviours you dislike. What does that tell you about your values?

What would someone who knows you well say is important to you?

When you were younger, what were your wishes for the future? How have your values changed as you've gotten older?

Core Values



PRACTICE

If you have already completed the *Stress Management & Healthy Coping Workbook*, you may have seen this activity before. If you have already completed this activity, take some time to review the original. Has anything changed?

Listing Your Values

Activity instructions

This is a list of common values. Shade in the values that mean the most to you.

Love	Wealth	Family	Success	Friends
Adventure	Freedom	Honesty	Humour	Loyalty
Independence	Respect	Peace	Wisdom	Stability
Fairness	Creativity	Safety	Relaxation	Achievement
Balance	Connection	Empathy	Purpose	Physical Activity
Spirituality	Teamwork	Belonging	Trust	Health
Joy	Experiences	Relationships	Productivity	Knowledge



CONSIDER

What would you add to the list?



If you have already completed the *Stress Management & Healthy Coping Workbook*, you may have seen this activity before. If you have already completed this activity, take some time to review the original. Has anything changed?

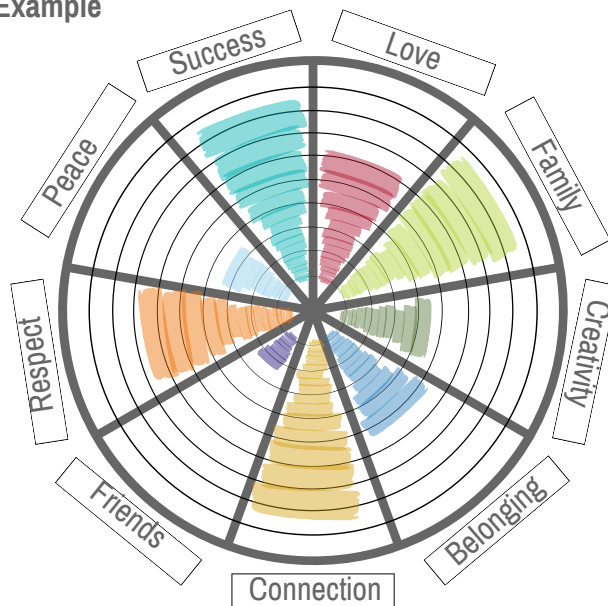
Core Values Circle

Activity instructions

1. This activity requires you to identify 8 things in your life that are important to you. You can use the questions or chart of common values from the previous section to help you decide, or you may think of something new. There are no wrong answers.
2. Once you have identified the things that are important, label each section of the circle (on the next page) with one idea.
3. Each category has been broken into 10 sections. Level 1 being the innermost section, and Level 10 being the outermost section.
4. Colour or shade each section up to the level of capability to which you feel you are living according to that value.
 - 1 means you feel like this area is lacking for you, and you think you want to make some changes.
 - 10 means you are rocking this area, and you feel like there is nothing else you could do to make improvements.

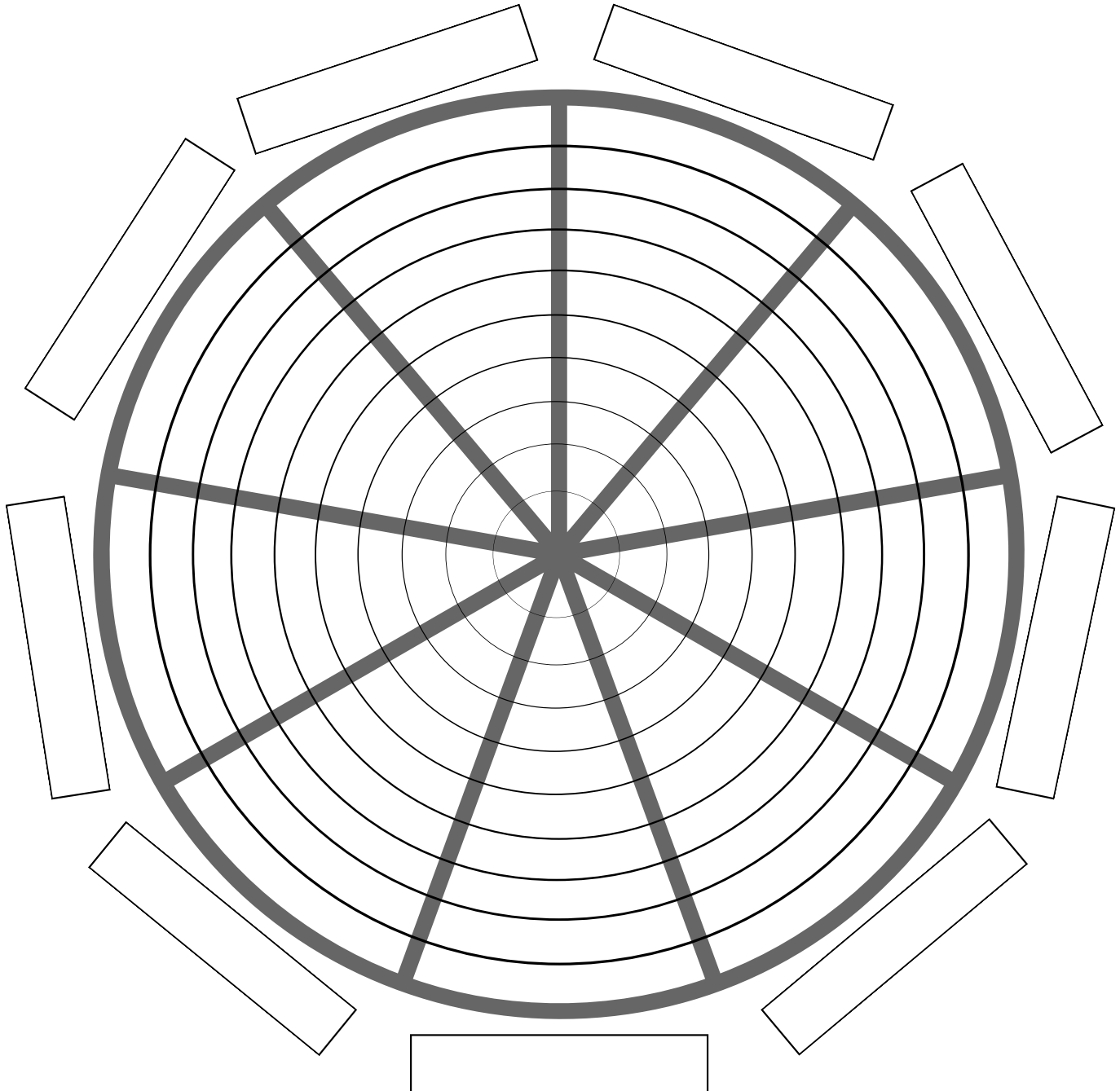
Notice sections of your wheel that are lower – what can you do to increase this? If you're looking for ideas for how to improve, refer to the Goal Setting section of this workbook.

Example





Core Values Circle



Stigma

It's one thing to understand that everyone has mental health, but it is another to openly talk about mental health experiences. Many don't share because of the stigma associated with these conversations.

Stigma is the negative attitudes and beliefs that motivate the general public to fear, reject, avoid, and discriminate against people with mental health problems and mental illness.

Impacts of stigma on mental health

- Discourages people from seeking help or engaging in conversations
- Fear of judgement
- Not being listened to or taken seriously
- Worried about being viewed as weak
- Feeling alone
- Not knowing where to go to receive help

Completing the activity on the next page is a great way to understand the impact of stigma, and by challenging these statements, you have begun to reduce stigma's impact on your impressions of mental health and mental illness.



CONSIDER

How can you help to reduce stigma?

Ways to reduce stigma

- Watch your language
- Ask questions
- Learn more
- Talk about mental health responsibly (talk in an informed way)
- Listen to experiences
- Speak out



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Stop Stigma

There are a lot of myths or false ideas surrounding mental health. The following statements are all statements about mental health that have become popular due to stigma or false information.

Activity instructions

Challenge yourself to see if you can break the stigma by rewriting these statements. Unsure of how to challenge these myths? Have conversations with those around you, or use trusted sources for research. Education is an important step toward reducing stigma surrounding mental health problems and mental illness.

Myth: Taking care of your mental health is something you have to do on your own.

Reality: _____

Myth: Once you have a mental illness, you have it for life.

Reality: _____

Myth: You only need to take care of your mental health if something is wrong with you.

Reality: _____

Myth: Medication is the only treatment for mental illness.

Reality: _____

Myth: People with a mental illness are generally violent and dangerous.

Reality: _____

Myth: You can tell by looking at people whether they have a mental illness.

Reality: _____

Myth: Mental health and mental illness look the same for everyone.

Reality: _____



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Language Matters

How people talk about mental health matters

Words used have a powerful effect and you can use these words to support those around you or alternatively, your words can contribute to stigma.

Remember mental illness is not an adjective. People often use language around mental illness to express human emotions. An example could be “I am so depressed the Calgary Flames lost the game” when we really mean “I am disappointed that the Calgary Flames lost the game.” Statements such as “I am so depressed over my breakup” or “I have PTSD after spilling coffee in front of my boss at work; that was so embarrassing” are problematic as they diminish the real experiences of individuals diagnoses with those conditions. Using these phrases is insensitive and reduces the likelihood of people opening up to you. They won’t perceive you as someone who can be sensitive to these topics. It won’t always be perfect, but practice making the swaps in your conversations, and encourage others to use more respectful language.



CONSIDER What respectful language sounds like

Try out the example statements. Can you think of a better way to say these statements?

Then add some sentences you have said or heard others say. How could you rephrase these sentences?

Stigmatizing	Respectful
“It drives me crazy”	“It frustrates/annoys me”
“I am so OCD about my locker”	“I really want my locker to be organized”
“Why can’t you be happy? There is nothing wrong with your life”	
“My parents are so bipolar lately”	

Dealing with Change

Change can be challenging – it is a departure from what you are used to, and it can cause stress or be difficult to cope with. This is especially true if the change is upsetting or unexpected.

We cannot control a large portion of our lives, and as a result, we need to be ready for change.

Tips for dealing with change:

- Acknowledge the emotions that are associated with an idea. Even good change can bring disruption and stress.
- Change presents us with the opportunity to grow. By focusing on the positives of this change instead of the negatives, it will help you adapt. This is called 'cognitive re-framing.'
- Keep up your regular schedule and routines, and ensure that you are taking care of your body by eating well and maintaining good sleep habits.
- Remember that you don't have to work through change on your own. Seek support in friends, family, trusted colleagues or even professional help from doctors or therapists.

What changes are you currently experiencing, or are upcoming for you?

Are these changes big? Small? Multi-layered?

What kinds of emotions are these changes bringing?

To begin, notice your feelings. Then, respond to these feelings: pretend someone else was telling you how they feel; you will often react in a kinder way. Finally, accept these feelings.

Dealing with Change



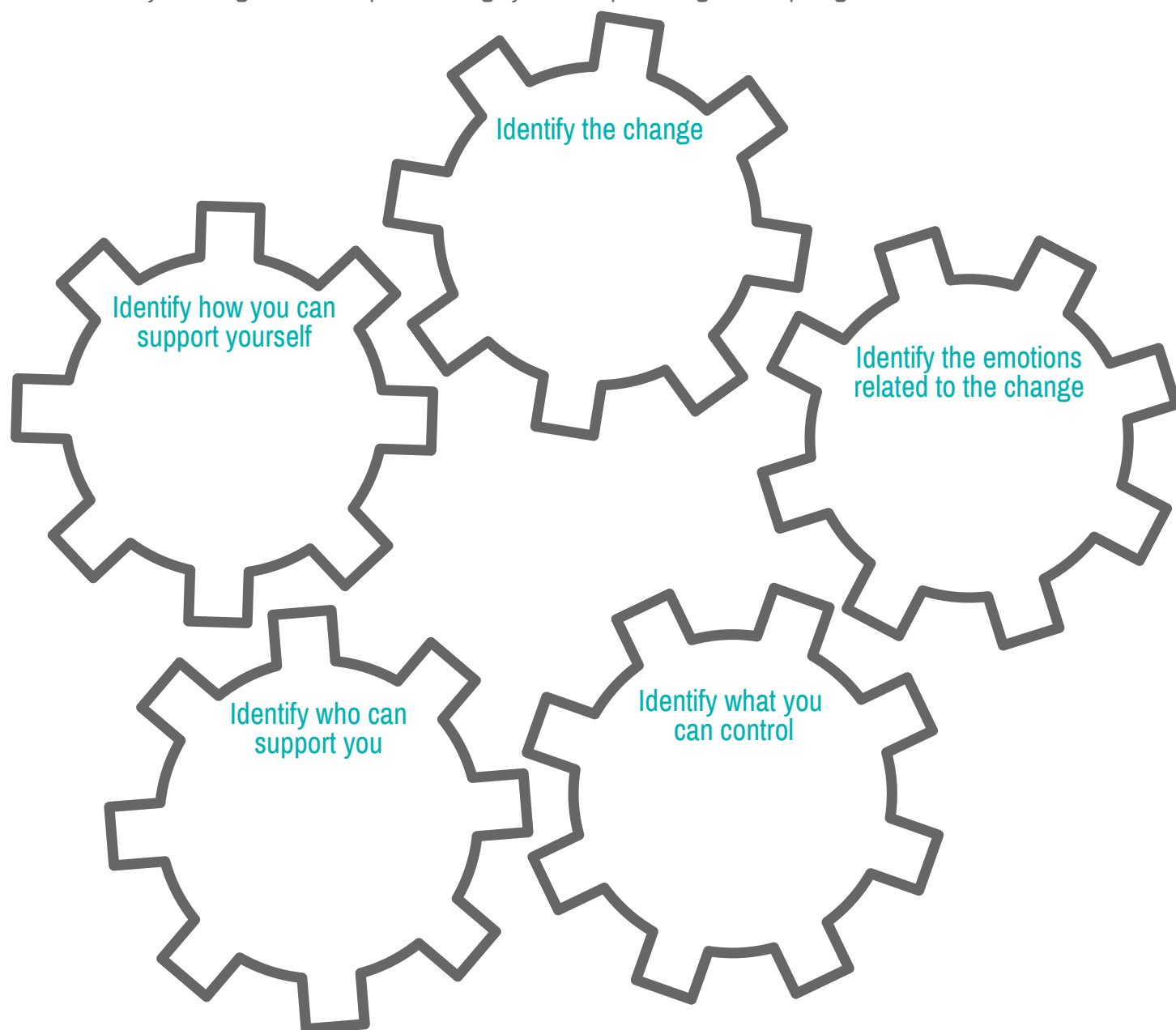
PRACTICE

Change Action Plan

Preparing for changes can be helpful in navigating the various emotions that come with a change.

Activity instructions

It can be helpful to make a plan to consider how you can best work through that change. Use each gear below to write out your thoughts about a specific change you are experiencing or anticipating.



Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is the process of becoming everything you are capable of becoming. It is not about living a perfect life, but instead about finding a way to use your strengths to live to your full potential.

Self-actualization is important for mental health as it strengthens the ability to view difficult situations as a challenge that you can overcome.



CONSIDER

Positive affirmations about yourself

Affirmations are statements about your strengths or positive qualities that help overcome negative thoughts. Just as we do repetitive exercises to improve our physical health, affirmations are exercises for our mind to strengthen our positive outlook.

Write out affirmation statements to reflect on your strengths. A great place to start is with "I am ____" statements. These could include things like "I am strong" "I am worthy" or "I am important."

I am...

I am...

I am...

I am...

I am...



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Self-Actualization



PRACTICE

Two Hands

Reaching our full potential involves recognizing the strengths in our lives and understanding what to let go of.

Self-compassion is the idea of treating yourself the way you would treat a friend if they were in the same situation as you (which is often kinder than you would treat yourself).

Activity instructions

Fill in the space above the hands with words, pictures, doodles, etc. that represent the ideas listed below.



To let go:

- Reflect on things in your life that don't serve you, such as negative thought patterns, unhealthy habits, times in which you doubt yourself.



To hold onto:

- Reflect on your strengths, characteristics, and dreams/goals.
- What are things in your life you want to hold with you as you move forward?

How to Help a Friend



Everyone deals with challenging situations.

You may understand how to deal with your stress and mental health, but what if you need to support someone else with their mental health?

How can you support someone?

Check in

If you notice something is happening with a friend, check in and let them know what you have observed, and that you want to know they are okay.

Let them share what they want, and listening without judgement. Sometimes listening is enough, you don't have to problem solve.

Listen up

Gather ideas

If they want to problem solve, support them to come up with their own ideas, and help weigh pros and cons of options.

Although you want your friends to make positive choices, you have to accept that everyone has autonomy and you have to accept their decisions and be as supportive as you can.

Accept their choices

Show support

Be there for your friend and ensure they know they can come to you for support.

It is important to be there for your friends, but it is also important to be there for yourself. It is important to know your own boundaries around providing support. It is okay to set limits and boundaries. It is also okay to recognize when your friend or loved one needs more support than you can provide.

How to Help a Friend



PRACTICE

If you have already completed the *Stress Management & Healthy Coping Workbook*, you may have seen this activity before. If you have already completed this activity, take some time to review the original. Has anything changed?

Conversation Starters

It is important to start a conversation with someone if we are worried about them. These conversations can be as simple as letting them know you have noticed a change, and you want to understand if they are okay. Remember to listen fully, without any judgment. If they don't want to talk about it, let them know you are available if they need.

Activity instructions

Consider which of these conversation starters may work well with a friend you are concerned about. Add your own comments or thoughts about how you may want to start the conversation.

It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can I help?

I noticed _____. Do you want to talk about it?

When I am stressed, I feel _____.
How do you feel?

If you are having a hard time, who else could you talk to?

Are you thinking of harming yourself?

What or who has helped you with this in the past?

What are you doing to cope with your stress?

How can I help you find more information or resources?

Finding Balance

How do you take care of yourself? How can you ensure your mental health is supported?

Wellness is the art of practicing a variety of healthy habits on a daily basis. These habits go beyond just focusing on our physical health and create a world in which you are feeling supported and balanced.

Healthy mind platter

Just as our bodies need different nutrients from different types of foods to function at our best, our brains need a balance of different activities to function optimally and build resiliency.

These 7 activities make up the mental 'nutrients' your brain needs to function at it's best. Every individual is different, and the amount of each activity needed will change depending on the person and the circumstances.

The Healthy Mind Platter



Siegel, D. (2011). Healthy Mind Platter. <https://drdansiegel.com/healthy-mind-platter/>

In general, a balance of all is important.

Just as you wouldn't eat only pizza every day for a week, we shouldn't live only on focus time with little time for sleep. The key is balancing the day with each of these essential mental activities (like a balanced diet).

Healthy mind platter components

- **Focus time:** Focusing on tasks in a goal-oriented way
- **Play time:** Allowing ourselves to be spontaneous, creative or playful
- **Connecting time:** Taking time to connect with other people who support us
- **Physical time:** Moving our bodies
- **Time in:** Quietly reflecting or focusing
- **Down time:** Letting our mind wander, relax or recharge
- **Sleep time:** Giving the brain time to rest to recover from the day

Finding Balance



PRACTICE

Healthy Mind Platter

Activity instructions

Take some time to list how you currently build a healthy mind through each area of the platter. Does each area have a healthy serving at this time? Consider some new things you could try for each area.



Sleep time



Physical time



Focus time



Connecting time



Down time



Time in



Play time



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Resiliency

Life happens and we all experience things that test or affect our mental health. In order to be ready when facing a tough situation, we need to build up our resilience. To be resilient means to be able to “spring back” after dealing with stressful or difficult situations.

>> KEY CONCEPT We all have the ability to learn and grow from challenges

Similar to building a muscle, resilience takes time and effort. It does not mean the absence of negative experiences. Even the most resilient people can feel sad, angry or frustrated when facing a setback, but they work to find creative ways to tackle challenges with a positive attitude.

How to build resilience

- Focus on goals or problems one small step at a time
- Identify and use your strengths
- Express yourself – don’t bottle your emotions but instead share by talking to others, journaling, mindfulness, artwork, etc.
- Keep things in perspective – this helps avoid seeing a crisis as an insurmountable problem as well helps you understand the long-term context of this situation rather than the stress in the moment
- Cut yourself some slack – dealing with difficult situations won’t always be perfect
- Build relationships with others who can give you support
- Focus on the positives in life and the good in every situation by practicing gratitude





Resiliency Assessment

Resiliency is a skill that is built over time like a muscle. To understand how resilient you are, take this brief assessment. Some days we are more resilient than others, so reflect on how you feel overall, even if today is not your best day.

Activity instructions

Rate yourself from 1 - 5

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

- I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times _____
- I can make it through a stressful event _____
- I am usually optimistic _____
- I adapt quickly to changes _____
- I learn valuable lessons from my experiences _____
- I am good at solving problems _____
- Feelings of anger or discouragement don't last long _____
- I can find humour in rough situations and can laugh at myself _____
- I am strong even during tough times _____

Total score: _____

Score guide

Less than 20:	Low Resilience
20 - 30:	Some Resilience
30 - 35:	Adequate Resilience
35 - 45:	Highly Resilient

No matter your score, resilience is something that can be created, strengthened or improved.

Whatever your score is today, this is a great starting point to grow from. Learning more about resilience and connecting with professionals or people in your life who demonstrate great resiliency is important. Identify the skills you are strong at, and work to build those you would like to improve.

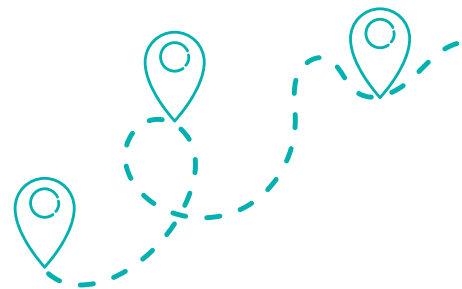


Road to Resiliency

Activity instructions

Journal your journey to resiliency with words, sketches, and pictures below:

The road to resiliency is not a linear/straightforward journey. Your road may appear as a wandering line connecting various symbols or words that represent the events you went through. Maybe you have a situation that you demonstrated resiliency that you want to reflect on, or maybe you are still in the journey and want to capture the experience thus far.



Some things to consider

- What emotions did you feel at certain points of your journey? Feel free to label them on the map.
- What was your physical body experiencing?
- What strengths did you leverage at different times?
- Who in your life was part of your journey? How did they support you?
- What problems or challenges did you face along the way? How did you overcome these challenges?

Riopel, L. (2019, January 20). Resilience skills, factors and strategies of the Resilient Person. Positive Psychology.
<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-skills/>

Gratitude

The brain is a muscle and you can strengthen your mind's tendency to optimism if you work at it.

We experience gratitude when we shift our focus to what we are fortunate to have, and when we take the time to appreciate and be thankful for those we have in our lives.

>> KEY CONCEPT Practicing gratitude strengthens your mind

When we express gratitude, our brain releases dopamine and serotonin, two hormones that contribute to our happiness. The brain is a muscle, and you can strengthen your mind's tendency towards positive thinking if you continue to practice it.

Think of your mind like your digestive system. What you put in it impacts how you feel. When you flood your mind with a constant diet of worry, envy, resentment, and self-criticism, it negatively impacts your mental well-being. Gratitude is like a healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables for your mind, and results in your feeling healthier and happier.





Gratitude Brainstorm

Activity instructions

Write all the things you are grateful for on the lines of the sunbeams below. Examples can include the people in your life, foods you enjoy, something fun that happened during your day, or something you appreciate about yourself.

Colouring can also be a great mindfulness activity, so if you'd like, take time to colour in the rest of the image.





Gratitude Letter

Activity instructions

Gratitude is even stronger when it is shared with others. Write a gratitude letter, text or email to someone who has had a positive influence in your life. Use the template below or write your own!

While a handwritten letter is the gold standard (it's more personal and tactile), the act of sharing your gratitude is more important than the form in which it is sent/received. Use whatever method works best for you!

Steps

1. Focus on the recipient
2. Be specific
3. Add how it made you feel – then and now
4. End with gratitude and a compliment

Dear

I want to say thank you for:

I appreciate you because:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I think you are special because

You are important to me because

From:

thank
you



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Goal Setting

Now that you have a better understanding about your mental health, it is important to act to create healthy habits, develop your wellness, or build resiliency. Detailed goals are important to keep us accountable towards your intentions.

Benefits of goals

- Provide direction
- Help focus on what is important
- Provides motivation for action
- Satisfaction and accomplishment when achieved

GROW model

Having a model, like SMART or GROW, can help us better identify and set achievable goals. Consider the components below for a goal you may want to set.



Goal

What do you want to achieve? What is your ultimate aim?

Reality

Where are you now? What are some barriers preventing you from achieving your goal?

Options

Consider what options you have. What resources are available to you? What changes can you make to your behaviour to overcome barriers?

Will

What choices will you make? How can you start making changes or tapping into resources to achieve your goal?

The Estate of Sir John Whitmore and Performance Consultants International (2017). The Grow Model. <https://www.performanceconsultants.com/grow-model> and MindTools. (2021). The GROW Model of Coaching and Mentoring. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm

Goal Setting



PRACTICE

If you have already completed the *Stress Management & Healthy Coping Workbook*, you may have seen this activity before. If you have already completed this activity, take some time to review the original. Has anything changed?

GROW Model

Activity instructions

Think of a goal you want to set and use the GROW formula (from the previous page) to help you create it.



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Where to Get Help

This course was developed to provide mental health tools and tips for emerging adults. However, if you are struggling or just need a listening ear, please reach out to the supports below for more assistance.

You can also print and share this page with a friend who may need support.

Phone / text:

- **Canadian Mental Health Association - Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary) Peer Line:** 403-297-1402
- **Distress Center (24/7):** 403-266-1605
- **ConnecTeen (24/7 talk):** 403-264-TEEN (8336)
- **ConnecTeen (24/7 text):** 587-333-2727
- **Kids Help Phone (24/7 talk) :**1-800-668-6868
- **Kids Help Phone (24/7 text):** 686868
- **Alberta Mental Health Line (24/7):** 1-877-303-2642
- **Crisis Services Canada (24/7):** 1-833-456-4566
- **Access Mental Health:** 403-943-1500

Websites:

www.youthsmart.ca

www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca

www.recoverycollegecalgary.ca

www.havethattalk.ca

www.mindyourmind.ca

www.thealex.ca

Note: CMHA Calgary does not necessary support or endorse the listed community resources. We have reviewed each source, however external organizations may change content without notice.

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