

# UNDERSTANDING YOU

A book created by Stephanie Scagliotti with assistance  
from Family Services Agency of the Central Coast.  
Spanish version translated by Celeste Cisneros.

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Our book is downloadable as a pdf. Please open in a application that allows you to do read speaker if you struggle with learning disabilities.

# THANK YOU

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# A FRIENDLY REMINDER

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The following pages describe and provide symptoms of different mental health disorders. Please be advised this guidebook is to help you or a loved one understand mental health disorders. This booklet is not to be used to diagnosis. If you or someone you know needs help, or struggling with symptoms, please see a doctor or a professional to get help you need and deserve.

# INTRODUCTION

Everyone struggles with mental health. Access to care can be challenging. Significant wait times and lack of access hinder people from getting the help they need. We hope you can start your mental health journey with this guidebook, a to help navigate challenges in life and assist in your mental health.

## 01

### WHO IS FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY OF THE CENTRAL COAST?



FSACC provides resources, support, and counseling services essential to healthy families and communities of the central coast in California.

## 02

### WHAT IS 988?



988 Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States.

## 03

### WHO IS NAMI?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is a nationwide organization committed to helping individuals and their loved ones navigate mental health.

# ACTIVITIES

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# HOW COMMON IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

1 IN 5 ADULTS

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Live with a mental illness

1 IN 5 YOUTH

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Have had or have a debilitating  
mental illness

1 IN 25 ADULTS

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Live with a serious mental illness  
such as schizophrenia, bipolar  
disorder, or major depression

1 IN 4 ADULTS

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experience a mental health event  
in their lifetime.

# RESOURCES: ORGANIZATIONS

Below are a list of resources to help guide you when need extra support. Please click in a link to gain access.

- [Family Services Agency of the Central Coast](#)
- [988](#)
- [NAMI: mental health resources](#)
- [SAMSHA: mental health resources](#)
- [Monterey County Behavioral Health](#)
- [Santa Cruz Behavioral Health](#)
- [San Benito County Behavioral Health](#)
- [Resources for suicidal thoughts](#)
- [211: find community support and resources by your zip code](#)
- [Suicide Loss Survivors Resources](#)
- [Resources for Veterans](#)
- [California Mental Health Resources](#)
- [PsychologyToday- find a therapist and psychiatrist in your area](#)
- [Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County](#)
- [Monterey Food Bank](#)
- [Community Food Bank of San Benito County](#)

# 01

## WHAT IS AN EMOTION

How to help individuals identify their emotions

# WHAT MAKES UP AN EMOTION?

There are three components that make up an emotion:

1. Thoughts
2. Feelings
3. Behaviors

# THE FOUR STAGES OF FEELING

**Stage 1**: wanting to run away from the feeling- try and “FEEL THE FEELING”.

**Stage 2**: Identify the feeling you are having.

**Stage 3**: Give meaning to why you are feeling the feeling.

**Stage 4**: Try to express and communicate the feelings you are having.

# WHAT IS AN EMOTION?

- \* An emotion is a physiological response from our body to an event.
- \* Emotions can be interrupted by our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to that event.
- \* The first sign of an emotion is a physiological response or a feeling that is happening within our body. Our thoughts come second and then our behaviors come last.

**CAUTION: AN EMOTION CAN OCCUR WITHIN SECONDS AND WITHOUT WARNING!**

# WHAT IS MY BODY TELLING ME?

When learning different emotions, first identify what your body is telling you.

- Ask myself, “What do I feel?”
- Where in my body do I feel this emotion?

Examples: trouble concentrating, easily irritable, fidgeting, fast paced breathing, feeling tense, sweating, a sense of hopelessness/worthlessness, low, motivation, heaviness,

Use the next page to answer the questions above.

# MY NOTES

# WHAT ARE MY THOUGHTS TELLING ME?

- Ask myself, “What am I thinking?”
- What is my inner voice saying?
- Are my thoughts negative or positive?
- Are my thoughts helpful or useful?

Use the next page to answer the questions above.

# MY NOTES

# WHAT ACTIONS AM I ENGAGING IN?

**Ask myself: “Are my actions in dealing with emotions helpful or destructive”?**

Having insight to your actions in response to an emotion is important to your mental health.

**Ask myself: “Am I isolating? Am I self-harming (cutting or substance usage)? Am I externalizing and yelling at people”?**

These types of actions can cause more harm than good when processing emotions.

**Actions can involve:** self harming, engaging in dangerous behavior, missing work, fighting with loved ones, binge eating, overspending, withdrawing from social life, not wanting to get out of bed.

# MY NOTES

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# 02 THE MENTAL HEALTH RAINBOW

How to identifying an emotional response, mental health event versus a mental health disorder.

# WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

According to **SAMHSA**, mental health, “is our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected.

Many associate mental health with a negative connotation, assuming it means you have a disorder or illness. However, each and everyone of us was born with mental health! It’s crucial to take care of your mental health and when you feel you may be struggling, reach out and ask for help. It takes a village, we were never meant to tackle mental health alone.

# WHAT IS A MENTAL HEALTH EVENT

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A mental health event affects your mental, emotional and state of wellbeing. It is not a reoccurring event which affects your mental state on a daily basis.

\* Examples of when a mental health event could occur:

- Divorce.
- Loss of a loved one.
- Losing a job.
- Traumatic event.

# A MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER IS NOT THE SAME AS A MENTAL HEALTH EVENT

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According to NAMI, mental health disorder is a, “condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood. These conditions deeply impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others.

Remember, a mental health disorder does not mean you are broken. We are all unique, with different needs!

# MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

- Mental health disorder can be short term or long term for an individual.
- A short-term mental health disorder can occur in response to certain life events like: a new job, a breakup, when one goes through an adjustment phase or a mourning a period in their life.
- A long-term mental health disorder could be generalized anxiety or major depressive disorder which effects a person on a consistent basis and can impede their daily activities and self-esteem.

# SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

According to NAMI, the following signs in an adult or adolescent may signify someone may be struggling with their mental health:

- Excessive worrying or fear.
- Feeling excessively sad or low.
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning.
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria.
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger.
- Avoiding friends and social activities.
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people.
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy.
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite.
- Changes in sex drive.

# SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

According to NAMI, the following signs in an adult or adolescent may suggest someone is struggling with their mental health:

- Difficulty perceiving reality (could be delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality).
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia).
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs.
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains").
- Thinking about suicide.
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress.
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance.

# ANXIETY

Anxiety is a common feeling all of us have experienced at one point in our life. However, feeling anxious is not the same as having an anxiety disorder/

According to NAMI, there are different types of anxiety disorders, yet they all share, “persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening”.

**Physical Symptoms of anxiety:** Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath, sweating, tremors and twitches, headaches, fatigue and insomnia, upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea.

**Emotional Symptoms of anxiety:** Feelings of apprehension or dread, feeling tense or jumpy, restlessness or irritability, anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDER

1. **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)**: According to NAMI, GAD is characterized as, “chronic, exaggerated worrying about everyday life. This worrying can consume hours each day, making it hard to concentrate or finish daily tasks.”
2. **Social Anxiety Disorder**: According to NAMI, Social Anxiety Disorder is characterized as, “Intense fear about social interaction, often driven by irrational worries about humiliation (e.g. saying something stupid or not knowing what to say). Individuals may not take part in conversations, contribute to class discussions or offer their ideas, and may become isolated. Panic attacks are a common reaction to social interaction.”
3. **Panic Disorder**: According to NAMI, panic disorders are characterized as, “panic attacks and sudden feelings of terror sometimes striking repeatedly and without warning. Often mistaken for a heart attack, a panic attack causes powerful physical symptoms including chest pain, heart palpitations, dizziness, shortness of breath and stomach upset.”
4. **Phobias**: According to NAMI, Phobias are characterized as, “certain places, events or objects create powerful reactions of strong, irrational fear.”

# DEPRESSION

We all have experienced periods of feeling low or sad, however experiencing that emotion is different than struggling with depression.

According to NAMI, depression is characterized as, “is more than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch. It’s a serious mental health condition that requires understanding and medical care”. Depression is long term and “changes how someone functions day-to-day, and typically for more than two weeks”.

Symptoms can include: Changes in sleep, changes in appetite, lack of concentration, loss of energy, lack of interest in activities, hopelessness or guilty thoughts, changes in movement (less activity or agitation), physical aches and pains, suicidal thoughts.

# BIPOLAR DISORDER

According to NAMI, “Bipolar disorder is a mental illness that causes dramatic shifts in a person’s mood, energy and ability to think clearly. People with bipolar experience high and low moods—known as mania and depression—which differ from the typical ups-and-downs most people experience. The average age-of-onset is about 25, but it can occur in the teens, or more uncommonly, in childhood.

Symptoms can range in individuals, but typically characterized with two distinct phases: Mania and Depression.

**Mania:** are extreme highs in emotions. Symptoms include: Intense feelings of euphoria, excitement, or happiness, excessive energy, insomnia/restlessness, speaking fast or being unusually talkative, having racing or jumbled thoughts, distractibility, inflated self-esteem, impulsive, uncharacteristic, or risky behavior, increased agitation and irritability, hypomania.

**Depression:** extreme lows in one's emotions. Symptoms include: feeling down, sad, worried, worthless, anxious, guilty, empty, or hopeless, lack of interest, feeling tired, low energy, forgetfulness, indecisiveness, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep, changes in appetite, thoughts of death and/or suicide.

Bipolar disorder can exhibit episodes of psychosis, paranoia, delusions, and hallucinations.

# SCHIZOPHRENIA

According to SAMHSA, schizophrenia is characterized as, “ delusions (false beliefs), hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that don’t exist), unusual physical behavior, and disorganized thinking and speech. It is common for people with schizophrenia to have paranoid thoughts or hear voices.

According to NAMI, schizophrenia “interferes with a person’s ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others. It is a complex, long-term medical illness.”

Symptoms that are present in schizophrenia are:

- Hallucinations.
- Delusions.
- Negative thinking: this can appear and is often mistaken for depression.
- Cognitive issues and disorganized thinking.

# SUICIDAL THOUGHTS & BEHAVIORS

Suicidal ideation are thoughts and self-harming urges that anyone can experience. Suicidal ideation can be passive, moderate, or severe.

**Passive suicidal ideation** can be a thought of “I wish I could go to sleep and not wake up” or “I wish I wasn’t alive.” They could be fleeting thoughts or consistent that do not escalate more than thought.

**Moderate suicidal ideation** is having a passive thought with a method of how you would put the thought into action.

**Severe suicidal ideation** is having a passive thought with not only a plan, but intent to act and not willing to contact for safety.

# SELF HARMING BEHAVIOR

According to NAMI, “Self-harm or self-injury means hurting yourself on purpose.” The desire to hurt yourself is triggered by emotional distress. Self-harming is a coping mechanism to deal with stressful emotions. Self-harming can look like cutting, burning, head banging, substance usage, or disordered eating,

Self-harming can be seen as a mental disorder, but it is not. In fact, is an indicator that an individual needs better coping skills to help manage the emotional distress they are experiencing.

If you know someone that may be struggling with self-harm, please bring up your concern and speak to them without judgment. Individuals struggling with self-harm tend to keep it a secret, as they feel shame and guilt around their behavior. Even though the conversation may be difficult, using active listening is a step in the right direction to help guide them toward safety,

Active listening includes: paraphrasing, reflective listening and non-verbal communication to show you care and are interested. Use of silence can be beneficial.

# WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs can be a person, place or thing that triggers suicidal ideation, suicidal thoughts or self-harming urge. Warning signs can be events, behaviors, thoughts, environments, people, situations, etc.

We can learn what our warning signs are by being mindful and present in the moment to notice how our body responds to our present moment and environment.

How to identify and prevent triggers from escalating: Check in with yourself throughout the day and asking how you are feeling and why you are feeling that?

# SUICIDE SURVIVORS GROUP

Are you unsure if someone you know is struggling with the loss of a loved one from suicide? There are some common emotions they may be experiencing that can help one to understand their loss.

Shock Guilt  
Despair Stress  
Confusion Depression Denial  
Anger  
Sadness Loneliness Denial  
Self-blame

Pain  
Shame  
Hopelessness Numbness  
Helplessness Rejection  
Disbelief  
Anxiety  
Abandonment

# SUICIDE SURVIVORS GROUP

Not knowing what to say to someone who has lost a loved one to suicide is common. Below you will find some guidance on how to best support someone who has lost a loved one to suicide:

- Create a safe space: be empathetic, give them space to talk about their loss and the person they lost.
- Ask if they would like to talk about the person they lost. Don't avoid bringing up their name.
- Active Listening: Use paraphrasing, reflective listening and non-verbal communication to show you care and are interested. Use of silence can be beneficial.
- Listen without judgment.

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# CHILDREN AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Children experience changes in their mental health. Sometimes they are unable to express verbally how they are feeling, instead they act out. There are ways to identify if your child is struggling with their mental health.

Children's brains are not fully developed, making it difficult for them to think rationally or logically when a trigger occurs. It is important for parents to be emotionally aware of how to identify emotions and how to guide their child through a healthy process in dealing with the emotion.

# GETTING HELP

If you or a loved one are experiencing symptoms that may be reflective of a mental health disorder, or experiencing symptoms that are affecting your well being, please seek help.

Call or text 988

Call 911

Call NAMI

See Resource page for more resources.

# 03

## “TOOLS FOR ADULTS”

Tools and exercises to help guide your way  
through the dark.

# DAILY ACTIVITIES

Use the space below to write some activities you can do for self care.

EXERCISE

---

SUNLIGHT

---

JOURNALING

---

MUSIC

---

FRIENDS

---

HOBBIES

---

# FINDING GRATITUDE

## What is gratitude?

Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative of the people, things, and places around us. It is the act of being kind, warm, or generous to those that we are thankful for.

How can I practice finding gratitude? Watch this [video: Gratitude is Good for You](#)

The three good things practice. **Watch the following video: [3 Good Things](#)**

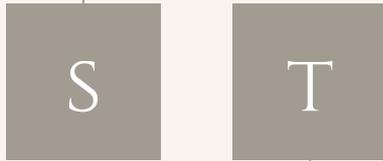
- Make a list of 3 good things in your life.
- Notice how you feel after focusing on these good things in your life.

# MY GRATITUDE LIST

# THE STOP METHOD

## STOP

Take a moment to stop  
what you are doing

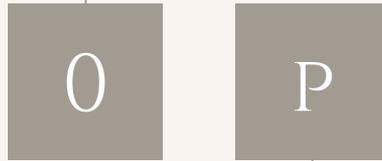


## TAKE A BREATH

Find a moment to take a  
deep breath.

## OBSERVE

Observe your thoughts,  
emotions and feelings.



## PLAN

What is the next step in  
your plan to take care of  
yourself?

CREATE YOUR STOP PLAN HERE

# INTERVENTION IN A HIGH DISTRESSED EMOTION

TIPP is a great skill set to remember when in a high stressed situation and you are expressing self-destructive behaviors. This helps change our nervous system and body chemistry and help de-escalate to access a more rational mind.

**T** – Temperature; example; dunking/splashing your face in ice water, ice cubes on your face/neck.

**I** – Intense Exercise – sprinting, jumping jacks, fast push ups.

**P** – Paced Breathing – deep breathing exercises.

**P** – Progress Muscle Relaxation – this is an exercise where you slowly tense up each muscle in your body and slowly relax while you are taking deep breaths.

# MY NOTES

# TAKE THE LEAP TO HELP SOMEONE

LISTEN

Listen to what they have to say.

ASK

Ask open ended questions.

SUMMARIZE

Summarize what was discussed and the safety plan.

L

E

A

P

S

EMPHASIZE

Show compassion and support.

PARAPHRASE

Paraphrase what they said to make sure you understand and to validate their feelings.

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# HOW CAN I LEAP INTO HELPING SOMEONE STRUGGLING WITH A CRISIS?

(WRITE YOUR PLAN BELOW)

# IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS

	TRIGGER	IMPACT	EMOTION
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

# CREATING YOUR SAFETY PLAN

A safety plan is crucial when you are experiencing a mental health crisis or feel triggered by a person place or thing.

**Step 1: Identify your triggers and warning signs:** what are your triggers or warning signs that a crisis or suicidal urges may be developing?

**Step 2: Coping Strategies:** what helps when you feel overwhelmed or triggered?

**Step 3: My distractions:** what activities help during a crisis?

**Step 4: My supports:** who are the individuals that support you during a crisis?

**Step 5: Environment:** Find a safe environment.

**Step 6: List of helpful resources and contacts:** doctors, family, support groups.

**Step 7: Gently ease your way back into your environment after a crisis.**

# WRITE YOUR 1-6 STEP PLAN FOR COPING WITH TRIGGERS

# CHALLENGING YOUR THOUGHTS

Challenge your fearful thoughts below

Fear:

What could happen if it comes true

Three empty rectangular boxes arranged horizontally, intended for writing potential outcomes if the fear comes true.

What could happen if it does not come true?

# MY NOTES

# SELF REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**1** How do I feel in this moment?

**2** Is this thought helpful or useful to me?

**3** Is there another perspective to this situation?

**4** Why am I feeling this way right now?

**5** How is my body feeling right now?

**6** Is there someone I can call?

**7** Have I taken care of myself today?

**8** Have I looked over my safety plan?

**9** What is one nice thing I can say to myself?

**10** What is something nice I can do for myself?

# BREATHWORK EXERCISES

FIVE FINGER  
BREATHING

BREATH IN THE  
FLOWER, BLOW  
OUT THE CANDLE

BOXED  
BREATHING

Please see [Page 69](#) for more information

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# ALTERNATIVES TO BREATHWORK AND MEDITATION

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Breathwork and meditation, in some instances, has triggered individuals while they are experiencing a mental health crisis.

Here are a list of alternatives that can help individuals:

- Pg 70 Grounding Work
- Pg 72 5 senses

# HOW TO HELP LOVED ONES EXPERIENCING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND IDEATION

- **Create a safe space for your loved one.**
- **Communicate with a soft tone.**
- **Ask direct questions.** It's better to ask and be wrong. Asking direct questions should be done in a kind, caring tone without judgment.
  - Example: I noticed you have seemed really sad and tired lately. I know you're going through a lot. I wanted to ask are you feeling suicidal?"
- **Non-verbal language:** engage with your loved one while communicating.
- **Signs to look for if loved ones are not forthcoming regarding their suicidal thoughts or ideation:** withdrawing socially, giving away their belongings (esp things they normally wouldn't), risky behavior, big fluctuations in mood, disinterest in life, verbalized desire to die

# 04

## HELPING CHILDREN FIND THE LIGHT

# WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN IDENTIFY FEELINGS

It can be hard to know what and how to speak to a child regarding sensitive matters. Here are some tips to help navigate feelings and suicide with your child.

- Ask yourself how you feel about the topic before speaking to your child.
- Let your child know they are not in trouble and that you care about them.
- If you are still having a hard time getting your child to open up, it's ok to seek help. Please call 988, or check our resources page [here](#), to seek outside help. You don't have to do this alone!

# HELPING CHILDREN IDENTIFY FEELINGS: ACTIVITY

I.C.E

I: Identify the feeling or emotion.

C: Clarify, understand the feeling or emotion.

E: Express that feeling.

# MY NOTES

# TOOLS TO HELP CHILDREN

1. Feelings temperature.
2. Feelings and thoughts worksheet.
3. Games.
4. Deep breathing.
5. Grounding techniques.
6. Self-soothing strategies.
7. Self soothing tool kit.
8. Safety Plan.

# INTERVENTION IN A HIGH DISTRESSED EMOTION

## TEMPERATURE

Change your temperature with an ice cube or heat

T

I

## INTENSE EXERCISE

Perform intense exercise to match intense emotion

## PACED BREATHING

Box breathing: in for 4 seconds, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4.

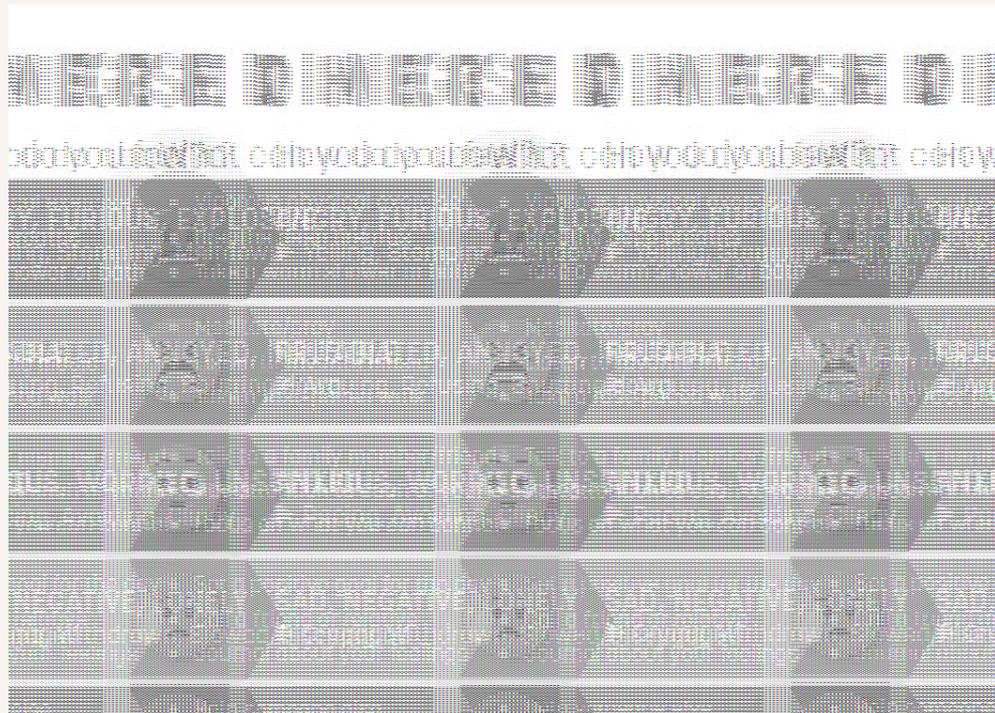
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P

## PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Tighten one muscle group at a time for 5 seconds.

# FEELINGS THERMOMETER



A feelings thermometer is a tool to help children and adults visualize their emotions and then take action to help.

If your child has a hard time communicating their emotions or feelings, sitting down with them and using the feelings thermometer is a great way to help them understand their emotions and help you, the guardian or parent, connect with your child.

# FEELINGS EXERCISE

## Practicing mindfulness.

“What is mindfulness? Mindfulness is a state of mind, achieved, by focusing on awareness in the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations”

The video links below can help guide and explain to adolescents the idea of mindfulness.

Elementary: What is Mindfulness?

Middle: 1) What is Mindfulness?

Why do we need mindfulness and what are the benefits?

Examples: eating food slow, while sitting. Taking moments to pause and reflect on the taste and sensation of the food and how it makes you feel.

# MY NOTES

# FEELINGS EXERCISE

## Guided Meditation for Children

Why is meditation important for children?

Elementary: How mindfulness can improve awareness and attention

Middle: Neuroscience of Mindfulness Meditation in 4 minutes

# MY NOTES

# FINDING GRATITUDE

## What is gratitude?

Gratitude is a positive emotion that involves being thankful and appreciative of the people, things, and places around us. It is the act of being kind, warm, or generous to those that we are thankful for.

How can I practice finding gratitude? Watch this [video: Gratitude is Good for You](#)

The three good things practice. **Watch the following video: [3 Good Things](#)**

- Make a list of 3 good things in your life
- Notice how you feel after focusing on these good things in your life

# MY GRATITUDE LIST

# GUIDED DEEP BREATHING FOR CHILDREN

- 1) Five finger breathing – use your index finger to guide your breaths on your opposite hand. Starting at the bottom of your thumb; take a deep breath in and hold at the top and a deep breath out as you slowly move your finger down your thumb, repeat with the opposite index finger, and again with your middle finger until you have done all five fingers.
- 2) Pretend you are holding a candle. Take a slow deep breath in to smell the candle, hold, and slow deep breath out to blow out the candle.
- 3) Pretend there is a box in front of you – with your index finger slowly count to four as you move your finger up, hold for 4 secs, slowly move your index finger to the right for 4 seconds, hold for 4 secs, slowly move your index finger down for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, slowly move your finger to the left for 4 secs

# GROUNDING TECHNIQUES FOR CHILDREN

**54321 Method**: This is helpful to relieve anxiety and panic symptoms. It isolates each of your senses through observation of your present environment.

**5: Five things you can see around you.**

**4: Four things you can touch around you.**

**3: Three things you can hear around you.**

**2: Two things you can smell around you.**

**1: One thing you can taste.**

# GROUNDING NOTES

# SELF-SOOTHING TECHNIQUE FOR CHILDREN

**5 Sense Self-soothing tool kit** – have small items on hand that target each of your senses that brings calmness or happiness to you

Examples:

**Sight:** picture of your pets/children.

**Hearing:** music, asmr.

**Taste:** gum, mint, small piece of candy.

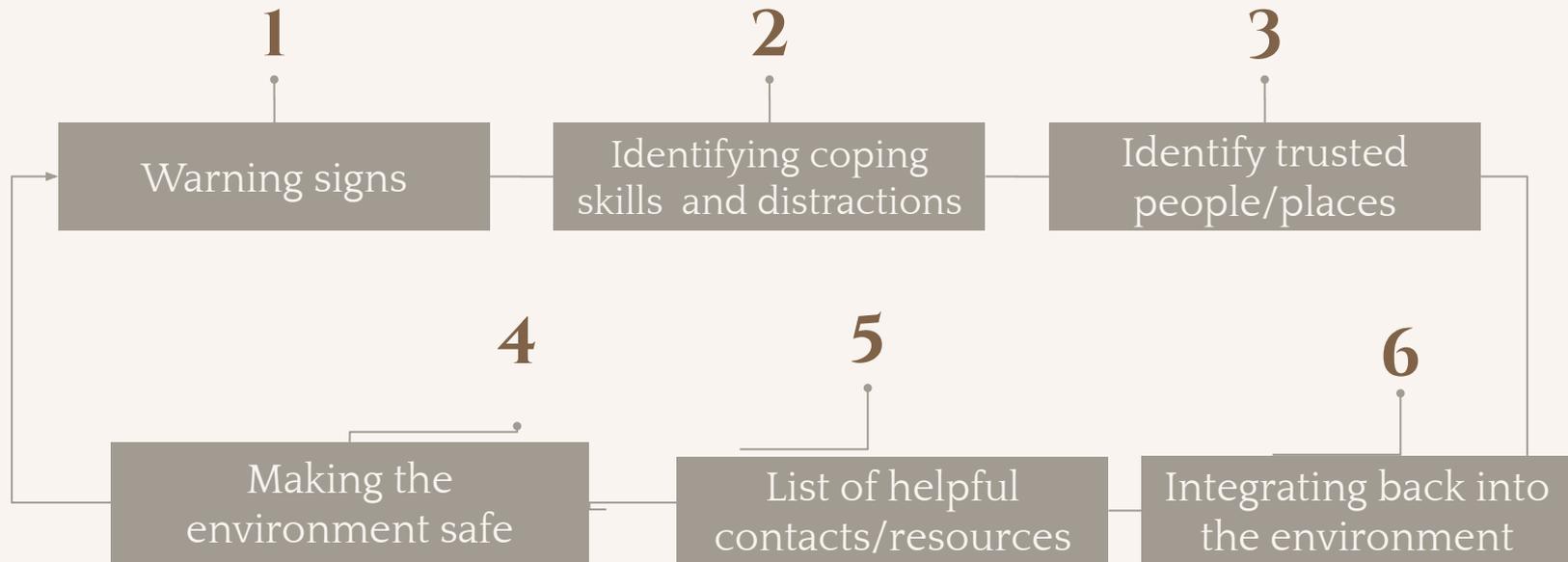
**Touch:** fidget, lotion.

**Smell:** essential oil roller, candle.

# WHAT'S IN MY SELF-SOOTHING KIT?

# SAFETY PLAN FOR CHILDREN

Follow this template to help a child create a safety plan.



# MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH

# 05

How to get help to take care of yourself in the short and long term

# PLEASE – ARE YOU MEETING YOUR BASIC NEEDS?

**PI** – Physical illness; are you getting rest when you are sick? Are you taking medications or increasing your remedies?

**E** – Eating; are you getting the necessary fruits and vegetables? Are you getting a lot of processed foods?

**A** – Avoid mood altering substances – are you taking illicit drugs? Are you consuming too much caffeine or sugars?

**s** – Sleep; are you getting the necessary hours you need? Do you have a healthy bedtime routine?

**E** – Exercise; studies show 20-30 minutes of daily exercise is necessary for a healthy lifestyle; how do you get that in?

# MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH

1. It's ok to take care of yourself. Set boundaries with friends, family, loved ones and coworkers. Let others know what you need and what you are able to give.
2. Accept your difference rather than compare yourself to others.
3. Using other resources to help when you experience a mental health crisis or event: therapist, support group, support system.
4. Check in with yourself and go over safety plan that includes: warning signs, coping strategies, distractions, supports, Professional support, your safe environment.
5. Keep safety plan easily accessible when you are at home and away from home.
6. Activities and workbook exercises from chapter 4 and chapter 5 (children).

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(WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS HERE)

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