

STARTING MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS WHILE STUCK @ HOME

Over the past 22 years, BYTE has been working with young people to learn about their perspectives on a number of important topics from substance use and mental health to relationships and consent.

We love working with youth and hearing all about their skills, strengths and resilience as they navigate their mental health, their relationships, being leaders in their community, worrying about climate change and much more!

In light of Covid-19 and a temporary pause in our in-person work with youth, we'd like to share some ideas and activities to start some important conversations at home! But really, these books can be used at anytime!

Over the next few weeks, we will tackle topics such as Healthy Relationships, Healthy Minds and Safer Partying. Drop us a line at manager@yukonyouth.com if you have any specific requests!

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR TALKING TO YOUTH

When we spend time talking to youth about anything we try to follow these tips and tricks for creating open, honest and non-judgemental conversations:

- Think about your own biases!** Of course as adult allies we all have our own experiences that influence our opinions. Acknowledge where these biases might be present in your conversations and do your best to catch yourself if your thinking turns judgemental.
- Know your purpose!** Why do you want to have this conversation? For us, we want to remind young people that they have already have a lot of skills for navigating the world!
- Be genuine.** Be honest and sincere. It'll be much easier to have these conversations if youth understand there is no hidden agenda.
- There are no bad questions.** We try not to shy away from any questions and do our best to answer everything openly and honestly. If we can answer honestly now, we can build a strong foundation for more serious questions later.

•**Manage your expectations!** Don't strike up this conversation with the goal of teaching a lesson or to change minds. Instead, be open-minded about learning about their perspectives.

•**Be conscious of your tone.** Use a tone and ask questions that encourage honest answers. Try saying things like "I want to understand more about that."

•**Listen!** Be present and set aside enough time to have a meaningful conversation. Listen to understand and not to respond (this has been a super helpful mindset for us)

•**Be comfortable with some silence.** If there is silence in your discussion, don't stress about filling it. Sometimes young people need time to open up, even if you have a close relationship with them already!

•**Be supportive and empower.** You might not necessarily agree with everything they say, but let them know you stand by them and their right to make their own decisions and have their own opinions.



HEALTHY MINDS 101

In this workbook we will explore how mental health differs from physical health, what stress is and how it affects our bodies and minds. We will brainstorm different coping mechanisms that young people can use to achieve mental wellbeing. The goal of this workbook is to help you achieve both short- and long-term mental wellbeing in a positive, non-triggering way. We will explore mindfulness, self-care practices, recognizing and expressing emotions, and building positive support networks to provide you with tools to develop coping skills, resilience, and positive mental health.

WE'VE FACILITATED
18 HEALTHY MINDS
WORKSHOPS FOR YOUTH
AGED 12-18 SINCE
2015

**"(I'm) learning how
to find peace with
myself." - A
previous workshop
participant**

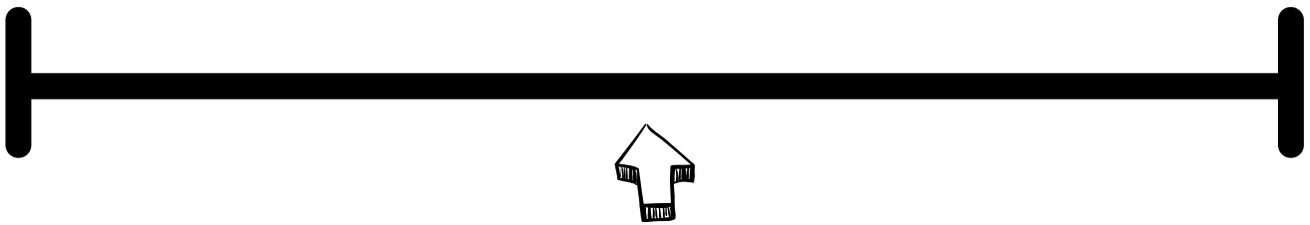
Activity 1: Where do you Stand? Values Exercise

Let's start this workbook with a few simple questions to help you think about mental health & wellbeing. There are no right or wrong answers here - simply your own opinions. After each statement, **circle** or **highlight** whether you agree or disagree with the statement. If you aren't sure or don't have an opinion, **circle** or **highlight** neutral. You may also find yourself in between any of those options.

AGREE

NEUTRAL

DISAGREE



Activity 1: Where do you Stand?

Mental health is more important than physical health.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Your physical health influences your mental health.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Adults have better mental health than youth.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Friends and family influence your mental health.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Elders don't suffer from poor mental health.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Some people can improve their mental health without the help of others.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Activity 2: Emotional Body Map

Mental health and physical health are closely linked and we often physically feel our emotions in different parts of our body. For example, when we are anxious we may feel butterflies in our stomach or have a stomach ache. The goal of this activity is to build awareness of emotions we have and how they affect our physical health.

Grab some markers or pencil crayons and take a few minutes to fill out the Emotional Body Map on the pages below by writing, colouring or drawing symbols on the areas of the body where you **physically** experience certain emotions. For example, maybe you feel embarrassed in your cheeks and you think red or pink is a good colour to go with that emotion. You'll also find some more questions on the following pages that can help you think through where you might feel emotions in your body.



List 6 emotions that you have felt before:

1. Nervous
2. Happy
3. Sad
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Activity 2: Emotional Body Scan

"When I feel this emotion, what else is happening to my body?"

Heart rate. What happens to your heart rate when you feel certain emotions? Is it fast? does it slows down? Can you hear it pounding? Where do you feel the pulse?

Lungs. Think about your breathing, does it feel restricted? Is it fast? Is it slow? Do you feel like you are holding it in? is it normal?

Skin. Does your skin feel more cold/clamy or even sweaty? Do you have goosebumps when you feel certain emotions? Is it rosy or flushed?

Hands and feet. Are your extremities tingly? Are they numb?

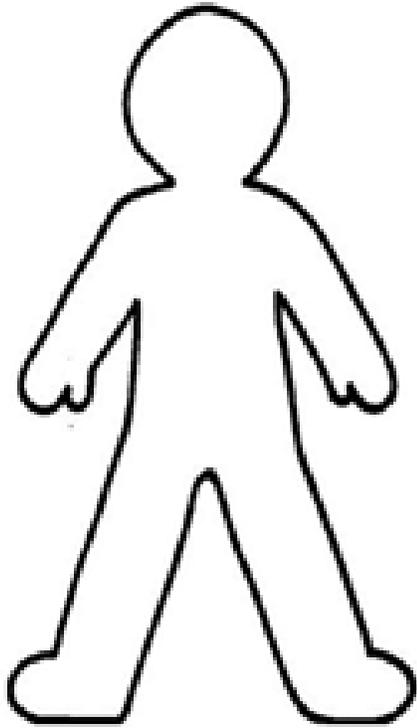
Eyes. Do your eyes feel heavy? wet? dry? tired?

Stomach. How do you feel inside when feeling certain emotions? Are your inside churning? Does it feel normal? Do you get cramps?



"When I feel this emotion, what else is happening to my body?"

write the emotion of the dotted line



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**EMOTIONS YOU
MIGHT FEEL:**

anger

peace

pride

satisfaction

loneliness

hopeless

gloomy

lost

heart broken

anxious

stressed

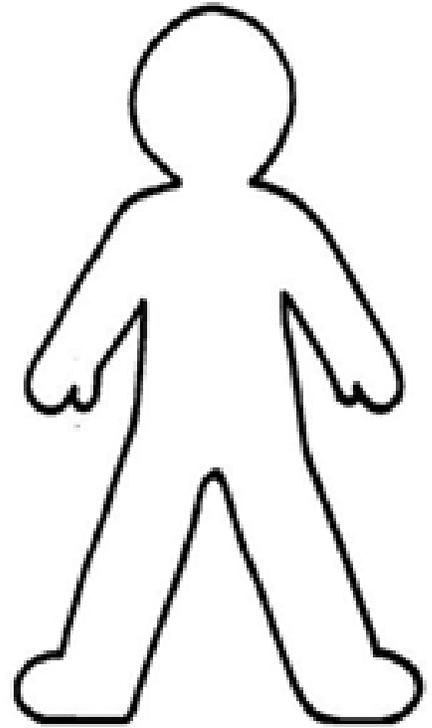
horrified

panicked

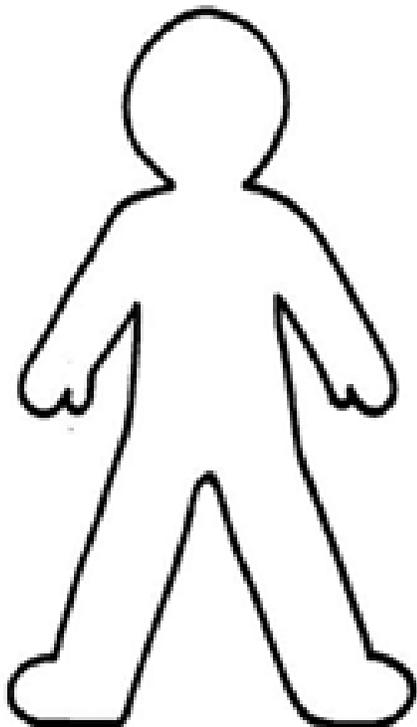
insulted

bitter

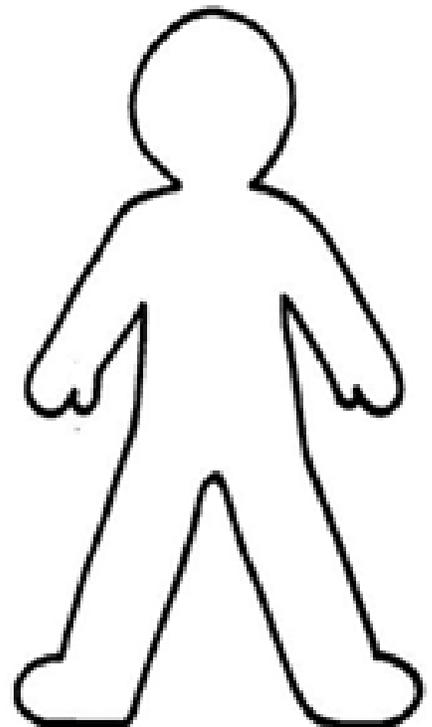
other



.....



.....



.....

Activity 3: Reflection on Mental Health

What words come to mind when you think of Mental Health?

What are signs that you might be experiencing good mental health?

What are signs that you might be experiencing poor mental health ?

Activity 3: Definitions

It's important to have a good understanding of each of these definitions before we get too far into the workbook, as these terms can often be quite similar and are easy to confuse.

Mental Health: Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, poor mental health and mental illness are not the same things. A person can experience poor mental health and not be diagnosed with a mental illness. Likewise, a person diagnosed with a mental illness can experience periods of physical, mental, and social well-being.

Physical Health: Physical wellness promotes proper care of our bodies for optimal health and functioning. Overall physical wellness encourages the balance of physical activity, nutrition, rest and mental well-being to keep your body in top condition.

Well-Being: Well-being includes the presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning. In simple terms, well-being can be described as judging life positively and feeling good.

Activity 3: Reflection on Mental Health

After reading those definitions, what does mental health mean to you?

What are some ways you cope with big emotions?



Activity 3: Reflection on Mental Health

Here are some things that are affected by mental health;

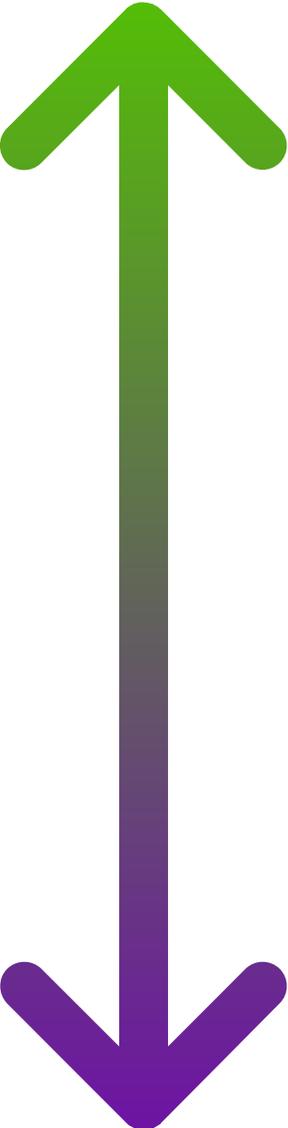
- Not being able to concentrate at school
- Not feeling like yourself
- Not wanting to do anything
- Feeling numb
- Feeling overtired or having a hard time sleeping
- Extreme mood changes
- Excessive fears, worries or feelings of guilt
- Having thoughts of suicide
- weight and appetite changes

Here is a list of some coping strategies

- Talking to someone you trust
- Listen to music
- Journaling about your emotions
- Using time-management strategies if you feel overwhelmed by a busy schedule
- Draw
- Drum
- Breathe / meditate
- Take time for yourself in nature, ground yourself
- Go for a walk
- Shower
- Eat a whole meal
- Sleep

Activity 4: Stress Spectrum

There are 4 stages in the Stress Spectrum.



Eustress- (good stress) are stress levels that are helpful. Eustress is a moderate, routine kind of stress that elevates our attention and functioning and at times contributes to a sense of excitement and joy in life.

Tipping Point- is when eustress becomes distress, the tipping point is different for everyone. Some can handle more stress than others.

Distress- is when eustress or good stress becomes too much to bear or cope with.

Burnout- refers to chronic physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual fatigue resulting from stress.

ACTIVITY: On the next page, read the different statements and color, highlight, draw an arrow or a line to pinpoint where the statement falls on your stress spectrum.

Remember that stress will look different for everyone and what one person might find tolerable some might find more stressful.

Activity 4: Stress Spectrum

How stressful would you rank these scenarios?

1. Going to an interview for a new job.



2. Not able to wake up and feeling tired all the time.



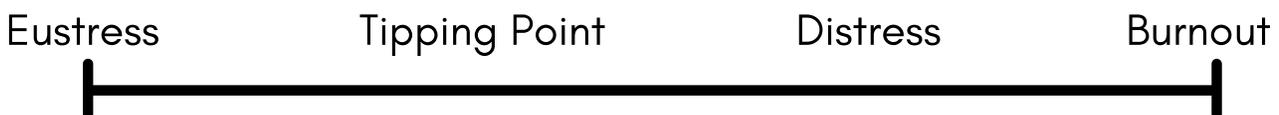
3. You are starting to fall behind in your school work.



4. You are feeling the pressure and things are getting out of control.



5. You have some homework due tomorrow, but you think you will have it done in time.



6. You feel a little anxious before a big sports game.



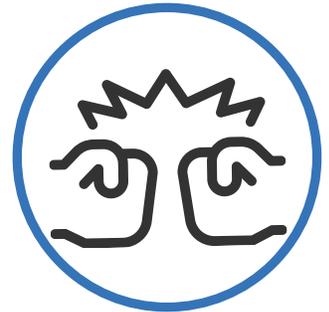
Activity 5: Fight, Flight or Freeze

When we are put in different difficult situations our body responds by either fighting, freezing or running. In this activity we will explore how our body reacts in challenging situations. On this page you will find some examples of fight, flight and freeze, on the next page, read the statements and circle which reaction you would be more likely to have in those different situations

Example of these responses are:

Fight:

Crying, hands in fists, desire to punch, tight jaw, grinding teeth, fight in eyes, glaring, fight in voice, desire to stomp, kick, smash with legs, feelings of anger/rage, homicidal/suicidal feelings, knotted stomach/nausea, burning stomach, metaphors like; bombs, volcanoes erupting.



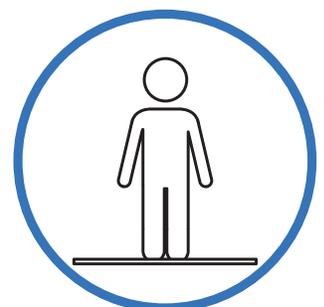
Flight:

Restless legs, feet/numbness in legs, anxiety/shallow breathing, big/darting eyes, leg/foot movement, reported or observed fidgety-ness, restlessness, feeling trapped, tense, sense of running in life, excessive exercise.

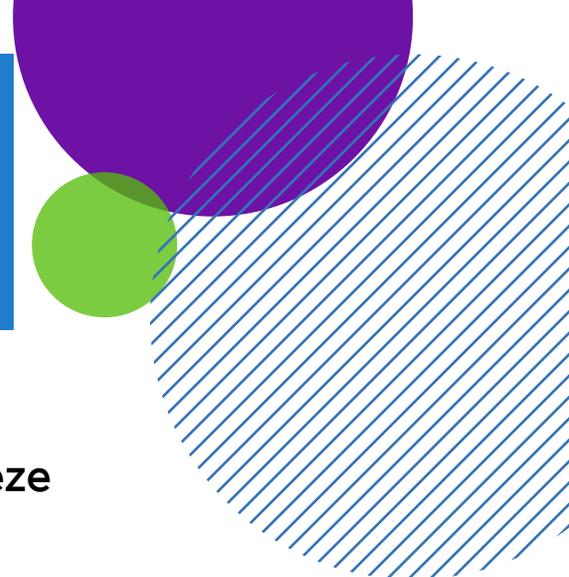


Freeze:

Feeling stuck in some part of body, feeling cold/frozen, numb, pale skin, sense of stiffness, heaviness, holding breath/restricted breathing, sense of dread, heart pounding, decreased heart rate (can sometimes increase), orientation to threat.



Activity 5: Fight, Flight or Freeze



You have to present a public speech

Flight

Flight

Freeze

You run into your ex at a party

Flight

Flight

Freeze

Your teacher puts you on the spot to answer a question

Flight

Flight

Freeze

You get pulled over by the police - even if you have done nothing wrong

Flight

Flight

Freeze

You run into your boss at the grocery store after you quit

Flight

Flight

Freeze

Your parent finds your secret stash and confronts you about it

Flight

Flight

Freeze

There's 5 second left to your game, it's a tie and you have the ball

Flight

Flight

Freeze

Somebody you like asks you on a date

Flight

Flight

Freeze

You get a call from a potential employer for an interview

Flight

Flight

Freeze

Activity 6: A to Z Self-Care Ideas

Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Self-care can also be boring! Taking time to brush your teeth, eat and take your medication are all ways we care for ourself! Below, write down your self-care ideas, starting with every letter of the alphabet. Don't worry about writing down your ideas in alphabetical order. GO!

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

G.

H.

I.

J.

K.

L.

M.

N.

O.

P.

Q.

R.

S.

T.

U.

V.

W.

X.

Y.

Z.

Here is a fun way to practice self-care! Over a week, see how many of these activities you can do to care for your mental health and wellbeing.

B I N G O

Ate a healthy breakfast	Took a mental break	Went for a walk	Called a loved one	Tried a new recipe
Stretched for 10 minutes	Drank water	Chose a healthy snack	Tried a new exercise	Started a journal
Meal plan for the week	Slept for 8 hours	FREE!	Wrote down my goals	Prioritized self-care
Brushed my teeth twice a day	Woke up by 8 AM	Sat down to eat lunch	Went to sleep before midnight	Practiced kindness
Cleaned my room	Had time to myself	Made my bed	Found a new hobby	Took a shower

Debrief 6: A to Z Self-Care Ideas



Self-care is important so we can maintain a healthy relationship with ourselves and prioritize our mental health. Here are some additional ideas to practice self-care!

Take Some Alone Time

Take this time to do something that you enjoy doing. Whether it be reading a book or going for a bike ride. It does not matter how long you do this for.

Socialize

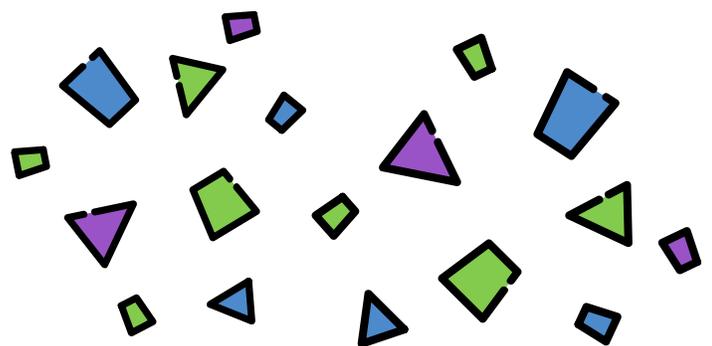
It is hard right now but maybe go on a zoom call with some friends. Here are some websites that you can also play games on:
skribbl.io
playingcards.io

Exfoliating Honey and Oatmeal Facial Mask

Mix 1 tablespoon of honey, 1 tablespoon of uncooked oatmeal (I prefer to grind in a blender to a powder rather than use whole oats for a finer, gentler exfoliation). Apply to face and let sit for 15-20 minutes. Use a warm washcloth to wipe off.

Have Fun

Do what ever you do for fun. Watch a funny movie, play some video games. Try finding a new hobby, or pick up that old hobby you used to love.



Instagram Pages you should follow



Sometimes our social media can also impact our mental health. We might be comparing ourselves to others and feel depressed or anxiety if we aren't doing the same things. But we can use our social media to help manage our mental health as well! Here are some mental health awareness, self-care and self-love pages on Instagram that we love! Give them a follow and see how it changes your newsfeed :)



@recipesforselflove

@jackdotorg

@sadboysca

@myeasytherapy

@mh.advocates

@youth_mental_health

@anxietyhealer

@wematterorg

@byteyukon

@unapologeticallysurviving

@anxietyguy

@ullaakut

@peaceofmindcan

@advocating.mentalhealth

@wholeheartedschoolcounselling

@realdepressionproject

#boringselfcare

Counselling and Support Resources



If you or someone you know is struggling, you know it might not always be safe or easy to ask for help. Here is a list of resources you can reach out to for help:

Kids Help Phone Line: 24/7 Crisis Line. Call 1-800-686-6868 or text 686868 to speak to someone

Yukon Canadian Mental Health Association: drop-in counselling by phone or video. Call (867)668-6429 to schedule an appointment

Residential Schools Resolution Health Support and Crisis Line: support for residential school survivors and their families. Call 1-866-925-4419 or for their Northern specific line call 1-866-509-1769

Sexualized Assault Response Team: talk to a trained professional about your options by calling 1-844-967-7275

Youth Emergency Shelter: safe bed and support services for youth aged 17-23. Call (867)633-7699 after 4PM

Women's Transition Home Crisis Line: Call (867) 668-5733

Counselling and Support Resources



Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services: Offers rapid access counselling services with daily slots available. No previous connection with MWSU necessary. Phone to schedule an appointment.

Whitehorse: Call 867-456-3838

Watson Lake: Call 867-536-3222

Teslin: Call 867-332-4088

Dawson City, Mayo, and Old Crow: 867-993-4300

Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Ross River and Faro: 867-332-5468

Haines Junction, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing and Beaver Creek: 867-334-5688

Carcross: 867-332-3157

Phone toll-free in the communities: 1-866-456-3838

Counselling and Support Resources



Here are some more counselling resources that you can access if you are living in the Northwest Territories in the Beaufort Delta Region.

Aklavik: (867) 978-2941

Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic: (867) 952-2245, ext. 2 and ext. 3

Inuvik and Paulatuk: (867) 777-8101

Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok: (867) 396-3024
(Child, Youth and Family Counsellor)

Sachs Harbour: (867) 690-4181
(Wellness Worker)

Tuktoyaktuk: (867) 977-2511, ext. 3
(Child, Youth and Family Counsellor)

Tuktoyaktuk: (867) 977-2511, ext. 5
(Wellness Worker)