



GGC Make A Difference Days

National Mental Health Week

May 2-8, 2016



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

From relationships, body image and school to changing family dynamics, there can be many sources of stress and anxiety for girls and young women today. While facing these ups and downs is part of our daily lives, mental health issues like stress and anxiety can make it harder to handle everyday stresses. Learning to cope with stress in a positive way is an important part of mental health.

National Mental Health Week (May 2-8, 2016) is an excellent opportunity for Girl Guide units to help girls learn to take care of their mental health. This instant meeting focuses on activities that will help girls develop techniques for managing stress and anxiety in healthy and positive ways.



Don't forget to share what you're doing and how you're recognizing National Mental Health Week with us. Tell us what activities your unit participated in and share photos with us using **#MENTALHEALTH** and the following tags:



Girl Guides of Canada



@girlguidesofcan



@girlguidesofcanada

OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES

This instant meeting provides an opportunity for girls to learn basic facts and information about stress and anxiety and develop healthy skills for coping with these mental health challenges. It can be completed in one or two unit meetings.

Complete both the **STARTER ACTIVITY** (page 6) and the **CLOSING ACTIVITY** (page 17) as well as two to three of the other activities. After completing this instant meeting, Guiders can choose to present girls with the Healthy Living Fun Crest available in the online store.



Look for the **OUTDOOR** icon throughout this instant meeting. This icon identifies activities that can easily be done outdoors with little or no modifications.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Girls will learn about stress and/or anxiety.
- Girls will explore healthy strategies for managing stress and/or anxiety.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this instant meeting, girls will:

- Increase their understanding of stress and/or anxiety
- Be able to identify how stress and/or anxiety affects their life
- Develop healthy strategies for handling stress and/or anxiety

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is stress?
- What is anxiety?
- Describe some things or situations that make you stressed or anxious.
- How do stress and anxiety make you feel?
- What are some things that you do to feel better when you're stressed or anxious?
- How does your life change when you're stressed or anxious? Think about being at home, school, eating, sleeping, etc.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

“Mental Health is a resource for living. Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. Mental health is a positive concept. Mental health is our ability to manage life in ways that help us cope with stresses and reach our goals. Mental health is closely tied to physical health. Mental health is ‘the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, act, in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.’ Mental health can also be called ‘mental or emotional wellbeing’, ‘emotional health’, ‘flourishing’, or ‘mental wellness’. Mental health is a ‘state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.’ Mental health is distinct from, but related to, mental illness. Mental health is a component of overall health. There is no health without mental health.”¹

Mental health is part of our overall health. It includes, but is not limited to:

- How we think, feel and behave
- How we cope with the regular ups and downs of life
- How we feel about ourselves, our lives and our future
- How we deal with negative things in life
- Our self-esteem and confidence

Did you know?

- Almost 1 in 5 young people live with mental health disorders
- Only 1 in 5 children in Canada who need mental health services ever receive professional help
- 3.2 million youth aged 12-19 are at risk for developing depression
- 50% of mental disorders develop by age 14 and 75% by age 24
- Girls consistently report more negative emotional health than boys
- Mental health problems can affect any young person regardless of age or circumstances²

¹ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Mental Health https://www.porticonetwork.ca/documents/81358/128451/Mental_Health_Postcard.pdf/a2c28ab2-a22d-4060-b8ed-38942385e5cd

² Kids Help Phone. Mental Health: Did You Know? <http://kidshelpphone.ca/KHP/media/TeensMediaLibrary/PDFs/KHP-Mental-Health-Did-You-Know.pdf>

It's important to remember that *everyone* experiences varying levels of stress and anxiety in their daily lives. Stress and anxiety come in many forms, and levels differ from person to person not only among adults, but children and youth as well. Healthy amounts of stress help motivate people to complete tasks or solve problems. Anxiety can be a helpful response in dangerous situations as it triggers the 'fight-or-flight' response, and many "firsts" in life (first day of school, first night away from home, etc.) may create a normal level of anxiety. When girls develop the tools to cope with stress and anxiety, they will carry those tools with them into adulthood.

While the lines between stress and anxiety often blur due to how similar they can be, it's important to remember they do pose different challenges for individuals and shouldn't be thought of or treated as the same thing.

PLEASE NOTE: The following table can be used to help girls understand and recognize how they may feel when dealing with stress or anxiety. This is not an exhaustive list of signs and symptoms, and should not be used by Guiders to try and diagnose girls.

	STRESS	ANXIETY
WHAT IS IT? ³ (Use the explanations in bold to help explain stress and anxiety to girls in your unit.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feelings people have when they are under too much pressure • What you feel when worried and/or uncomfortable about something • Normal and comes from both good and bad things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Good stress might be when you feel nervous about a test and it helps you study harder ◦ Unhealthy stress might make it hard to sleep; give you bad dreams, headaches or stomach aches; or make you feel just kind of yucky, tired, 'down' or sad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling worried, scared or nervous a lot • It might come from something that makes you upset, something you can't stop thinking about, or for no reason at all • Normal and comes from both good and bad things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Good anxiety might make you nervous before a big sports game and help you practice harder; it also shows that you have a good healthy range of feelings ◦ Unhealthy anxiety might be if your feelings of being scared, worried or nervous stopped you from doing the things you need and/or want to do
CAUSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure from school (e.g. projects and grades), extra-curricular activities • Social situations with peers and those in power (e.g. teachers, leaders, parents, etc.). • Frustration with understanding and/or learning a new idea or skill • Changes to routine (e.g. home life, school life, etc.) • Relationships with family, friends, dating, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening situations (e.g. bullying, being in the spotlight, new situations, etc.) • Pressure (e.g. tests, falling behind others, learning challenges, etc.) • Worries over disappointing others (e.g. parents, teachers, peers, etc.)

³ Kids Help Phone; Info Booth: Feelings - <https://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Kids/InfoBooth/Feelings.aspx>

HOW GIRLS MIGHT FEEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify what is causing the stress • Headaches, stomach aches, generally feeling sick • Sleeplessness or needing/wanting more sleep; tiredness • Changes in general mood, anger easily, feeling down/sad • Withdrawing from friends, family and activities they enjoy • Loss of appetite • Concentration issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard time identifying the cause of anxiety • Fear or dread of everyday situations • Panic attacks, chills, headaches, hot flashes, chest pains, stomach aches, heart racing, dizziness, diarrhea, shaking voice • Sleep problems • Concentration issues • Changes in general mood, moodiness, short temper, clinginess • Development of nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pulling/twirling hair, clenching/grinding teeth, etc.) • Nightmares • Feeling like being choked or throwing up
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Research indicates that there is potential for Guiding to help in the prevention of mental health issues of girls. With the involvement of caring and consistent Guiders in their lives serving as positive role models, girls are at less risk against vulnerabilities in mental health and other areas.⁴

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Please refer to page 19 for a list of resources for more information on stress and anxiety, or for those seeking additional support and assistance on any mental health topic.

A template of a pocket card has been provided on page 21. Guiders may choose to make copies to provide to girls and have them fill in local contact information (two national resources are already provided) of where girls can turn to for help. Girls can carry these cards with them should they or someone they know need help or assistance related to mental health/illness.

Guiders of older girls may want to consider inviting an expert in the field of stress and/or anxiety or general mental health to assist in the delivery of this instant meeting.

NOTE TO GUIDERS

Should there be concerns about the health and safety of a particular girl or should a disclosure be made during this instant meeting, Guiders should refer to the following GGC documents, procedures and resources:

- Provincial Girl Protection Advisor (name and contact information can be obtained from your provincial office)
- Adult Member Support Procedures, Module 4: Girl Protection and Self-Harm
- Contact membership@girlguides.ca

⁴ Girl Guides of Canada. (2015) Cognitive, Physical, Emotional and Social Development of Girls in Canada: A Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada Perspective. Toronto, ON.

BEGIN the instant meeting with this Starter Activity.

STARTER ACTIVITY: WORRY WALL

MATERIALS (WILL VARY DEPENDING ON APPROACH CHOSEN):

- Paper/cardboard bricks; options could include:
 - Draw bricks onto pieces of coloured or white paper; Guiders should have them cut out (if necessary) in advance.
 - Make 3D bricks in advance out of folded/origami paper using the following video instructions: <http://www.luuux.com/viz/how-to-make-origami-bricks>. **NOTE:** to end with a brick with enough space for girls to write/draw on, make 28 cm (11”) squares from 43x28 cm (11x17”) sheets of paper.
 - Bricks could also be made from GGC cookie cases covered with white or coloured blank paper (Guiders should prepare these in advance)
- Coloured markers, pencil crayons, crayons
- Tape for posting on wall (if needed)

There are two ways your unit can create a worry wall:

1. Create individual bricks for girls to write/draw on, and then post them on the wall to create a paper worry wall.

OR

2. Have girls write/draw onto 3D bricks, then stack the bricks into a worry wall.

As girls arrive at the meeting, direct them to the worry wall area. Girls can spend a few minutes writing and/or drawing current or past worries onto bricks. Girls can also think about how these worries make them feel. Guiders should explain that there is no right or wrong answer.

When all girls have arrived and Guiders are ready to begin, the activity can be concluded by giving girls a quiet minute or two to look at the worry wall. Explain that tonight you will be talking about stress and anxiety, which can make people feel worried. Explain that being able to identify what makes them worry, and how worry makes them feel is an important first step to being able to handle stress and anxiety in healthy and positive ways.

IF GUIDERS WISH, THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO COMPLETE A TRADITIONAL OPENING SONG/ACTIVITY THAT MAY BE PART OF REGULAR MEETINGS.

Whether completing a traditional opening song/activity or not, proceed with the instant meeting by having girls think about the words ‘stress’ and ‘anxiety’ for a minute. Ask girls to share other words or ideas that come to mind when they think about stress and anxiety. If girls are having difficulty, they can be prompted with some of the following questions:

- What are some times or things that make you feel worried?
- How does your body feel at these times? (Think about your muscles, stomach, head, heart, etc.)
- What do you want to do when you worry a lot?

Share with girls, definitions of stress and anxiety (see table below) and provide some examples of when girls may experience these feelings and some of the things they may feel.

	STRESS	ANXIETY
WHAT IT IS...	What we feel when we are worried or uncomfortable about something. It's the different feelings we have when we're under too much pressure.	Like stress but may be more about what <i>might</i> happen. Might make you feel scared or nervous.
EXAMPLES...	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Balancing test and projects ◦ Trying to get good grades <p>Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Arguing with parents/siblings ◦ Getting chores done ◦ Moving <p>Friendships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Arguing with friends ◦ Being bullied ◦ Wanting to fit in <p>Within yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Getting sick ◦ Seeing someone you care about get sick ◦ Feeling bad about your body 	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nervous before a test ◦ Anxious before making a presentation <p>Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Disruptions or changes to routine <p>Friendships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Worry about what others think ◦ Making new friends <p>Within yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A situation that upset you that you can't stop thinking about ◦ Feeling like you are in danger
HOW WE FEEL IT...	<p>In our bodies and our minds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Anger ◦ Sad or down ◦ Sick (headaches, stomach aches, tired) ◦ Worry ◦ Confusion ◦ Fear 	<p>In our bodies and minds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Feeling shaky ◦ Sick (stomach cramps, headaches) ◦ Dizzy ◦ Faint ◦ Breathing fast or finding it hard to breath ◦ Heart beating fast ◦ Sweating ◦ Tense muscles

If girls are comfortable doing so, they can share personal examples of when they have felt stress or anxiety. Reinforce the idea that both stress and anxiety are normal and most people will experience them many times in their lives. If girls are comfortable doing so, have them share how experiencing stress and anxiety makes them feel and how it affects their lives. Guiders can conclude by explaining that the rest of the meeting will be spent participating in some activities that can be used to help girls effectively manage their stress and anxiety in healthy ways.

≡ **CONTINUE** your meeting by selecting two or three of the activities below. ≡

ACTIVITY 1: BREATHE IN, BREATHE OUT

Before beginning the activity, ask girls how they feel when they are stressed or anxious. To help girls with this, have them think about: how their bodies react (stomach, head, muscles) and what emotions they feel (angry, frustrated, calm, excited).

If working with younger girls, you may want to alter the activity as follows:

Have a large outline of a girl on paper that can be hung on the wall. With a crayon or marker, girls come up to the poster and draw an 'x' on the parts of the body where they feel stress or anxiety. Girls can then describe in their own words what those parts of their body feel like. Girls can look at the poster for similarities and differences in where others feel stress and anxiety.

Talk with girls about how breathing exercises can be useful to help relieve stress and anxiety by helping them to focus on one thing as they calm themselves. Guiders can explain that when people are stressed or anxious, they generally take quick shallow breaths, making their bodies feel frustrated and tense. Deep controlled breathing helps the whole body feel more relaxed and calm. These breathing exercises are fast, can be done anywhere and don't draw attention.

Try one or more of these breathing exercises with the girls. Be sure to see if any girls have questions or need support as the activity progresses. Remind girls not to talk during the exercise and that they should follow the instructions as they are read as best they can.

OPTION1: BASIC CONTROLLED BREATHING

1. Sit or stand in a relaxed position. You may choose to close your eyes, or keep them open.
2. Slowly inhale through your nose as you count slowly to five in your head. As you breathe, concentrate on letting your abdomen expand, keeping your shoulders lowered in a relaxed position. (It may be helpful for younger girls to put a hand on their stomach so they can feel their abdomen expand.)
3. Pause for one or two seconds.
4. Slowly breathe out through your mouth as you count to eight in your head.
5. Repeat a few times for stress/anxiety relief or longer as a mini meditation. Remember, if your thoughts wander, bring them back to focus on your breathing.

OPTION 2: TAKE FIVE BREATHING

1. Open one hand with your fingers outstretched and palm facing you. Your pointer finger on your other hand is like a pencil and will trace your open hand during the breathing activity. Remember to keep your breathing slow and steady, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
2. Place your pointer finger at the bottom of your thumb. As you slide your finger to the top of your thumb, breathe in.

3. When your pointer finger gets to the top of your thumb, pause and hold the breath for a moment.
4. Breathe out through your mouth as you slowly slide your pointer finger down the other side of your thumb.
5. Continue the same process for each finger on the hand.
6. When finished, think for a moment. How are you feeling? If you're still not calm or are feeling stressed/anxious, begin again and take another five.

OPTION 3: BUBBLE BREATHING

For this example, you will need a bubble wand and solution for each girl.

1. Have girls hold their wand in front of their lips and blow hard. Have girls provide feedback on the result.
2. Have girls take a deep breath and try again blowing slowly and steady into the wand. Gain feedback from girls on the results.
3. Explain to girls that when they are stressed and/or feel anxious they might take fast shallow breaths without realizing it. Taking a moment to remember the bubbles can help them focus on deep, slow, steady breathing which will help their bodies relax.
4. Allow girls to practice this deep controlled breathing until they can easily create big bubbles.

If you have access to the internet and a computer with speakers, Spark and Brownie Guiders may want to consider showing the following fun music video from Sesame Street featuring the singers Common and Colbie Caillat on Belly Breathing:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpyIA

ACTIVITY 2: BIG EMOTIONS POSTER

(This activity is based on 5 Steps to Managing Big Emotions from Childhood 101; <http://childhood101.com/2015/03/helping-children-manage-big-emotions/>)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Take 5 Icons; one set per girl (see page 22); Guiders may want to cut these out in advance
- Blank paper, one sheet per girl
- Various colours of washable paint – at least six different colours
- Brushes
- Glue
- Markers

NOTE TO GUIDERS: This activity may be a bit messy.

Have a short discussion with girls about “big emotions.” Girls may want to comment on which emotions they think are “big” and why, as well as why these emotions may be harder to handle than others. If girls need help getting started, try providing the example below.

FOR EXAMPLE, *frustration can be a big emotion. Have you ever been frustrated with something at school, like a math problem? Or a new game? And no matter how hard you try, you just can’t seem to get it, even when everyone else does? When frustration like this happens, you might be tempted to yell at someone, or throw something, or bang your fists against the desk or even just give up. But what would be really helpful is for you to be able to tell someone how you are feeling and to find a healthy way to calm yourself down so that you can try again.*

Explain that girls will be making a poster that will help them remember some of the things they can do when they feel big emotions like stress and anxiety.

Provide each girl with a set of the Take 5 Icons. Take a couple of minutes to have girls talk about the strategy shown in each icon and how it can help with stress and anxiety.

POSTER INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set up paints and markers ahead of time.
2. Provide each girl with a blank sheet of paper and have them title their poster “Big Emotions: What to Do.” Depending on the abilities of the girls in the unit, Guiders may want to provide a template of this that girls can copy.
3. Working with a partner if needed, have girls paint one of their hands by painting each finger, their thumb and palm with a different colour (each girl will need six different colours).
4. Girls will press their handprint onto the center of their paper. (Have girls wash their hands before proceeding with the next step.)

5. Have girls carefully glue one of the Take 5 Icons pictures at the end of each of the fingers and thumb on their sheet. The order of the icons doesn't matter – girls can be encouraged to paste them in the order that they would use each of the strategies.
6. Girls can then label each strategy one through five (beginning at the thumb) with marker.
7. Have girls who finish early practice the five strategies with a partner.

At the end of the meeting, girls can take their posters home to hang in a place where they will see it (locker, bedroom, fridge, etc.) to help them to remember how to use each strategy. Guiders may choose to create an extra poster to hang in the meeting space as a reminder as well.

TAKE 5 ICONS

Use the following to help explain the icons (page 22) to girls, what they mean and the various strategies they show.

1. Remind myself that it's never OK to hurt others.

It's never ok to hurt others physically, emotionally or be destructive to their property no matter how big our feelings are.

2. Take three deep breaths or count to 10 slowly.

Take a deep breath slowly, hold while you count to 10 in your head and then let it out slowly. Repeat two more times.

3. Use words to say how I feel and what I wish to happen.

Be clear with your words. Explain to others how you are feeling, what you need and what you want to happen to make you feel better.

4. Ask for help to solve/deal with the problem.

Find someone you trust and who can help you. Explain what you need from them or be clear in what you need help with.

5. Take time to calm down.

Walk away. Do something else for a while. Take some time to be active. Come back to the situation with a clear head when you are calmer and start again.

ACTIVITY 3: STRESS BALLS

For many people, the sense of touch is very powerful and having something to touch and do with their hands when stressed or anxious can instantly help them calm down. These simple stress balls are fun, healthy tools for girls of all ages in coping with stress and anxiety.

Ask who has used a stress ball before, and how they felt when they used it. Did it help them feel less stressed or anxious? Did it help focus their thoughts? Explain that stress balls are a great tool to use at anytime and anywhere.

NOTE TO GUIDERS: This activity may be a bit messy.

MATERIALS NEEDED (PER STRESS BALL):

- Two round balloons of any colour (or one sock per girl can be used in place of balloons)
- Filling material: flour, cornstarch, rice or sand
- Funnel (rolled paper funnels also work)
- Spoon
- Pencil, skewer or long toothpick
- Scissors
- Markers

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Allow girls to choose two balloons. Have girls set one of the balloons aside. This balloon should be the colour they want visible at the end of the activity.
2. Have girls blow up the balloon that they will not see and let the air out several times to stretch the balloon.
3. Use a funnel to fill the balloon, by spooning the filling material into the funnel. Be careful to ensure that the balloon doesn't slip off and spill the filling material. For younger girls, it may be helpful to have them work in pairs for this step with one girl holding the balloon and the funnel while the other scoops the filling material.
4. If the funnel becomes clogged, carefully use the pencil/skewer to push the filling material into the balloon without puncturing the balloon.
5. Fill with filling material until it reaches the neck of the balloon. Carefully remove from the funnel and tie a knot in the balloon to prevent it from spilling. Younger girls may need help tying the knot.
6. With their second balloon that will be visible, have girls cut most of the neck off this balloon. For younger girls, Guiders may want to do this part in advance.
7. Stretch the second balloon over the first to help contain filling material should a hole appear.
8. Girls can decorate their stress balls with markers!

Remind girls that they can use their stress balls anytime they feel stressed or anxious to help them relax, refocus and release some tension.

ACTIVITY 4: YOGA

Stress and anxiety can quickly take a toll on the body – tense muscles, low energy, shallow/oxygen-poor breathing and thoughts that are fast and swirling. Physical activity when stressed or anxious is an opportunity to begin to manage these feelings in a healthy way. Yoga is an opportunity to access inner strength, improve body awareness while being physically active. It also is a time of quiet reflection, to focus on breathing and the physical body in a non-competitive way.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- List of yoga poses (see pages 23 -25)
- Yoga mats if available, but not necessary
- Calming music (preferably without lyrics) and equipment to play it if desired

Before you begin, have a brief discussion with girls about how their bodies feel when they are stressed or anxious. If girls are having trouble describing how their bodies feel, have them scrunch their faces while also raising their shoulders, making fists and tightening as many muscles in their arms and legs as they can. Have girls hold this for a few seconds and then release. Have girls describe the way they felt and sensations they had when tensed. Explain that physical activity can help with all the tension that builds up in their bodies when they are stressed or anxious, while also giving them a chance to focus on their breathing, calm their thoughts and begin to relax.

Have girls remove their shoes and socks and spread out throughout the room. If using yoga mats, have girls unroll them. Before beginning the yoga poses, take a few minutes to practice deep breathing. Have girls focus on breathing deeply so that their abdomens expand, not their chests, making their abdomens expand completely on inhale and fall completely on exhale. All of this should be done without strain, in a slow smooth easy way. Next have girls try the same type of deep breathing extending their abdomens first and then continue to inhale and also fill their chest. When exhaling, girls should focus on emptying their chest first and then the abdomen. Remind girls that this is the type of breathing they should try and use throughout the yoga session.

With calming music playing (if desired), have girls follow you through various yoga poses (see pages 23-25). Depending on the age and engagement level of girls, Guiders can use as many or as few yoga poses as they choose for the session. Girls should try and remain silent, focusing on their breathing and completing each pose to the best of their ability. Younger girls may not complete each pose with accuracy; however, Guiders not leading can circulate and assist girls as needed. Each pose should be held between 10-30 seconds (depending on the age and abilities of girls). Poses should not be held to the point that they cause pain. Girls should continue their deep abdomen and chest breathing while holding the poses.

Guiders may want to begin with easy pose or seated meditation and finish with corpse pose. These three poses can be held for 1-2 minutes or longer to allow girls time to gather their thoughts for the activity ahead and to regain their thoughts once it is completed.

ACTIVITY 5: COLOURING MANDALAS



Colouring is an amazing way to help us de-stress, feel calm, and to create wellness and quietness in the brain. It is commonly used as a way to relax for children and adults of all ages. Mandala loosely means circle or centre and is a spiritual symbol that represents the universe. The mandala's shape promotes relaxation, balance, creativity and healing, which is why they are often used in colouring and art therapy.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Assorted printed mandalas (see page 26 or reference websites at the end of the activity)
- Blank paper
- Crayons, pencil crayons and markers
- Pencils

NOTE: Guiders may want to advise girls of a time limit in advance, so girls are not disappointed when the activity ends and their page is not complete. Remind girls they will be able to take their pictures home and complete them later.

Guiders can begin by asking who likes to colour, what they like to colour and why. Ask girls if they know any adults who colour and why they think colouring has become so popular with adults recently. Share with girls that when we focus on a specific activity, like colouring, the mind focuses on that activity, and not on our stresses, worries and anxieties. It also brings out our creativity and artistic sides. Explain that this activity will allow them to experience the calming effects of colouring as a way to ease stress and anxiety. Girls can take their colouring/drawing home with them to complete later.



Guiders can provide a variety of printed mandalas for girls to colour. Various websites where free printable mandalas are available can be found below. Guiders can also provide girls with blank paper and allow girls to draw and create their own mandala design.

<http://mandala-4free.de/en/en-Mandalas-flowers.htm>

http://www.coloringcastle.com/mandala_coloring_pages.html

<http://printmandala.com/>

http://www.coloring-book.info/coloring/coloring_page.php?id=209

ACTIVITY 6: MINDFULNESS



“Mindfulness means paying attention to something ‘on purpose,’ being aware of our thoughts and staying in the present moment.”⁵

Mindfulness helps to improve wellbeing by making individuals more aware of things they may not pay attention to, focusing attention on what’s happening right now rather than your worries. Mindfulness helps improve physical and mental health by decreasing stress.

Below are a couple of mindfulness activities to try with girls. Before beginning, have girls share some of the words/phrases/images that come to mind when they hear the term “mindfulness.” Share the definition with them from above. Have girls comment on whether it is easy or hard to pay attention to things ‘on purpose.’ Have they ever tried this before? How did it work? How and why do girls think this might be helpful in handling stress and anxiety?

OPTION 1: JUST LISTEN

(Modified based on: [http://www.youthdeved.ie/sites/youthdeved.ie/files/Mindfulness Exercises.pdf](http://www.youthdeved.ie/sites/youthdeved.ie/files/Mindfulness%20Exercises.pdf))

MATERIALS NEEDED: None

Ask girls to get into a comfortable sitting position on a chair or on the floor. If they are comfortable doing so, have them close their eyes. (If girls are uncomfortable with closing their eyes, explain that they can continue with their eyes open, but may find that they are better able to focus with their eyes closed.) Read the following italicised instructions to girls.

Picture your sense of hearing like a radio that can be tuned into different stations. Right now I want you to tune your radio into the sounds that are farthest away for a moment. (Pause and allow girls to listen.)

Now I want you to change the station and listen to the sounds right around you. (Pause for a few moments allowing girls to listen.)

I want you to change your station again now and this time, listen to the sounds of your own body – your breathing, heartbeat and so on. Bring your attention to each part of your body. Starting with the tips of your toes, move your attention up slowly through your legs, hips, back, arms, shoulders, neck and head. (Pause for a few minutes to allow girls to move their attention through their bodies.)

I want you to now change your station again and just listen to your own breathing. (Pause for a few moments.)

Now change your station again and listen to the sounds right around you. (Pause again for a few moments to allow girls to listen.)

One last time, I want you to change your station and listen to the sounds furthest away. (Pause for a few moments to allow girls to listen.)

When you feel ready to do so, open your eyes and take a deep breath.

⁵ National Youth Council of Ireland. NYIC Bouncing Back . [http://www.youthdeved.ie/sites/youthdeved.ie/files/Mindfulness Exercises.pdf](http://www.youthdeved.ie/sites/youthdeved.ie/files/Mindfulness%20Exercises.pdf)

Have girls share how they feel now compared to how they felt at the start of the activity. Have them share comments on how easy or hard it was to concentrate. Girls can share what the easiest part and the hardest part of the activity were. Ask girls how often they just stop in their everyday lives, focus on and listen to the sounds around them. Conclude by discussing why it might be important to listen more.

OPTION 2: SAVOURING THE TASTE

(Modified based on: <http://www.youthdeved.ie/sites/youthdeved.ie/files/Mindfulness%20Exercises.pdf>)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Two of something small for everyone to eat (small squares of chocolate, grapes, raisins, etc.). Be sure to check with girls for food allergies and dietary restrictions in advance.

Have girls sit in a comfortable position. Distribute one food item to all the girls and tell them they can eat it. Ask girls to comment on the taste, feel, texture, temperature and smell of the food item. Girls may provide general comments, too.

Distribute a second food item. This time tell girls they need to wait to eat the item. Have girls close their eyes if they are comfortable. When all girls have the second food item, read the following to the group. (This paragraph was written with a square of chocolate in mind. If using a different food item, adjust as needed.) Girls should not respond to the questions within the paragraph, but simply think about how they would answer.

Hold your chocolate square in your hand. Feel the weight and shape of your chocolate. Bring it to your nose. Smell the chocolate. How does it smell? Is your mouth watering? Now, with your eyes still closed, place the chocolate in your mouth and let it rest on your tongue. Can you taste the chocolate? Where on your tongue can you taste it? Feel the texture of the chocolate as it begins to melt. Can you still smell it? What temperature is the chocolate? As the chocolate rests in your mouth, think of the cocoa bean it started as. Can you imagine what that bean might have looked and felt like? Notice the chocolate in your mouth again. Is it still on your tongue or has it moved to another area of your mouth. With your eyes closed, swallow the chocolate. Think about the chocolate moving down your throat and into your stomach. Can you feel this? When you're ready, open your eyes.

Talk with girls about how this second experience was different from the first and from how they may normally eat this food item. Have girls comment on what they learned from eating the food item mindfully. Discuss what else girls can do in their lives “mindfully” (for example, focusing on their actions in the moment, or information from their other senses – touch, sound, smell, etc.) and the differences they could experience in their lives if they lived more “mindfully.”

≡ CONCLUDE your instant meeting with the following Closing Activity. **≡**

CLOSING ACTIVITY: BREAK DOWN THE WALL

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Blank paper, two sheets per girl
- Crayons, pencil crayons, markers

Have girls think about what they experienced during the meeting and what they learned about stress, anxiety and how to handle them in healthy ways. Have girls draw or write one thing they will take away from the meeting related to stress and one related to anxiety on their papers.

Girls may choose to draw or write:

- a fact they learned
- how stress and/or anxiety feel
- how they feel after the meeting
- a strategy they learned that they will use in the future
- anything else they choose related to stress and/or anxiety

When girls are finished, hang their papers on the wall and have a gallery walk and talk where girls can discuss their ideas and those of others in positive ways related to what they learned.

Have girls gather around their worry wall from the beginning of the meeting. They can collect the brick(s) they created earlier in the meeting. Have girls look over what they wrote/drew reflecting their worries. Remind girls that worries can cause stress and anxiety, but they are perfectly normal and everyone experiences them at different times in their lives. Explain that many worries that cause stress and anxiety can be managed with the types of activities they completed in this meeting. Sometimes, however, extra help from professionals is needed which is still perfectly normal. Remind girls that they can now use these activities any time to help them with any stress and/or anxiety. As a symbolic way to show their worries and anxieties can be managed, have girls crush, tear up and rip apart their worry bricks.

IF GUIDERS WISH, THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO COMPLETE A TRADITIONAL CLOSING SONG/ACTIVITY THAT MAY BE PART OF REGULAR MEETINGS.



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MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

The following are resources for Guiders and girls looking for more information on stress and/or anxiety, or for those seeking additional support and assistance on any mental health topic.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Kids Help Phone – www.kidshelpphone.ca; 1-800-668-6868 (free, 24/7, confidential, anonymous and available to children and youth 5-20 years)

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) - www.camh.ca/en/hospital/Pages/home.aspx

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)- www.cmha.ca

Local CMHA locations can be found across the county here:

www.cmha.ca/get-involved/find-your-cmha

Mental Health Commission of Canada - www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English

eMentalHealth.ca, (Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario) - www.ementalhealth.ca

mind your mind - <http://mindyourmind.ca/>

ALBERTA

Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division - <http://alberta.cmha.ca/>

Alberta Health, Addiction and Mental Health Services -

www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/addiction-mental-health.html

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division - www.cmha.bc.ca/

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre - <http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>

BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services - www.bcmhsus.ca/

MANITOBA

Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba - <http://winnipeg.cmha.ca/>

Mental Health Services for Children, Youth and Families - www.matc.ca

Mental Health Education Resource Centre of Manitoba - <http://mherc.mb.ca/index.php>

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Canadian Mental Health Association, Newfoundland and Labrador - <http://cmhanl.ca/>

Thrive, Community Youth Network - www.thrivecyn.ca

Bridge the gAPP - www.bridgethegapp.ca

NEW BRUNSWICK

Canadian Mental Health Association, New Brunswick - <http://cmhanb.ca>

Capital Region Mental Health and Addictions Association - www.crmhaa.ca

Partners for Youth, Dots NB - www.partnersforyouth.ca/dotsnb/



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services -

www.hss.gov.nt.ca/social-services/mental-health-and-addictions

NOVA SCOTIA

Canadian Mental Health Association, Nova Scotia - <https://novascotia.cmha.ca/>

Nova Scotia Health Authority -

www.cha.nshealth.ca/mentalhealth/programs_services/child_youth_services.htm

IWK Health Centre - www.iwk.nshealth.ca/mental-health

NUNAVUT

Ilisaqsivik Society and Family Resource Centre - <http://ilisaqsivik.ca/>

Embrace Life Council - <http://inuusiq.com>

ONTARIO

Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario - <http://ontario.cmha.ca/>

Children's Mental Health Ontario - www.kidsmentalhealth.ca

Youth Net - www.youthnet.on.ca/en/home

Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario - www.cheo.on.ca/En/cheomentalhealth

QUÉBEC

Canadian Mental Health Association, Québec; Association Canadienne Pour La Santé Mentale - Division du Québec - www.acsm.qc.ca/

Tel-Jeunes - <http://en.teljeunes.com/home>

AMI-Québec - <http://amiquebec.org/>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Canadian Mental Health Association, Prince Edward Island - <http://pei.cmha.ca/>

Health PEI, Mental Health Services - www.healthpei.ca/mentalhealth

SASKATCHEWAN

Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan - <http://sk.cmha.ca/>

Government of Saskatchewan - www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/accessing-health-care-services/mental-health-and-addictions-support-services and www.employeeservices.gov.sk.ca/wellness

YUKON

Yukon Health and Social Services - www.hss.gov.yk.ca/mental_health.php

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES POCKET CARD



Girl Guides of Canada Guides du Canada

Bust Your Stress

- Take five breathing
- Check in with a friend
- Catch some zzzzzs
- Treat your body well
- Try and focus on the positive/good things around you

Where Do I Get Help?

National Supports
Kids Help Phone: (24/7, free, anonymous, confidential, youth 5-20)
 1-800-668-6868 or www.kidshelpphone.ca

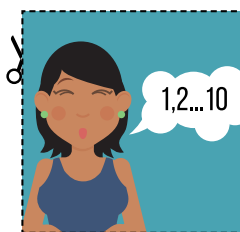
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
www.cmha.ca or Find Your Local CMHA - www.cmha.ca/get-involved/find-your-cmha/

Local Supports

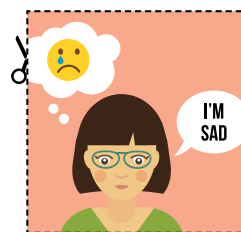
TAKE 5 ICONS



1. Remind myself that it's never OK to hurt others.



2. Take three deep breaths or count to 10 slowly.



3. Use words to say how I feel and what I wish to happen.



4. Ask for help to solve/ deal with the problem.



5. Take time to calm down.

YOGA POSES



Easy pose or seated meditation



Cat pose



Cow pose



Seated forward bend

YOGA



Child's pose



Tree pose



Warrior III



Legs up the wall pose

YOGA



Standing forward bend



Downward dog



Extended triangle pose



Corpse pose

COLOURING MANDALA

