



Girl Guides  
of Canada  
Guides  
du Canada

# Mighty Minds Guides Program



THE PSYCHOLOGY  
FOUNDATION  
OF CANADA  
LA FONDATION  
DE PSYCHOLOGIE  
DU CANADA

*Girl Guides of Canada would like to thank Kids Help Phone and The Psychology Foundation of Canada for their support and assistance in the development of Mighty Minds. Their expertise in the areas of child and youth mental health has been fundamental in ensuring Mighty Minds is a strong mental health program based on research and best practices for girls and young women across Canada.*



## Guides Challenge

The Mighty Minds Challenge is designed to help girls develop positive mental health skills they can use in their daily lives, while addressing the stigma that surrounds mental health and illness in our communities. Mighty Minds offers many different activities girls in units can choose to do. Some require planning and organizing and some can be done with just the information provided here. As you work with girls to plan your Mighty Minds meeting(s), review the activities and decide which ones are suitable and of interest. Then you can mix and match activities to create your unit meeting. Don't forget to begin with the provided Starter Activity and end with the provided Closing Activity for a full experience.



Don't forget to share what you are doing in the Mighty Minds Challenge by telling us about your participation in the program and sharing photos with us on social media using **#MightyMindsGGC** and **#MentalHealth** and the following tags:



Girl Guides of Canada



@girlguidesofcan



@girlguidesofcanada



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

Complete the Starter Activity and the Closing Activity as well as **at least one activity from each of the three themes**. After completing the Mighty Minds Challenge, Guiders can choose to present girls with the Mighty Minds crest, available from [thegirlguidestore.ca](http://thegirlguidestore.ca).

**NOTE:** Throughout this Challenge document, you will notice text in **BLUE**. This text is provided as a sample dialogue that Guiders may choose to use to explain various concepts, ideas or terms to girls. Guiders should feel free to adapt these sections, based on what works for them. Guiders should also feel free to use these sections as mini scripts in their unit meeting, depending on their individual knowledge and comfort levels on the topic.



≡ **BEGIN** the Challenge with this Starter Activity ≡

## Starter Activity – Building Blocks of Health

Materials: (will vary depending on approach chosen)

- Options for making bricks:
  - 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: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nggz44ADzMs>. Note: to create 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 the building blocks:

1. Create individual bricks for girls to write/draw on, and then post them on the wall to create a paper wall.  
**OR**
2. Have girls write/draw onto 3D bricks, then stack the bricks into a wall.

As girls arrive at the meeting, direct them to the building blocks area. Invite girls to spend a few minutes writing and/or drawing onto bricks/sheets of paper ideas, objects and/or concepts they think are part of health and staying healthy. If girls are struggling, have them think about their own health and the different things that help them be healthy. Girls can also think about how being healthy makes them feel. Guiders should explain that there is no right or wrong answer.

When all the girls have arrived and Guiders are ready to begin, conclude the starter activity by using the bricks to build a wall, or tape sheets of paper to the room's wall in a 'wall' formation. Give girls a quiet minute or two to look at the ideas on the bricks/sheets of paper. Explain that tonight you will be talking about mental health, which is part of everyone's health. Guiders can share that:

### **Mental health is part of your overall health. It's about:**

- how you feel, think, and behave
- how you cope with the ups and downs of everyday life
- how you feel about yourself and your life
- how you see yourself and your future
- how stress affects you
- how you deal with negative things that happen in your life
- your self-esteem or confidence<sup>1</sup>

Explain that being able to understand how mental health is part of their overall health is an important skill. Let girls know that you will be coming back to these bricks at the end of the meeting.

<sup>1</sup> "Mental Health: The Basics," Children's Mental Health Ontario, accessed October 2016, [http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/children\\_youth/introduction.php](http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/children_youth/introduction.php).



≡ **CONTINUE** the Challenge by selecting one activity from each of the themes. ≡

## THEME 1 – General Mental Health

Mental health is a natural part of overall health and something that everyone has and experiences. Mental health has strong connections to feelings and emotions and is best thought of as a continuum from optimal mental health to poor mental health. Each person will experience a range of feelings and emotions, and be at countless places along that continuum at various times in their lives. Experiencing this range is normal and healthy. Good mental health involves the building of skills to spend as much time as possible on the positive side of this continuum and lessen the impact of negative emotions.

### Objective:

- Girls will learn about mental health and illness.

### Outcomes:

At the completion of this theme, girls will demonstrate:

- an understanding of what mental health is and its role in their daily lives
- knowledge of the distinction between mental health and illness and the relation between the two
- the ability to identify people and organizations where additional help is available
- insight into supporting the positive mental health of themselves and others

## Theme Activities:

### Okay Not To Be Okay

Girls will explore how feelings play an integral role in mental health. Girls will learn how feelings vary from person to person and will have the opportunity to practice strategies for supporting someone who may not be feeling ‘okay.’

### Materials:

- Blank paper – one sheet per girl
- Poster paper
- Markers, pencil crayons, crayons
- Pens, pencils
- Scenarios (see page 26)



To begin the activity, Guiders should remind girls what mental health is from the Starter Activity, and that feelings are a vital part of mental health. Let girls know that in this activity they are going to take some time to explore feelings, particularly the ones that might make them feel ‘not okay.’

Guiders will provide each girl with a blank piece of paper and access to various drawing/colouring materials. Ask girls to write one word and/or image to show/describe how they are feeling today. Explain that we feel a range of emotions throughout the day, so girls can choose what they are feeling right now, the strongest feeling or emotion they had today, or the one that stuck with them most. Guiders can let girls know that there is no right or wrong answer and they don’t have to put their name on the paper. Girls should try to be as honest as possible.

When girls have finished, Guiders will collect the papers, shuffle them and then post them on the wall to maintain anonymity. When all pages have been hung up, allow girls some time to have a short gallery walk to look at all the thoughts and images.

Bring girls back together to discuss how the unit is feeling today. Guiders may choose to include the following questions to assist with the discussion:

- What did you notice during the gallery walk?
- What surprised you as you looked at the pages?
- How might you recognize how another girl is feeling?
- It’s typical to experience a variety of feelings and emotions in our lives. Why might this be a good thing?

Guiders can let girls know that **experiencing a wide variety of feelings and emotions is perfectly normal and a good thing. Having a healthy range of emotions is one aspect of good mental health. Because experiencing this wide range of feelings is normal, that means that sometimes we won’t feel ‘okay’ and that’s alright. Not only should we give ourselves permission to feel our true feelings, we should respect others and let them know it’s okay to feel and express what they are feeling. Having different feelings and emotions at the same time is normal and part of what makes us all unique and special.**

Guiders can suggest to girls that when they know someone is ‘not okay’ for some reason, there is still a lot they can do to support this person while respecting how they feel. Brainstorm on poster paper some of the things girls can do to provide support to others when they don’t feel ‘okay.’ Leave this poster hanging for girls to refer to in the last part of the activity.

Break girls into small groups of three to four and let them know they are now going to have the opportunity to practice some of these support ideas. Provide each group with a scenario. Girls will develop a short skit where they ‘practice’ using at least one of the support ideas from the brainstorm. When girls have had time to develop a one-minute skit, Guiders can either bring two or three small groups together and have them present to each other or have all groups present to the rest of the unit. Audience members can provide positive feedback on how they thought the support idea chosen might work, and how it might be improved the next time.



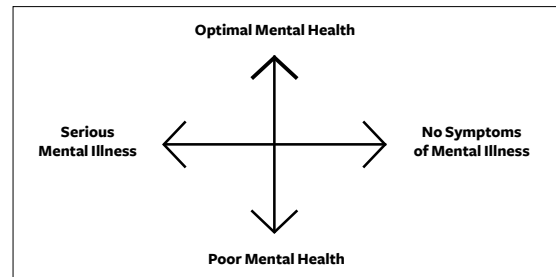
## The Same But Different

(Bracelets based on “Make a Bracelet: Twisted Bead Strand Style” from the Crafts Unleashed blog. <http://blog.consumercrafts.com/jewelry-main/make-a-bracelet-twisted-beads/>)

Girls will explore how mental health and mental illness are different yet connected and make a bracelet to remind them of this.

### Materials:

- Three posters with titles: Mental Health, Mental Illness, Mental Health and Mental Illness
- Mental health/mental illness continuums poster (see example page 27)
- Post-it notes – several per girl
- Pens, pencils, markers
- Tape (any type)
- Yarn or thread
- Beads – in three shades of green (mental health awareness colour)
- Scissors



Guiders should have the three posters (Mental Health, Mental Illness, Mental Health and Mental Illness) hanging on the wall before the activity begins. Each girl should receive several post-it notes and something to write with.

Bring girls together and have them think of words and phrases that they know, have heard, read or believe are used or connected in some way to mental health or mental illness (e.g., crazy, psycho, insane, obsessive, act different, talk to themselves, moody, feel down etc.). Have girls record the words and phrases they think of on the post-its. Explain that each post-it will then need to be placed on one of the posters, depending if girls think the word/phrase is about mental health, mental illness or both.

When all girls have finished, spend some time discussing the words and phrases girls have posted. Post-its can be moved if they have been placed in the wrong place, or removed if they relate to incorrect information. Guides may want to include the following ideas in their discussion:

- How does the word/phrase relate to mental health and/or mental illness?
- How is the word/phrase used?
- Does this word/phrase help to better understand mental health and/or mental illness?
- Does the word/phrase do harm to how we think about and understand mental health and/or illness?

**NOTE:** While it is important that girls are provided with correct information, do not feel that you need to have all the answers. If you don't know why something is incorrect, or what the correct information is, let girls know that you will find out and let them know in the next meeting. However, stigmatizing words, phrases and ideas held in society, while often incorrect, should be left on the posters.)



Before concluding the discussion, Guiders can ask girls about whether it was easy or hard to place the word/phrases on the three posters and why. While referring to the mental health/mental illness continuum poster, Guiders can explain that **mental health and mental illness are different concepts, but they are still very much connected to each other.** While everyone has some level of mental health all the time, not everyone will have a mental illness. Sometimes it's easier to think of them as two lines that cross each other like here on this poster. Here's mental health which is about how we think, feel and behave; how we deal with the ups and downs of daily life, how you deal with stress, how you feel about yourself. Some days your mental health is great and you're up here. You feel good, you're happy; you can deal with the challenges that come up. Other days, you're at the other end. You feel down, life is stressful and hard to deal with. Both of these are normal and we should expect to have days at both ends and all along this line. Mental illness is different from mental health. It is a health disorder, an illness. It's something that a person can't control and didn't choose to have. Because it's different than mental health it's on a different line. But here's how mental health and mental illness are connected: even if you have a mental illness, you can still have good mental health. Think of this like someone with asthma. If you have the right treatment and supports, you can live an otherwise healthy life and function well even with asthma. A mental illness can come and go over time and diagnosis can change. This is like someone with asthma who takes their medication, avoids things that trigger their asthma, and tries to maintain a healthy lifestyle – their asthma may not impact their life too much. Mental illness is like that.

Explain to girls that to help them remember how mental health and mental illness are different yet still connected, they are going to make their own twisted bead bracelets to wear as a reminder. Guiders can explain that they will be using green beads for these bracelets as this is the mental health awareness colour. Let girls know that they can twist and braid their bracelets into a unique look to represent the fact that each person's experiences with mental health and/or illness are different and unique as well.

## Bracelet Steps

1. Each girl will need three pieces of yarn/thread that are slightly longer than the desired length. This will allow extra yarn/thread for tying knots.
2. Tie all three pieces together with a knot.
3. String each piece of yarn/thread with a different shade of green beads.
4. Tie all three pieces of yarn/thread together with a knot to hold beads in place.
5. Braid or twist the three strands to create a unique design or pattern.
6. Tie a slip knot at the other end of the three pieces of yarn/string. This will allow the bracelet to be taken on and off easily. (Video instructions for tying slip knots can be found here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Slip-Knot>)





## Mental Health Bingo



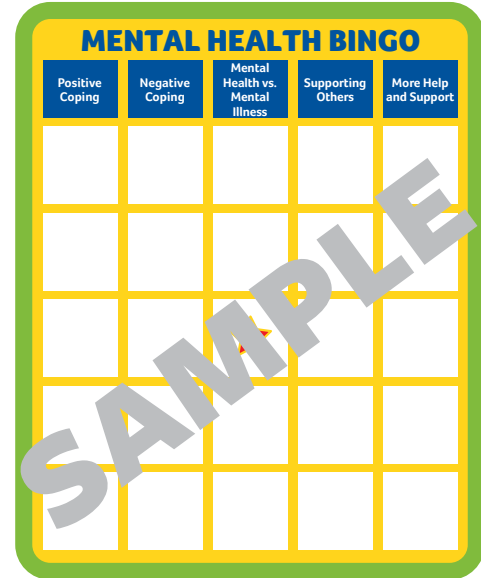
In this activity, girls will learn more about mental health, mental illness, coping, and giving and receiving support through playing bingo and a follow-up discussion.

### Materials Required

- Blank Bingo Card – one per girl (page 28)
- Bingo Square Options Table – several copies (page 29)
- Markers, pens, pencils

To begin the activity, have girls share a few ideas of things they can do to support their own mental health and that of others. (If needed, remind girls of the explanation of mental health from the starter activity.) Guiders can explain to girls that they are going to play a game of bingo where each square on their bingo card will be filled with a different idea or strategy for supporting mental health.

Provide each girl with a blank Bingo Card (page 28) and provide several copies of the Bingo Square Option Table (page 29). Girls will make their own unique bingo card using options from each of the columns on the Square Options Table they choose.



**NOTE:** If girls have questions about any of the items on the Square Options Table, Guiders can address these as girls are completing their bingo cards or after they are complete depending on the questions asked and their individual unit needs.

When all girls have their cards complete, play one or more games of bingo. Guiders can call out items from the Bingo Square Option Table randomly and girls can work towards completing a line, four-corners, whole card or other option chosen.

After the game has finished, have a discussion with girls about the items on the Bingo Square Option Table and those they chose to put on their Bingo Card. Some of the questions Guiders might choose to incorporate into the discussion could include:

- What made you choose the options you did for a particular heading?
- Was there anything on any of the lists that surprised you?
- Which positive coping ideas have you tried in the past or do you use now?
- Which items on any list do you want to learn more about?
- What might be missing from any of the lists?
- How can you incorporate one new idea or strategy into your daily life to help you keep good mental health?





## Practice the Positive - Guides



This activity allows girls to try various techniques for helping maintain positive mental health.

### Materials:

- Materials will vary depending on the strategies chosen for the stations
- Activity instructions – (pages 30 – 32)

### Activity options

1. Basic Controlled Breathing – page 30
2. Making Stress Balls – page 30
3. Yoga – page 31
4. Colouring Mandalas – page 32
5. Mindfulness – page 32

Guiders should have several stations set up ahead of time based on the activities they have chosen. (See activity options above.) Guiders can determine the amount of time girls will spend at each station based on their individual unit. It may be worthwhile to let girls know ahead of time that if they do not complete particular activities, they can take them home and finish them later.

Guiders can begin the activity by talking briefly with girls about things they do to cheer themselves up when they feel down, to calm themselves down when they are angry or upset and that make them feel happy. Guiders can share with girls that learning how to handle big or overwhelming feelings and emotions is part of good mental health and that having some strategies to improve their mood or manage big feelings will help make these situations easier.

Explain to the girls that they are going to have a chance to try out a few different strategies that can help with all this. Break girls into groups, having one Guider with each group. Have each group move to their first station to complete the activity. Girls rotate to the next station as directed by Guiders and the process continues until girls have completed all of the stations (or as many as possible in the time available).



**NOTE:** Guiders can decide how much time groups will spend at each station. Five minutes should be enough at each station except for making stress balls, which will require approximately 10 minutes. Guiders can choose which activities to include based on the overall time available, and could have groups visit all stations, or one or two of the girls' choice.



Before the activity concludes, bring all girls back together for a short discussion. Remind girls that if they are worried that they can't seem to move past a feeling/emotion, or are concerned about what they are feeling, they should talk with an adult they trust. Questions to incorporate in the discussion may include:

- Which activity did you like best? Why?
- Share why one activity helped you relax better than another.
- Which activity do you think could help you cheer up best? Calm down? Which might you feel comfortable doing around others?
- How did you feel after trying some of the activities?
- What strategies do you currently use to deal with various feelings and emotions?
- Why might activities like the ones you tried help with good mental health?
- Why do you think it's important to have a number of different strategies to handle feelings and emotions?





## THEME 2 – Resiliency

Resiliency skills are powerful tools in helping girls bounce back from the challenges in daily life. The ability to bounce back from failure, disappointment, adversity, trauma and every day ups and downs and to move forward in a positive way supports positive mental health and reduces the risk of mental health challenges and/or behavioural problems.<sup>2</sup>

### Objective:

- Girls will learn resiliency skills and how they support good mental health.

### Outcomes:

At the completion of this theme, girls will demonstrate:

- improved understanding of their feelings, emotions and ability to self-calm
- techniques in problem solving, handling failure and adaptive skills
- increased skills in flexible and positive thinking
- realization of how recognition of personal strengths, achievements and self-concept support mental health

## THEME ACTIVITIES:

### Keeping It Balanced



(Modified based on “Balancing the Bucket” from *Flex Your Head*; Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada)

In this activity, girls will play a game to explore the feelings they have in situations that are stressful and out of their control, and consider positive ways for managing these feelings.

### Materials:

- Plastic bucket or Rubbermaid-type bin – one per five or six girls. (The bottom of the bucket must be wide enough to fit at least one foot per girl. The bucket should not be too heavy; any handles should be removed.)
- As many tennis balls and bouncy balls as possible for each group. (Balls should be heavy enough to add some weight, but light enough that they don’t cause harm if they fall on a girl.)

Before beginning, fill each bucket at least half way with balls. Guiders should be sure to have extras close by for the activity.



<sup>2</sup> “Promoting Resilience and Wellbeing,” Response Ability, accessed October 2016, [http://www.responseability.org/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/4783/Promoting-Resilience-and-Wellbeing.pdf](http://www.responseability.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/4783/Promoting-Resilience-and-Wellbeing.pdf).



Before the activity begins, Guiders can explain to girls that they are going to be completing an activity that will help demonstrate the effects stress can have on their mental health.

**NOTE:** A Guider will need to be paired with each group in order to add and remove balls from the bucket during the activity. Depending on the number of groups and Guiders, one Guider could do this for more than one group.

Divide girls into groups of five or six, depending on the size of the unit. Have girls sit on the floor in a very tight circle. Ask girls to lie on their backs and put their feet in the air. Have girls move closer together so that their feet are very close together and still in a circle. Let girls know that you're going to put a bucket full of balls on their feet and that the object of the game is for them to balance the bucket and not let any of the balls fall out. All girls need to be touching the bucket with at least one foot. Depending on the size of the bucket, girls may choose to use only one foot. Girls can only touch the bucket with their feet.

Guiders will place the bucket of balls on the girls' feet. After a few moments, Guiders will begin to either add or remove balls at random to change the weight of the bucket making it more difficult or easier. Guiders can also randomly give girls instructions that make their task more challenging such as:

- Everyone using two feet, remove one foot
- Everyone use two feet
- Everyone use only one foot and then switch feet
- Try to remove a shoe
- Try to remove a sock
- Turn the bucket a 1/4 turn



Guiders can help girls to realize that the balls in the activity represent different things in life that might cause them stress or challenge them in different ways. Guiders can share that **just like in life, we can't control how or when difficult, stressful and challenging things come up that we have to deal with. This is like the number of balls in your bucket and other factors of the game that were out of the control of your group. Your feet during the game represented the different support and strategies you use to handle stress. Sometimes these supports were added, sometimes taken away. Maybe this made your group's bucket fall, but as a group you choose to dust yourselves off, bounce back and try again. Each of us experiences situations that are out of our control every day in our lives. Sometimes when we think things are out of our control, we feel helpless. This is a normal feeling and there are different ways to care for ourselves when we feel helpless to maintain good mental health. For example, taking a few moments to do some deep breathing, looking at the situation again from a different perspective or using problem solving can help to lessen this feeling.**

Before concluding the activity, Guiders may want to take a few moments to do some basic controlled breathing (see page 30) with their unit. This may be particularly useful if girls have shown or described high levels of stressful feelings during the activity.



## One Way Out



(Modified based on "The Maze"; Playmeo)

Girls will explore techniques for problem solving, handling setbacks and failure and the resiliency skills required to succeed.

### Materials:

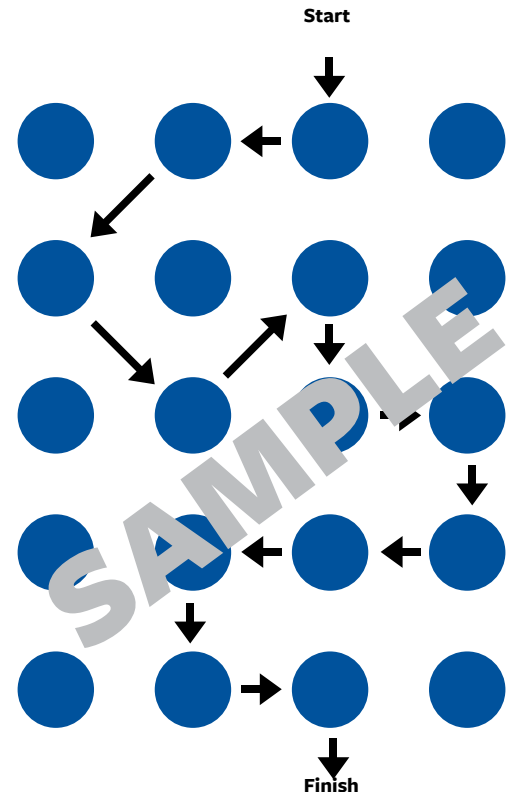
- 40 large paper circle (large enough for a girl to stand on)
- Four signs – Two with 'Start' and two with 'Finish' on them
- Maze Map – One per maze (page 37)
- Paper
- Pens, pencils

Before the game, set up two identical play areas. The play area should have circles placed in a 4x5 grid. Circles should be placed close enough so that girls can move comfortably from one circle to another. Guiders will need to design a maze through the play area and can record it on the Maze Map page (page 37). Each maze can have a unique path. Place a 'Start' sign where girls are to enter the maze and the 'Finish' sign near the final circle. Ensure there is space for girls to stand around the play area.

Explain to girls that they are going to be playing a maze game and the object of the game is to find the correct way out.

### Game instructions

- Only one girl can be 'in' the maze at a time.
- The girl in the maze will move to a circle in front, behind, beside or diagonal to the circle they are standing on. A Guider will let the group know if the move is correct or incorrect.
- Girls cannot jump over circles.
- If the girl in the maze makes an incorrect move, she must leave the maze and the next girl enters the maze.
- If the girl makes a correct move, she continues until she makes an incorrect move.
- Once the first girl correctly exits the maze, the next girl in line will enter the maze and follow the same correct path to the exit.
- The game is complete when all group members have exited the maze.
- Groups should work together to find their way through the maze.





Break girls into two groups to play the game. One Guider with each group will have the map to advise girls on correct or incorrect moves. Guiders can have paper and pens/pencils on hand and provide them to groups who want to write things down .

**NOTE :** The goal of this activity is to give girls a challenging task. Guiders should be aware that some girls may get quite frustrated and possibly upset if their group needs to repeatedly start over. Guiders should monitor this, and only pause the activity if girls are having difficulty coping with their feelings or if their emotions are impeding the group from continuing.

Once both groups have completed their maze, bring all girls back together to discuss their experiences playing the game. Guiders may choose to include some of the following questions in their discussion:

- What was hard about this game?
- When the game was hard, how did you and others in your group feel?
- How did the feelings of girls in your group affect how they acted and/or played the game?
- What were some of the techniques your group used to try and find the path through the maze?
- How did you feel when your group had to start over?
- How did you feel when you or someone else ‘made a mistake’?
- Where/how did your group find encouragement to try again and keep going when you had set backs?

Guiders can conclude the discussion by explaining that **this game was a good chance to practice the feelings we have when things don’t turn out the way we might like. No one likes to struggle, but it’s important to remember that struggles can help us learn new skills. When your group had to start over, you did so with new information to help you find your way to the exit of the maze. When we focus on what we learn from struggles, rather than the struggle itself, it’s easier to move past feelings of frustration and anger that we might have. Sometimes when we focus on the negative feelings we feel because of our struggles, it can stop us from trying again and succeeding. It’s not always easy to try again, but when we do we build more skills that help us in various parts of our lives (e.g., in learning a new sport, studying for a test, etc.), including with our mental health.**

Guiders may want to take a few moments to do some basic controlled breathing (see page 30) with girls following their discussion. This may be particularly useful if girls have shown or described high levels of stressful feelings during the activity.



## A Whole New Game



In this activity, girls will build flexible thinking skills by using game objects in a different way to create a new and unique game.

### Materials:

- Variety of game items such as:
  - Frisbees
  - Balls
  - Bats
  - Racquets
  - Decks of card
  - Board game pieces
  - Dice
  - Bean bags
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, markers



Before the activity Guiders can lay out the supplies available. Guiders may want to limit the number of items each group can work with.

To begin, ask girls what they think the phrase “flexible thinking” means. After girls have shared some thoughts, Guiders can share that **flexible thinking is about looking at things in a different way; changing your thoughts and mind to ‘see’ something different.** Explain that this activity is going to help them practice their flexible thinking.

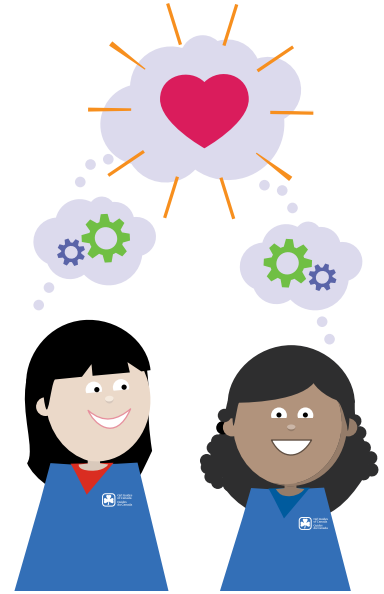
Break girls into small groups of two to four. Explain that in this activity their group is going to select a common game item(s) from those available. Working together as a group, they need to use their flexible thinking to create a new game using the selected item(s). The game can be anything they choose, but they must use their item(s) in a new and different way than it is normally used. Girls will need to think through their new game and develop any new rules to play it. Let girls know that they will have a chance to pair up with another group at the end and try a new game.

Allow girls time to work with their group to develop their games. Provide paper and pencils/pens to those groups who might want to write things down. It may be helpful to have Guiders circulate and provide support to girls as needed, particularly when getting started. When the allotted time is up, pair groups together and have each group teach the other their new game, and allow girls a few minutes to try out each other’s game.



Bring all the girls back together to share their experience during the activity. Some of the questions Guiders might include in the discussion may include:

- What was the hardest part of this activity? How did you deal with it?
- What was the easiest part of the activity?
- How did you feel when things were hard? What about when they were easy?
- What strategies did your group use to think in a flexible way?
- Why might flexible thinking be helpful?
- When might you be able to use flexible thinking in your life?



## Mail Me Some Positive - Guides

This activity will allow girls time to reflect on their personal strengths and achievements and how this is connected to positive mental health. Girls will create positive message postcards to send to themselves with reminders of their strengths and achievements.

### Materials:

- Half sheet of card stock – one per girl OR postcard template – one per girl (page 38)
- Markers, pencil crayons
- Pencils, pens
- Stamps – one per girl (if postcards will be mailed)

Guiders should collect the postcards at the end of the meeting. Postcards can be mailed to girls at a random time in the coming weeks. To avoid postage costs, Guider can hand them back to girls at a randomly chosen future meeting as girls are leaving for the evening.

Have girls share examples of things they do well or have accomplished. Ask girls if it's easy or hard to think of these things and why that might be. Guiders can talk with girls about why it might sometimes be hard to think of things they do well or achieved and why thinking about them, or reminding themselves of these things is a good thing. Guiders can explain that **identifying the things we do well and things we have achieved, both big and small, help us keep good mental health. Especially when we feel sad, down or frustrated, remembering what our strengths are can help us shift our feelings and emotions by focusing on all that we can do and have done. This can sometimes give us the boost we need to keep going or start to feel better.**





Explain to girls that they are going to be creating and writing postcards to themselves. These postcards will have personal messages to themselves to remind them of the things they do well and what they have accomplished, both big and small. Let girls know they can write, draw and decorate them however they like. Be sure to have girls address the postcard to themselves.

Guiders can collect the postcards at the end of the activity and let girls know they will be mailed/handed back at a random point in the future. They can look forward to the surprise positive message in their mailbox or at the end of a future meeting





## THEME 3 – Stigma

Mental health stigma is widespread and harmful. Stigma is seen in the labelling of anyone perceived to be ‘different’ from the majority. Those who struggle with mental health and/or illness often comment that dealing with the stigma associated with mental health is worse than the mental health/illness they face, causing many people to never seek help or treatment. Open communication and education about mental health are powerful steps towards breaking the stigma that exists in society.

### Objective :

- Girls will learn about the negative impact of stigma on mental health while becoming empowered to build awareness and acceptance.

### Outcomes:

At the completion of this theme, girls will demonstrate:

- an understanding of what stigma is and its impact on mental health
- an awareness of the impact of biases and language choice and use
- the confidence to take a stand against stigma through building awareness
- the confidence and courage to break the silence on mental health through open conversation

## THEME ACTIVITIES:

### Physical Health/Mental Health

*(Modified based on “Stigma Activity: Earache/Psychache”, from Mental Health Workshop; Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health)*

Girls will explore the differences in how physical and mental ‘aches’ are viewed and treated in society.

### Materials:

- Poster paper – one piece titled ‘Stomach Ache’ and one titled ‘Mental Ache’
- Markers
- Post-it notes – several for each girl
- Pens, pencils
- Blank paper
- Markers, pencil crayons, crayons
- Various art supplies
- Tape (for hanging posters)



To begin the activity, Guiders will post the two posters on the wall – ‘Stomach Ache’ and ‘Mental Ache’ – and provide each girl with several post-its and something to write with.



Guiders can ask girls to think about having a *stomach ache*. Girls can think about:

- how long they would wait before they might get help
- how bad the stomach ache might have to get before they would seek help
- who would they seek help from
- what would they feel like
- how would they describe what they were feeling to someone
- how others might treat them when they have a stomach ache
- other words or phrases that might be used in talking about their stomach ache

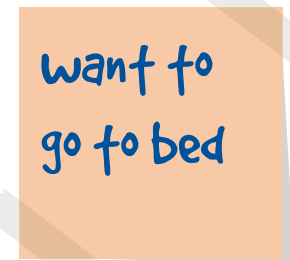


Girls can record their ideas (one or two per question) on post-it notes and stick them to the poster. When stomach ache has been completed, Guiders repeat the process this time having girls consider mental aches and consider the points above substituting mental aches for stomach ache.



Guiders can lead a discussion with girls examining the ideas they placed on the two posters and why differences exist between how a physical ache and a mental ache are discussed, shared and when help is asked for. Some of the questions Guiders might choose to include may be:

- Why do you think there are differences in how a physical ache and a mental ache are thought of and talked about?
- What are some of the barriers that might stop you from asking for help or talking to someone if you had a mental ache?
- Why do you think people and society treat physical aches differently than we treat mental aches?



Guiders can wrap up the discussion by asking girls if they have ever heard the word stigma before and to share what they think it means. Depending on what girls know already, Guiders can explain that **stigma is a set of negative and usually unfair beliefs that society or a group of people have about something, someone or another group of people for being 'different.'** Guiders can ask girls:

- How might we be able to change things so that mental aches are thought about and treated the same way physical aches are?

Using a variety of art supplies, girls can complete this activity by designing a poster or flyer educating others on viewing mental health and illness in the same ways that we view physical health and illness. After an allotted time, girls can take a gallery walk to examine the ideas of others through their in progress or completed poster/flyer. Guiders can ask girls:

- Why do you think it's so important to try and stop mental health stigma?
- What is one thing you could do each day to help stop stigma?



## Label Me Not



(Modified based on “Whatever She Said”, from *Flex Your Head*, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada)

In this activity, girls will explore how the use of labels and language contribute to mental health/illness stigma.

### Materials:

- Index cards – one per girl divided into sets of four (see note below)
- Tape (for sticking index cards to foreheads)
- Poster paper - two
- Markers
- Ink pad (optional)



**NOTE:** Before the activity, Guiders will need to divide the index cards into sets of four. Within the set, there should be one card with each of the following labels: Leader, Disagree With Me, Agree With Me, Ignore Me.

To begin the activity, Guiders can ask girls if they have ever heard the word stigma before and to share what they think it means and where/how they’ve heard it before. Depending on what girls know already, Guiders can explain that **stigma is a set of negative and usually unfair beliefs that society or a group of people have about something, someone or another group of people for being ‘different.’** Ask girls:

- Why might someone label another person as ‘different’?
- How might someone who is struggling with their mental health be labeled?
- How do you think being labelled might make someone challenged by their mental health feel?

Guiders will break girls into groups of four. Guiders will randomly tape one of the four index cards to each girl’s forehead so that they do not see their own card. Explain to girls that in their groups, they need to plan an activity or game they want to do in a future meeting. However, while they do this, they should treat the other girls in their group according to the labels on their foreheads. Girls can use various words, terms or phrases that help with this, but should not say what’s on the girls’ cards or call them that. Guiders may want to provide girls with a time limit to complete their task.

**NOTE:** Guiders may want to monitor this portion of the activity to ensure that girls do not get too upset or use overly hurtful words/phrases.



At the end of the allotted time, have girls remove their label, read it, and then come together to discuss their experiences. Guiders can include any of the following questions in the discussion:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What did you think the label on your forehead might say based on how you were treated by your group?
- Were there any words/phrases used that you or someone else found hurtful?
- Did anyone acknowledge or call this out to stop it?
- Was it hard for you to treat your group members according to their label?
- How might this experience resemble the stigma experienced by someone struggling with their mental health?



Have girls brainstorm harmful, hurtful and negative words, labels and comments that they have used or heard used about those struggling with their mental health. Guiders can record these on a page of poster paper. On a second piece of poster paper, have girls brainstorm positive, accepting and inclusive alternative ways to talk about mental health and mental illness.

When girls are satisfied that their list is as complete as possible, girls can either sign their names or add their thumb/finger print as their agreement to make a conscious effort to monitor their language use and use more positive and inclusive language about mental health and illness moving forward to help end stigma.

## Guest Speaker- Guides

Guest speakers are an opportunity for girls to hear from experts and those with lived experiences with mental health and illness. This is also an excellent opportunity to incorporate an open discussion about mental health to encourage positive dialogue.

### Materials:

- None

Invite a guest speaker from a mental health field (e.g. psychologist, social worker, representative from a mental health organization, etc.) or someone with a lived mental health experience to visit your unit meeting. Have your guest speaker talk with girls about stigma related to mental health and mental illness. They can talk with girls about things that can be done to stop the spread of stigma and to help people talk openly about mental health.

When contacting your guest speaker, be sure to share information about your unit (age of girls, what the girls are like and how they can best engage girls) and some of the activities you are going to be completing with girls during your Mighty Minds meeting. This can help your speaker better prepare to deliver the best possible presentation for your unit.



Guiders may want to incorporate some time to allow girls to talk openly about mental health. This could include asking questions, sharing thoughts, concerns or worries, as well as breaking stigma and myths. Guiders shouldn't worry about being able to answer every question when asked. Knowing where to direct girls for more information, or helping them find the information they need is appropriate in this case.

For Guiders who may not be sure what resources are available in their local area or how to find a suitable guest speaker, check out the Mental Health Resources Document available on the Mighty Minds page of [girlguides.ca](http://girlguides.ca).



## Positive Message T's

Girls create their own T-shirts with positive mental health messages to build acceptance and end stigma.

### Materials:

- Poster paper
- Markers
- T-shirts – one per girl
- Fabric paints/fabric spray paints, fabric markers, bleach pens or other shirt decorating supplies depending on technique chosen

**NOTE:** the T-shirt portion of this activity can get a bit messy.

To begin the activity, Guiders can ask girls if they have ever heard the word stigma before and to share what they think it means and where/how they've heard it used. Depending on what girls know already, Guiders can explain that **stigma is a set of negative and usually unfair beliefs that society or a group of people have about something, someone or another group of people for being 'different.'**

Guiders can ask girls to brainstorm things they can do each day to help take a stand against stigma and build awareness about mental health. Part of the discussion can include positive messages and language girls can use to help promote acceptance, understanding and inclusion. Guiders may want to record these on poster paper for girls to refer to later.

Girls will create their own positive message T-shirt with a message of their choice on it. Messages can focus on promoting understanding, acceptance and ending stigma towards mental health. Girls can refer back to their brainstorming list, create their own positive messages or consider the list below:



- Stop Stigma
- There is always hope
- Pain is real but so is hope
- Don't let your struggle become your identity
- Mighty Minds
- Stay strong
- Stigma is real
- Keep talking about mental health
- Labels are for jars, not people
- Break the silence

There are many simple techniques that can be used to make unique and very personalized shirts. Some of these may require more than one meeting, or completing portions at home. Here are a couple of simple techniques to try and where to find complete instructions.

- Bleach Pens - <http://www.weddingchicks.com/2013/09/09/diy-bleach-pen-tank-top/>
- Hot Glue Stencils - <http://www.lilblueboo.com/2012/10/hot-glue-stencils.html#more-27361>
- Sticker Resist - <http://nurturestore.co.uk/kids-crafts-design-a-tshirt>





≡ **CONCLUDE** the Challenge with the following Closing Activity. ≡

## Closing Activity – Building Stronger Health

### Materials:

- Tape (any type)
- Small blank squares of paper (approximately 7-10cm square)
- Markers, pencil crayons, crayons

Have girls return to the building blocks of health wall they created at the beginning of the meeting. Provide girls with a few moments to look at the bricks again. Ask girls where the weak points are in the wall and how the wall can be made stronger (the bricks aren't attached in any way; they can be made stronger by gluing/taping them together).

Have girls think about everything they have talked about in this meeting when looking at their building blocks of health and consider what might be missing. Have girls comment on this as well as what ideas and strategies they have learned that can help strengthen the blocks, and their overall health.

Provide girls with squares of paper and have them draw or write some of these ideas on the squares. Explain that these new ideas are going to be used like patches to attach bricks together with tape. When girls have completed their pictures, use some tape to add them to the building block wall like patches.

Example ideas might include:

- Talk about feelings
- Say nice things
- Deep breathing
- Move your body
- Problem solving
- Flexible thinking

Remind girls that they should try and keep in mind after this meeting all of these different parts of health and keep trying to support their positive mental health (feelings/emotions) as well as the mental health of others.







# Appendix

## Theme 1: Mental Health in Action

Scenarios .....	26
Mental Health/Mental Illness Continuums Poster .....	27
Blank Bingo Card .....	28
Bingo Square Options Table .....	29
Practice the Positive Activity Options	
Basic Controlled Breathing .....	30
Making Stress Balls .....	30
Yoga .....	31
Colouring Mandalas .....	32
Mindfulness: Savouring the Taste .....	32
Yoga Poses .....	34
GGC Mandala .....	36

## Theme 2: Resiliency

Maze Map.....	37
Postcard Template .....	38



## Scenarios

You're feeling excited and nervous before a test but your friends tell you they're nervous, worried and anxious.

You think your friend is having a rough week. She hasn't said anything but she's been keeping to herself a lot, is quiet and it looks like she's been crying.

You and some friends all tried out for the soccer team. You found out only two of you made the team.

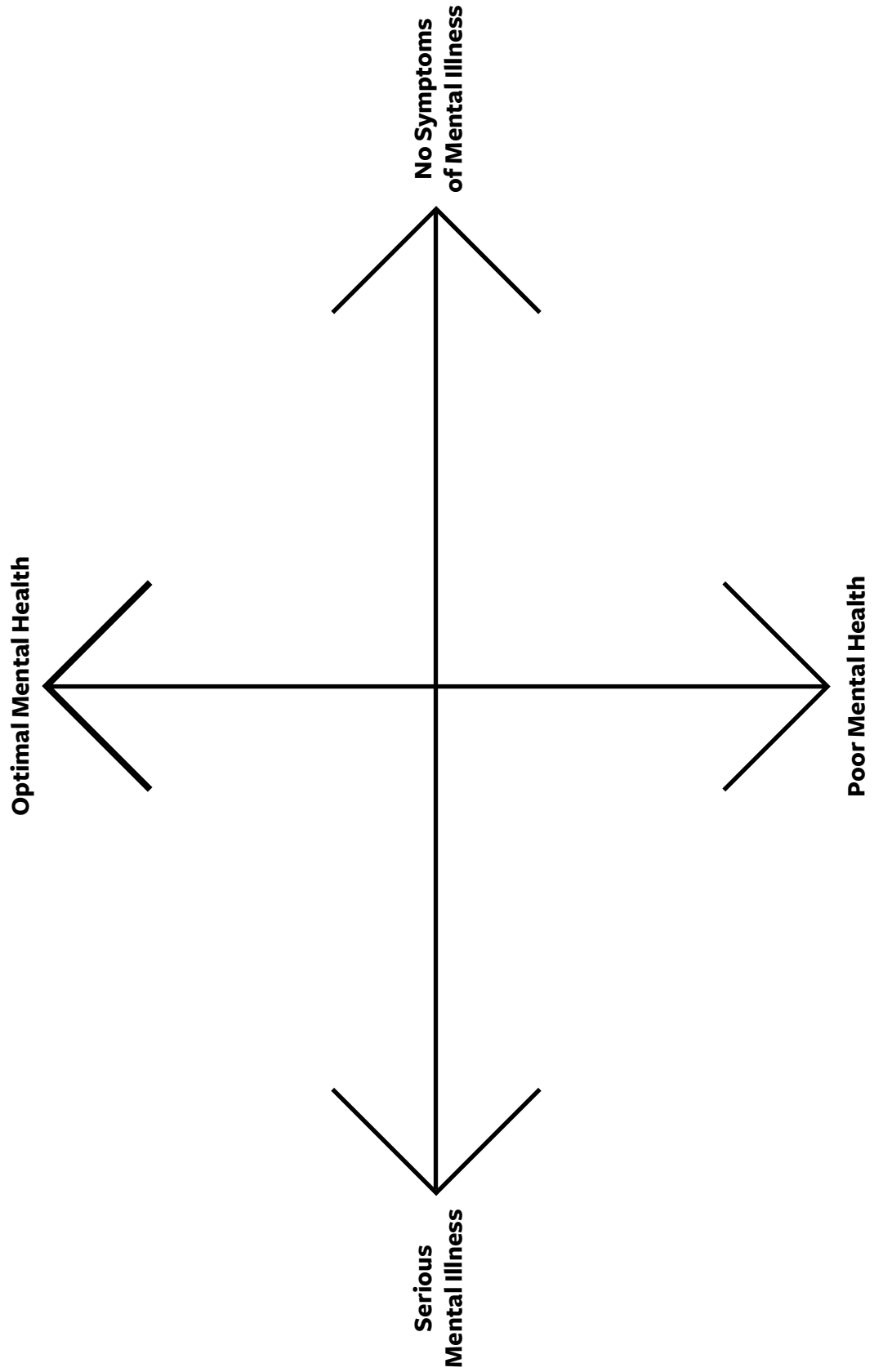
Your younger sister sometimes gets anxious. She has some friends over for a sleepover. You walk past the party and see her sitting on the floor alone while her friends are having fun around her.

You know one of your friends is going through a rough time at home, but you aren't sure what's happening.

At camp with your Guide unit, one of the girls has been getting angry and yelling at other girls. She never acts like this during normal unit meetings, but you remember that she seemed really nervous planning for camp.



## Mental Health/Mental Illness Continuums Poster





## Blank Bingo Card

<b>MENTAL HEALTH BINGO</b>				
<b>Positive Coping</b>	<b>Negative Coping</b>	<b>Mental Health vs. Mental Illness</b>	<b>Supporting Others</b>	<b>More Help and Support</b>
				



## Bingo Square Options Table

Positive Coping	Negative Coping	Mental Health vs. Mental Illness	Supporting Others	More Help and Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep breathing</li> <li>• Meditation</li> <li>• Mindfulness</li> <li>• Sleep</li> <li>• Take care of your body</li> <li>• Positive self-talk</li> <li>• Slow down</li> <li>• Tech-free time</li> <li>• Talk openly</li> <li>• Ask for help</li> <li>• Do something you're good at</li> <li>• Do something fun</li> <li>• Me time</li> <li>• Time with friends or family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore</li> <li>• Take on too much</li> <li>• Hurt yourself</li> <li>• Verbal attacks</li> <li>• Physical violence</li> <li>• Drug/alcohol use</li> <li>• Negative self-talk</li> <li>• Keep feelings inside</li> <li>• Avoid friends/family</li> <li>• Physical/verbal outburst</li> <li>• Hide</li> <li>• Eat too little/too much</li> <li>• Stop doing things you like</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings</li> <li>• Thoughts</li> <li>• Behaviours</li> <li>• How you deal with ups and downs of life</li> <li>• Everyone has mental health</li> <li>• Mental illness is an illness</li> <li>• Change with time, situation, circumstance</li> <li>• Everyone's experience is different</li> <li>• Not everyone will experience mental illness</li> <li>• Stigma</li> <li>• Many things influence</li> <li>• Often misunderstood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen without judgement</li> <li>• Call just to check in</li> <li>• Random acts of kindness</li> <li>• Smile</li> <li>• Kind and honest words</li> <li>• I'm here for you</li> <li>• Learn more</li> <li>• Help others get help</li> <li>• Give hope</li> <li>• Spend time together</li> <li>• Respect the wishes of others</li> <li>• Take what they say seriously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Trusted adult</li> <li>• Kids Help Phone</li> <li>• Psychology Foundation of Canada</li> <li>• Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)</li> <li>• Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)</li> <li>• School counsellor</li> <li>• Doctor</li> <li>• Family member</li> <li>• Crisis centers</li> <li>• 911 (in emergency only)</li> <li>• Emergency department</li> </ul>



## Practice the Positive – Possible Activities

### Basic Controlled Breathing

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

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.

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.

### Making Stress Balls

**NOTE :** This activity may be a bit messy.

#### Materials: (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. Stretch the balloon onto the funnel ensuring that the balloon is attached tightly to the bottom.
4. Spoon the filling material into the funnel to start filling the balloon. Be careful to ensure that the balloon doesn't slip off and spill the flour. 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.



5. If the funnel becomes clogged, carefully use the pencil/skewer to push the filling material into the balloon without puncturing the balloon.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Stretch the second balloon over the first to help contain filling material should a hole appear.
9. 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.

## Yoga

### Materials:

- Yoga poses (see page 34)
- Yoga mats if available, but not necessary
- Calming music (preferably without lyrics) and equipment to play it if desired

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 abdomen expands, 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 their 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 page 34). 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.



## Colouring Mandalas

### Materials

- Assorted printed mandalas (see reference websites below or GGC mandala page 36)
- Blank paper
- Crayons, pencil crayons and markers
- Pencils

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

<http://printmandala.com/>

[http://www.coloring-book.info/coloring/coloring\\_page.php?id=209](http://www.coloring-book.info/coloring/coloring_page.php?id=209)

## Mindfulness: Savouring the Taste

(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:

- 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.”



## Yoga Poses



**Easy pose or seated meditation**



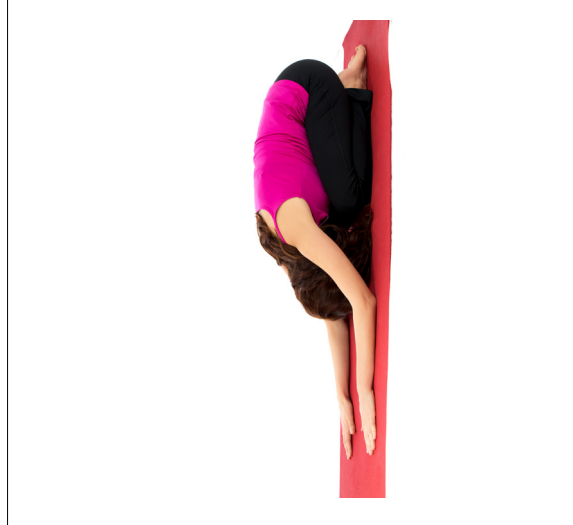
**Cat pose**



**Cow pose**



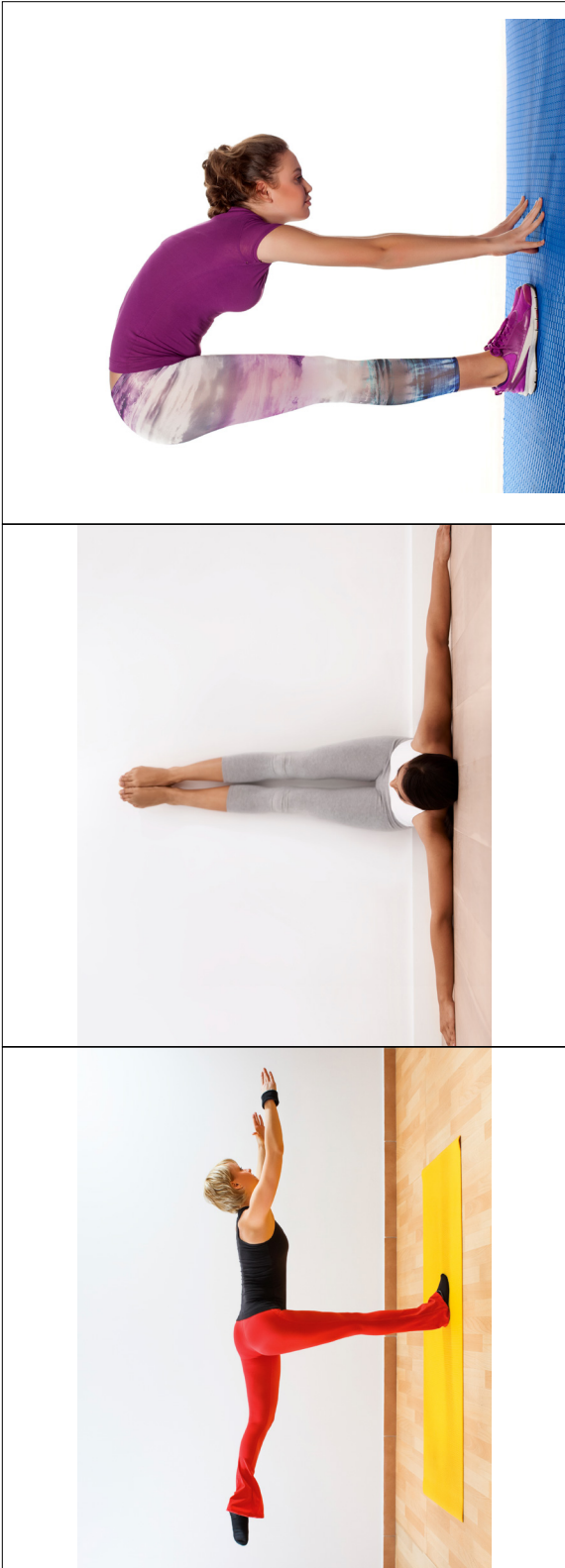
**Seated forward bend**



**Child's pose**



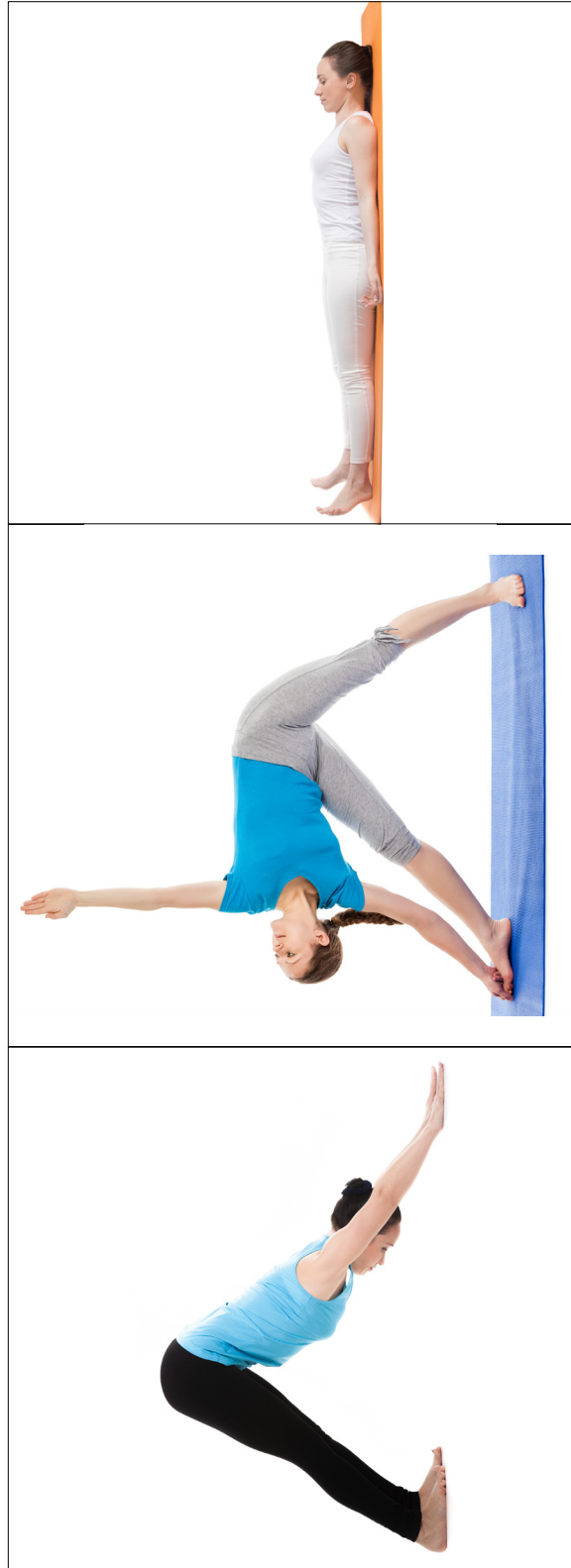
**Tree pose**



**Warrior III**

**Legs up the wall pose**

**Standing forward bend**



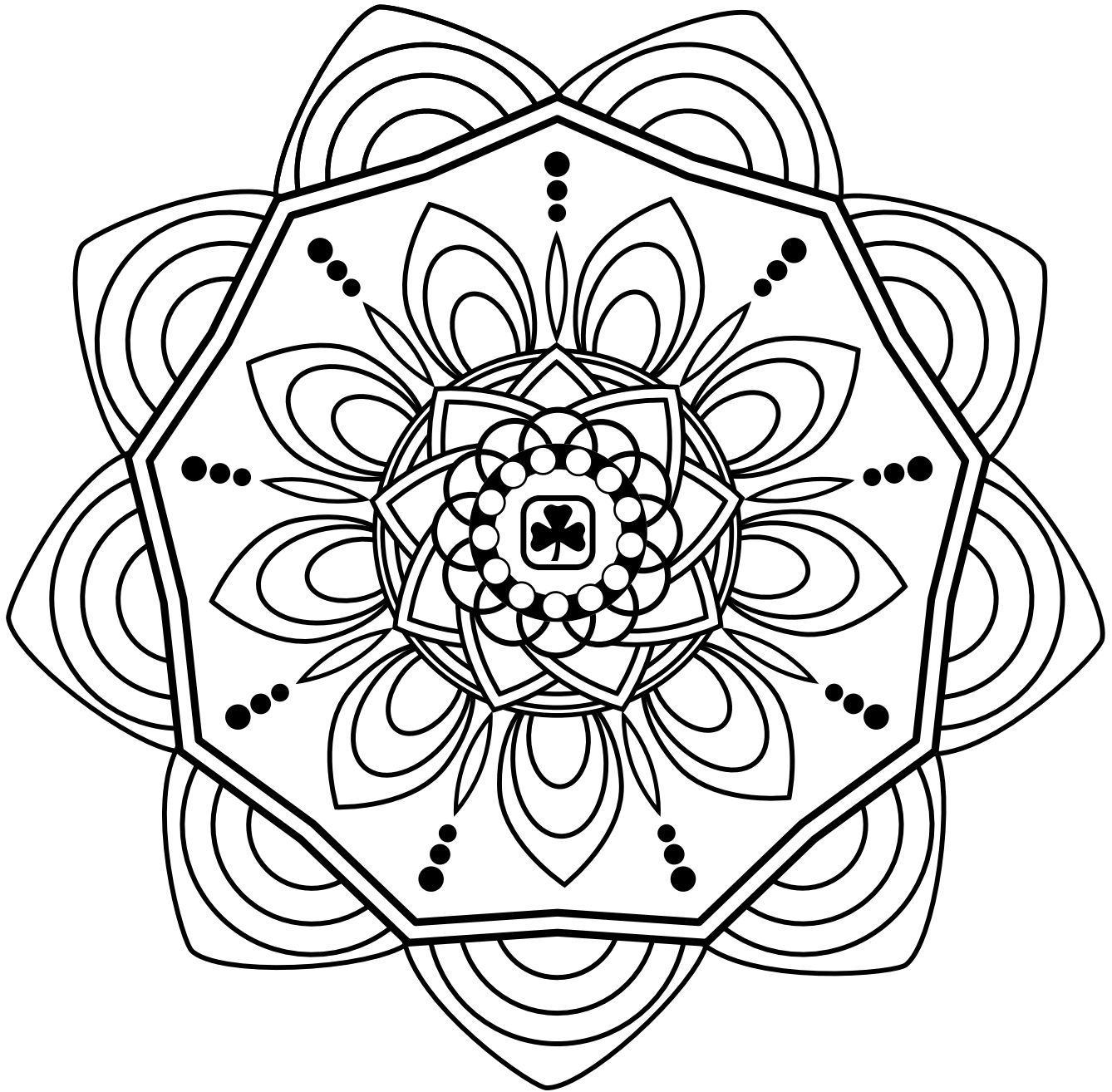
**Downward dog**

**Extended triangle pose**

**Corpse pose**

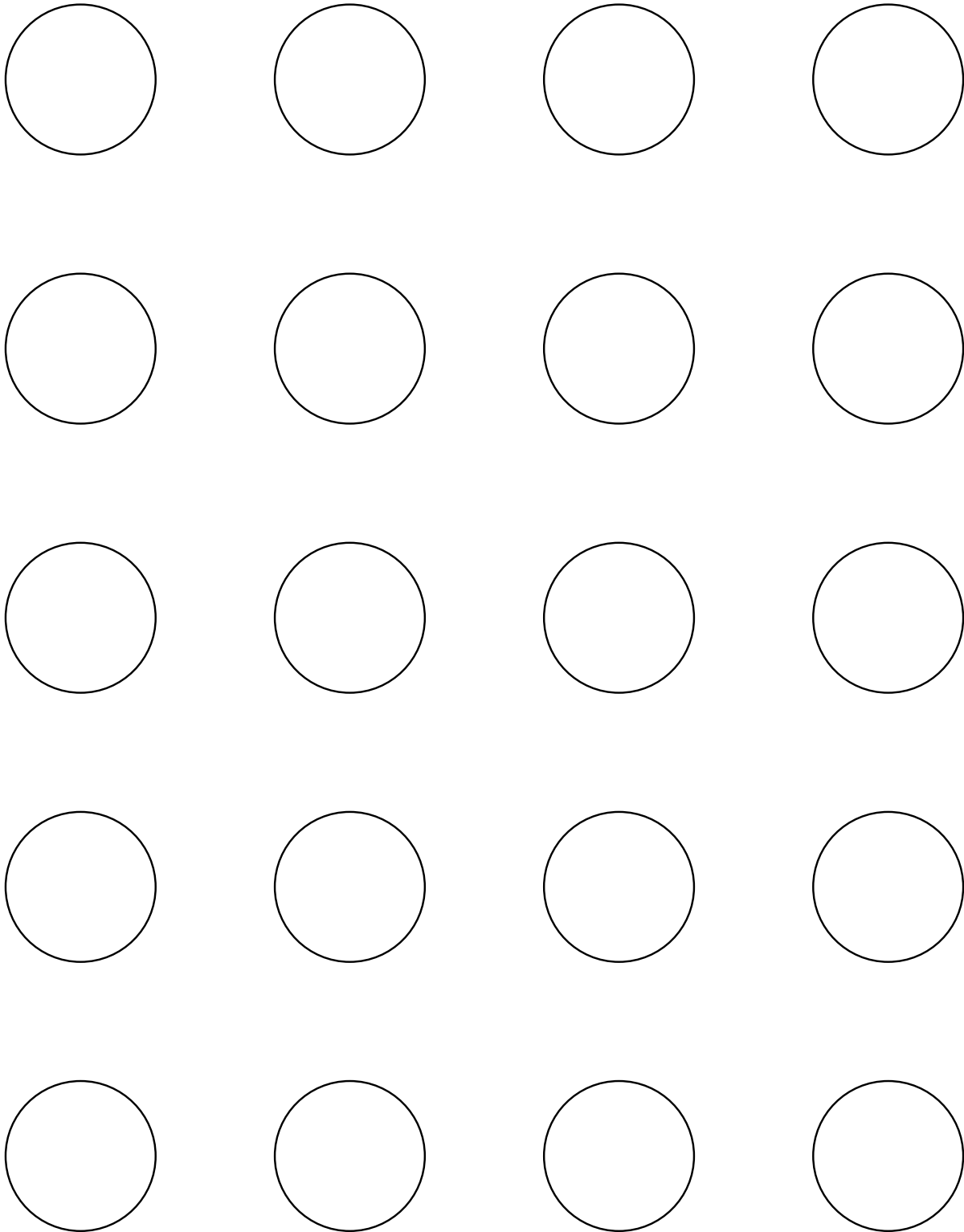


# GGC Mandala





## Maze Map





## Postcard Template

Scissors icon on the left edge of the top postcard template.

**MIGHTY MINDS**

Word cloud includes: Spark, Thankful, Movement, Dream, Trust, Breathtaking, Generous, Warm, Vitality, Life, Mindful, Happy, Kind, Respect, Fearless, Motivate, Joy, Love, Ambition, Better, Exceptional, Truth, Quiet, Laugh, Nurture, Unique, Empathy, Positive, Safe, Powerful, Inspire, Appreciation, Bright, Fabulous, Imagine, Who, Restore, Rest, Care, Discover, Creative, Resourceful, Hope, Smile, Wonderful, Honest, Excellent, Invigorate, Grateful, Compassion, Calm, Patient.