



STUDENT RESILIENCE TOOLKIT

Florida State University



This Student Resilience Toolkit is dedicated to every student who has struggled during difficult times and to the staff and faculty who work so hard to support them.

We sincerely appreciate President Richard McCullough, Dr. Jim Clark, Provost, and Dr. Amy Hecht, Vice President for Student Affairs, who have worked tirelessly for our students and believe everyone deserves access to evidence-informed resilience resources.

Institute for Trauma and Resilience Studies
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What lifts you up?



WELCOME

This resource is a project of the Clearinghouse on Trauma and Resilience at Florida State University. It provides practical exercises and guidance to promote resilience and reduce stress.

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to overcome adversities, trauma, and other sources of stress. Resilience is often referred to as “bouncing back” after experiencing difficulties. Everyone faces stress and hardships, and everyone can develop resilience to cope. By learning, practicing, and strengthening resilience skills, anyone can move forward feeling empowered and stronger than before.

Who Can Benefit from this Toolkit?

All students can benefit from learning new coping and stress management skills. Some students, however, will need a higher level of intervention, including counseling, medical treatment, and accommodation from the university. Students are encouraged to use and share these tools with others.

Created at: www.itrs.csw.fsu.edu

**Visit STRONG.FSU.EDU
for more information and resources**



Coloring mandalas can help calm your
mind and release your creativity



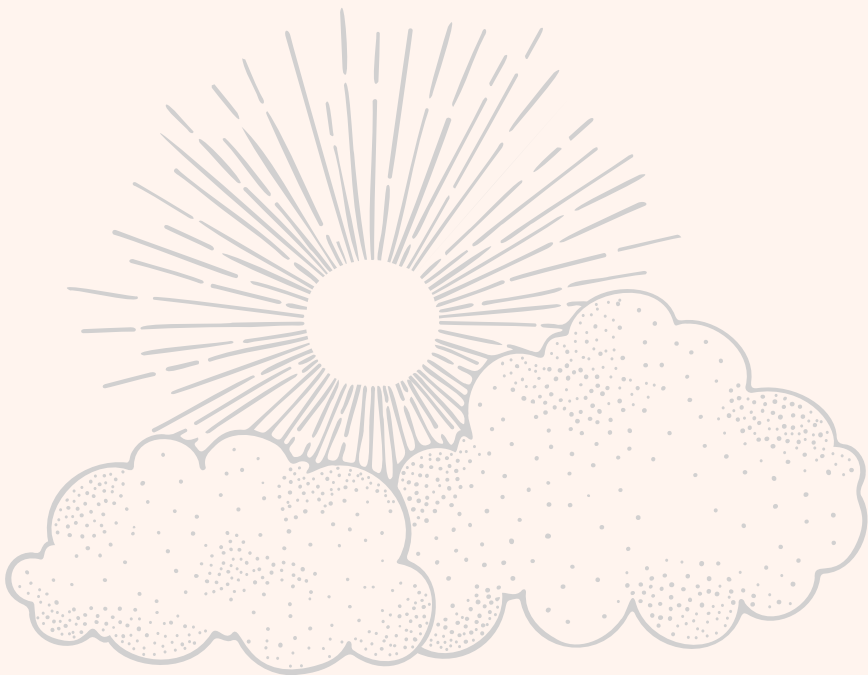
PART ONE

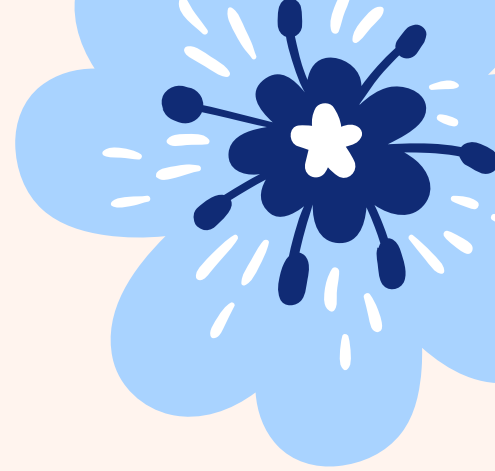
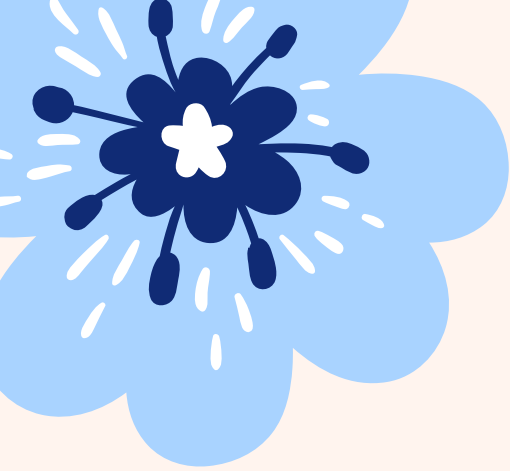
Introduction to Student Resilience

The handouts in this section will help students identify the skills they currently have and allow them to explore areas where they wish to enhance their personal resilience.



"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that
within me there lay an invincible summer."
— Albert Camus



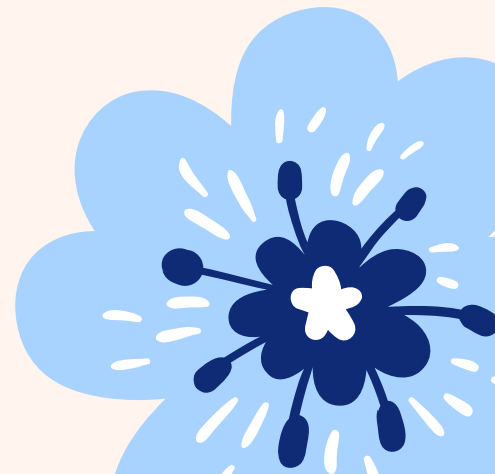
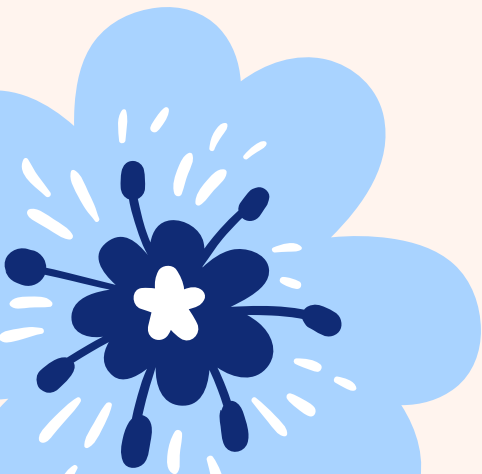


INTRODUCTION TO COMPONENTS OF RESILIENCE

Building resilience is key to academic success and overall well-being.

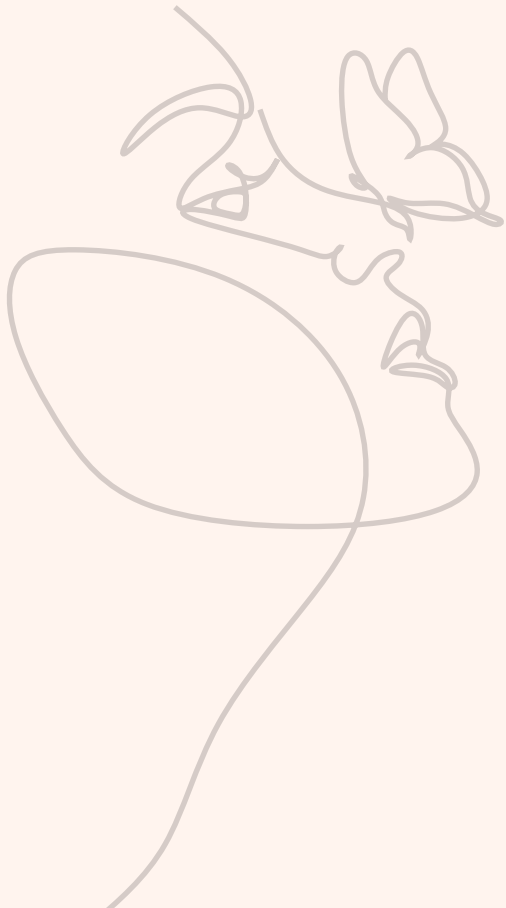
It is important to remember that everyone already possesses many components of resilience.

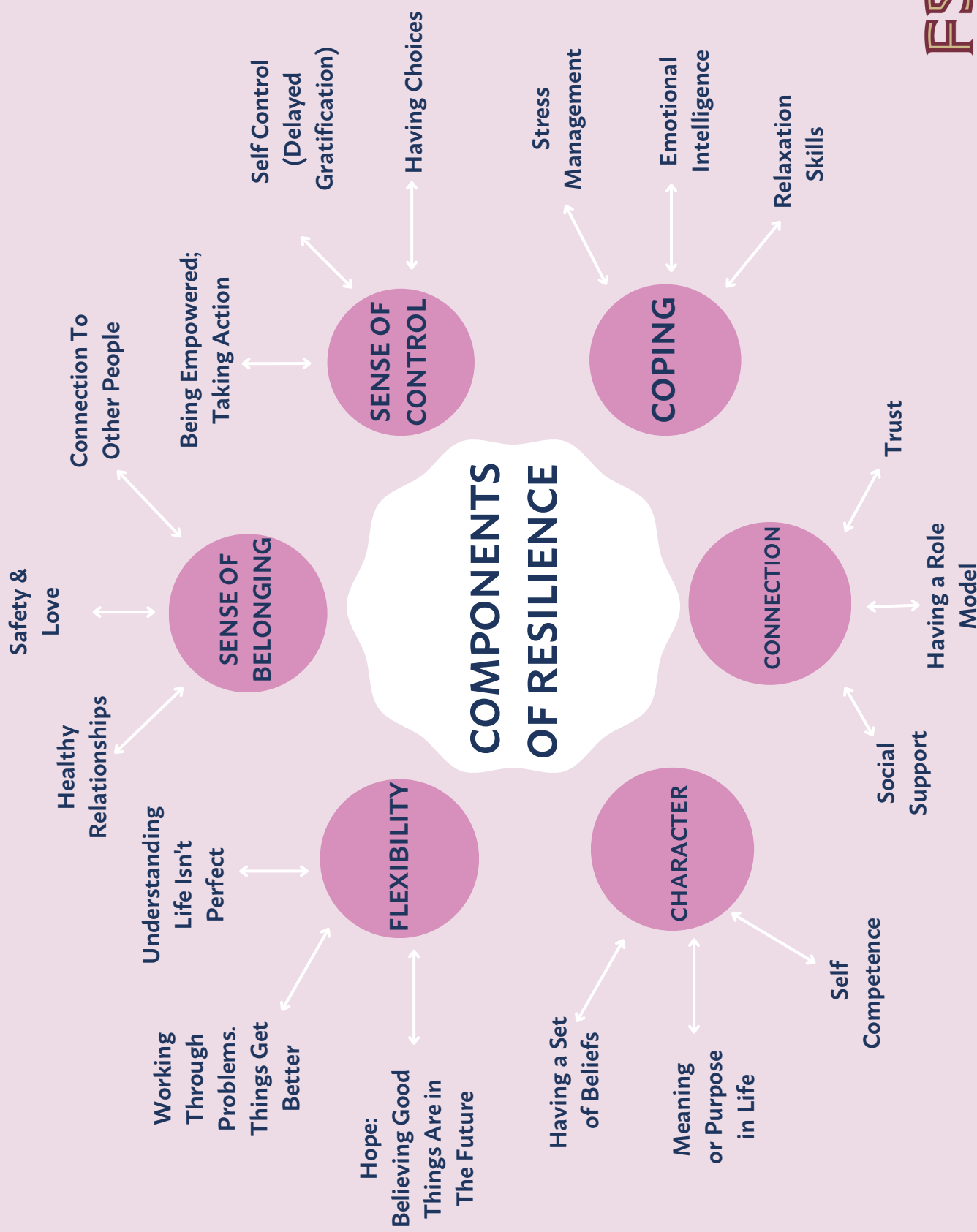
Think about which components you already have. Then, identify the components you can improve on. Resilience can be built day by day, a little at a time.



"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly,
but rarely admit the changes it has gone
through to achieve that beauty."

-Maya Angelou





List some things that you are
looking forward to:





INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTERISTICS OF A RESILIENT PERSON

The following handout presents seven characteristics that are associated with resilient people.

You can share this handout with friends. Remember: it is not necessary to have ALL the characteristics to be resilient.

The Characteristics of a Resilient Person

COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

- Being aware of negative thoughts
- Avoiding perfectionism



ACTIVE COPING SKILLS

- Seeking out resources
- Engaging in healthy responses to stress

EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION

- Having the ability to focus
- Planning ahead

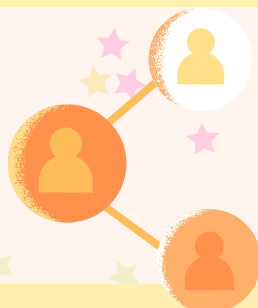


OPTIMISM

- Being hopeful for the future
- Having a sense of humor

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

- Getting good sleep
- Having healthy eating and exercise habits



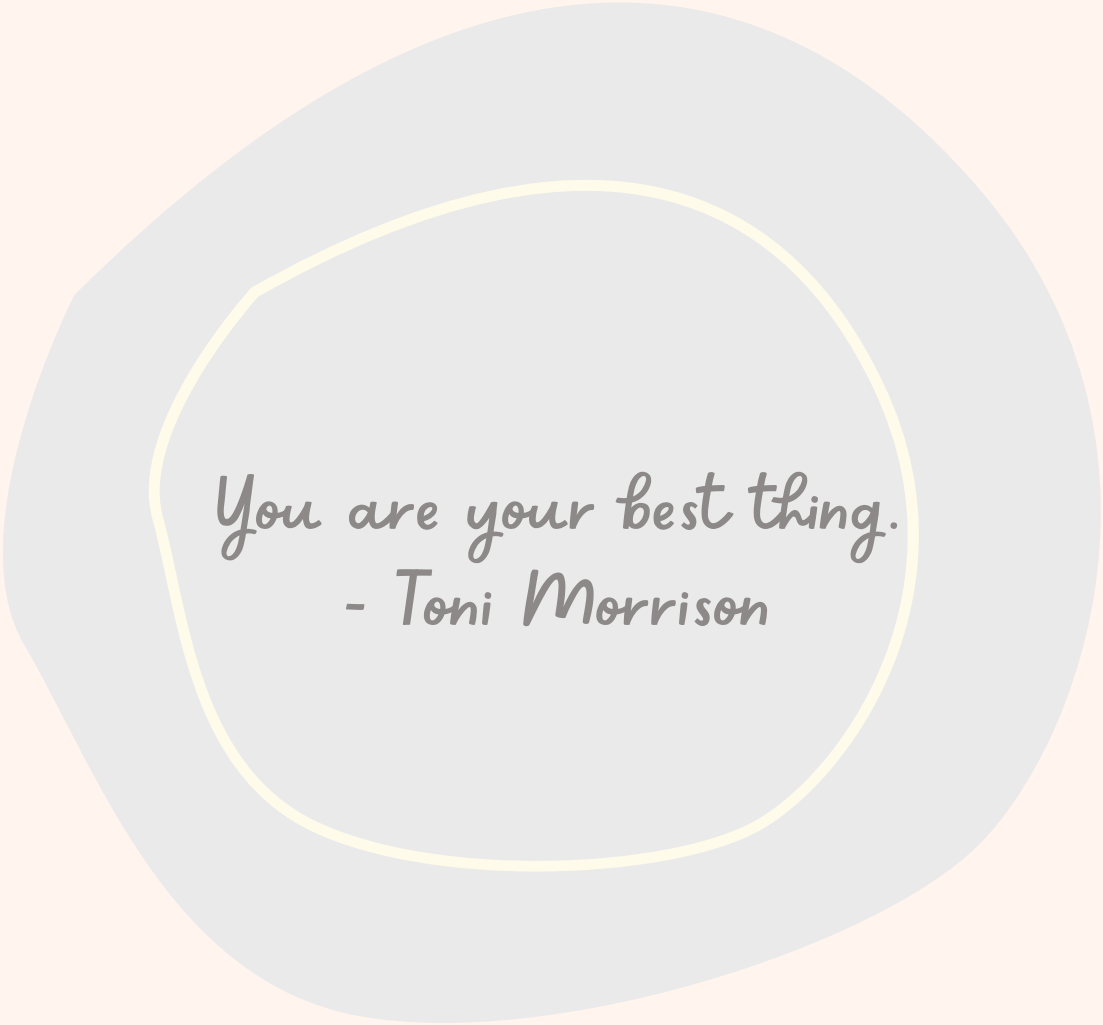
SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL NETWORK

- Building prosocial skills that foster supportive relationships
- Engaging in positive communities

MINDFULNESS/SPIRITUALITY

- Having positive core values/beliefs
- Finding meaning and purpose in life





*You are your best thing.
- Toni Morrison*



INTRODUCTION TO STRENGTHS

The following page has a strengths exercise that recognizes that everyone has strengths and can use them to grow resilience skills. Sometimes we need to take the time to discover our strengths. Identifying and acknowledging strengths can enhance confidence and motivation to help you navigate challenges. (Alvord & Grados, 2005).

Try identifying your strengths on your own, or with a friend. Friends can benefit from hearing your positive perception of their strengths.

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR STRENGTHS



TAKE A MINUTE TO REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE STRONG

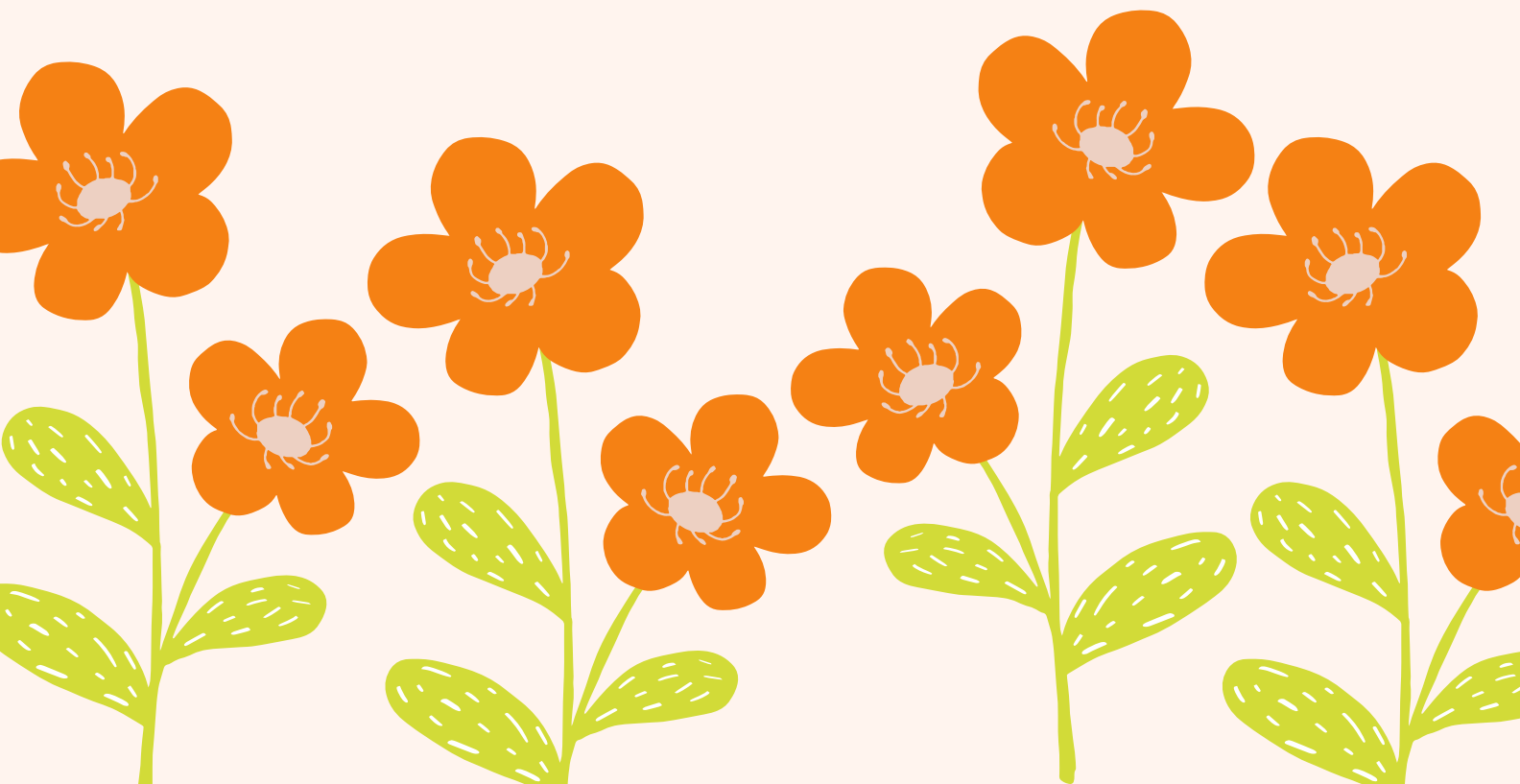
DIRECTIONS: CIRCLE FOUR OPTIONS BELOW

KINDNESS	CREATIVITY	SELF-CONTROL
AMBITION	INDEPENDENCE	FLEXIBILITY
LOGIC	CONFIDENCE	WISDOM
HUMOR	CURIOSITY	COMMITMENT
PATIENCE	INTELLIGENCE	OPTIMISM
LEADERSHIP	COMMON SENSE	TRUSTWORTHINESS
BRAVERY	EMPATHY	IMAGINATION
HONESTY	SPIRITUALITY	ORIGINALITY
PERSISTENCE	ATHLETICISM	DEPENDABILITY

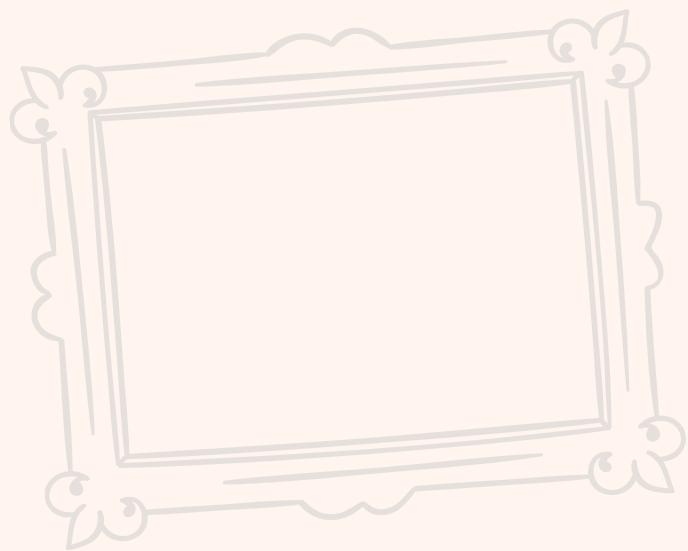
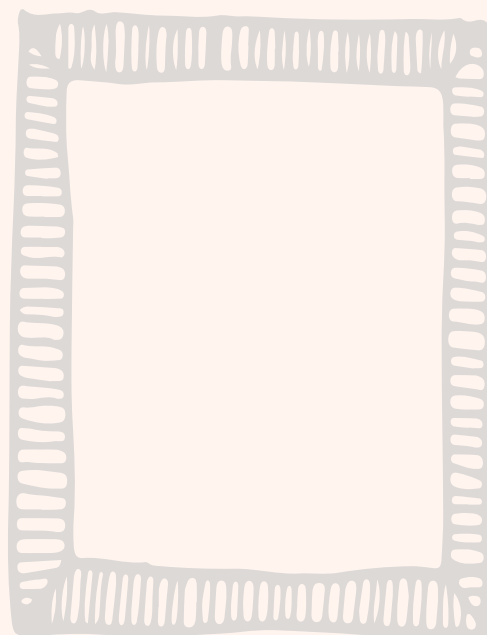
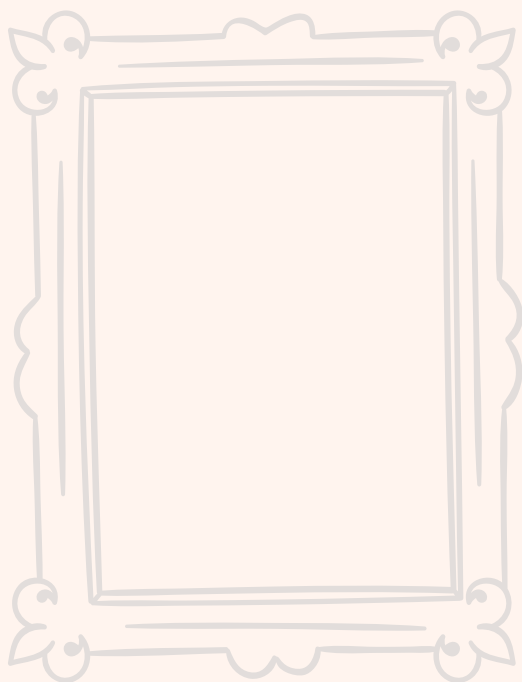
INTRODUCTION TO AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations are positive statements that can provide support and encouragement. They can help you stay focused on hope and optimism.

Try the Affirmation handout on the following page.



What are some positive affirmations you can say to yourself in the mirror?



Daily Positive Affirmations

Examples:

I've got this!

I am strong.

I am brave.

My hard work will pay off.

I will keep going.

I am filled with potential.

I am blessed.

I have what it takes to succeed.

Write yours here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

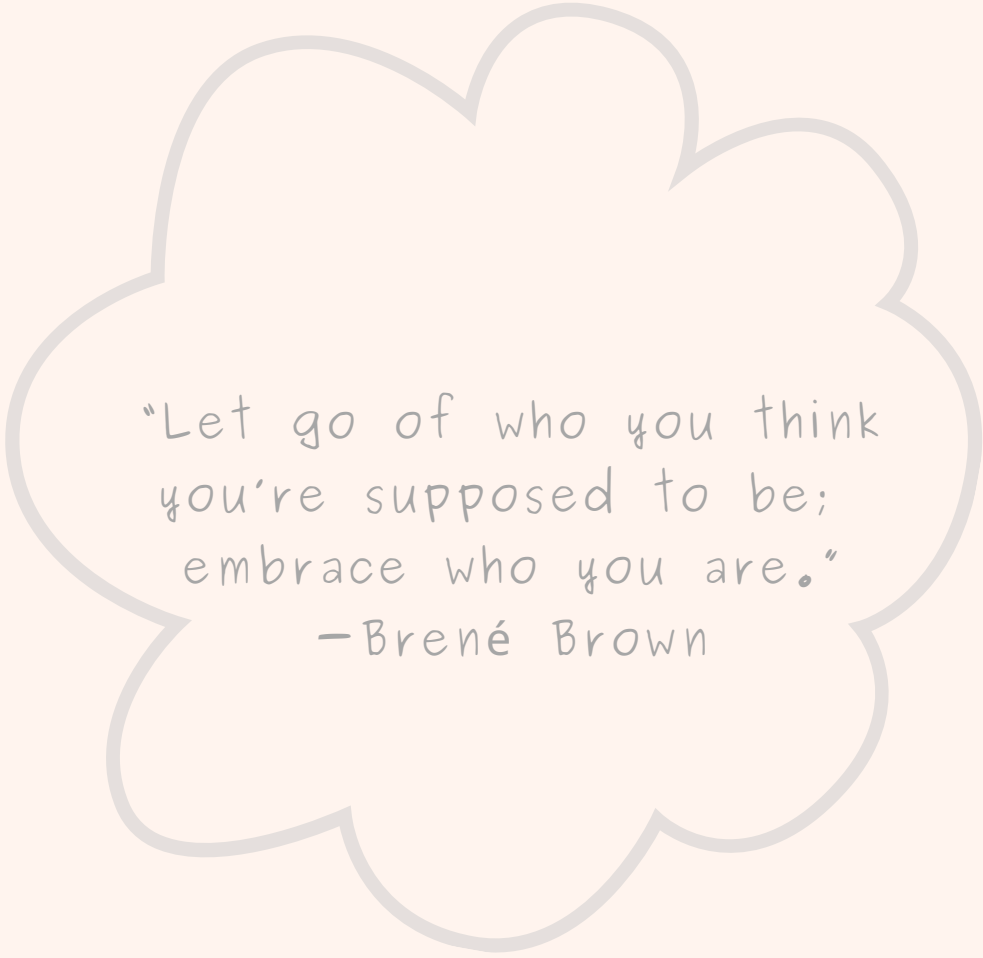
.....

.....

.....

Repeat your affirmations
throughout the day.

(Cohen & Sherman, 2014)



"Let go of who you think
you're supposed to be;
embrace who you are."

—Brené Brown

INTRODUCTION TO GRATITUDE

Practicing gratitude allows you to recognize the good and positive things in your life. Practicing gratitude helps you to feel more positive emotions, enhance your overall health, overcome adversity, build meaningful relationships, and appreciate valuable experiences (Alspach, 2009; Harvard Health Publishing, 2021).

Try the gratitude exercise on the following page.



Paddle into silence...

What makes you feel content?





An Exercise in Appreciation

Stop and think about four things/people you are grateful for today. Write about them in the boxes below:

A large, empty orange rectangular box for writing.A large, empty red rectangular box for writing.A large, empty yellow rectangular box for writing.A large, empty light green rectangular box for writing.

Color in your Rainbow





INTRODUCTION TO COPING SKILLS

Coping skills are essential components of resilience. People who have experienced trauma or significant stress may have depended on unhealthy survival skills, like smoking or substance abuse, to cope.

It is important to learn healthier coping strategies, as illustrated on the next page.



Doodle Here:

COPING TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

(CDC, 2019)

FSU



Give yourself time to adjust



Avoid making impulsive decisions



Take breaks



Connect with others



Limit your doom scrolling



Seek help when needed

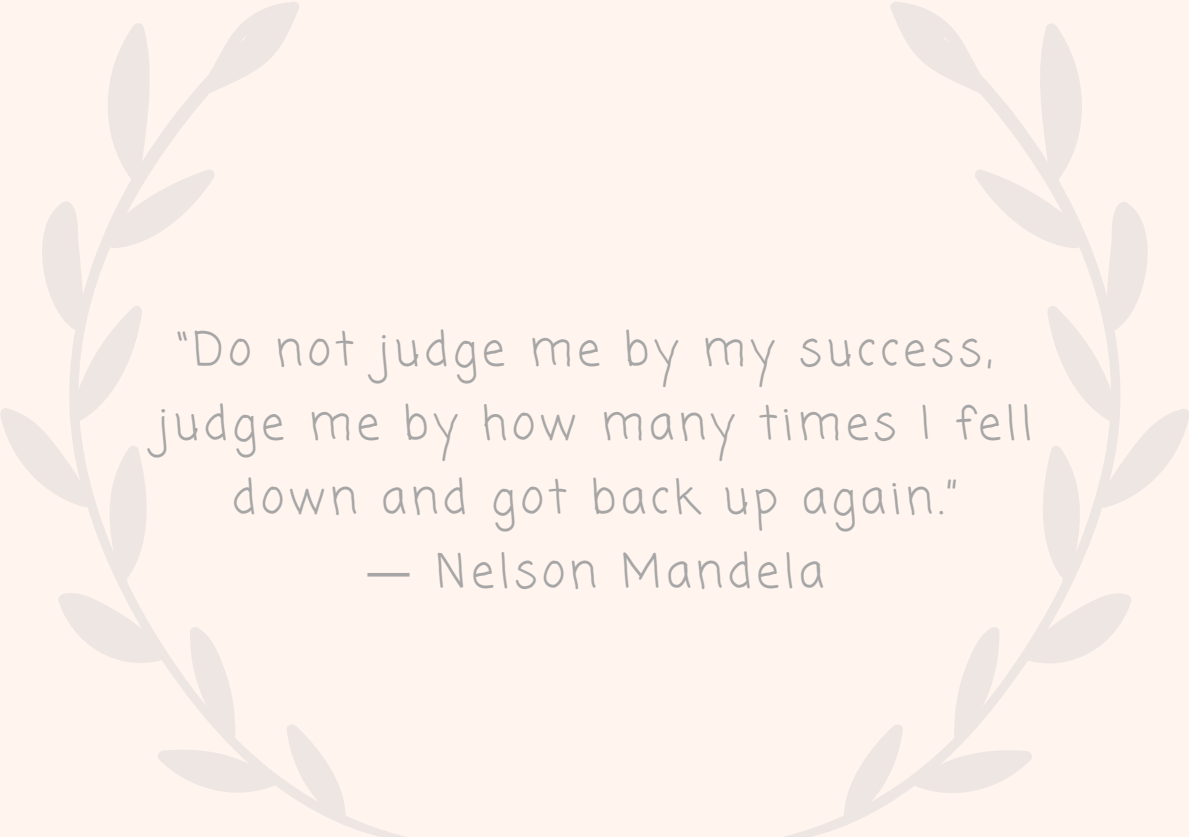
Establish or reestablish routines



Communicate your experience to others



Take care of your body



"Do not judge me by my success,
judge me by how many times I fell
down and got back up again."

— Nelson Mandela

PART TWO

Practices to Build Student Resilience

This section includes several research-based practices and exercises to help you grow your resilience skills.

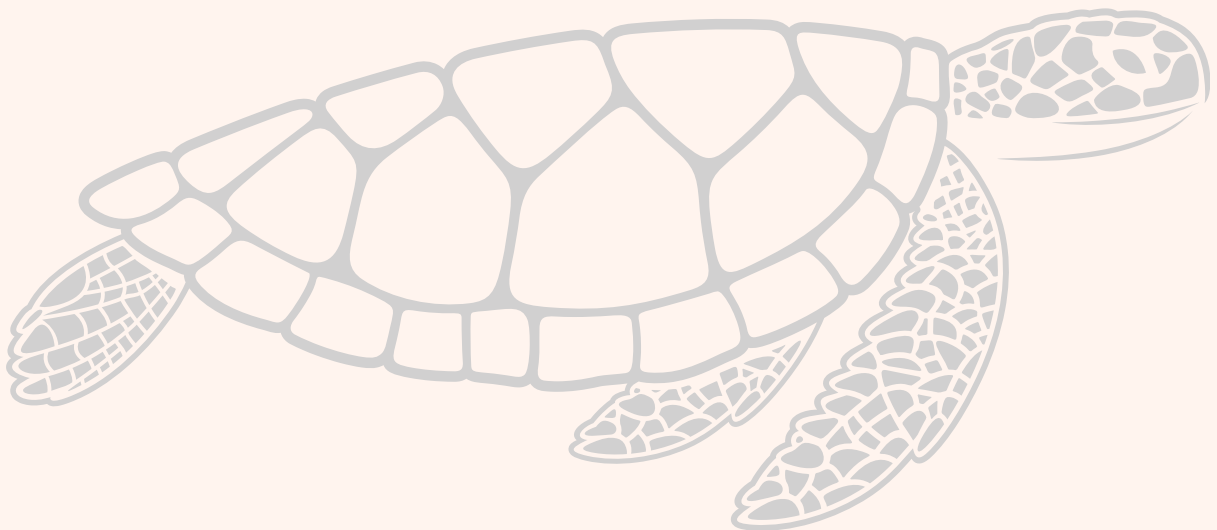
Together
we can
do it!


¡Juntos,
podemos
hacerlo!



A turtle's shell is its home and protection.

What makes you feel safe?



The background of the page is decorated with several stylized orange seashells. The shells are arranged in a circular pattern around the central text, with some shells partially overlapping. The shells have a textured, stippled appearance and radiating lines representing their ridges.

INTRODUCTION TO RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Research shows that a person's ability to manage stress impacts their resilience. Learning relaxation skills can help you cope with stress and have more control over physiological and psychological systems, which may be overly reactive to stress.

Relaxation techniques like deep breathing and mindfulness activities like meditation can interrupt stress hormones that can increase feelings of anxiety (Liu et al., 2021).

In this section, there are several handouts on relaxation techniques. Each handout provides step by step instructions on how to practice:

- Breathing Techniques
- Mindfulness Techniques
- Grounding Techniques
- Journaling Techniques

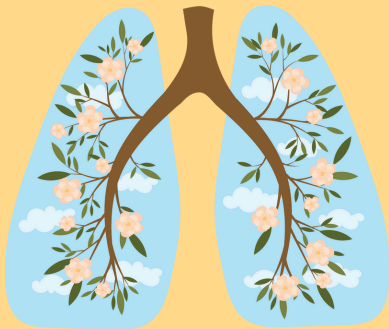
Try these techniques and decide which activities work for you.

What helps wash away your stress?



BELLY BREATHING RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

1. Sit in a chair or on the floor in a relaxed posture, with one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.



2. Breathe in through your nose, filling your lungs. You should feel your belly expand and your chest stay still.

3. Breathe out through your mouth. The hand on your belly should return to its original position.



This is a practice you can do when you are feeling anxious, overwhelmed, or experiencing negative emotions.

(Harvard Health Publishing, 2016)

How do you nourish your mind, body, and soul?

Draw or write in each section.

MIND



BODY



SOUL



THE BODY SCAN

A MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Body scanning reduces stress, increases focus,
and improves sleep.

Get comfortable. Lying on your back or sitting in a chair, face your palms upwards and have your feet slightly apart.

Remain as still as possible for the duration of the exercise.

Shift your focus onto your body. Examine how the clothes feel against your skin, how the object you're lying on shifts as you do, notice the temperature of where you are.

Notice your breathing. Don't try to change it, just be aware of it.

Starting from your toes moving upward toward your head, ask yourself these questions at each region of your body:

Is there any tingling or soreness?

Does it feel heavy or light?

Is there no sensation or is it hypersensitive?





Grounding Exercises

(CHEVALIER, 2015)

When you feel anxious, overwhelmed, panicked, or out of control, try a grounding exercise. Grounding is focusing on your surroundings in the present moment, instead of being trapped by anxiety.

Physical grounding is the focus on tangible things, which helps people move through moments of distress. List things that help you stay physically grounded:

Mental grounding techniques redirect our thoughts and attention away from negative feelings and back to the present. List things that help you stay mentally grounded:

These techniques can be used to comfort yourself in times of distress. List things that help soothe your grounding:

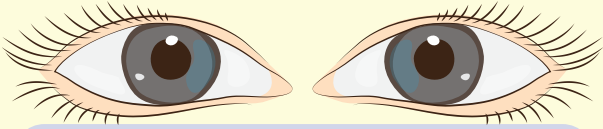


What are some things that make
you feel stressed?

Write them on the balloons and
let them fly away.

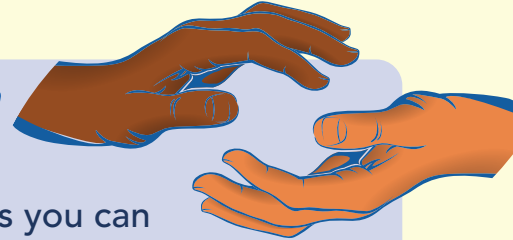


The Five Senses Grounding Exercise



SIGHT

Look around your home and name five things you haven't noticed before. Something like a crack in the wall or a shadow.



TOUCH

Name four things you can feel. Some examples are the feeling of the clothes on your skin or the feeling of the ground under your foot.

HEAR

Name three things you can hear that you would usually filter out as background noise. These can include even things like the humming of the refrigerator or birds chirping outside.



(BAILEY, 2021)

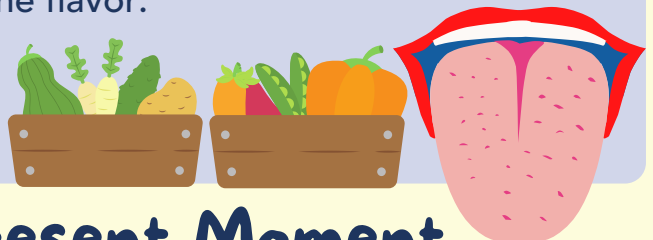
SMELL

Name two things you can smell. Bring your awareness to smells you usually ignore, whether pleasant or unpleasant. This can be the smell of coffee or a newly lit candle.



TASTE

Name one thing you can taste. Take a bite or sip and think about the flavor.



As you listen to your favorite song,
doodle or draw freely.



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JOURNALING

Try writing a little bit everyday. Keep it simple. Carry a pen, paper, or a small notebook with you. Write or draw whatever feels right in the moment. Make your journal yours; the rules are up to you.

Here are some prompts that can help guide your journey:

- *What have you learned about yourself this week?*
- *In the next year, what are five things you want to improve about your life? How can you accomplish each one?*
- *In detail, describe your perfect day.*
- *Write a list of ten things that make you happy.*
- *Write a love letter to yourself.*



"If you don't see a clear path
for what you want, sometimes you
have to make it yourself."
— Mindy Kaling

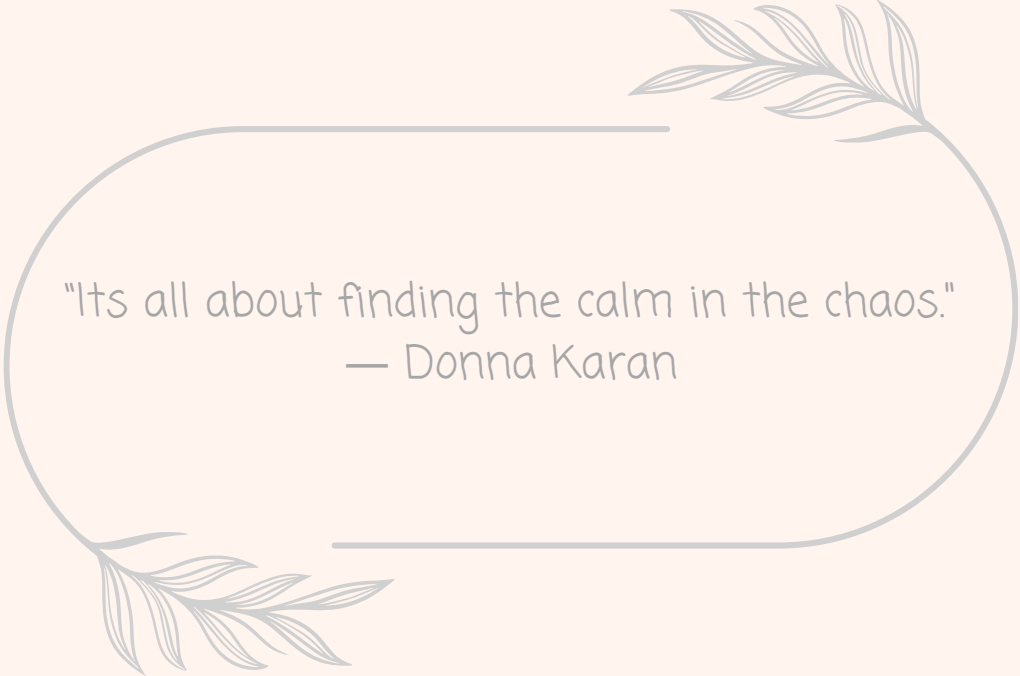


PART THREE

Mini-Posters to Promote Self-Care and Student Resilience

This section includes several mini-posters that can remind you to care for yourself during stressful times.





"Its all about finding the calm in the chaos."
— Donna Karan

HAPPY CHEMICALS

HELP FIGHT STRESS

THE LOVE HORMONE

(*OXYTOCIN*)

- Hugging a loved one
- Giving a compliment
- Playing with a baby or a pet



THE REWARD CHEMICAL

(*DOPAMINE*)

- Completing a task
- Engaging in self-care
- Celebrating little wins



THE MOOD STABILIZER

(*SEROTONIN*)

- Enjoying the outdoors
- Meditating
- Eating dark chocolate



THE PAIN KILLER

(*ENDORPHINS*)

- Exercising
- Laughing
- Helping others






(Breuning, 2016)

"Sleep is the best meditation."
— Dalai Lama





TIPS FOR GOOD SLEEP HABITS




 **Have a consistent routine. Try to go to bed at the same time every night and wake up around the same time each morning, including weekends.**

 **Make sleeping spaces quiet, dark, and at a comfortable temperature.**

 **Try shutting down electronics before going to bed. Turn your phone upside down and place it away from your bed. Avoid using electronics at least 30 minutes before bedtime.**

 **Avoid eating large meals, alcohol, or caffeine before bedtime.**

 **Engage in physical activity during the day to help bring energy levels down.**

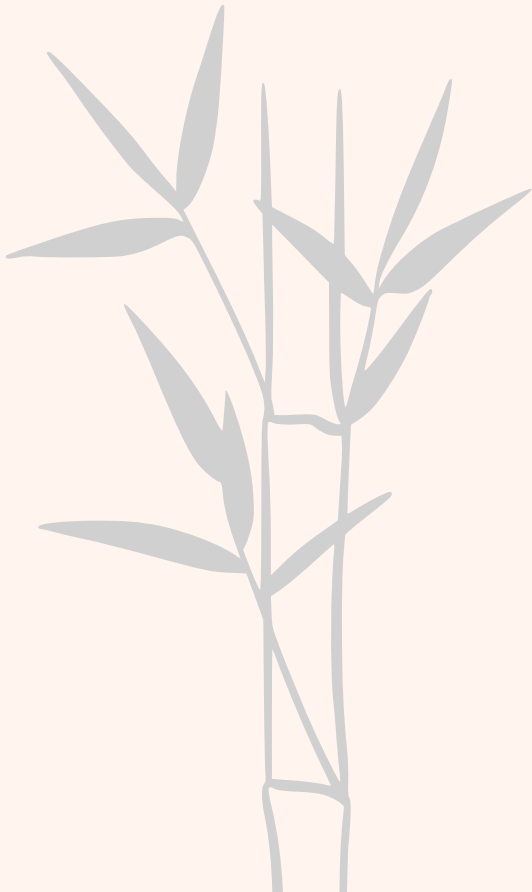
 **When unable to fall asleep, get out of bed and do a quiet activity without a lot of light exposure (i.e., water plants, tidy up room, do relaxing stretches).**

 **Try not to use your bed for schoolwork or work. Keep the bedroom a relaxing environment for sleep.**

(Hershner & Shaikh, 2020)



"The human capacity for
burden is like bamboo -
far more flexible than you'd
ever believe at first glance."
- Jodi Picoult



YOGA POSES

TO CONNECT YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND



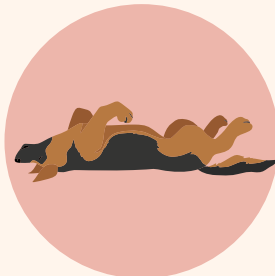
TREE POSE

Balance on one foot while holding the other foot to your calf or above the knee (but never on the knee) at a right angle. Try to focus on one spot in front of you while you balance for one minute.



DOWNWARD DOG

Begin in a kneeling position on your mat with hands directly under your shoulders, fingers spread wide. Tuck your toes under as you push your body up off the mat, so only your hands and feet are on the mat. Press your hands into the mat. Move your chest gently toward your thighs and your heels softly toward the floor.



SHAVASANA POSE

Lie down with your limbs gently stretched out, away from the body, with your palms facing up. Try to clear your mind while breathing deeply. You can hold this pose for 5 to 15 minutes.



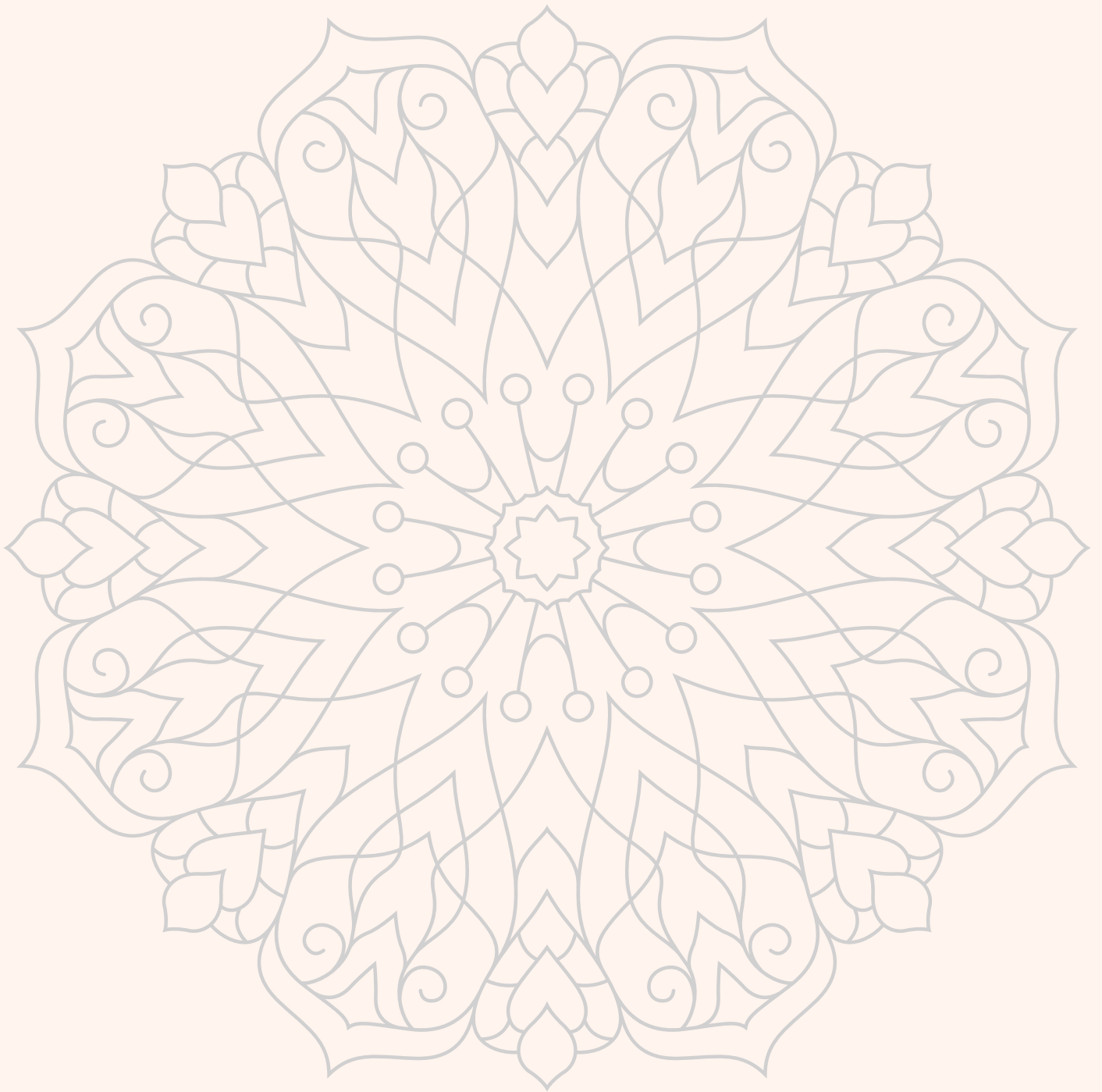
SIDE STRETCH POSE

In a comfortable position, lift one arm up and over your body to the opposite side. Hold and take five deep breaths. Release and repeat on the other side.

FOR MORE YOGA BENEFITS AND FREE RESOURCES,
VISIT YOGA WITH ADRIENE:

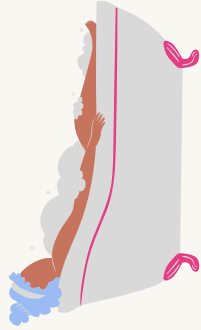
<https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>

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Emotional Self-Care Activities

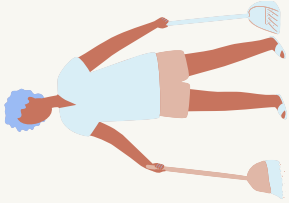
(Purdy, 2017)



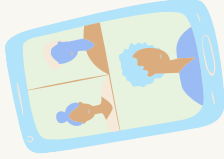
Take a bath



Read a book



Organize your space



Catch up with friends or family



Go to therapy



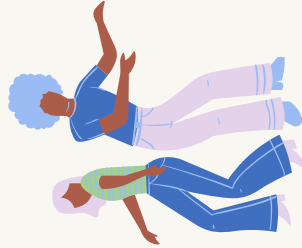
Watch your favorite movie/show



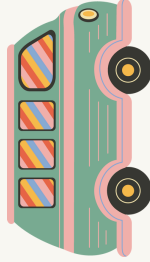
Say "no"



Journal/write down your feelings



Have a dance party!



Take a day trip



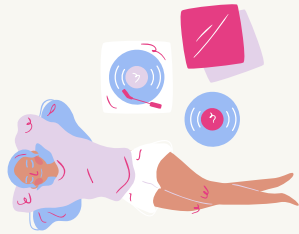
Meditate



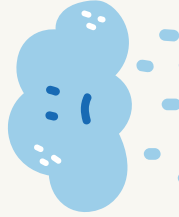
Wear clothes YOU like



Take care of your space



Listen to music



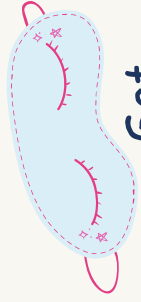
Allow yourself to cry



Play some music



Eat healthy



Get enough sleep



"Courage doesn't always roar.
Sometimes courage is the quiet voice
at the end of the day saying
'I will try again tomorrow'.
— Mary Anne Radmacher



Physical Self-Care Activities

(Purdy, 2017)

- play a sport
- watch your favorite movie/show
- stretch your body
- sing a song
- play some music
- eat good food
- join a group
- take a bath
- exercise
- take a dance class
- go for a walk
- organize your space
- wear clothes you like
- take a day trip
- sit outside
- eat regularly
- get enough sleep
- learn something new





Spiritual Self-Care Activities

(Purdy, 2017)



create a list of dreams + goals

celebrate milestones

find comfort in the unknown

seek moments of awe

spend time in nature

meditate, pray, or reflect

write out your values + morals

forgive yourself for your mistakes

write down affirmations

change your perspective

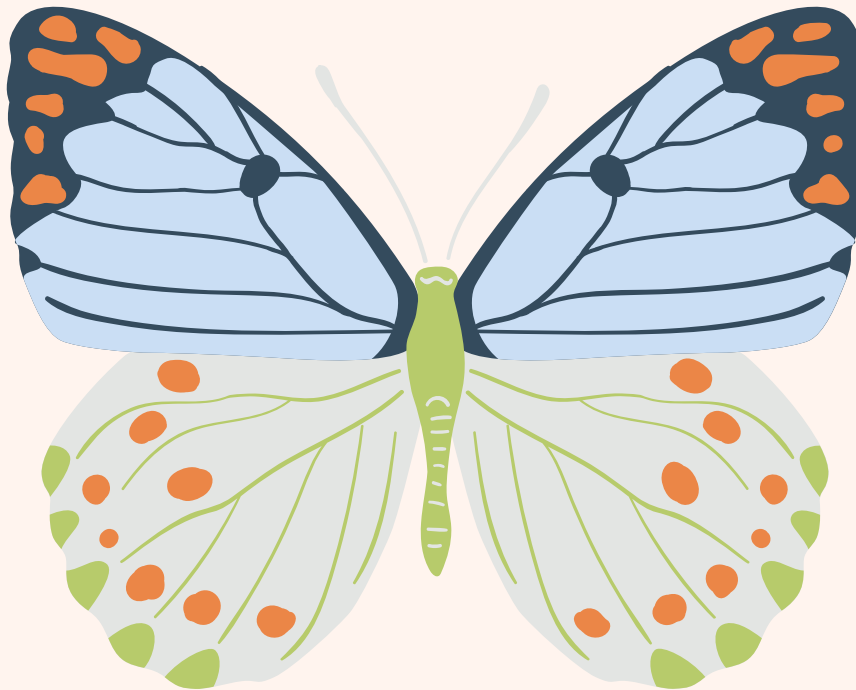
read your sacred text

stretch + move your body

find a spiritual connection or community

be open + inspired

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Created by:
The Institute for Trauma and Resilience Studies

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ITRS-ADMIN@CSW.FSU.EDU

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