

Bolton

Together

# Thrive

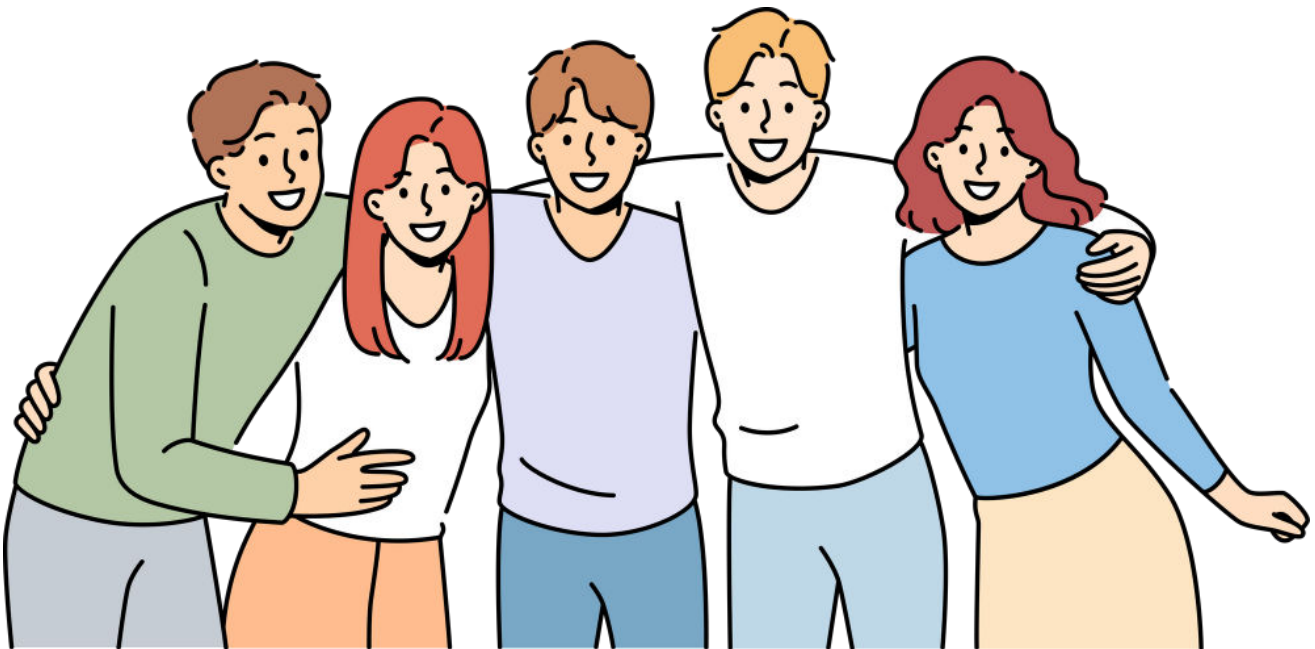
A Workbook for Adolescent  
Mental Health and Wellbeing



# Introduction

This workbook is all about you—your feelings, your dreams, and your journey. It's packed with activities to boost your mood, build resilience, and give you tools to navigate life's twists and turns.

There is also some useful information for your parent, carer or trusted adult. Along with some links to additional resources and support.



Adolescence is a time of immense growth, discovery, and change, and this workbook is here to offer you support.

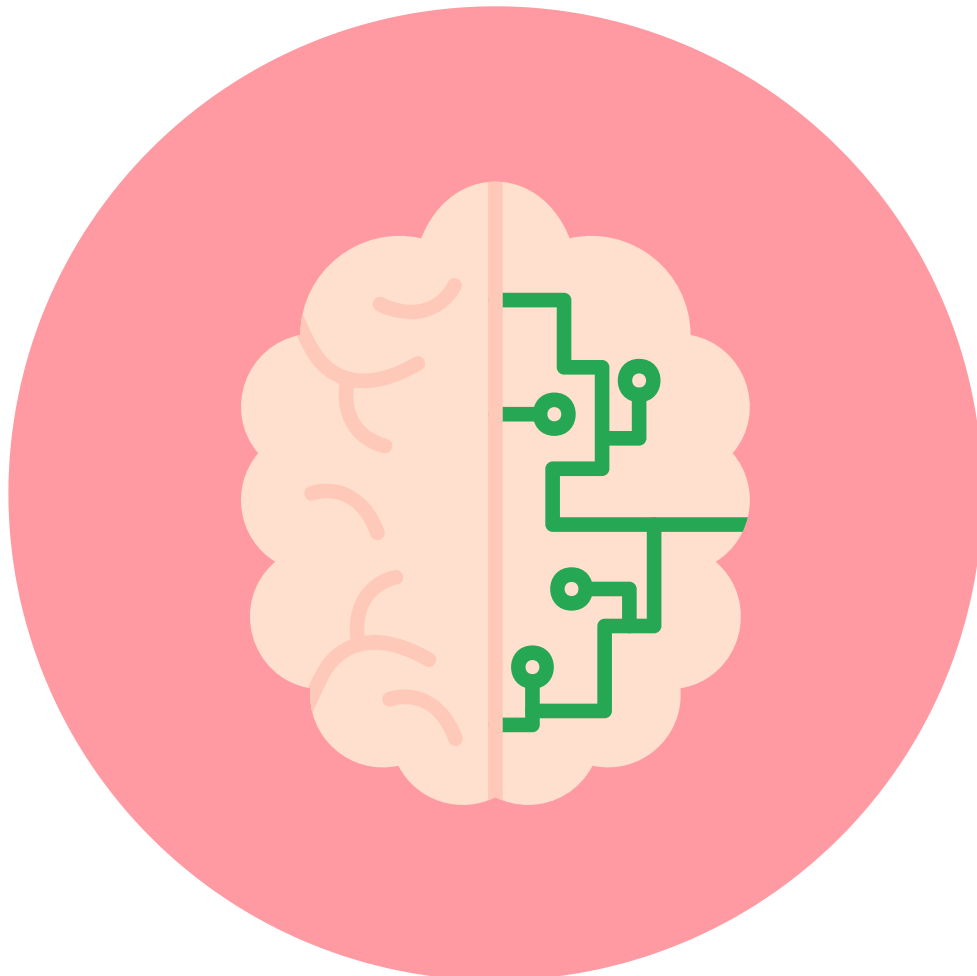
Remember, this workbook is not just about tackling difficulties; it's about celebrating your strengths, acknowledging your worth, and empowering you to Thrive.

# Your Brain

The adolescent brain is an incredible thing, constantly changing as it transitions from childhood to adulthood. This shift can have a significant effect on emotions, behaviour, and overall mental health. During this time, the brain undergoes a flurry of neurological transformations that shape how you interact with the world around you.



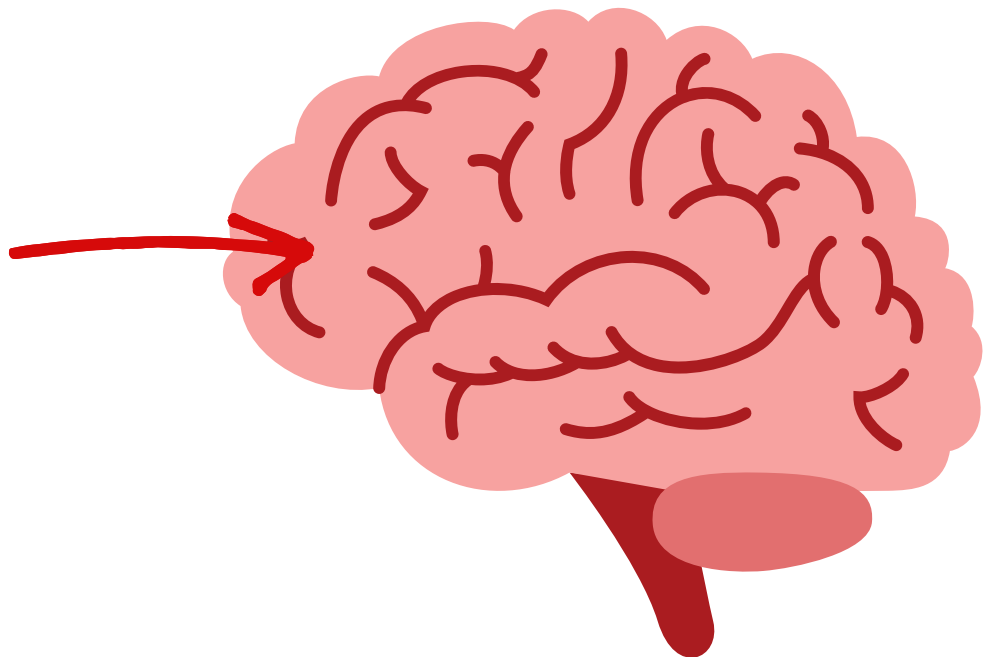
There are many ways people describe the brain. You might hear about the Left and Right brain or the Upstairs and Downstairs brain. Although this can seem perplexing, it's important to recognise that each part of our brain plays a unique role in shaping how we think, feel, and react to the world around us.



The section of the brain responsible for decision-making, impulse control, and evaluating outcomes is a crucial component of brain development.

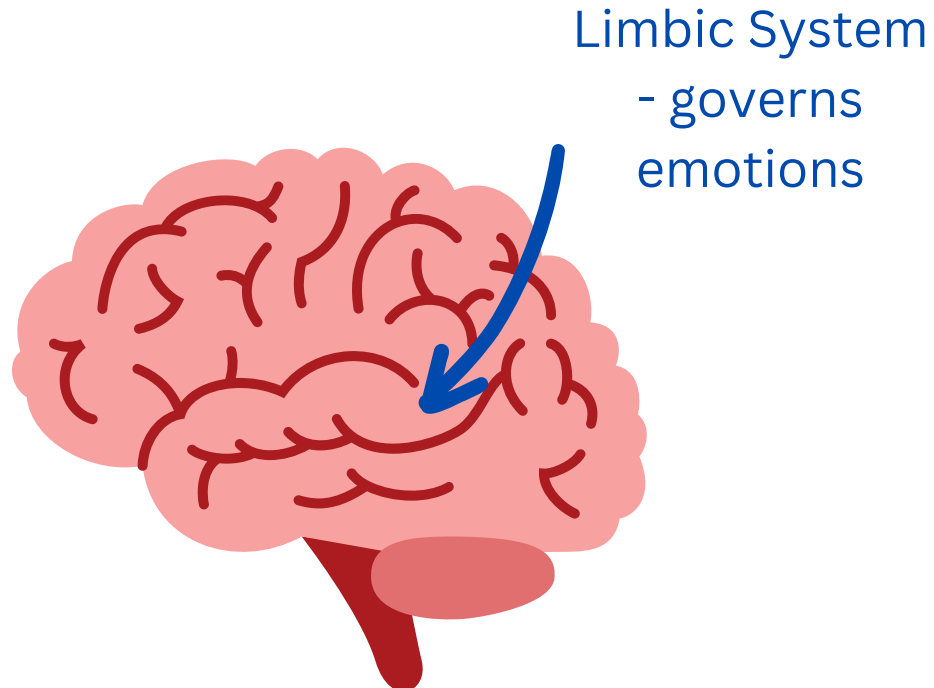
However, this area is still maturing during adolescence, which can result in increased risk-taking behaviour as you establish your identity and may test boundaries.

Prefrontal  
cortex -  
responsible for  
decision-  
making



The area responsible for emotions and reward processing undergoes significant development during adolescence, which can lead to heightened emotional experiences.

As a result, you may encounter intense mood swings and increased sensitivity to stressors, potentially affecting your decision-making, mental health, and overall wellbeing.



It is important to regard our emotions and feelings as data to help inform our decisions.

Whilst they can sometimes improve the quality of our decision-making by providing us with updates on how things are going in the world around us, too much can interfere with our thinking.



# What is Mental Health?

Mental health is more than just feeling good, it's about having the capacity to manage emotions effectively.

Adolescence is a challenging phase to navigate, as it often comes with a range of difficult experiences. However, embracing the emotional impact of these experiences is critical for personal growth and development.

Building positive mental health means being able to withstand and cope with difficult experiences.



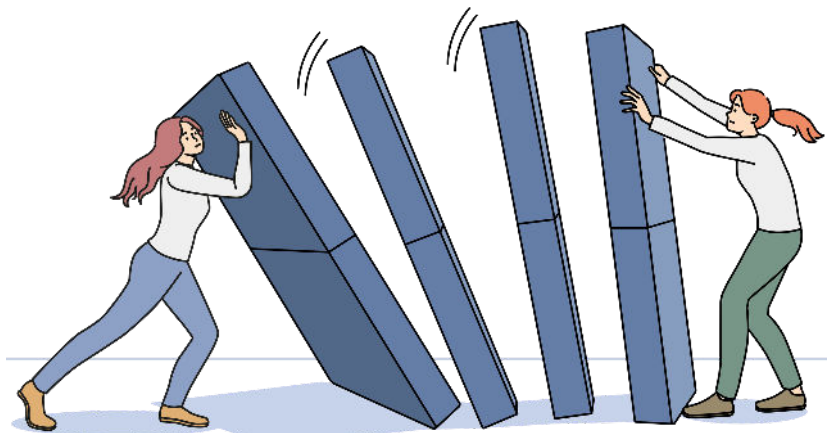


# What is Resilience?

As you go through this workbook, you'll come across the word "resilience" frequently. But what does it mean exactly? Essentially, resilience refers to your capacity to handle difficult and challenging experiences.

Each person has a varying level of mental resilience, which is influenced by factors such as age and life experiences. Furthermore, your resilience can change over time.

The good news is that, just like any skill, there are steps you can take to enhance and develop your resilience. In fact, there are several methods you can use to build and reinforce your resilience.



# Strengthening Your Mental Resilience

## **Appreciate your strength**

When you are caught in the middle of a difficult situation, it is often hard to remember or recognise your own strength. Chances are you have already overcome an obstacle or challenge in your life. Try to recall a time when you have faced a difficult situation and how you came through it.

## **Remind yourself you always have a choice**

Whatever you are going through, you always have a choice on how you respond to it. Reminding yourself that you have this power can help to regain some control of the situation.

## **Focus on your personal growth**

You are constantly learning from your experiences. It's important to remember that every challenge or obstacle is an opportunity to grow and develop. What can you learn from this set-back? What skills did it take to overcome the situation?

## **Take a step back**

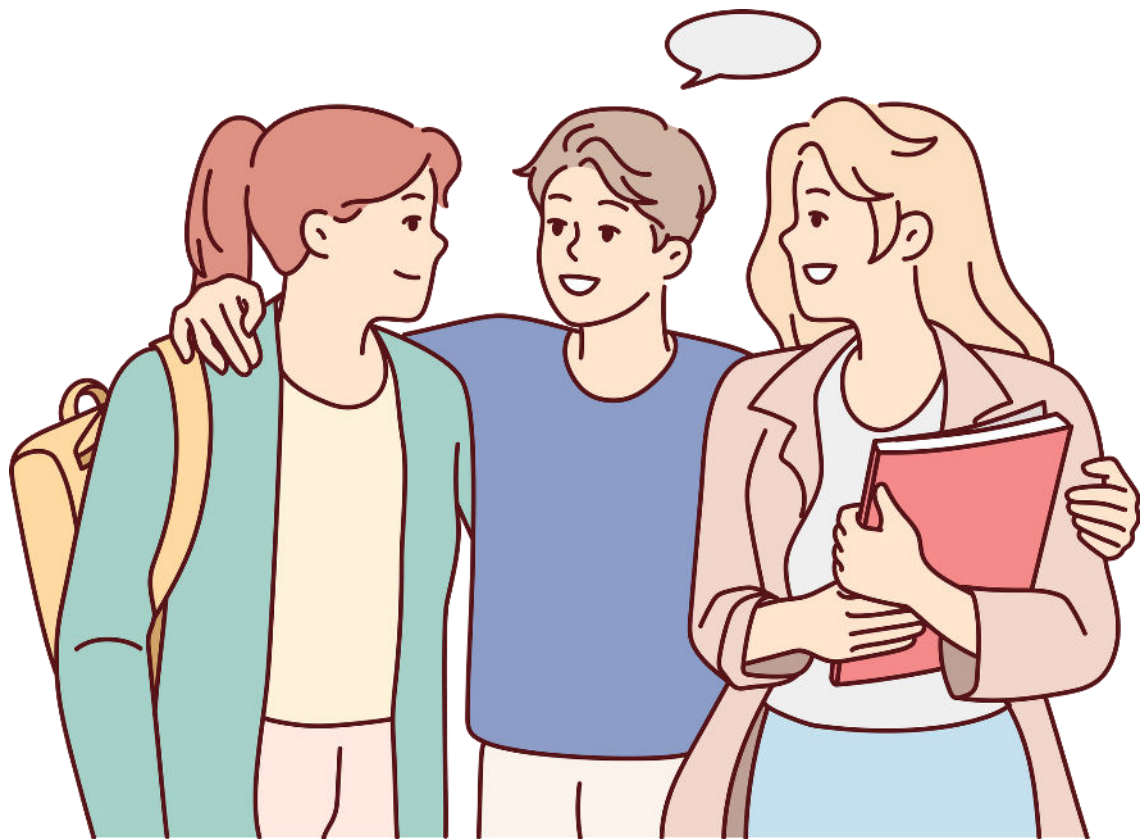
Difficult situations often feel immediate and intense. It can be helpful to take a breath and try to gain some perspective. Will you feel the same in an hour, a day, or even a week?

# Using This Workbook

Throughout this workbook you will find coping mechanisms such as resilience and emotional regulation skills.

You can work through each activity or pick-and-choose what interests or works for you.

However you choose to approach these activities, we hope that you find them useful.



# Mindful Colouring

Ever heard of mindful colouring?

It's not just another art activity; it's like a superpower for your mental health. Here's the lowdown on why picking up those colouring pencils can be a game-changer:

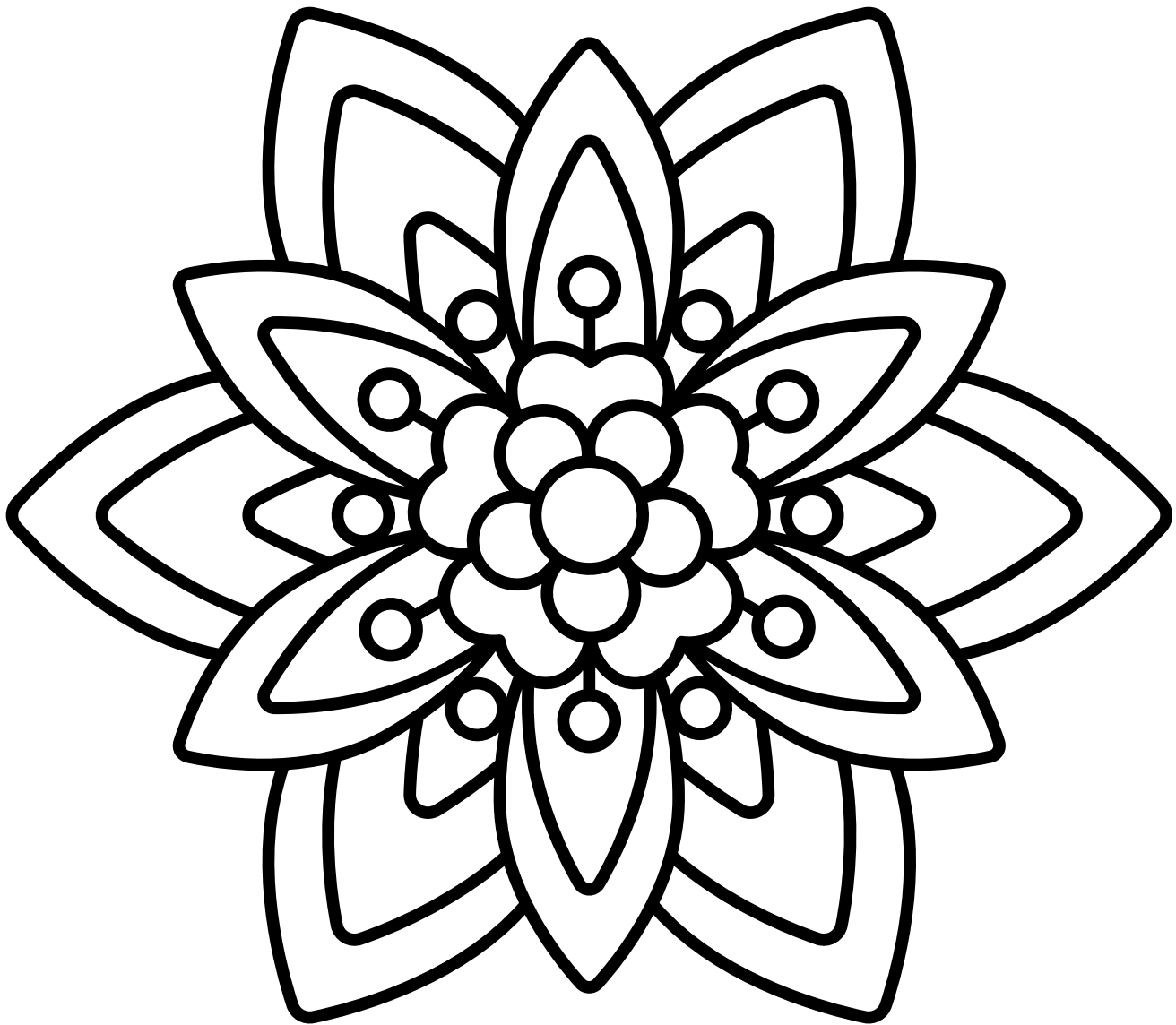
**Stress Buster:** Mindful colouring is like a mini-vacation for your brain. When you focus on colouring, your mind shifts away from worries and stress. It's like hitting the pause button on the chaos of life and giving yourself a breather.

**Mindfulness Magic:** You've probably heard about mindfulness—it's all about being present in the moment. Colouring is a sneaky way to practice mindfulness without feeling like you're doing homework. As you colour, you concentrate on the strokes, the shades, and the patterns, tuning out distractions and bringing a sense of calm.



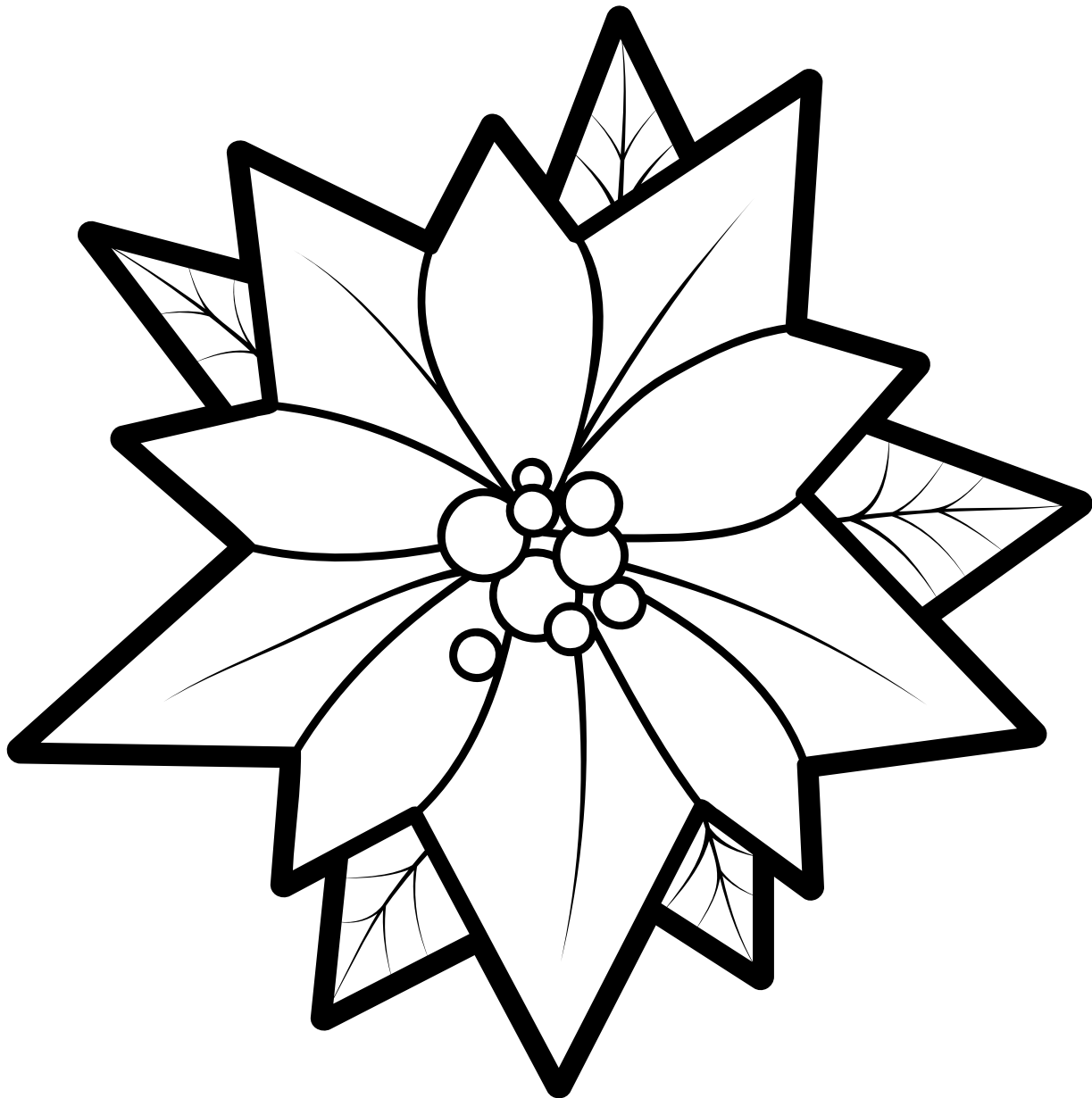
**Creative Escape:** It's your chance to unleash creativity without any pressure. You don't need to be a Picasso! Whether you prefer vibrant rainbows or calming pastels, colouring lets you express yourself freely. Plus, there are no rules—colour outside the lines if you want!

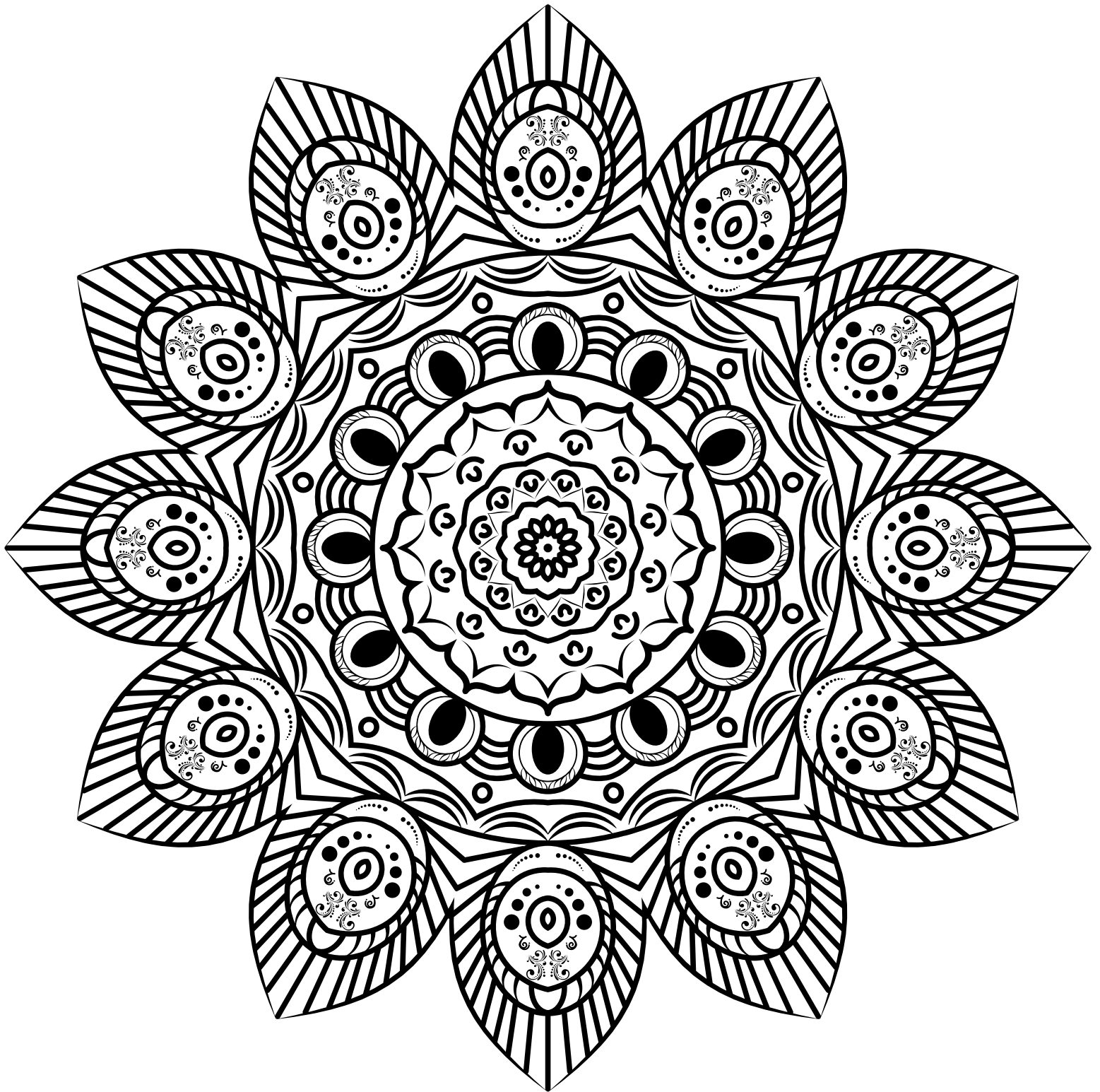
**Relaxation Station:** Colouring can be super relaxing. It's like a spa day for your mind. As you focus on those intricate designs, your brain switches gears, slowing down and easing tension. It's a fantastic way to wind down after a busy day.



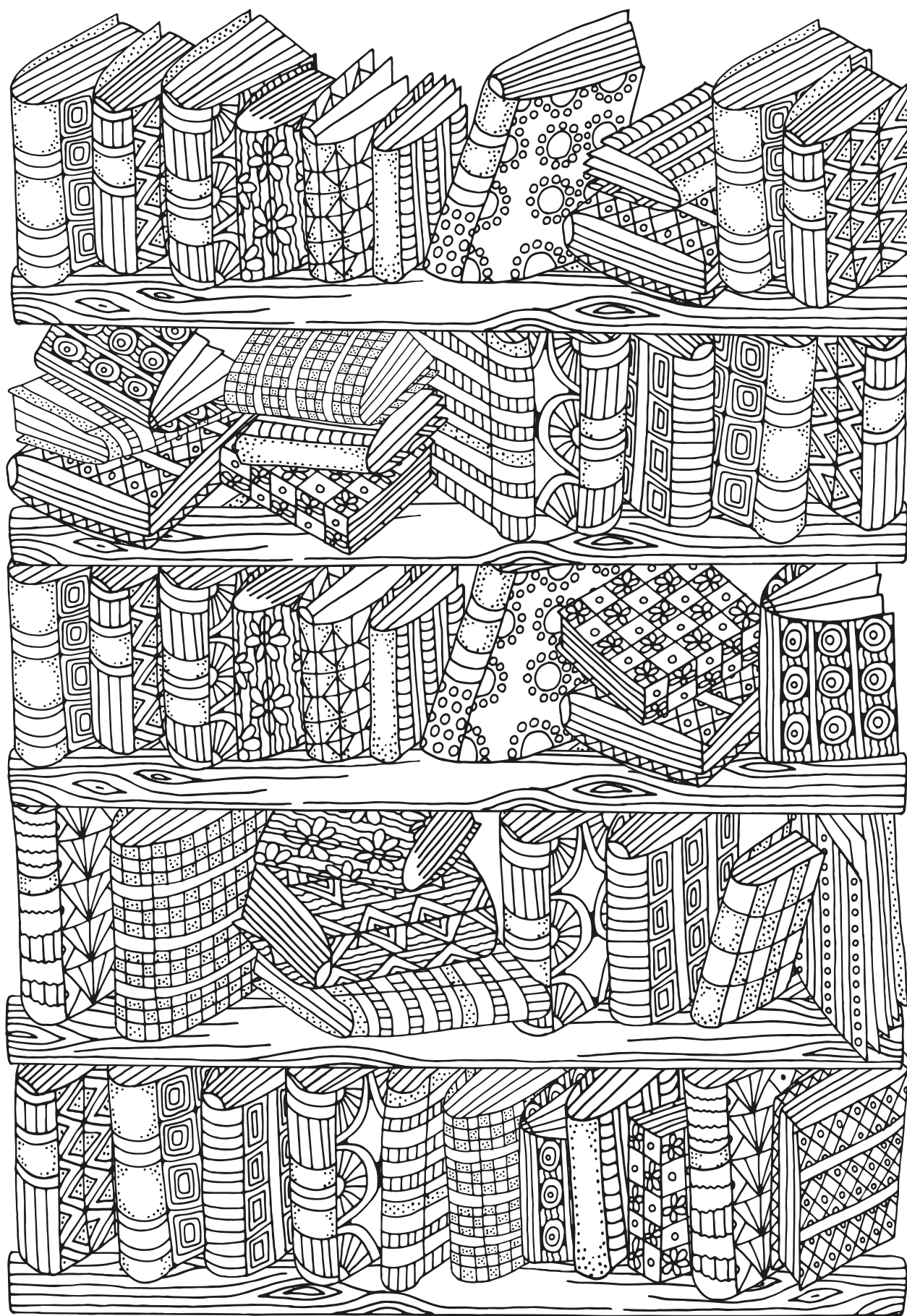
**Boosts Mood:** Remember how colouring used to make you smile as a child? That's because it releases feel-good chemicals in your brain. When you colour, your brain releases dopamine, making you feel happier and more content.

**Brain Workout:** Believe it or not, colouring is like hitting the gym for your brain. It improves focus, attention to detail, and fine motor skills. So, while you're creating a masterpiece, your brain is getting a workout too!

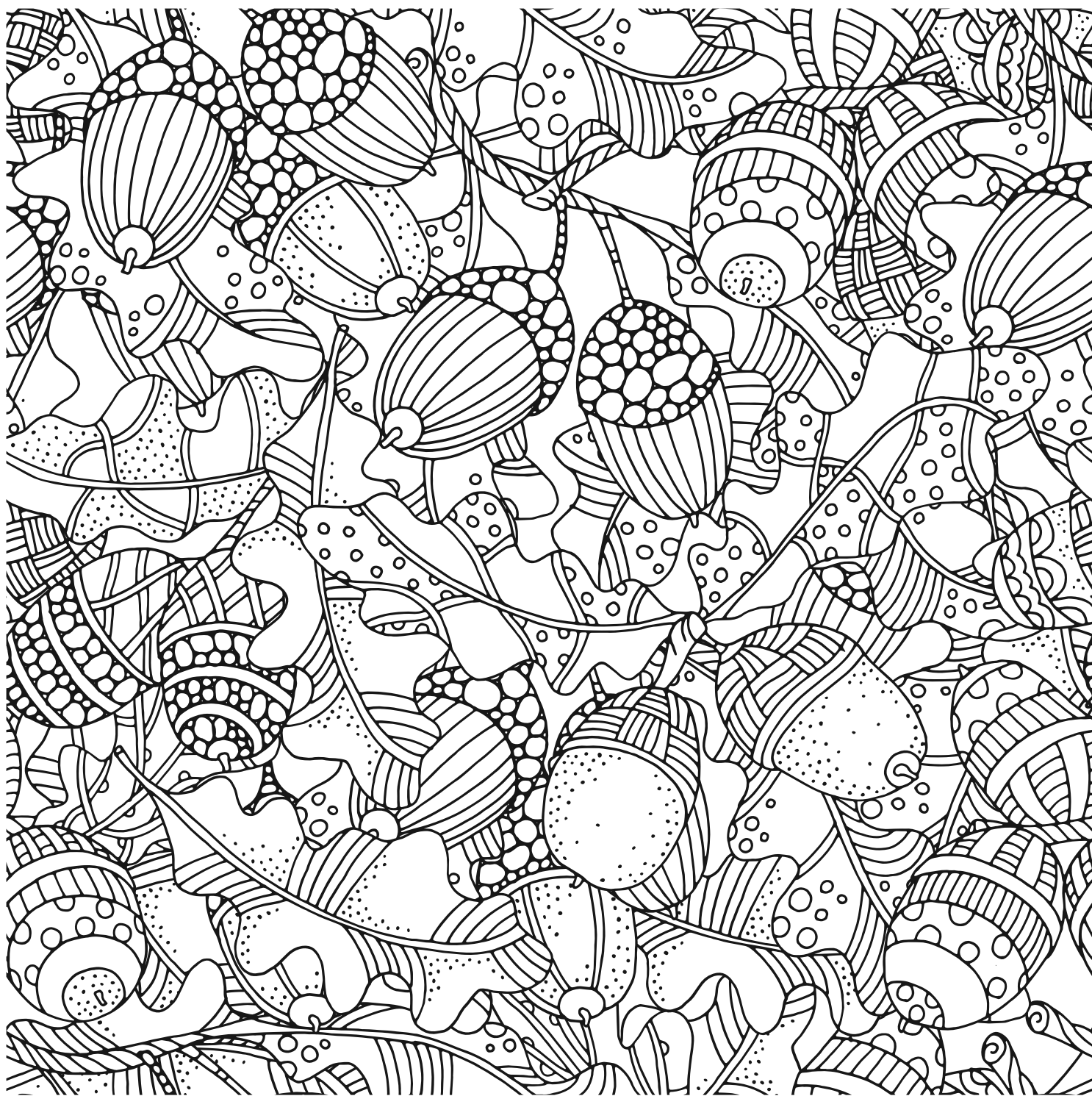


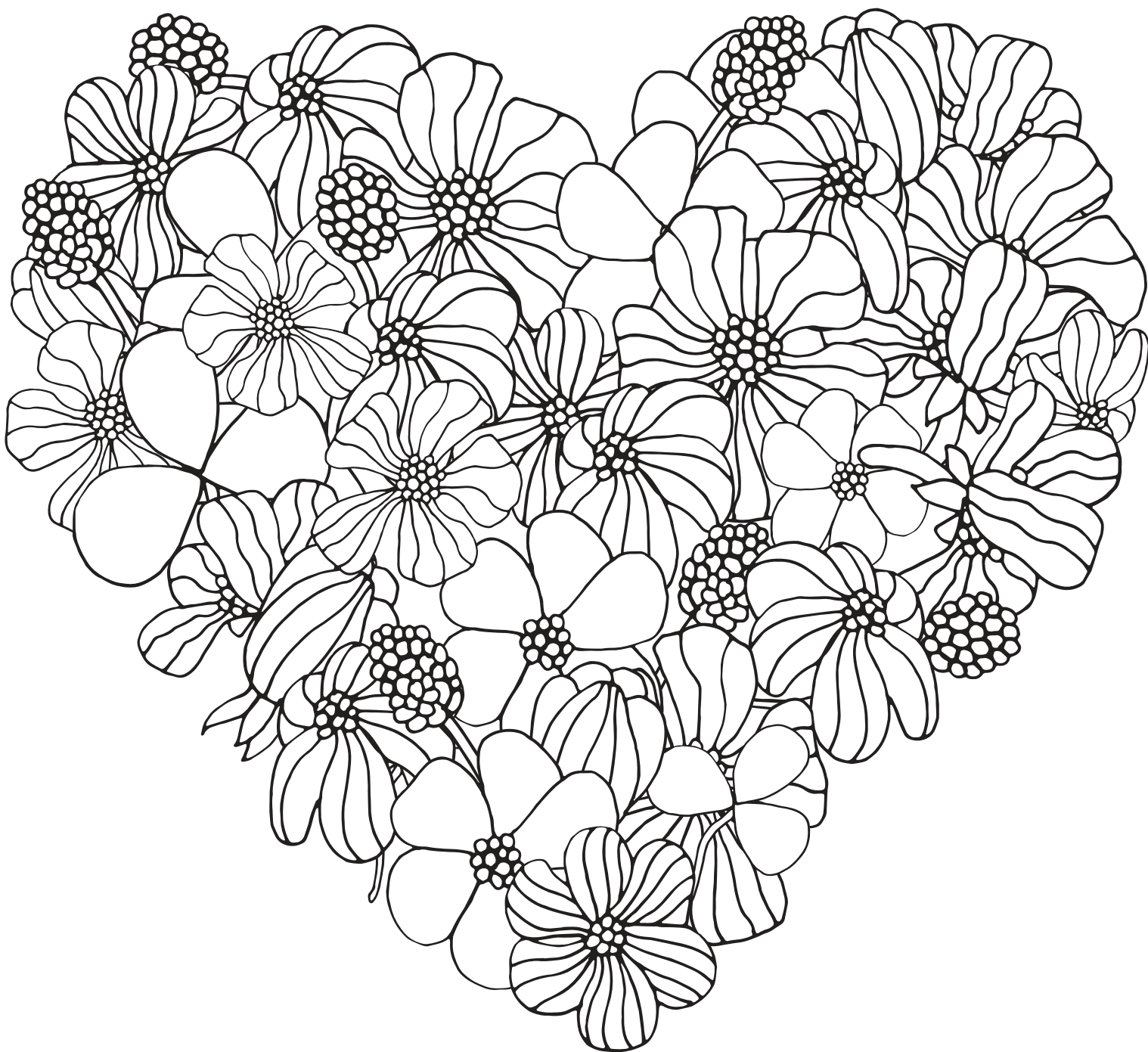












# Reading

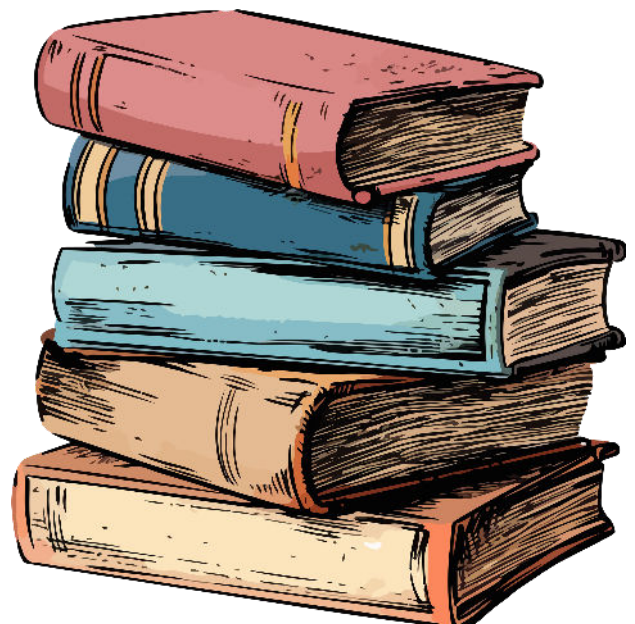
You may not know this, but there is developmental value in reading. It's true. Several studies have proven that reading helps to foster empathy.

Reading compelling narratives of lived experiences helps us to build compassion and the ability to take on another's perspective, especially if we become emotionally invested in what we are reading.

Reading provides escapism and helps you experience powerful emotions within the safety of a story.

Whether it's gained from difficult personal experience or inspired by literature, feeling the emotional impact of difficult experiences helps us to develop emotional maturity.

So head to your school or local library and find a book that interests you. Settle down in a quiet and calming space, and get lost in a story.



# Dear Future Me

You are embarking on a journey to your future self.

Writing a letter to the 'you' that you'll become isn't just about predictions; it's a chance to reflect, set intentions, and foster positive mental health. Take a moment to imagine where you'd like to be in a year, five years, or even a decade. What do you hope to have achieved? What strengths do you want to embrace? Pour these thoughts onto paper. Speak kindly to your future self, sharing your dreams, aspirations, and the steps you're taking now for a better tomorrow.

Remember, this letter is a gift, a reminder of your growth, resilience, and the incredible person you're becoming. Embrace this opportunity to nurture your mental wellbeing and shape the path toward a brighter future. Your future self will thank you.



Dear Future Me



# Positive Vibes

Music has a profound impact on our emotions and mental health. Research shows that listening to music can affect mood, reduce stress, and boost overall well-being. Creating a playlist filled with positive songs can be a fun and effective way to lift your spirits and support your mental health.

## Steps:

**Reflection:** Start by reflecting on how different songs make you feel. Consider moments when a particular song lifted your mood, made you feel energised, or brought a smile to your face. Think about the emotions and memories associated with these songs.

**Identify Positive Songs:** Browse through your music library, streaming platforms, or explore new music to find songs that evoke positive emotions. Look for tunes that make you feel happy, motivated, empowered, or relaxed. Consider lyrics, melodies, and rhythms that resonate with you.



**Curate Your Playlist:** Create a dedicated playlist titled "Positive Vibes" or any name that resonates with you. Add the songs you've identified as uplifting and mood-boosting. organise them in a way that feels right to you—maybe by mood, tempo, or simply what makes you smile the most.

**Listen and Feel:** Take time to listen to your curated playlist regularly. Pay attention to how the music makes you feel. Notice any changes in your mood, energy levels, or stress. Whether you're dancing around your room or listening quietly, let the music work its magic.



## The Science Behind It

Music has a direct influence on our brain. When we listen to music we enjoy, our brain releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward. This release of dopamine can elevate mood and reduce stress.

**Positive** and **upbeat** music with catchy melodies or **empowering** lyrics can stimulate the brain's reward centre, promoting feelings of happiness and motivation.

Additionally, music has the power to distract us from negative thoughts and can serve as a form of self-expression or emotional release.

**Listening** to these songs regularly can act as a **mood-booster**, helping you manage stress, lift your spirits, and create a positive atmosphere around you.

Remember, your playlist is a personal creation, so don't be afraid to experiment and add or remove songs based on how they make you feel.





# Friendship Mosaic

**Objective:** To strengthen bonds and foster a deeper understanding among friends.

**Materials Needed:**

- Sheets of paper (preferably different colours)
- Markers, pens, or coloured pencils
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Optional: Magazines, old newspapers, or printed images



**Instructions:****Preparation:**

Gather the materials and ensure enough space for everyone to work comfortably.

**Friendship Traits:**

Go around and each think about the qualities and characteristics you appreciate in your friends. These could include loyalty, humour, supportiveness, etc.

PROUD

brave

SUPPORT

LOYALTY

SMART

Kind funny →

## Creating the Mosaic:

- You should each get a sheet of paper of a different colour.
- On your paper, draw or write about one specific trait or quality you admire in your friends. For instance, you might draw a symbol representing "supportiveness" or write a short note about "trust." This is your time to be creative in how you depict these traits, using colours, images, or words.

## Cutting and Mixing:

- After completing your drawings or writings, cut your paper into small mosaic pieces. These pieces should eventually form a larger mosaic when put together.

## Assembling the friendship mosaic:

- Once everyone has cut their pieces, come together and mix your mosaic pieces with each other.
- Take turns picking up pieces from the mixed pile and gluing or taping them onto a large sheet of paper.
- As you assemble the pieces, discuss why you chose these particular traits or qualities and how they relate to your friendships.



## Reflection and discussion:

- After completing the mosaic, sit together and admire the collaborative artwork.
- Talk about the pieces you contributed and how they connect to your idea of friendship.
- Discuss the importance of these qualities in fostering strong, supportive friendships and how you can continue to embody these traits in your relationships.

## Display and celebration:

- Once the friendship mosaic is complete, consider displaying it prominently in a common area where everyone can appreciate it.
- Celebrate the bonds of friendship by taking a group photo with the friendship mosaic.

The friendship mosaic represents the unique qualities that each individual brings to their friendships. By combining these pieces, teenagers create a beautiful representation of the diverse and meaningful traits that strengthen their bonds with one another.



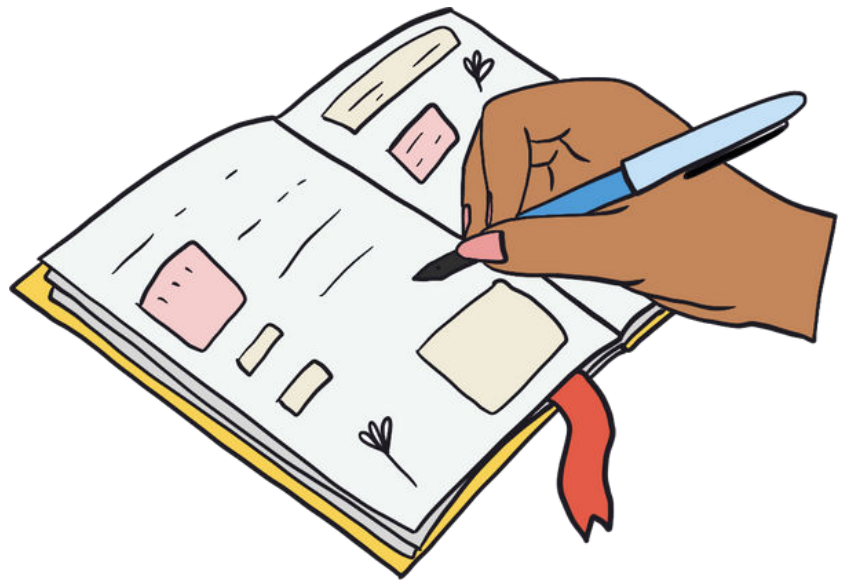
# Explore Your World Through Journaling

Life as a teenager can be a whirlwind of emotions, experiences, and changes. Sometimes, it feels like you're juggling a dozen things at once—school, relationships, self-discovery, and the ever-present push to figure out who you are and where you fit in the world.

In the midst of this rollercoaster, it's crucial to take moments for yourself, to pause, reflect, and understand your thoughts and feelings. That's where mindful journaling comes in.

Mindful journaling isn't just about scribbling thoughts onto paper; it's a powerful tool that helps you navigate the ups and downs of life with more clarity and self-awareness.

It's a safe space where you can pour out your thoughts, explore your emotions, and make sense of the whirlwind inside your mind.



Remember, there's no right or wrong way to journal. This is your personal canvas—a place to be authentically you. So, grab your pen, embrace the blank pages, and let's embark on this mindful journey together.

Let's start journaling mindfully and uncover the incredible potential that lies within you!







Journaling is a powerful tool for self-discovery and self-expression. Through this activity, you can explore your thoughts, emotions, and experiences, gaining insights into yourself and fostering better mental wellbeing.

Try to make journaling a regular practice. It's a safe space for their thoughts and feelings.

# A guide to better sleep

Sleep plays a crucial role in maintaining our overall well-being. It has the power to affect our mood, brain performance, and general health. That's why getting a good night's sleep is essential.

However, there are several factors that may hinder the quality of our sleep, including stress, anxiety, lack of routine, or an uncomfortable sleeping environment. The following tips may help improve your sleep quality:

- Develop a regular sleep routine and stick to it as much as possible. Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day can help establish a healthy sleep pattern.
- Disconnect from your phone or any electronic devices that may distract you before bedtime. Instead, try winding down by journaling about your day, reading a book, or practicing calming breathing exercises.
- Make your sleeping space as comfortable and cosy as possible. Consider adding your favourite blanket or adjusting the temperature to create a peaceful environment conducive to sleeping.





# Support Networks

As the popular saying goes, "it takes a village" to raise a child. This same notion can also be applied to the importance of positive relationships within a community and how it can greatly impact an individual's mental health and overall well-being.

Having supportive adults and peers can provide a sense of comfort and security. Knowing that there is a trustworthy source of help available can make all the difference.

Take some time to identify the individuals who make up your support system. Who are they and what kind of support do they offer? Whether it's advice, emotional support or simply someone to rely on, they can make a significant difference in your life.

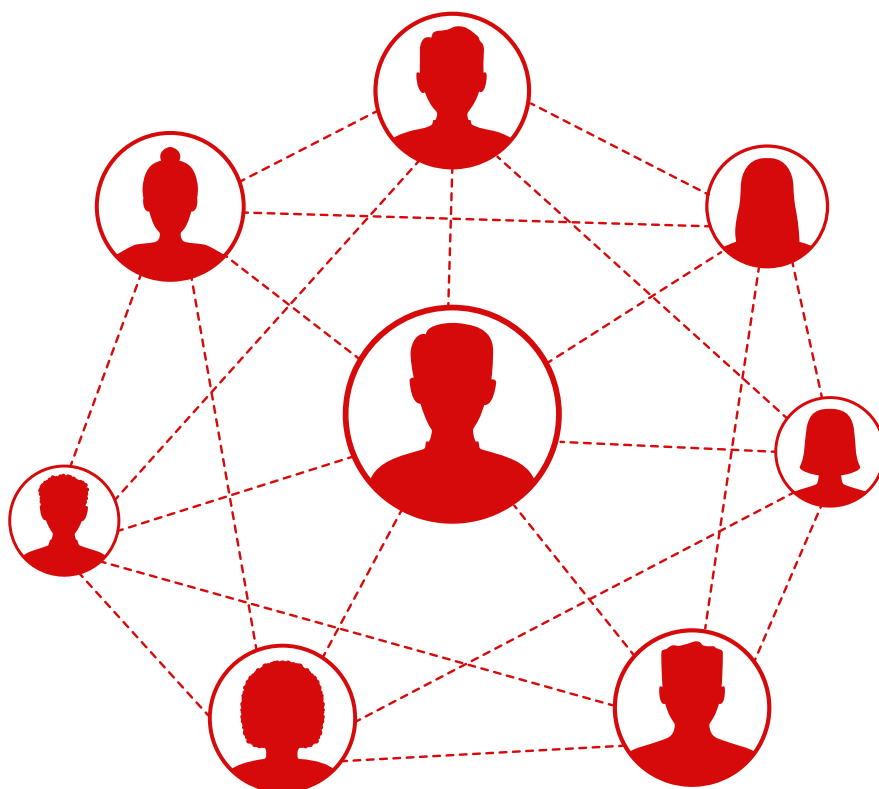


# Identifying Your Support Network

Would you like to learn more about your support network? In this activity, we will use an ecomap to help you recognize the individuals who make up your support system. These individuals may be family members, friends, teachers, neighbours, or other trusted adults who provide you with guidance.

Creating an ecomap is easy – simply place yourself at the centre of the map, and your support network around you. You may place family members or other essential people closer to your centre, as well as individuals you depend on the most.

By reflecting on the significance of each person in your network, you can gain insight into why they are so important to you. This map is an excellent resource for identifying those you can count on for support when you need it most.

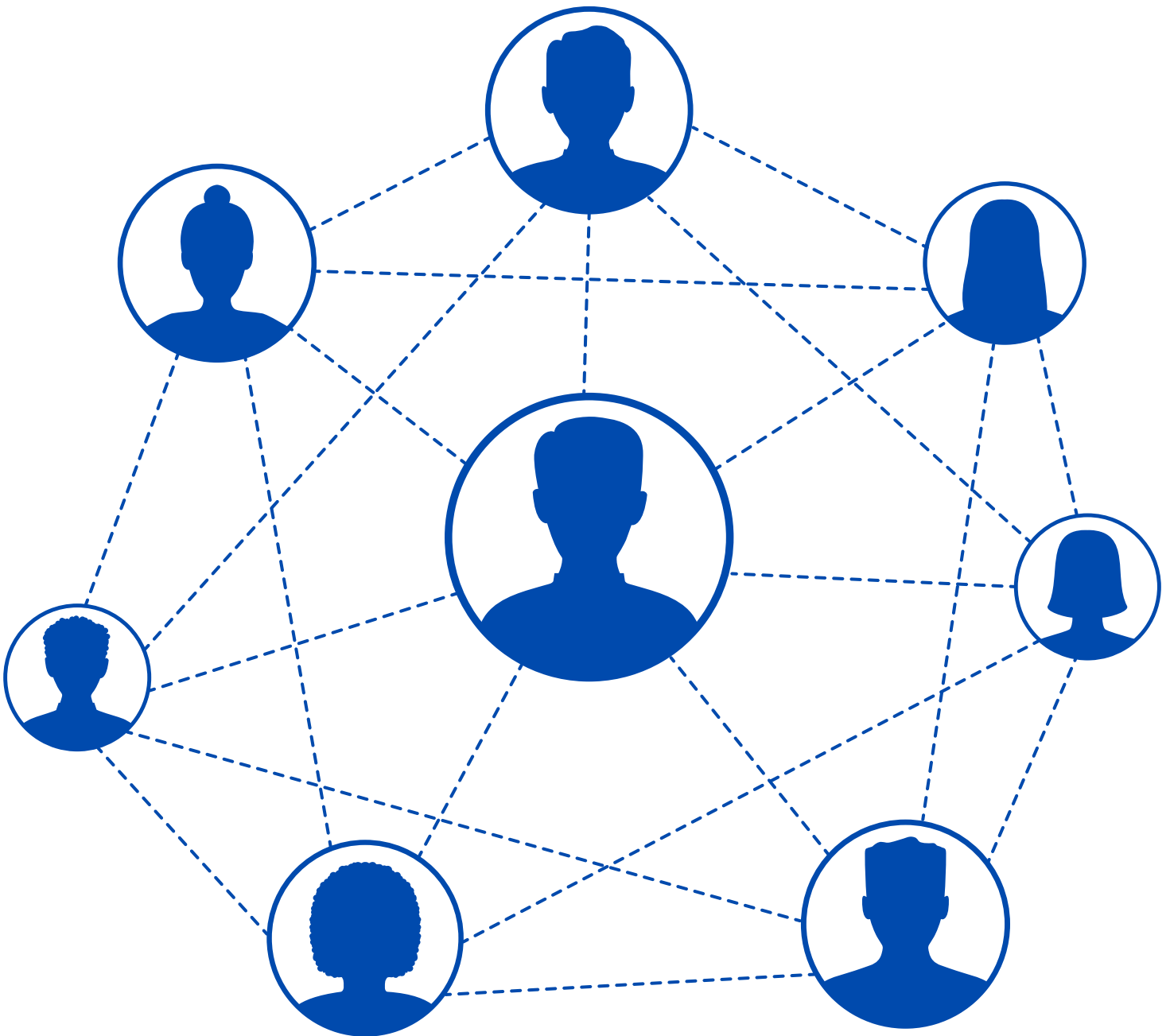


# Your Support Network

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Identify Your Support Network with this template.  
Begin with yourself in the centre and use the following  
template to map out your support system.



# Self-Care

Self-care refers to any activity that helps you feel better. It's a constructive way to take care of your mental health and overall well-being. Keep in mind that everyone's approach will be different and what may work for someone else may not work for you. The key is to keep trying until you find what works best for you.



**It's normal not to feel amazing every moment of every day. Mental health and wellbeing entails being able to handle our emotions efficiently. Self-care is an important tool that can help you manage your emotions by allowing you to focus on your own needs.**

# Designing a Self-Care plan

Creating a self-care plan is an effective way of identifying activities that can support your mental health and well-being. The beauty of this plan is that it can be customised on a weekly or monthly basis to align with your priorities.

Your self-care plan should be broken down into four categories: physical, emotional, social, and practical. This approach will help you maintain a balanced lifestyle.

While you might already have your own ideas to practice self-care, we've provided a few ideas below to inspire you.



## Physical

- Eating a healthy diet
- Relaxation techniques
- Regular exercise
- Time away from tech

## Emotional

- Build friendships
- Be kind to yourself
- Journal
- Read

## Social

- Talk and spend time with friends
- Join a local youth club

## Practical

- Organise your day
- Shower and get dressed each day
- Set some goals for the future
- Create a revision timetable

# Your Self-Care plan

The diagram consists of four interlocking puzzle pieces arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each piece is white with a green border and contains a label in the top-left corner. The pieces are labeled as follows:

- Physical** (Top-Left piece)
- Emotional** (Top-Right piece)
- Social** (Bottom-Left piece)
- Practical** (Bottom-Right piece)

The puzzle pieces are interlocking, with the top-left piece fitting into the top-right piece, the top-right piece fitting into the bottom-right piece, the bottom-right piece fitting into the bottom-left piece, and the bottom-left piece fitting into the top-left piece. The pieces are arranged in a 2x2 grid, with the top-left piece fitting into the top-right piece, the top-right piece fitting into the bottom-right piece, the bottom-right piece fitting into the bottom-left piece, and the bottom-left piece fitting into the top-left piece.

# Parent/Carer and Trusted Adults

## Starting a conversation about mental health

As a trusted adult, it can be difficult to know how to navigate conversations about mental health with young people. You may notice that young people don't feel comfortable to speak about how they are feeling when you first ask them, and this is okay. Remember that if the young person doesn't want to speak at first, give them time and space, it may take a few attempts before they will feel ready to open up.

### When is a good time to speak with a young person about their mental health?

- When you notice a change in behaviour
- Over mealtime
- During an activity or sport
- On a journey or a walk
- When they are visibly withdrawn or upset





# Conversation starters

The next step once you have found the right time and place to talk to the young person, is to open up the conversation. This is your opportunity to have an open conversation, to talk about feelings and to provide comfort.

How are you feeling?

How can I support you through this?

What was the best and worst part of today?

If you could start today again, what would you change?

If you want to talk to me, I will do my best to help you



# Tips for listening

Providing a safe space for having a conversation about mental health is extremely important so that the young person knows they can express how they are feeling safely and freely. It is also important as the trusted adult that you listen actively to what they tell you, so they feel comfortable to talk to you again in future. Here are some tips for how to be a good active listener.



- Validate their feelings.
- Ask open ended questions e.g. 'how did that make you feel?'
- Acknowledge what they are saying
- Clarify anything you feel you have misunderstood

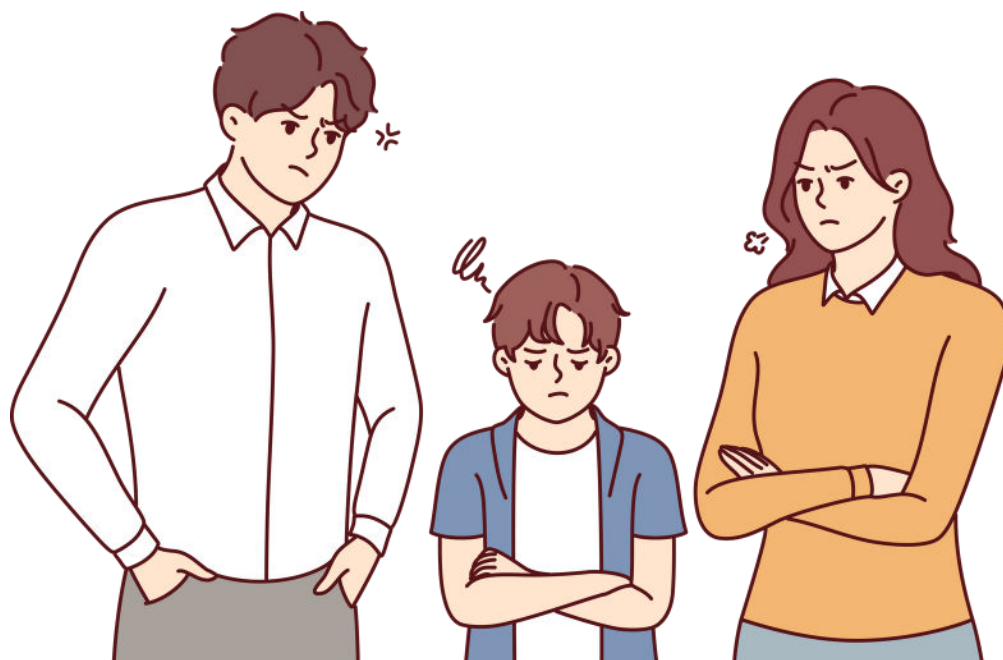


- Don't be distracted by your phone, give the young person your full attention.
- Don't make assumptions about what they are feeling
- Try not to give unwanted advice or interrupt what the young person is saying.

# Understanding Your Teenager's Brain

Understanding how your teenager's brain develops can provide insights into their behaviour, emotions, and decision-making. During adolescence, the brain undergoes significant changes, particularly in the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for reasoning, planning, and impulse control. This phase is characterised by an increase in neural connections, pruning of unnecessary ones, and the maturation of brain regions linked to emotions and social interactions.

Parents who recognise these changes can be more empathetic while navigating challenges. Adolescents may exhibit impulsive behaviour, heightened emotional responses, and risk-taking behaviour as their brains struggle to balance emotions and rational thinking. This mixture often leads to exploration and learning, which are essential for their development.



Your support is essential when it comes to nurturing a healthy brain.

Encouraging open communication, validating experiences, and creating a secure environment for exploration can have a positive impact on cognitive development. Providing well-balanced guidance—setting boundaries while allowing autonomy—will enable children to exercise decision-making skills and learn from their experiences.

It's important to remember that their brains are in development, and it's crucial to have patience, understanding, and consistent guidance to help them navigate this transformative phase effectively.



# Refresh & Reconnect: A Teenager's Digital Detox Plan

In today's digital age, constant connectivity can take a toll on our wellbeing. This plan is designed to help teenagers take a break from screens, recharge, and rediscover the joys of offline life.

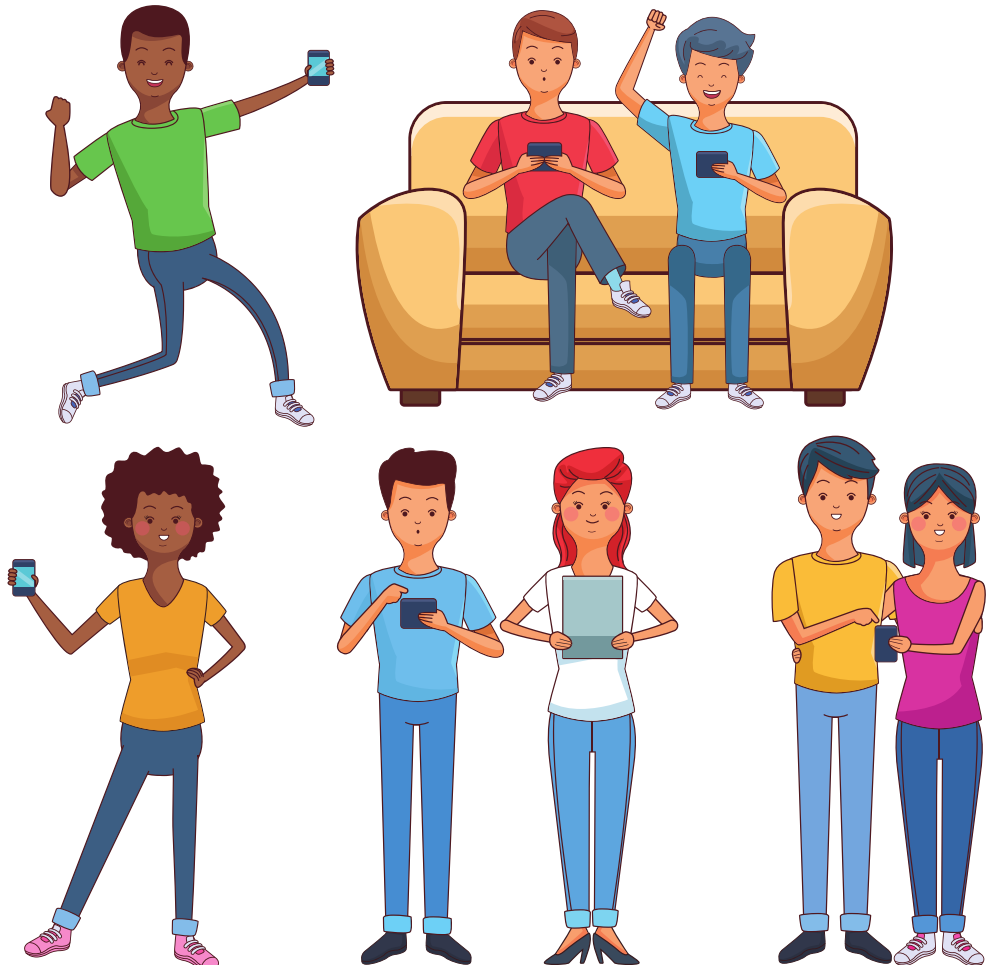


## Step 1: Setting Intentions

- Reflect on Digital Habits: Encourage teens to assess their current screen time and how it affects their mood, focus, and relationships.
- Define Goals: Help them articulate why they want a digital detox—whether it's to reduce stress, improve sleep, or reconnect with the world around them.

## Step 2: Planning the Detox

- Establish Boundaries: Set clear guidelines, such as specific times or days for the detox. For example, no screens after dinner or a screen-free weekend.
- Identify Alternatives: Suggest activities to fill screen-free time, like reading, hobbies, outdoor activities, or spending time with family and friends.
- Communicate: Encourage teens to inform friends and family about their detox plan to gain support and minimise temptations.



### Step 3: Implementing the Detox

- Digital Declutter: Turn off non-essential notifications, delete unnecessary apps, and organise digital spaces for a cleaner interface when returning to screens.
- Create a Tech-Free Zone: Designate areas like bedrooms or dining areas as tech-free zones to promote better sleep and quality family time.
- Explore Offline Activities: Provide a list of engaging offline activities or challenges to spark creativity and curiosity.

### Step 4: Engaging in Mindful Activities

- Mindfulness Practices: Introduce mindfulness exercises, meditation, or yoga to help teens stay present and manage stress during the detox.
- Journaling: Encourage journaling about their detox experience—thoughts, emotions, challenges, and any newfound discoveries.
- Physical Activity: Emphasise the importance of physical movement and encourage outdoor activities or sports during the detox.





## Step 5: Reflecting and Sustaining Changes

- **Reflection Time:** After the detox period, facilitate a reflection session. Encourage teens to evaluate how the detox affected them mentally, emotionally, and socially.
- **Establishing Healthy Tech Habits:** Discuss strategies for maintaining a balanced approach to screen time moving forward, setting limits, and practicing mindful use.



**Conclusion:** A digital detox isn't just about disconnecting; it's an opportunity to reconnect with oneself, relationships, and the world outside screens. By periodically unplugging, teenagers can foster a healthier relationship with technology and enhance their overall wellbeing.

You may find these additional resources useful:

- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/My-First-Phone-Poster.png>
- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Digital-Mental-Health-Offer-within-Greater-Manchester-2022.pdf>
- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/YLBT-OSI-Cyberbullying-Poster.pdf>

# Parent-Peer Support

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At Bolton Together we also have a range of Parent Peer Support offers which you can self-refer into for extra support. These sessions are aimed at parents/carers of children who are experiencing poor mental health.

## Breaking Barriers

Bringing together parents/carers of children with SEND to offer support and advice and signpost to useful information.

Location -

Tuesdays 5-6:30pm or Thursdays 10-12:30

Breaking Barriers NW café, upper ground floor of Market Place (next to TUI). **Contact - [breakbarriers3@gmail.com](mailto:breakbarriers3@gmail.com) 07717 434 840**

## Raise The Youth

One to one guidance and meeting with parent connectors, access to informal support groups to meet others and share experiences.

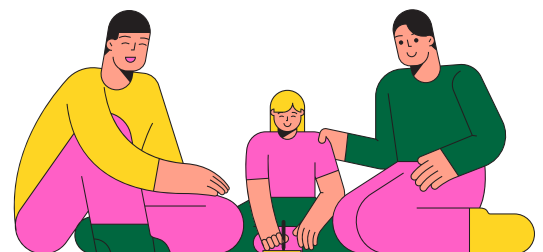
Also available is an 8 week 'Nurturing Parents Mindfulness Programme.'

**Contact - [parents@raisetheyouth.co.uk](mailto:parents@raisetheyouth.co.uk)**

## MHIST - Bounce Back

A 6 week course looking at how Positive Psychology can boost family wellbeing. For parents/carers looking at ways to support their own and their child's mental wellbeing.

Location -MHIST 1st floor, Moorland house. 116 Bark street, Bolton, BL1 2AX. **Contact - [christinemakinson@mhist.co.uk](mailto:christinemakinson@mhist.co.uk) 01204 527200**



Or you can refer via our website <https://bolton-together.org.uk/parent-peer-support-referral/>

As parents, it's only natural to want to protect our children from emotional distress. We may even go out of our way to ensure they never experience negative emotions. However, it's essential to realise that feeling the impact of difficult experiences is what helps us grow. Teenagers are resilient and built to withstand discomfort, and it's through these experiences that they mature.

Mental health isn't about feeling good all the time. Instead, it's about having the right emotions at the right moment and learning to manage them effectively. Here are some tips to help support your teenager's mental health:

- Ensure that your child knows that you're always available to talk.
- Create a calm and safe space where your teenager can feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts and feelings with you.
- Learn to be comfortable with your child's discomfort. It's essential for them to understand that emotions are a natural part of life and that they need to be felt and experienced to learn from them.
- Seek out support when you need it. There are various resources available, including parent-peer support such as the IThrive Parent Peer Support Overview at [bolton-together.org.uk](https://bolton-together.org.uk).



# Additional Resources

In this workbook, you've embarked on an incredible journey towards understanding and nurturing your mental health and happiness.

Remember, just as we care for our bodies, our minds deserve attention and care too.

You've learned fantastic tools and activities, but this is just the beginning.

Check out the additional resources and links provided.

## For Children and Young People:

- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/resources/>
- [www.bekindtomymind.co.uk](http://www.bekindtomymind.co.uk)
- [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/>
- <https://www.theproudtrust.org/proud-connections/>

## For Parents/Carers:

- <https://bolton-together.org.uk/parent-peer-support-referral/>
- [www.qwell.io](http://www.qwell.io)
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/>
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-guide-to-looking-after-yourself/>
- [www.bekindtomymind.co.uk](http://www.bekindtomymind.co.uk)



## **Acknowledgement for Bolton Together's iThrive Partners and Workbook Exercises**

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We have given credit to the authors of the exercises at the bottom of each page.