

EMOTIONAL

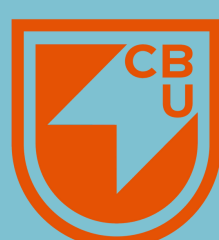


PSYCHOLOGICAL



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

TEAM B-WELL



PHYSICAL



SPIRITUAL



**sexual
Health Centre**
CUMBERLAND COUNTY

KNOW YOURSELF

Do more of what
brings you joy

TOP
The Opportunity Project
Youth Association

Disclaimer

As the creators of this document, Team B-Well would like to acknowledge that whilst this information has been gathered and researched extensively, it has not been conducted by licensed practicing mental health professionals. Our team is comprised of four psychology students currently enrolled in the Bachelors of Arts in Community Studies Program at Cape Breton University. Our previous experience and skill set include non-profit work, program development, and various mental health training. This self-care toolkit does not contain professional or medical advice. The information provided is meant to be used for general information and educational purposes only, and is not meant to be a substitute for professional advice.

Self-care and mental health are deeply connected. If you or anyone you know are struggling, please reach out to the resources below:

Recommended Phone Numbers -

Canadian Crisis Hotline - 1 (888) 353-2273

Crisis Services Canada - 1 (833) 456-4566 OR Text Support (4pm-12am EST) - 45645

Kids Help Phone - 1 (800) 668-6868 OR Text "CONNECT" to 686868 (Adult friendly)

Youthspace.ca - (778) 783-0177 (9pm-3am EST)

Recommended Websites -

Canadian Mental Health Association - <https://cmha.ca>

Kids Help Phone Chat Services - <https://kidshelpphone.ca/live-chat/>

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health - <https://www.camh.ca>

Youthspace.ca - Youth Chat (9:00pm-3:00am EST) - www.youthspace.ca

Recommended Apps -

Mindshift App

Mindfulness-Coach

PTSD-Coach

Self-Care Toolkit: Workshop Guideline

"Know yourself. Do more of what brings you joy!"

This workshop and self-care toolkit was developed by Team B-Well; a group of four psychology students in the Bachelor's of Arts in Communities Studies program at Cape Breton University. The project was developed with support from our partners:

The Opportunity Project Youth Association (topyouth.ca) and The Sexual Health Centre for Cumberland County (sexualhealthmatters.ca).

The goal of this project is to provide a universal self-care toolkit and workshop that can be moulded to any audience and is accessible to the public through organizations and online. Our inspiration comes from the significance self-care plays in mental and physical wellness and the lack of generalized resources available.

Purpose of this workshop: Self-care is an activity that tends to become overlooked with the hustle and bustle of daily life. The purpose of this workshop is to provide education around self-care and how participants can begin to implement self-care in their daily lives.

Target Audience: Everyone who needs self-care! This workshop can be beneficial to anyone who is seeking to improve their wellness. Please feel free to tailor this workshop to a specific target audience of your choice by researching the specific barriers and interests of your group.

Desired outputs:

- To create increased awareness about self-care and its importance.
- To increase public education on how self-care or a lack thereof can impact our lives.
- To increase access to simple tools and resources that can positively impact wellness.

Workshop Objectives:

- Define self-care, the four dimensions of self-care and how these influence our lives.
- Explain the subjectivity of self-care.
- Define and explore self-reflection.
- Explore self-care across the ages.
- Define barriers and explore one's personal barriers.
- Define intersectionality. Explore systems of oppression and privilege.
- Teach how we can effectively implement self-care into our lives.

This workshop was intentionally designed to focus on the four dimensions of self-care that pertain to the general population and is meant to be a base for general guidance in implementing self-care. This workshop can be customized for targeted audiences including (but not limited to):

- Faculty/Teaching Staff
- Mental Health/Front-line workers
- Men & Boys
- Women & Girls
- Gender Minorities
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- People of Color
- People living with Disabilities
- Cultural & Ethnic Groups
- Age groups: Youth/Adult/Seniors
- Parents
- Students

When tailoring this workshop to a specific group, try to modify activities, videos, or discussion questions to reflect the needs and interests of your audience!

Ex: Indigenous youth
To tailor this workshop to this audience, try to include cultural practices and teaching. You can reach out to partners with experience in your target audience for guidance!

PREPARATIONS:

Participant Worksheet Checklist:

- ☐ Disclaimer/resource page
- ☐ Self-Care Fact Sheet
- ☐ Self-Care Daily Tracker
- ☐ Self-Reflection Worksheet
- ☐ Four Dimensions Worksheet
- ☐ Nurturing & Depleting Worksheet
- ☐ Oppression vs Privilege Activity
- ☐ Breathing and Mindfulness Sheet
- ☐ Colouring Book

Videos: Please feel free to implement videos into this workshop on topics such as: mindfulness, affirmations, visualization, breathing, or self-care in general!

If implementing the self-care vision board activity, you will need:

- ☐ Glue, tape and scissors
- ☐ Paint, pens or art supplies
- ☐ Photos, magazine clippings, stickers, etc.
- ☐ Large bristol board for each participant

Sample schedule: Duration - 2 to 3 Hours.

An example of what a potential schedule may look like is as follows:

Time (AM)	Section	Approx. length	Materials
9:00 - 9:15	Introduction	15 Minutes	
9:15 - 9:20	Self-Care Definition	5 Minutes	Self-Care Fact Sheet
9:20 - 9:35	The Four Dimensions	15 Minutes	Four Dimensions Worksheet
9:35 - 9:45	10 Minute Break		
9:45 - 10:00	Subjectivity & Self-Care	15 Minutes	Self-Reflection Worksheet
10:00 - 10:05	Self-Care Across the Ages	5 Minutes	
10:05 - 10:20	Barriers to Self-Care	15 Minutes	Nurturing vs Depleting Worksheet
10:20 - 10:30	10 Minute Break		
10:30 - 10:50	Intersectionality	20 Minutes	Oppression & Privilege Worksheet
10:50 - 11:05	Implementing Self-Care	15 Minutes	Breathing & Mindfulness Handout
11:05 - 11:15	Goal-Setting	10 Minutes	Self-Care Daily Tracker
11:15 - 11:25	10 Minute Break		
11:25 - 11:55	Self-Care Vision Board	30 Minutes	*see preparation

MATERIAL:

Introduction (15 Minutes):

Confidentiality: When implementing this workshop, a confidentiality statement must be stated in front of participants due to the sensitive nature of discussions. Feel free to use your organizational statement or the one we have provided below:

“The nature of this workshop is to look within ourselves, to explore our self-care needs, along with how we can meet them. The content found and discussed within this workshop is likely to contain personal matters or opinions, and therefore, what is discussed in this workshop should stay within the workshop. Our goal is to create a safe, judgement-free space where we can openly share and respect one another.”

Ice-breaker: Start the class off with an ice breaker! Feel free to tailor this activity to your group specifically. We’ve provided some examples below:

- Have everyone pair up and introduce themselves to each other. As a group, have each person introduce their partner to the group.
- Have each person state three ways they practice self-care.
- Two truths and a lie: go around the room and have each person make three statements about themselves (two are true, one is a lie). Other participants try to guess which statement is the lie.
- Have the four dimensions written on a large piece of paper and place them on the floor in a circle. Under each dimension, have participants write what they are currently doing in this area, as well as what they could do to improve self-care. Have participants team up into four groups and assign them to one dimension. Give the participants 5-10 minutes to discuss the questions. Then have the teams introduce themselves, their dimension and what they came up with for answers to the questions.
- Thumb ball - if you have a thumb ball, have the participants stand in a circle, and throw the ball to someone across the circle. Have the person introduce themselves, and answer the question that their thumb is on. Proceed until all people in the circle have had a turn.

Self-Care (5 Minutes):

Discussion: What does self-care mean to you? Why is self-care an essential part of our lives?

Handout: *Self-Care fact sheet*

Self-Care Definition:

Self-care is essential for everyone and can be achieved in various ways, varying from person to person. Self-care is not just taking a bubble bath once in a while, as some people may say.

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides us with the following definition of self-care:

“Self-care refers to activities individuals, families and communities undertake with the intention of enhancing health, preventing disease, limiting illness and restoring health. These activities are derived from knowledge and skills from the pool of both professional and lay experience. They are undertaken by laypeople on their own behalf either separately or in participative collaboration with professionals. Seeking professional advice in self-care is part of the continuum of trying to maintain good health and prevent disease.”

Self-care is considered the art of being mindful of one's own needs, and it is crucial because it helps maintain a healthy balanced life. When self-care is implemented into one's daily routine, it can help improve mental health, physical health and also aids in stress management.

Discussion: What are some examples of taking care of yourself?

Four Dimensions of Self-Care (15 Minutes):

The four dimensions of self-care encompass the four areas of ourselves that make up who we are! Every person has emotions, a physical body, a cognitive and psychological mind, and some form of spiritual experience. The emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of self-care can be found in many cultural and psychological teachings, including the Native-American Medicine Wheel. First Nations cultures have recognized that in order to operate at optimal wellness, we must balance and nurture the four main areas of our lives. Let's discuss the dimensions:

Emotional Dimension: Tapping into the emotional self-care dimension helps us understand ourselves more, cope with challenges, and develop and nourish healthy relationships. When we tend to our emotional needs, we cultivate a greater sense of compassion, kindness, and love for ourselves and others (Beard, 2016).

Physical Dimension: The physical dimension of self-care encompasses safety, health, nutrition, movement, physical touch, and sexual needs. When you practice activities for your physical well-being, you can increase your energy levels and boost your self-esteem (Beard, 2016).

Psychological Dimension: The desire to learn new concepts and expand your knowledge contributes positively to your overall well-being. Mental self-care is about finding the balance between stimulating your mind and giving your mind a break, which can help with creativity, innovation, and continual learning.

"I'm a big advocate for personal growth, but I greatly appreciate the opportunity to switch off and let my brain rest for a while" (Beard, 2016).

Spiritual Dimension: The spiritual dimension of self-care involves a personal practice that allows you to follow the values and beliefs that give you purpose. Dedicating time to this dimension can help you find more meaning in life, develop a sense of belonging, and find a connection to something greater than yourself. Even if you're not religious, it's still important to make a connection with the universe (Beard, 2016).

Handout: *The Four Dimensions of Self-Care.* Have participants complete this activity individually. Ask for volunteers to share an example for each of the dimensions.

The Subjectivity of Self-Care (15 Minutes):

Subjectivity is the concept of being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. Self-care is unique to every individual. What might work for one person may be detrimental to someone else. Each person has different and unique needs of their own that need to be nurtured to maintain a healthy balance. So how do we know what will work for us?

Self-Reflection:

Self-reflection can help us dive into who we are, what we feel, how we act, and what we think. Reflection requires asking personal and intimate questions to find out what your needs are. This activity will help to create a self-care plan that will work for you individually. Digging deeper within yourself to figure out where to start will help find nurturing activities that will be effective for their self-care journey. Questions we can ask ourselves every day are:

“What am I doing to implement self-care today? Am I looking at the world with a positive attitude? Am I taking care of myself? What matters most to me in my life right now?”

Handout: *Self-reflection worksheet.* Remind participants that these questions are only a few examples of reflection for each of the four dimensions. Regularly exploring these dimensions can create a better relationship with yourself and lead to a path of self-love!

Self-Care across the ages (5 Minutes):

As we move through life we go through incredible changes. Each stage of our lives brings new stressors, interests and needs.

Children/Youth: Young people often experience stressors related to development, personal and social life, along with the ongoing stressors associated with academics. Childhood is the stage where we go through the most rapid and diverse changes! It is essential to teach self-care skills for the four dimensions early in life. Developing a positive self-care practice at a young age can produce resiliency and improved wellness.

Adults: Adults are thrown into the labour force and care-taking role even before they reach maturity! Adults face stressors of financial stability, safety and security of their families, developing a successful career/life path, and caring for younger or older family members. Adulthood comes with many responsibilities that can be extremely overwhelming. Self-care is important to remember as we move through our busy lives so that we do not face burnout.

Seniors: Ageing adults face many emotional and psychological stressors. Seniors face mobility issues, health concerns, loss of family and friends, loss of independence, and even discrimination for their age. Teaching our ageing friends and family about self-care can reduce emotional stress, physical symptoms and create a healthy mind!

Discussion: What are some stressors that are specific to youth? Adults? Seniors?

Barriers to Self-Care (15 Minutes):

Of course, there are many barriers and obstacles to self-care. If taking care of ourselves was easy or innate behaviour, we would have no need to discuss it. The stress of everyday life can take priority in our minds, but to maintain wellness and become the best version of ourselves, we must care for the four dimensions of wellness.

Have you ever felt like you couldn't say no to your boss when they ask you to contribute extra time? Have you ever felt like you couldn't speak up about your needs because you were afraid of being criticized?

Anything that prevents you from acting with self-love and consideration for your own needs is a barrier to your self-care. If we can not meet our needs, our bodies will let us know through physical or mental symptoms.

Burnout is our body's way of saying, "I'm out of fuel." It is a concern for every working or active individual because it is a result of long-term stress. Many professionals who have suffered from burnout experienced:

"... a loss of objectivity and engage in harmful boundary violations; experience depression, anxiety, or other mental health difficulties to include even becoming suicidal; become irritated by clients or disinterested in their issues and needs; and may engage in a wide range of maladaptive coping strategies to include self-medicating with alcohol and other substances" (Barnett & Cooper, 2009, p. 17).

Discussion: Has anyone ever experienced burnout? What are some signs or symptoms we can watch out for that signal we are becoming burnt out?

Handout: *Nurturing vs Depleting Activity*. Have participants discuss some nurturing activities and some depleting activities. Our goal is to consistently engage in more nurturing activities and find ways to reduce our depleting activities. We can also find ways to compensate after we have been depleted by practicing nurturing activities regularly.

Intersectionality (Oppression & Privilege) (20 Minutes):

Intersectionality: is how categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability are interconnected and how it affects our individual and collective experiences (Avery, Cole, Jerald, & Ward., 2017). Intersectionality is an essential consideration for self-care in understanding how oppression and privilege impact our community and individual health.

Considering the implementation of self-care, we must also consider the individual experiences of groups who experience high societal stress. Engaging in self-care can create a balance between our mind, body and spirit and increase overall health (NMAAHC, 2021). For some, this is harder to achieve due to power systems that create inequality in our communities.

Privilege: "Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favours, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of target groups... Privilege is characteristically invisible to people who have it. People in dominant groups often believe that they have earned the privileges they enjoy or that everyone could have access to these privileges if only they worked to earn them. In fact, privileges are unearned, and they are granted to people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent" (Leaven 2003).

Oppression: "The combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that discriminates against some groups (often called "target groups") and benefits other groups (often called "dominant groups")...Targets of oppression are members of social identity groups that are disenfranchised, exploited, and victimized in a variety of ways by agents of oppression and the agent's systems or institutions. " (Leaven, 2003). Systems of oppression include racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism and ableism.

Many individuals in our society experience discrimination or oppression due to their membership in a particular group. Minority stress is the stress experienced by stigmatized groups, which can negatively impact well-being and health (Stevens, Haverly, & Powell, 2020). Minority stress is an additional barrier that can manifest through internalized oppression, where an oppressed individual internalizes the negative stereotypes placed on them by society and others. Minority groups often

experience trauma that may affect their ability to engage in self-care. Effective self-care is essential for the healing and empowerment of these groups.

Handout: *Oppression vs Privilege Activity*. Upon completion of the activity individually, allow participants to discuss their results with the group or in pairs. Remind participants that what they wish to share is up to them.

Debrief: (participants may discuss/share if they wish)

- 1) What memberships do you think of most often? Why?
- 2) What memberships do you consider least? Why do you think that is?
- 3) What memberships hurt your options or opportunities the most? How?
- 4) What memberships provide the most access or privileges? How?
- 5) What memberships have the strongest effect on your self-image? How?
- 6) What membership plays a greater role in how others see you? How?

Discussion: How did this exercise make you feel? What were your thoughts as you were completing it? What were your thoughts as you listened to others? What have you learned from this?

Implementing Self-Care (15 Minutes):

Discussion: What are some ways we can start practicing self-care? Are there some simple steps we can take each day to remind us to care for ourselves?

Breathing and Meditation: Some ways to begin self-care and relaxation are through breathing and meditation techniques. Practicing breathing strategies can help center yourself and bring about mindfulness. Breathing techniques have been known to reduce panic attacks, symptoms of mental illness and stress reactions.

WARNING: Meditation and self-care practices can sometimes bring up negative thoughts, feelings or memories of trauma. Our minds can intuitively bring these thoughts to the front of our minds, but we may not be prepared to deal with these thoughts and feelings. Breathing, mindfulness and grounding techniques can help remove immediate discomfort; but we have also provided contact information for crisis lines and mental health resources. If you are struggling with symptoms of trauma, coping, or mental wellness, we encourage you to reach out to a mental health professional and/or counselling services to aid in recovery and positive mental health! If you are in crisis, please reach out to the Canadian Crisis Line: 1 (888) 353-2273 or go to your closest emergency room.

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, being aware of where we are and what we're doing. Being mindful is not to be overwhelmed with what's going on around us. There are ways to practice mindfulness, such as breathing strategies, practicing gratitude, taking time for yourself, and setting daily intentions. Journaling has also been effective in creating mindfulness and self-reflection.

Handout: *Breathing and Mindfulness Handout*. Practice the 4-7-8 technique and breathing waltz as a group. Feel free to demonstrate a guided meditation if time permits. Many versions of meditations can be found online!

Goal Setting (10 Minutes):

Setting goals for ourselves can be extremely beneficial to our productivity. You may find yourself making daily 'to-do' lists, setting goals for your career or creating exercise/fitness goals. Writing out our goals can help us keep these in mind and achieve them! Self-care should be a priority in your life to connect your mind, body, emotions and spirit.

Handout: *Self-Care Daily Tracker*. Have participants use this sheet to set goals for the four dimensions of self-care. Remind everyone that small, obtainable goals are usually more successful! If you have a larger goal such as "get physically fit," divide this task into smaller, short-term goals so that you can celebrate the successes more often!

****Self-care vision board activity**** - This is an optional activity as it requires additional resources and time. Participants can create a vision board with the self-care activities that they see themselves implementing for their self-care plan. Materials can include stickers, paper, magazine clippings, photos, and any other art supplies! This creative activity includes self-reflection, self-care, mindfulness, and creative expression!

TERMS

Age Groups:

Children: less than 12 years

Youth: 12-30 years

Adults: 30-64 years

Seniors: 65 years and over

Barriers: are “something that restricts, impedes, or blocks progress or the achievement of an ultimate objective or end. In psychological contexts, barriers are mental, emotional, or behavioural limitations in individuals and groups” (American Psychological Association, 2020). Barriers to self-care include stressful events, distractions and limitations that stray an individual from their mindfulness practice.

Burnout: Burnout is a concern for every working or active individual because it results from long-term stress. It is our body’s way of saying, “I’m out of fuel.” Many professionals who have suffered from burnout experienced: “... a loss of objectivity and engage in harmful boundary violations; experience depression, anxiety, or other mental health difficulties to include even becoming suicidal; become irritated by clients or disinterested in their issues and needs; and may engage in a wide range of maladaptive coping strategies to include self-medicating with alcohol and other substances” (Barnett & Cooper, 2009, p. 17).

Community Partnership: A community partnership is a working relationship where a worker forms with another service provider or informal support person that may be helpful for the families we work with. It's a formal agreement between two agencies who share the same clients, so they work together productively (*Community Partnerships & Linkages*, 2021).

Depleting activities: “sap our energy, increase our stress levels, and take away from our happiness” (Schaffner, 2021). Working long hours, caretaking and paying bills are examples.

Four Dimensions of Self-Care:

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Physical Dimension: The physical dimension of self-care encompasses safety, health, nutrition, movement, physical touch, and sexual needs. When you practice activities for your physical well-being, you can increase your energy levels and boost your self-esteem (Beard, 2016).

Psychological Dimension: The desire to learn new concepts and expand your knowledge contributes positively to your overall well-being. Mental self-care is about finding the balance between stimulating your mind and giving your mind a break, which can help with creativity, innovation, and continual learning (Beard, 2016).

Spiritual Dimension: The spiritual dimension of self-care involves a personal practice that allows you to follow the values and beliefs that give you purpose. Dedicating time to this dimension can help us find more meaning in life, develop a sense of belonging, and find a connection to something greater than oneself. Even if you're not religious, it's still important to make a connection with the universe (Beard, 2016).

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is how categories like race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability are interconnected and how it affects our individual and collective experiences (Avery, Cole, Jerald, & Ward., 2017). Intersectionality is an essential consideration for self-care in understanding how oppression and privilege impacts our community and individual health.

Ism's: Systems of oppression can be defined as 'ism's,' as this suffix refers to a specific attitude or belief. For example, 'racism' is a specific prejudice or discriminatory attitude towards racialized groups and people of colour. Other systems of oppression include but are not limited to sexism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism.

Mental Health: is "a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, good behavioural adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life" (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Mental Wellness: "The wellness concept is the notion that individual health care and health care programs should actively involve the promotion of good mental and physical health rather than being concerned merely with the prevention and treatment of illness and disease" (American Psychological Association, 2020). Mental wellness is the health of our mental state and the act of promoting and practising positive mental health.

Minority Stress: Minority stress is the stress experienced by stigmatized groups that can negatively impact their well-being and health (Stevens, Haverly, & Powell, 2020). Specific stressors such as discrimination and hate crimes can come from oppression systems.

Nurturing Activities: “cheer us up, give us energy, improve our well-being, and help us to better manage stress” (Schaffner, 2021).

Personalized Wellness: Personal wellness means being physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually healthy. Your decisions and choices will impact both your short-term and long-term wellness. It is important to consider your overall personal wellness to increase the potential for academic success in your educational program and get the greatest benefit out of it. (Shier, 2021).

Privilege: “Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favours, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of target groups... Privilege is characteristically invisible to people who have it. People in dominant groups often believe that they have earned the privileges that they enjoy or that everyone could have access to these privileges if only they worked to earn them. In fact, privileges are unearned and they are granted to people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent” (Leaven, 2003).

Oppression: “The combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that discriminates against some groups (often called “target groups”) and benefits other groups (often called “dominant groups”)... Targets of oppression are members of social identity groups that are disenfranchised, exploited, and victimized in a variety of ways by agents of oppression and the agent’s systems or institutions. ” (Leaven, 2003).

Commonly Oppressed Groups:

Indigenous: Indigenous peoples were on the land now called Canada for centuries before European settlers arrived, and they have long proud histories that include rich cultural and spiritual traditions. But a cycle of social, physical, and cultural destruction began when European culture and values were forced upon them, Aboriginal lands were dispossessed, populations were wiped out, and foreign modes of governance were imposed. The effects of all this trauma continue to harm Indigenous people today (YWCA Canada, 2021).

2SLGBTQIA+: This abbreviation stands for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual & allies and refers to the queer/pride community. Those who identify as a sexual or gender minority often experience discrimination and stressors related to their identity. They have faced decades of social isolation, abuse and hate for their lifestyle.

People of Color: People of color can experience oppression through limitations, disadvantages, or disapproval. They may even suffer abuse from individuals, institutions, or cultural practices. "Oppression" refers to a combination of prejudice and institutionalism that creates a system that regularly and severely discriminates against some groups and benefits other groups (National Museum of African American History and Culture - Smithsonian, 2021). People of color are oppressed by society due to the color of their skin.

People living with disabilities: Disabilities can include but are not limited to: mental, cognitive and physical concerns that impair a persons' functioning. People living with disabilities could consist of physical injury, mobility concerns, mental illness, or learning disabilities. When a person's ability to perform is hindered by a disability, consideration must be given to accessibility resources to aid in equitable participation in society.

Women & Gender Minorities: Women and gender minorities experience inequality and mistreatment related to their gender. Gender minorities are those who do not identify as cis-gendered males. Examples include but are not limited to non-binary, gender fluid, transgender, and gender non-conforming.

Resilience: "Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress" (American Psychological Association, 2012).

Self: The perception of self is very individual and unique. The way we see ourselves involves our perception of who we are as defined by our minds, bodies and spirit. The self encompasses our conscious and unconscious awareness of ourselves.

Self-Awareness: "Self-awareness is the ability to see yourself clearly and objectively through reflection and introspection" (Ackerman, 2021). Self-awareness allows us to be aware of our thoughts, actions and emotions. Practicing self-awareness through reflection can aid in your self-care practice!

Self-Care: “Self-care is a sustainable and holistic investment in our minds and bodies. It includes taking good care of our physical health, most notably by eating healthily, exercising, and sleeping well. But it also entails looking after our minds and emotions, which can take the form of setting time aside for activities that nourish our spirits and learning to understand how we can best replenish our energies” (Schaffner, 2021).

Self-Reflection: “Reflection is a deeper form of learning that allows us to retain every aspect of any experience, be it personal or professional — why something took place, what the impact was, whether it should happen again — as opposed to just remembering that it happened. It's about tapping into every aspect of the experience, clarifying our thinking, and honing in on what really matters to us” (Geil Browning, 2021).

Self-Talk: “Self-talk is generally thought to be a mix of conscious and unconscious beliefs and biases that we hold about ourselves and the world generally... Self-talk can be positive or negative – and paying attention to which you most often sway towards, can help you start making proactive changes about how you take on life's challenges.” (Mead, 2021). Positive self-talk is showing yourself compassion and speaking to yourself with kindness. Negative self-talk degrades ourselves and harms our self-image.

Stereotype: “An exaggerated or distorted belief that attributes characteristics to members of a particular group, simplistically lumping them together and refusing to acknowledge differences among members of the group.” (Leaven, 2003). Stereotyped individuals experience additional stressors when interacting in society.

Stigma: Stigma is when someone views you in a negative way because you have a distinguishing characteristic or personal trait that's thought to be, or actually is, a disadvantage (a negative stereotype). Unfortunately, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2021).

Stigma Consciousness: “Stigma consciousness refers to the extent to which [one] believes that their stereotyped status influences their interactions with outgroup members. Individuals high in stigma consciousness are more likely to report perceived discrimination... again highlighting the stress that accompanies awareness of group stereotypes” (Avery, Cole, Jerald, & Ward, 2016, p. 489).

Stress: “Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension” (Medline Plus, 2020).

Stress Management: Stress management is not just about mitigating stress: you have to know what is hurting you in the first place. "Stress is universal and of relevance to all, a more thorough understanding of stress management techniques is essential for preventing stress related disease and enhancing health overall" (Varvogli and Driver, 2011, p. 80).

Subjectivity: Refers to a person's perspective or opinion, particular feelings, beliefs, and desires. It is often used casually to refer to unsubstantiated personal opinions, contrary to knowledge and fact-based beliefs. In philosophy, the term is often contrasted with objectivity. Subjectivity refers to the specific discerning interpretations of any aspect of experiences. They are unique to the person experiencing them (Psychology Wiki, 2021).

Trauma: Trauma is the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event. Experiencing a traumatic event can harm a person's sense of safety, sense of self, and ability to regulate emotions and navigate relationships. Long after the traumatic event occurs, people with trauma can often feel shame, helplessness, powerlessness, and intense fear (Center for Addictions and Mental Health, 2021).

Wellness-plan: A wellness plan is a plan of action geared towards achieving personal wellness. Personal wellness implies a state of multidimensional health and satisfaction. There are many dimensions to personal wellness, and each must be nurtured, developed, and maintained for optimal overall well-being. Personal wellness plans are personalized plans to help you maintain health and wellbeing (Kirkpatrick, 2017).

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What is Self-Care?

Self-care is considered the art of being mindful of one's own needs, and it is crucial because it helps maintain a healthy balanced life. When self-care is implemented into one's daily routine, it can help improve mental health, physical health and also aids in stress management

Our minds, bodies, spirits and emotions need to work in balance if we want to achieve optimal wellness!

Self-care & you

Self-care is subjective and unique to every individual!

We all experience different life-stressors at different stages in our lives. We find comfort/interest in a variety of things that others may not.

When developing your self-care practice, dive into self-reflection and find what works for you!

What's stopping you?

Self-care seems simple... but there are many barriers that prevent us from taking care of ourselves in a positive way!

Burnout: When we get overwhelmed with daily life responsibilities, we may experience burnout. Our bodies will shut down if we do not take care of it. If we do not meet the needs of the four dimensions of self-care, our lives will be out of balance. Self-care can help us avoid burnout by balancing our work with self-love!

Stigma Awareness: Unfortunately, we live in a society where everyone is not treated equally. Many individuals face stigma and discrimination due to their position in society. People of color, Indigenous communities, Women/Gender minorities, LGBTQ2IA+ individuals, and people living with disabilities all face barriers to self-care. Awareness of the stigma that affects us will allow us to combat these issues with self-love!

Visit these websites to access our FREE Self-Care Toolkit and start your self-care journey today!

www.topyouth.ca

www.sexualhealthmatters.ca

4 Dimensions:

The emotional dimension helps individuals understand their emotions, cope with challenges, and develop healthy relationships. When we tend to our emotional needs, we cultivate a greater sense of compassion, kindness, and love for ourselves and others.

The physical dimension of self-care encompasses safety, health, nutrition, movement, physical touch, and sexual needs. When you practice activities for your physical well-being, you can increase your energy levels and boost your self-esteem

The psychological dimension is about finding the balance between stimulating your mind and giving your mind a break, and this can help with creativity, innovation, and continual learning.

The spiritual dimension involves a personal practice that allows you to follow the values and beliefs that give you purpose. Dedicating time to this dimension can help you find more meaning in life, develop a sense of belonging, and find a connection to something greater than yourself.

The Four Dimensions of Self-Care

These four areas of our lives are essential to our self-care practice. Use this sheet to reflect on how you are caring for these areas in your life now and what goals can you set to improve your self-care in these areas.

The diagram is a large circle with a thick orange border, divided into four equal quadrants by a vertical and a horizontal orange line. Each quadrant contains a faint, light blue background image of a person in a yoga pose. The quadrants are labeled as follows:

- Emotional** (Top Left):
 - Now:
 - Goals:
- Mental** (Top Right):
 - Now:
 - Goals:
- Physical** (Bottom Right):
 - Now:
 - Goals:
- Spiritual** (Bottom Left):
 - Now:
 - Goals:

SELF-REFLECTON *worksheet*

Psychological

1. Am I employing a healthy perspective?
2. If I could talk to my teenage self, the one thing I would say is . . .
3. Am I achieving the goals that I've set for myself?
4. Write about a time when your work felt real, necessary and satisfying to you, whether the work was paid or unpaid, professional or domestic, physical or mental.
5. What's one topic you need to learn more about to help you live a more fulfilling life? (Then, follow through and learn more about that topic.)

Physical

1. Am I taking care of myself physically?
2. When I'm in pain—physical or emotional—the kindest thing I can do for myself is . .
3. I feel most energized when ...
4. If my body could talk, it would say . . .
5. I feel happiest in my skin when . . .

Spiritual

1. Am I taking anything for granted?
2. Am I using my time wisely?
3. Am I living true to myself?
4. What am I doing about the things that matter most in my life?
5. Write the words you need to hear.

Emotional

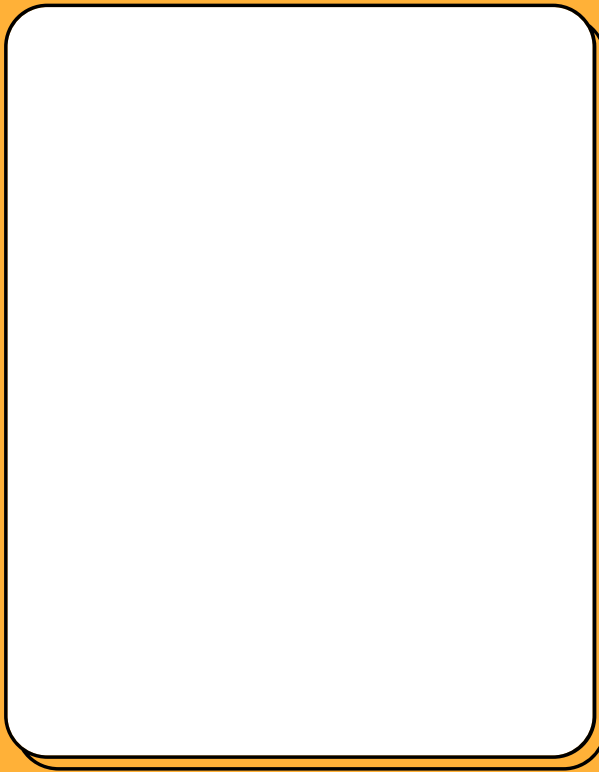
1. Am I letting matters that are out of my control stress me out?
2. What matters most in my life?
3. The two moments I'll never forget in my life are . . . (Describe them in great detail, and what makes them so unforgettable.)
4. Make a list of 30 things that make you smile.
5. My favorite way to spend the day is . . .

SELF-REFLECTON *worksheet*

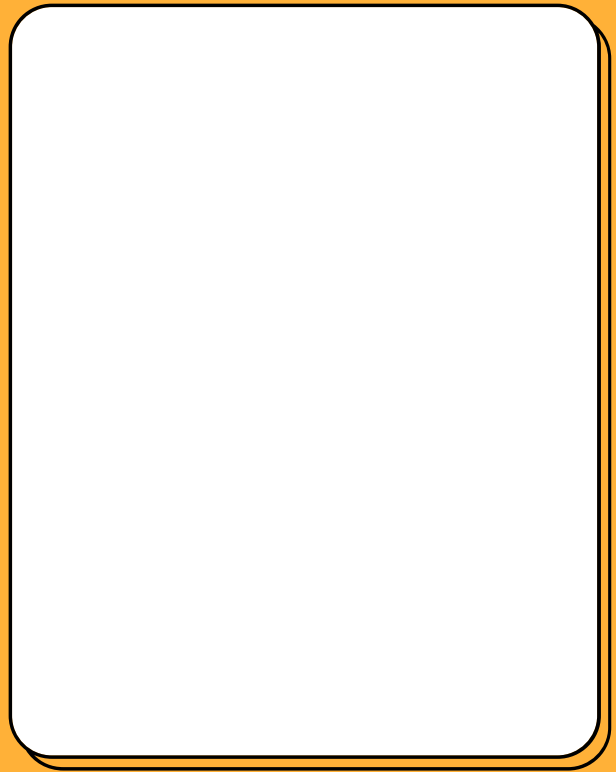
Psychological

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing reflections on the psychological aspect of the self.

Physical

A rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing reflections on the physical aspect of the self.

Spiritual

A rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing reflections on the spiritual aspect of the self.

Emotional

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for writing reflections on the emotional aspect of the self.

Nurturing vs Depleting Activity

Nurturing activities are those that provide us with energy, positive feelings/emotions, improve our wellness or decrease our stress!

Examples:

- Spending time with children/family
- Journaling
- Positive self-talk
- Going for a hike/jog
- Visiting a therapist



Depleting activities often drain us of energy, negatively impact our emotions and increase our stress levels!

Examples:

- Working overtime hours
- Dwelling on the past
- Engaging in conflict at work or home
- Over-exercising
- Poor nutritional habits



Take a moment to reflect on the activities you engage in over the next few weeks. Record these activities and reflect on how you felt after completing them. Check the box to the right to indicate if this activity is nurturing or depleting. Our goal in self-care is to engage in more nurturing activities than depleting ones. We can't always avoid stressful events but we can compensate for the strain these events may put on us!

Example: Activity	Nurturing	Depleting
<i>Took my dog for a walk</i>	✓	

[illegible]

Oppression vs Privilege Activity

Our society gives unearned privilege to specific groups while oppressing and discriminating against others. Understanding where we stand in systems of power can help us identify barriers we may face when engaging in self-care activities.

The stigma and stereotypes we face may place additional stressors on us that ultimately affect our mind, body, spirit and emotions!

I **DO** experience privilege in these areas:

Socio-economic ____
Sexual Orientation ____
Religion ____
Gender ____
Gender Identity ____
Employment ____
Physical Ability ____
English speaking ____
Ethnicity/Race ____
Geographic location ____
Nationality ____
Education ____
Mental/Cognitive Ability ____
Age ____

I **DO NOT** experience privilege in these areas:

Socio-economic ____
Sexual Orientation ____
Religion ____
Gender ____
Gender Identity ____
Employment ____
Physical Ability ____
English speaking ____
Ethnicity/Race ____
Geographic location ____
Nationality ____
Education ____
Mental/Cognitive Ability ____
Age ____

Oppression vs Privilege Activity

Group membership makes up who we are! Being a part of a certain race, gender, religion, or age group can determine how we are treated in society. Use this page to reflect on the groups you are a part of:

Gender: _____

Gender Identity: _____

Race: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Ability status: _____

Sexual Orientation: _____

Education: _____

Religion: _____

Age: _____


Socio-economic: _____

Language: _____

Nationality: _____


- 1) What memberships do you think of most often? Why?
- 2) What memberships do you consider least? Why do you think that is?
- 3) What memberships hurt your options or opportunities the most? How?
- 4) What memberships provide the most accessibility or privileges? How?
- 5) What memberships have the strongest effect on your self-image? How?
- 6) What membership plays a greater role in how others see you? How?

What is mindfulness?



Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, being aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not be overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's easier to access when we practice it on a daily basis.



Whenever you bring awareness to what you're experiencing through your senses, or to your state of mind through your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful. And there's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodelling the physical structure of your brain.

How we can practice mindfulness?


Focus on your breathing: you can do this action several times a day. Check to make sure you are breathing a regular breath. Take some deep breaths as well.

Take Time for you: Take a moment to take in what is around you, what do you see, hear and smell? Know that you are ok at this moment. The idea is to pay attention to the present moment.

Set an intention: Choose a positive affirmation such as love, kindness or happiness, to tune your mind to.


Set your thoughts free: When you find your mind wandering when you are paying attention to the present moment, acknowledge those thoughts, and let them float by.

Grounding Exercise



When you start to feel overwhelmed or anxious, try this grounding exercise. Look around your environment and note:

5 things you can SEE
5 things you can HEAR
5 things you can TOUCH
5 things you can SMELL
5 things you can TASTE



Some may be heard to note but as you focus on this exercise you're attention is drawn to your 5 senses



Remember: Mindfulness is a lifetime practice



MINDFULNESS & BREATHING

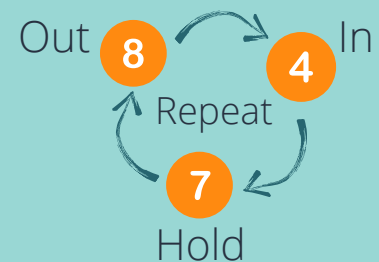
How can breathing help us practice mindfulness?

Mindful breathing is a very basic yet powerful mindfulness meditation practice. The idea is simply to focus your attention on your breathing—to its natural rhythm and flow and the way it feels on each inhale and exhale. Focusing on the breath is particularly helpful because it serves as an anchor—something you can turn your attention to at any time if you start to feel stressed or carried away by negative emotions.

Some breathing exercises to practice:

1 THE 4-7-8 BREATHING TECHNIQUE

Breathing in for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 seconds, and exhaling for 8 seconds. This breathing pattern aims to reduce anxiety or help people get to sleep.



2 SIGHING AND YAWNING

Try to breathe through your nose. This should reduce the number of yawns and sighs. Breathing in through your mouth gives your body too much oxygen and creates high respiration.



3 Breathing Waltz

At the first signs of over-breathing do this exercise.

The '9-second cycle' involves taking one breath every nine seconds.

1. Breathe in and out slowly... in a smooth light manner...

Breathe in for 3 seconds, Hold for 3 seconds, Breathe out for 3 seconds
(like a waltz ...1 2 3, 1 2 3 ...).

This will produce a breathing rate of 6-7 breaths per minute.

1. Say the word ***relax*** or let it go to yourself every time you breathe out.
2. At the end of each minute (after 6-7 breaths) hold your breath (don't take a gulp of air) for 10 seconds and then continue breathing in the 9-second cycle.
3. Continue breathing this way until all the symptoms of over-breathing have subsided.

Remember: You are in control

THE ART OF Self-Care

A daily Tracker for Personal Care

What am I grateful for today?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF

1. Learn a new skill or hobby
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



PHYSICAL SELF

1. Get a good nights sleep
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



EMOTIONAL SELF

1. Allow myself to fully feel my emotions
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



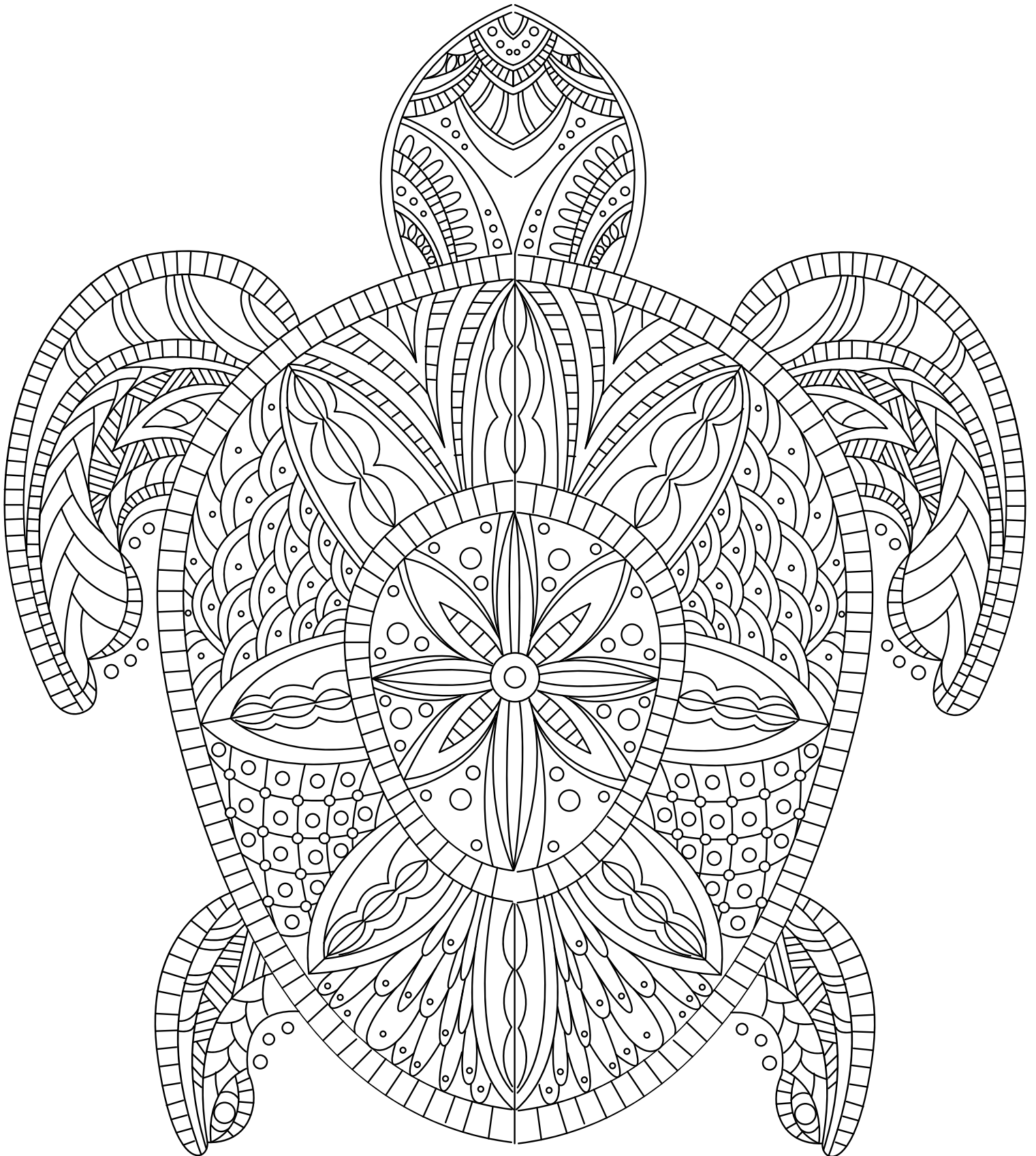
SPIRITUAL SELF

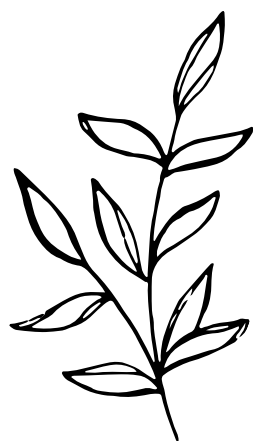
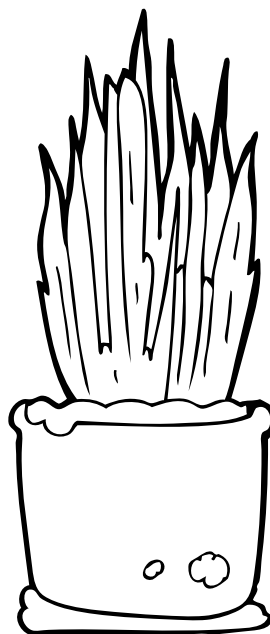
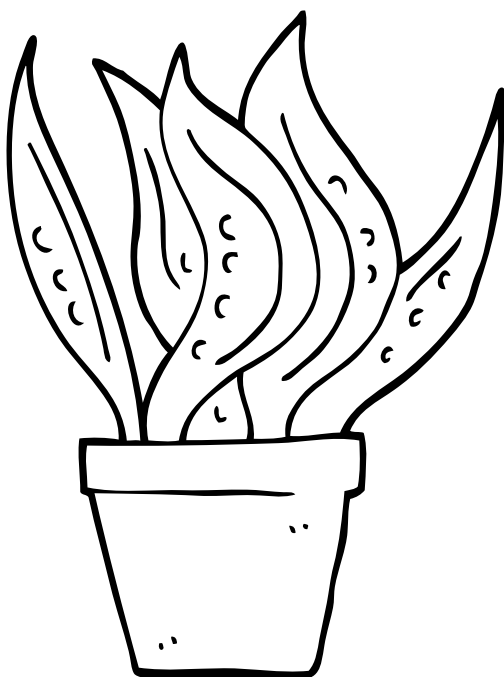
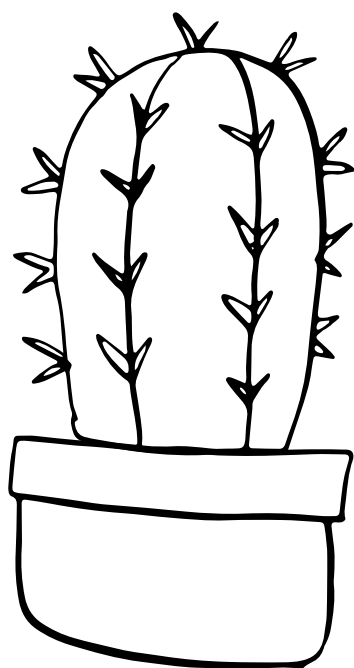
1. Read a spiritual message
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



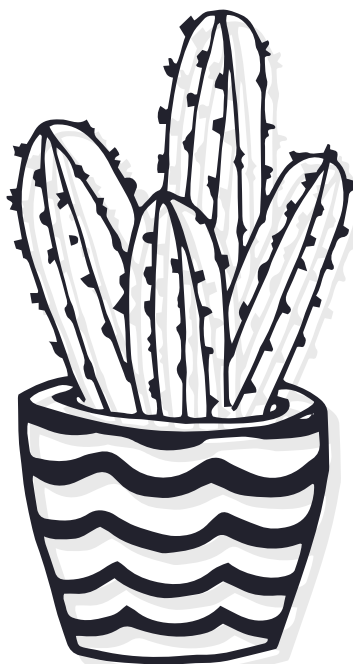
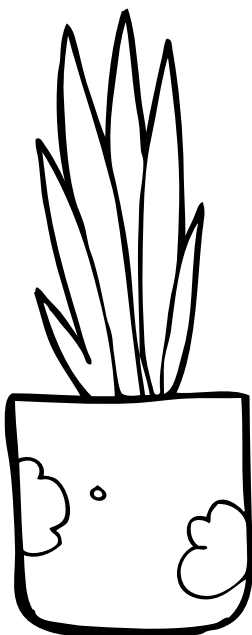
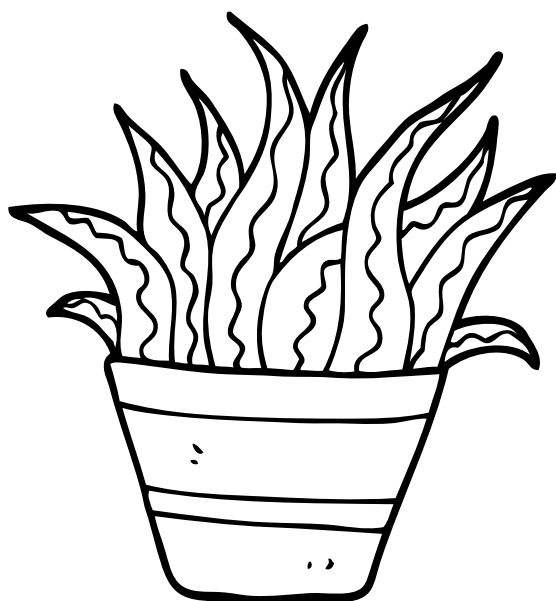
Notes:

PERSEVERANCE



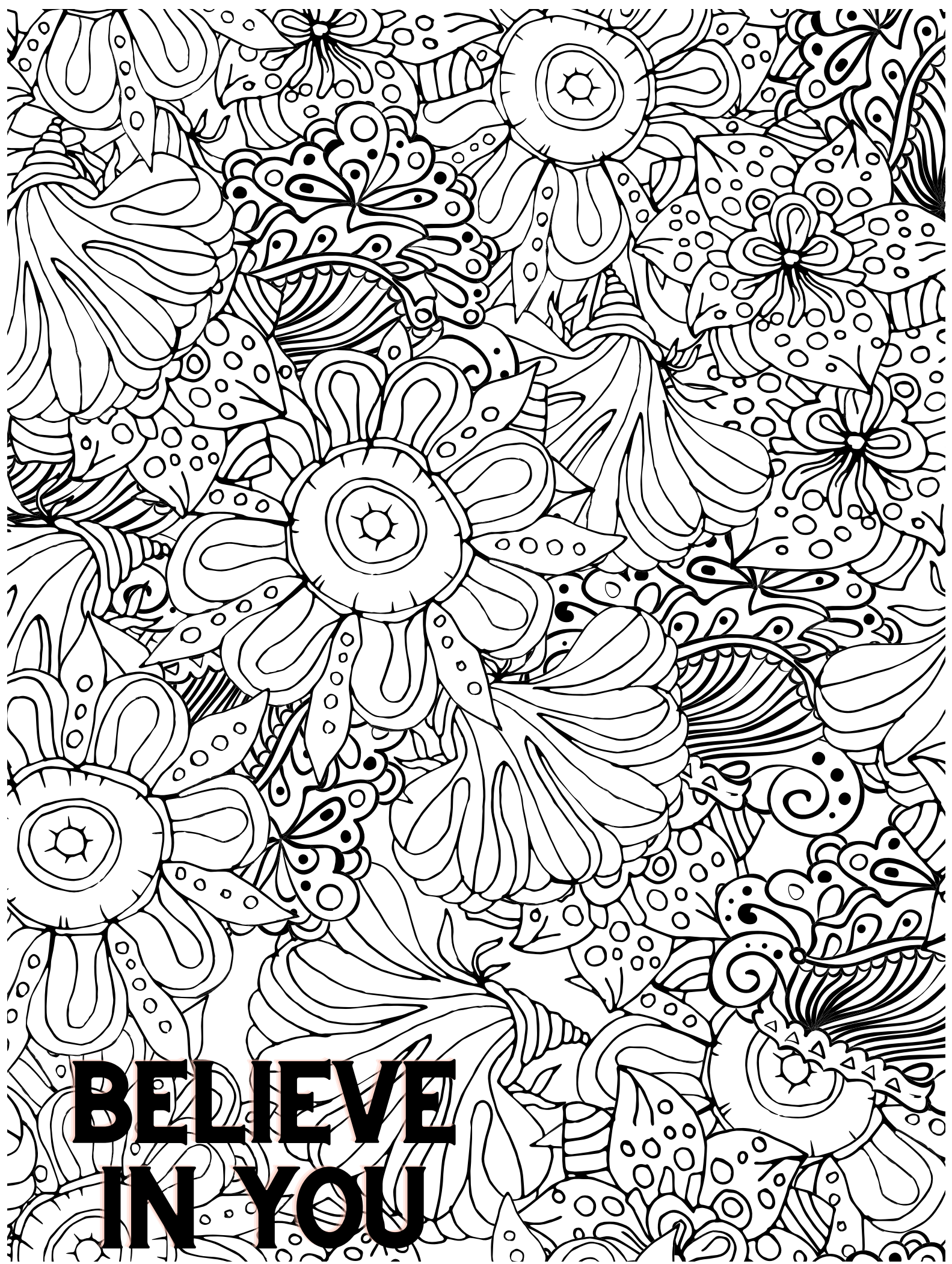


LET'S
GROW

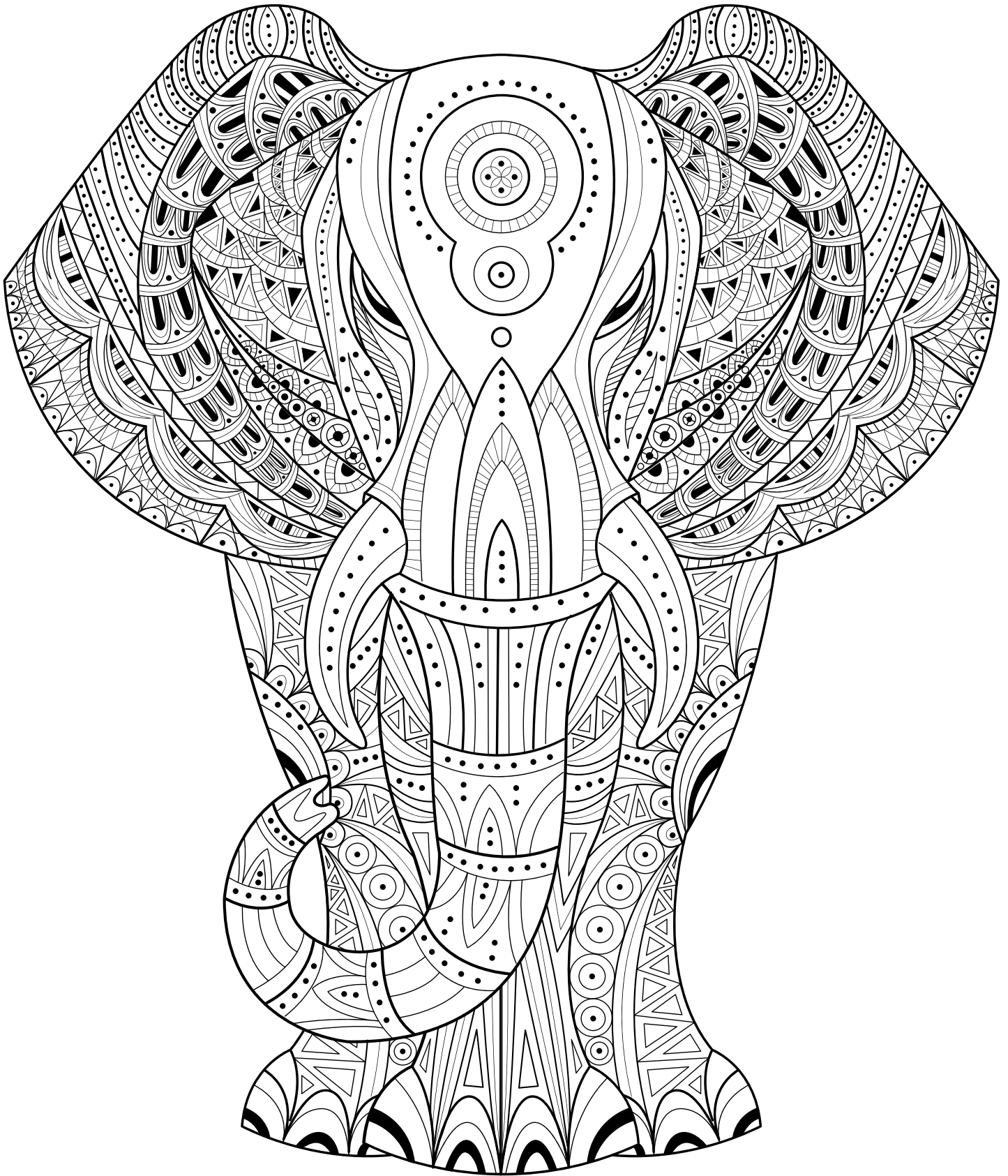


COURAGE



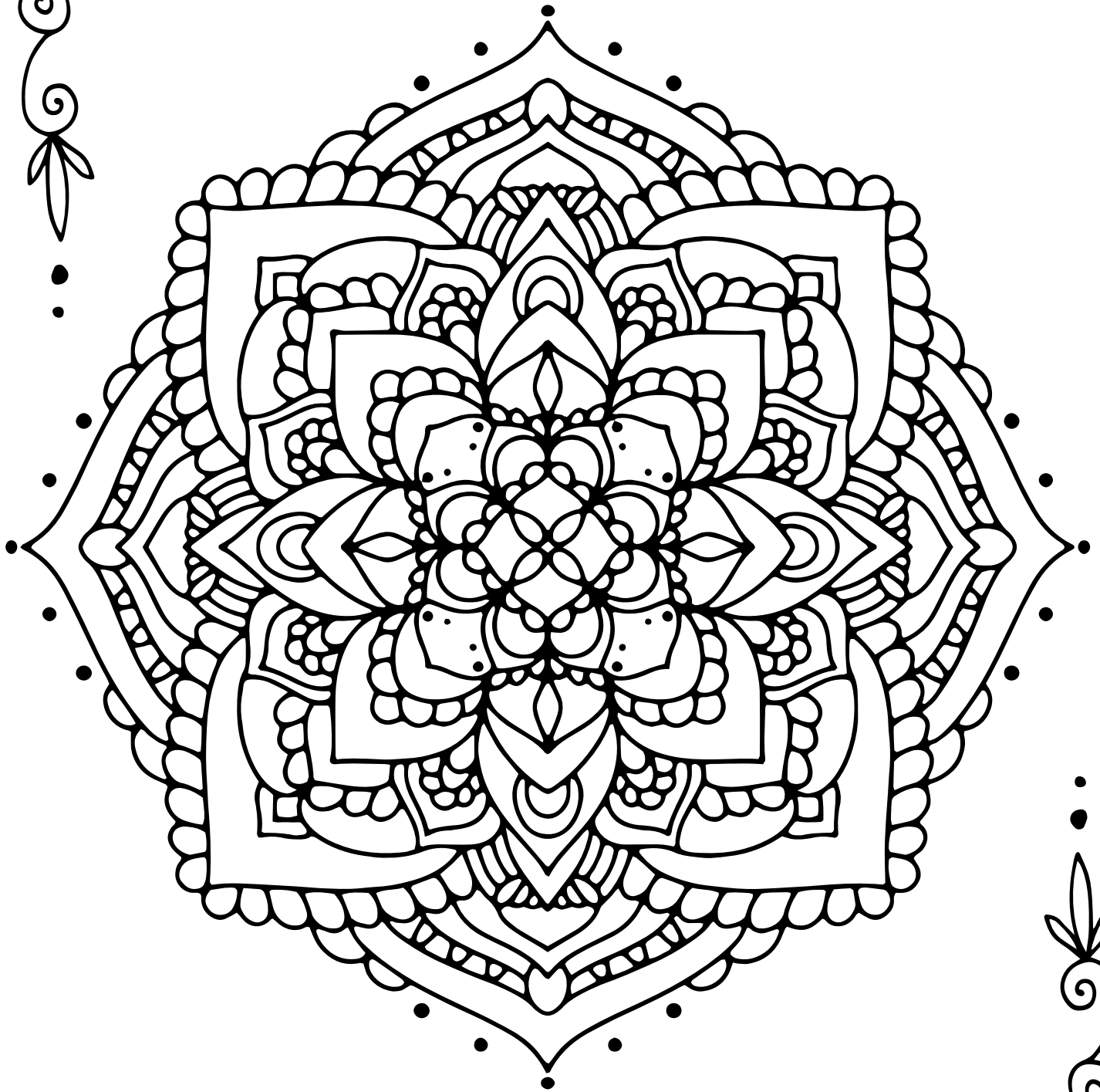


**BELIEVE
IN YOU**



PROSPERITY

..
Breathe in...



Breathe out...





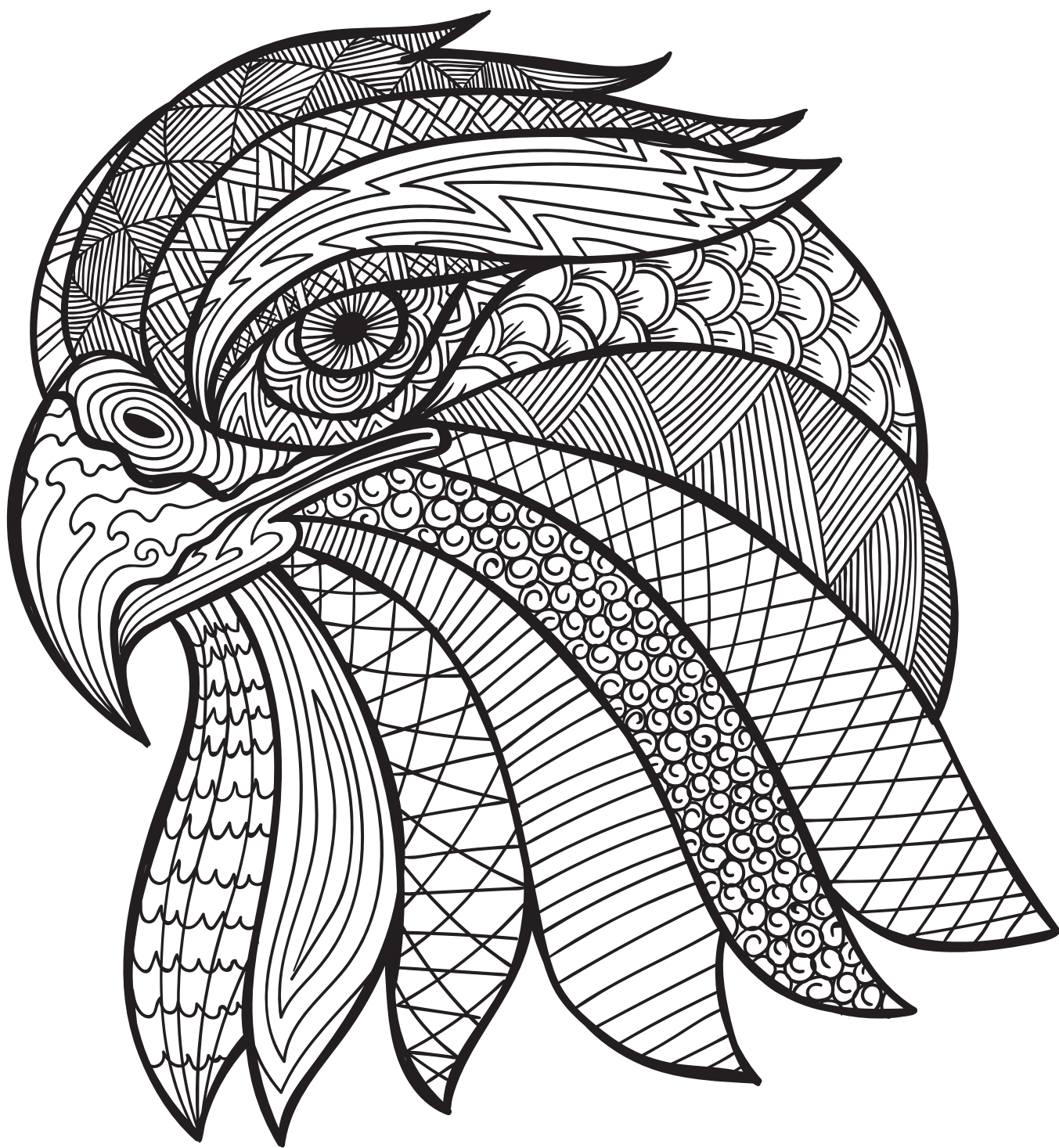
KINDNESS





RESILIENCE





STRENGTH

