

Action

ACTION ANXIETY DAY
JOURNÉE ACTION ANXIÉTÉ

EDUCATOR TOOLKIT 2024

Get Involved & Support
Action Anxiety Day
in the classroom!



Anxiety
CANADA

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Special Thanks

Thank you to our incredible Mental Health Champions Beneva and Telus Health.

beneva

 **TELUS** Health

Action

ACTION ANXIETY DAY
JOURNÉE ACTION ANXIÉTÉ

JUNE 10

How can you **ACT** on **Action Anxiety Day**?

A wareness: Learn about anxiety.

C olours: Wear **blue** and **orange**.

T alking: Share your anxiety stories.

Let's break the stigma together.

Learn more about the toolkit:
actionanxietyday.com



WHY CELEBRATE AAD?

We created Action Anxiety Day (AAD) as an annual anxiety awareness and education day. **AAD can help motivate people to normalize, face, and manage their anxiety.** Together, we can reduce stigma and give anxious children and youth the tools they need to cope. Anyone can participate in AAD, and you can **ACT** on anxiety by:

- A**wareness • Raise awareness of anxiety and our trusted, evidence-based resources.
- C**olours • Wear **blue** and **orange** June 10th to show support and eliminate the stigma around anxiety disorders.
- T**alking • Tell your anxiety stories and encourage others to share. Let's break the stigma together!



GETTING STARTED

Anxiety is common for many children, and we can empower them with knowledge and the tools they need to cope. It is important for your students and their families to know that excessive anxiety can interfere with their daily life, but it is manageable and treatable. We've designed this educational toolkit to help you teach elementary students about anxiety and proven coping tools in a fun and engaging way.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1) Choose your lesson plan(s) based on grade:

- Kindergarten - Grade 3
- Grades 4-7

2) Choose the lesson plan(s) for your class:

- The Flight, Fight, Freeze Response
- Coping Strategies
- Gratitude and Mindfulness

3) Use the lesson plan with the corresponding worksheets and activities.

4) Encourage your students to sign our proclamation and participate in our drawing and writing contest.

Together, we can create a supportive learning environment that benefits young people who may experience excessive anxiety. Thank you for your dedication and willingness to help shape your students' understanding of mental health. If you have any questions about this toolkit, please email info@anxietycanada.com.



ABC's of Anxiety

6 Ways Anxiety Impacts Children

Anxiety is an emotion felt in the body that can result in physical symptoms like stomachaches, headaches, and rapid breathing. Excessive anxiety is one of the most common mental health concerns for children and adults, affecting upwards of 20% of children and adolescents.

Anxious youth can present in different ways. Most are quiet, well-behaved, and try to stay out of the spotlight of attention. Others can become avoidant and act out if they are asked to engage in something that makes them fearful or anxious (fight or flight). Both scenarios can result in children failing to receive the help they need. Sadly, untreated anxiety can lead to decreased quality of life, missed opportunities in career and relationships, depression, and increased substance use.

Anxious children may:

- Worry excessively and seek reassurance from their parents, peers, or educators. While it is normal for children to seek comfort, anxious children do so more often and in non-threatening situations.
- Avoid anxiety-inducing situations and refuse to do things, which is not a helpful way of coping with stress.
- Function at a lower level than their peers due to challenges with time management, organization, and focus.
- Experience more conflict with their families or depend more on parents to get their needs met.

We can help children remember that when it comes to anxiety, it's best to **ACT** as taking action on our anxiety reminds us that we can fight our fears by facing them.

Anxiety can impact the lives of children, teens, and adults in these 6 ways:

Affect: Emotionally and physically – what we feel in our body

Behaviour: Behaviourally – what we do/our actions, like avoiding or seeking reassurance.

Cognition: Mentally – what goes through our mind, like worrisome thoughts.

Dependence: Relying on parents – over time, children depend too much on their parents.

Excess/Extreme: Anxiety is problematic when it's considered excessive or extreme related to a situation.

Functioning: How a child manages each day's tasks and activities.

Note: The pattern of these experiences varies in each child and from situation to situation, but generally anxious children are impacted in all six domains.



Anxiety in the Classroom

Is my student struggling with anxiety?



What can you do to help...

As an educator, you can play an essential role in identifying and assisting students with unwanted, persistent anxiety. The first step is to learn what anxiety can look like within the classroom. Anxiety specialists have identified that when a child or teen experiences anxiety more often (e.g., most days, for months at a time) and more intensely than their peers of the same age, it's more likely that they have an anxiety disorder.

The frequent, intense symptoms students with anxiety disorders encounter often significantly disrupt their lives and prevent them from participating in school experiences. These experiences may include, but are not limited to, attending school, completing assignments, joining clubs, learning or participating in class, and making friends.

If you think that a student is experiencing excessive, disruptive, and intense anxiety symptoms, here ways you can help:

- consult your school counsellor or principal.
- schedule a meeting with the student and/or their family to gather information and discuss.
- suggest effective resources like our self-paced, free online course, My Anxiety Plan (MAP).



FIGHT



FLIGHT



FREEZE



What is the Fight-Flight-Freeze (F3) response?

Anxiety triggers the natural “**Fight-Flight-Freeze**” (F3) response, the automatic response that affects our thoughts, body, and behaviours. Our mind notices what it thinks is a potential threat, our heart beats faster, and our muscles tense up. When we feel this way, we tend to react like a real danger is threatening us when, in reality, we are safe. Our body just overreacts because our brain tells us that something is unsafe. For example, you may feel fearful about an upcoming class presentation and react in one of these ways:

Fight: Due to your anxious feelings, you get very angry that you have to present in front of class.

Flight: You try to stay home from school to avoid having to present.

Freeze: You feel yourself ‘freeze’ during the presentation and forget what you planned to say.

Video Content

Fight Flight Freeze
English



Fight Flight Freeze
(French Subtitles)





**Lesson Plans:
Kindergarten-Grade 3**

Topic: Identifying Anxiety & The Fight-Flight-Freeze Response

Learning Objective:

- Students will be able to identify anxiety, as well as the natural Fight-Flight-Freeze stress response. They will learn that anxiety is normal and there are healthy ways to cope.

Materials Needed:

- Computer or Projector for YouTube Videos.
- Poster Paper or Whiteboard to record responses.
- Worksheets: “Fight, Flight, Freeze” ([pages 11-12](#)); “Feeling Worried” ([page 13](#)).

Warm-up: Ask students what the words “worry” and “anxiety” mean, or write the definitions below on the board. Together, create a list of things that cause students to worry. Write the list on the board in a column titled, “**Things that cause worry.**” Reassure the class that being worried is a normal feeling, and everyone feels it from time to time. Offer examples to start the discussion.

Worry Definition: Worry means feeling concerned about something real or imagined. For example, you may worry that your friend is upset with you because they seem to be acting different, or you worry you’ve lost something you can’t find.

Anxiety Definition: Anxiety is when you often feel scared or nervous about the future or specific situations real or imagined. Anxiety is like a big, longer-lasting worry. An example: You feel fear and dread daily over recess because you’re scared of being left out.

View Video: Fight, Flight, Freeze for Kids ([click here](#)). Watch the video together. It provides an explanation of our body’s natural fight-flight-freeze response.

Video Follow-up: Distribute the “Fight, Flight, Freeze: Examples” handout ([page 11](#)). Ask the class if they have any questions about what they’ve learned. Did anyone gather from the video that anxiety or worry can appear differently for different people? You may want to discuss identifying and describing big feelings and worries.

Group Activity: Fight, Flight, Freeze Role Play ([page 12](#)). You can either read the scenario and act out a response for students OR ask for student volunteers to act out a response and have the group identify if the response is fight, flight, or freeze.

Discussion: Together, create a list of healthy ways to deal with worries. Add them to the board/poster in a column titled “**Ways to deal with worry.**” Once you have a list of examples, reinforce that experiencing anxiety is normal, but without good coping strategies, it can get in the way of our daily life. Everyone manages anxiety differently, but students can try different ways to deal with worry and see what works for them.

Independent Activity: Distribute the “Feeling Worried” handout ([page 13](#)).



FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE: EXAMPLES

FIGHT

Yelling, screaming,
using mean words



Hitting, kicking,
punching, throwing

FREEZE

Shutting down, mind
goes blank



Numb, stuck,
sad, or helpless

FLIGHT

Wanting to escape
or run away

Procrastination, avoidance,
or ignoring





FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE

Acting out the F3 Response

Ready for some role play? This activity can help children understand how anxiety affects the body and the different ways people react when feeling anxious or worried.

Scenario to act out: Getting lost in a crowded place

You can start by saying, "Let's play a game. I'm going to act out a scenario, and I want you to guess which F3 response I'm showing. Ready?"

"Imagine you're at a crowded mall with your family, and suddenly you realize you're lost. You don't know where your parents are, and you can't find anyone you know. You start to feel anxious and scared."

(Act out one of the options)

Option 1 - **Fight Response:** You start to feel angry and frustrated. You push people out of the way or start yelling for your parents.

Option 2 - **Flight Response:** You feel like you need to escape from the situation as quickly as possible. You might start running around the mall, trying to find your parents or someone you know.

Option 3 - **Freeze Response:** You feel overwhelmed and unable to move. You might stand in one spot, feeling paralyzed and unable to think or act.

Ask children: "Which response did I just act out? Was it the fight response, the flight response, or the freeze response?"

Students can guess which response you acted out and discuss as a group if that response was ideal in the situation. They can also come up with ideas for what someone should do in the scenario and how they can stay calm.

Other examples you can act out include having to get a needle, accidentally spilling something or knocking it to the ground, or needing to speak up in class. You could act stressed to speak up in class for Show & Tell, loudly sighing and raising your voice (fight), then asking to be excused before your turn, hoping you won't have to speak (flight), or freezing up when it's your turn with no words coming out.

Acting out scenarios using examples of Flight, Fight, and Freeze can help illustrate how anxiety manifests differently for everyone—and that we don't always have to listen to our brain's response to fear. We can show anxiety who is boss and fight our fears by identifying and facing them.

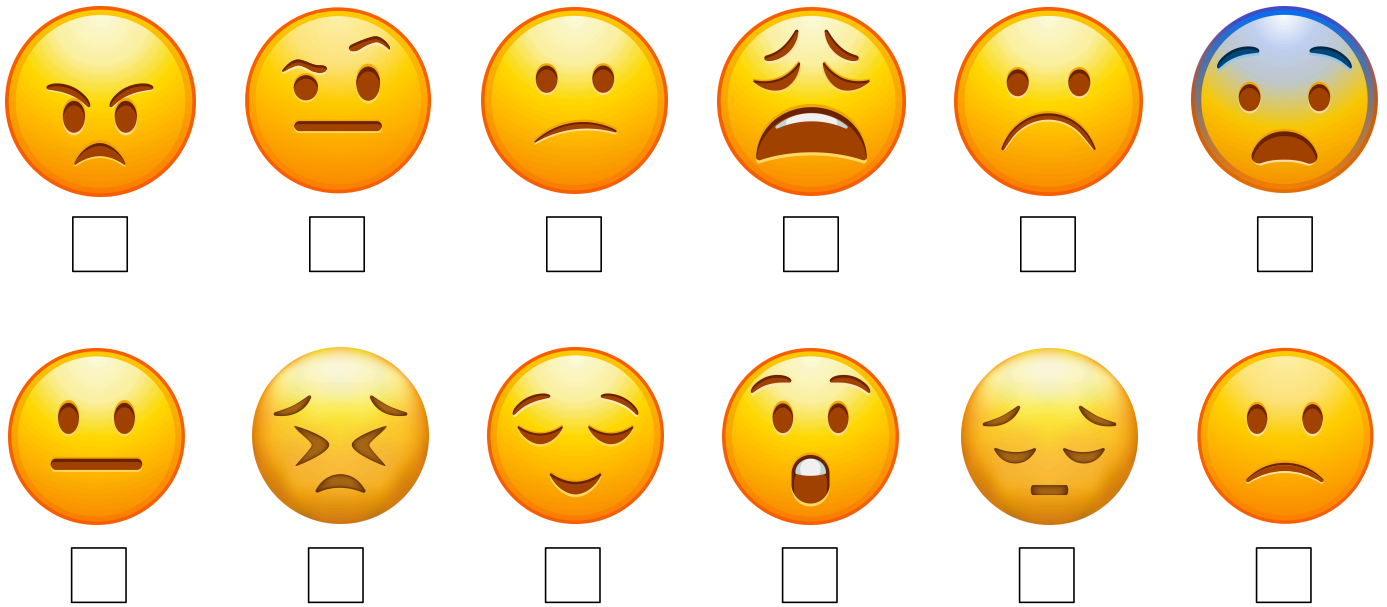


Name _____ Date _____

FEELING WORRIED

Worry looks different for everyone.

- Check off the faces you make when you are worried.



- Write 4 things that make you feel worried.

- Write 4 things that make you feel calm when worried.



Topic: Coping Strategies for Stress and Anxiety

Learning Objective:

- Students will learn about anxiety and explore ways to cope and manage it.

Materials Needed:

- Printed worksheet: "Grounding Exercise 5,4,3,2,1" ([page 15](#)).
- A screen to show the YouTube video, *Time Travelling Pizza - Social Anxiety*.
- Printed worksheet: "Write a letter to a Caretoons character" ([page 16](#)).

Warm-Up: Review the 5 senses with your students and how we use them every day. Ask students to sit comfortably and close their eyes and focus on the movement of their breath in and out through their nose. Ask them to tune into their senses and prompt them to quietly notice to themselves what they hear, smell, feel... Next, ask them to open their eyes and explain to students that focusing on your surroundings using the senses can help ground them in the present and calm their worries.

Independent Activity: Distribute the "Grounding Exercise" worksheet ([page 15](#)).

Videos: View Anxiety Canada's 'Caretoons' Videos, *Time Travelling Pizza - Social Anxiety* ([click here](#)), and *Galaxy Brain - Future Uncertainty* ([click here](#)). These animated clips further explain different types of anxiety in a fun, engaging way.

Independent Activity: Ask students to select a "worry situation" from earlier or use an example from 'Caretoons.' They can write how they think they'd feel in the situation and how they'd cope.

If the class watched 'Caretoons,' they can write a letter to the main characters, Drexal the Alien or Christ Crust the slice of pizza, offering them advice on their anxious feelings ([page 16](#)).



[CLICK TO VIEW](#)

Length: 2 mins



[CLICK TO VIEW](#)

Length: 2 mins



Name _____ Date _____

5-4-3-2-1

Grounding Exercise

A calming technique that connects you with the present by exploring the five senses.

Instructions: Sitting or standing, take a deep breath in and think about your surroundings as you complete the following questions.

5

5 things you can see



4

4 things you can touch



3

3 things you can hear



2

2 things you can smell



1

1 thing you can taste



Topic: Gratitude and Mindfulness

Learning Objective:

- Expand on anxiety teachings by focusing on the importance of daily gratitude.
- Students will learn additional strategies for coping with stress and anxiety, and how gratitude and mindfulness can positively impact their mental well-being.

Materials Needed:

- Worksheets: “My Gratitude Journal” ([page 18](#)); Breathing Exercises ([page 19 or 20](#)).
- Printed worksheets and colouring materials: Mindful Colouring ([pages 21-24](#)).

Warm-up: Gratitude Brainstorm

- Introduce the concept of gratitude as a practice to help reduce anxiety and improve mental well-being. Explain that gratitude involves focusing on the positive things in our lives and expressing appreciation for them.
- Create a gratitude wall on the whiteboard and record student’s ideas as they share some things that they’re grateful for.
- Encourage students to think about different areas of their lives, such as family, friends, school, nature, and personal achievements.

Gratitude Journal

- Distribute “My Gratitude Journal” ([page 18](#)) and explain that a gratitude journal is a personal space to write down things that they are grateful for each day.
- Ask students to think about 3 things they are grateful for to record on the worksheet. Encourage them to be specific and provide details about why they are grateful for each item.

Mindfulness

- Define mindfulness for students. **Mindfulness definition:** *a mental state achieved by focusing your awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.*
- Using “Calm Breathing Exercises” ([page 19](#)), introduce different breathing techniques. Alternatively, use the “Mindful Breathing Script” ([page 20](#)) to guide students through a calm breathing exercise.
- Demonstrate that Mindful Colouring ([pages 21-24](#)) can help create calm and give our brains a break when we feel overwhelmed or anxious.

Gratitude & Mindfulness Reflection

- Ask students to reflect on how they feel after practicing gratitude. Discuss as a class how focusing on positive parts of our lives can shift our thinking and reduce anxiety over time. Emphasize that gratitude is a habit that takes regular practice but can be a powerful tool to improve mental health.
- End the lesson on a positive note, expressing gratitude toward your students for participating and being willing to learn.



MY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

I felt:



The weather was:



The three things I am grateful for today are:

The best thing about today is:

Today, I learned...

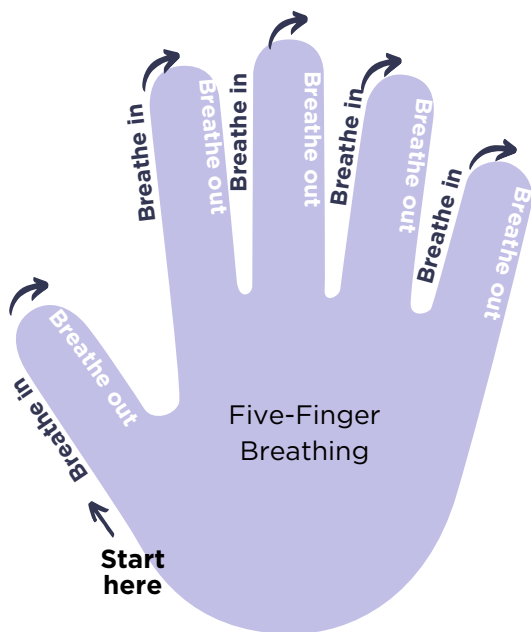
Today, I helped others by...



CALM BREATHING EXERCISES

Box Breathing

1. Breathe in for 4 seconds
2. Hold for 4 seconds
3. Breathe out for 4 seconds
4. Hold for 4 seconds... and repeat!



4-7-8 Technique

1. Breathe in for 4 seconds
2. Hold for 7 seconds
3. Breathe out for 8 seconds... and repeat!

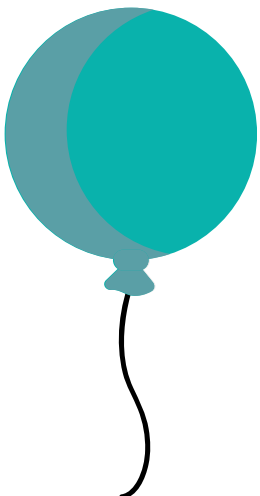
Five-Finger Breathing

Use your thumb to slowly trace the outside of your other thumb. Breathe in as you trace up, and breathe out as you trace down. Repeat with each finger.

Balloon Breathing

INHALE: Place your hands on your belly and breathe in slowly through your nose. Feel your belly, abdomen and chest expanding out like a balloon. Hold your breath for 2 seconds.

EXHALE: Open your mouth and slowly blow all the air out of your lungs, as if deflating your imaginary balloon. Repeat this exercise five times or until you are calm.



MINDFUL BREATHING SCRIPT

Have students find a comfortable space to sit or lay down, then read the script out loud in a calm voice as they practice mindful breathing.

Today, we are going to take a few minutes to practice a special exercise that will help us relax and focus our minds. It's called deep breathing, and it's a great way to bring mindfulness into our day. So, let's find a comfortable position, either sitting on our chairs or cross-legged on the floor, and get ready to relax.

Close your eyes gently and take a moment to notice how your body feels right now. Take a deep breath in through your nose and slowly let it out through your mouth. Let's do that one more time. Inhale deeply, and exhale slowly. As you breathe, imagine that you are filling up a balloon inside your tummy.

Take a moment to pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out. Notice the cool air as you breathe in and the warm air as you breathe out. Feel your belly rise and fall with each breath. Let's take a few more deep breaths together.

Now, imagine that you're in a peaceful garden. Picture yourself sitting under a beautiful tree, with a gentle breeze blowing and the warm sun shining down on you. As you breathe in, imagine the sweet scent of flowers filling the air. And as you breathe out, let go of any worries or thoughts that may be on your mind.

Now, let's try a breathing technique called "Five-Finger Breathing." We'll use our fingers as a guide. As I say a number, touch the same finger on your other hand. Let's start with our thumbs.

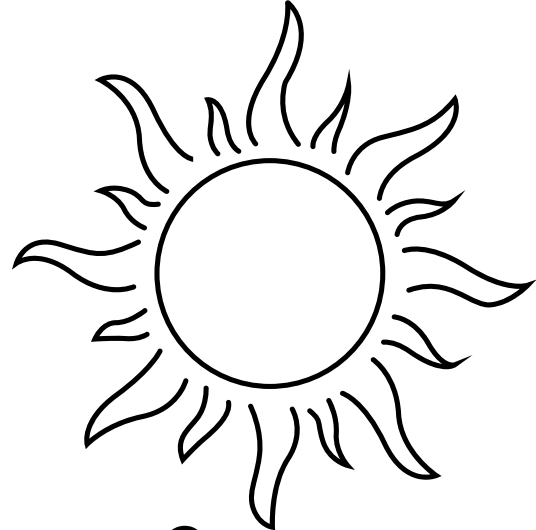
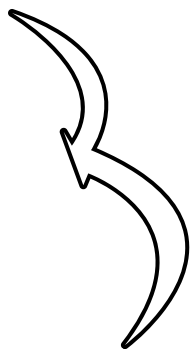
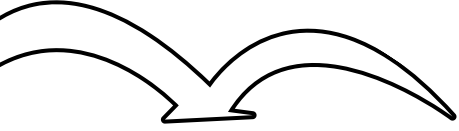
Inhale as you trace up the outside edge of your thumb with your other finger. Now, exhale as you trace down the inside edge of your thumb. Let's continue with the rest of our fingers. Inhale up, exhale down. Inhale up, exhale down. Inhale up, exhale down. Inhale up, exhale down.

Take a moment to notice how your body feels. Are you feeling more relaxed and calm? Remember, you can always come back to this peaceful garden and deep breathing whenever you need to feel calm and centered.

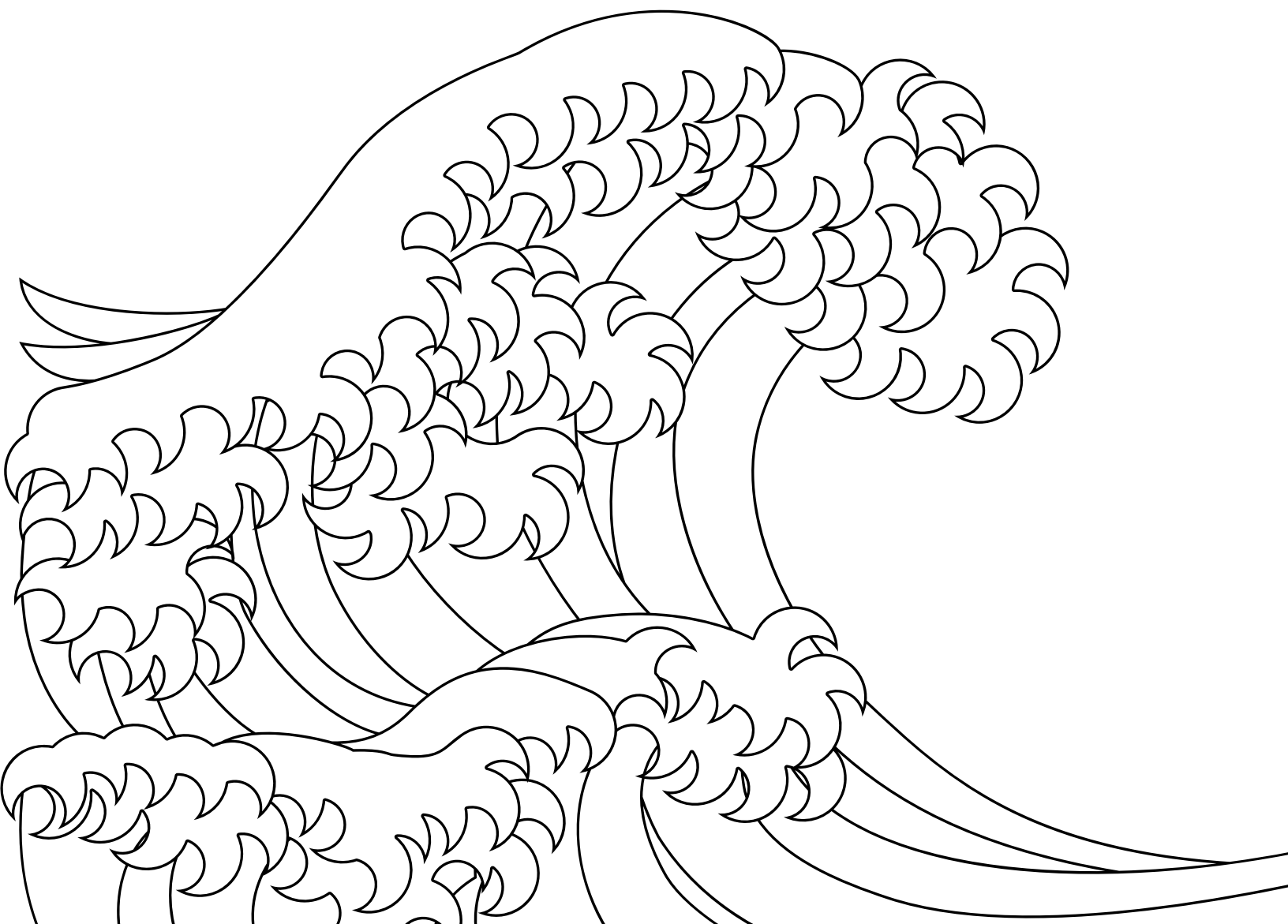
Slowly open your eyes and bring your attention back to the classroom. Take a moment to notice how you feel now compared to before we started our mindfulness exercise. Remember, deep breathing is a wonderful tool you can use anytime, anywhere, to help you relax and find your inner calm.

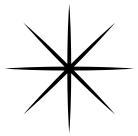
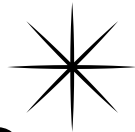
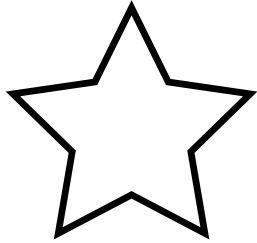
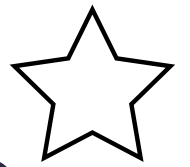
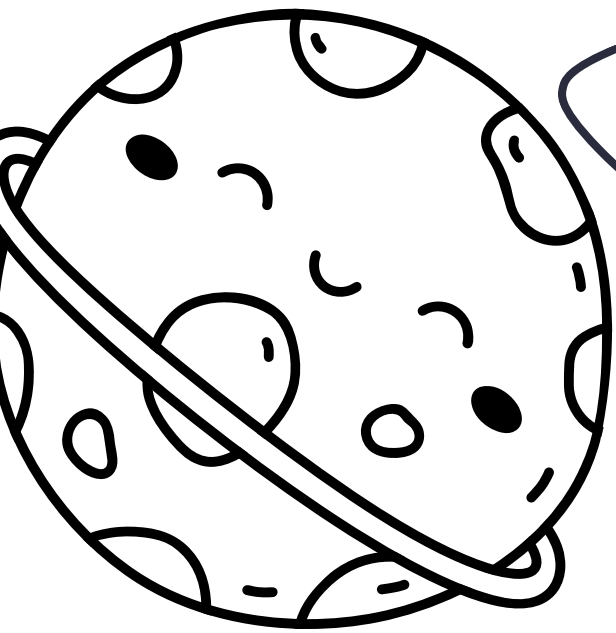
Great job, everyone! I hope you enjoyed this mindfulness exercise. Whenever you feel stressed or overwhelmed, remember that you have the power to take a few deep breaths and find your calm.



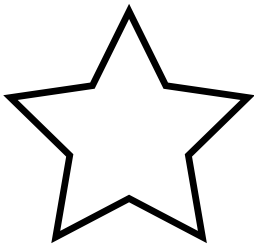


breathe in
breathe out

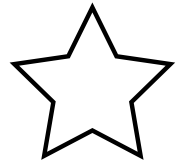




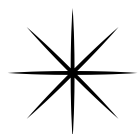
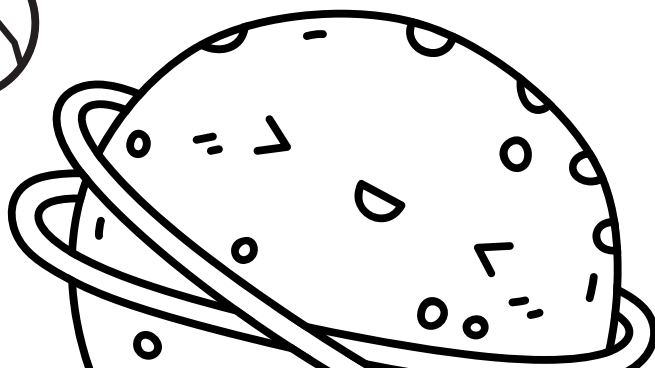
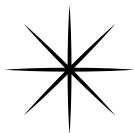
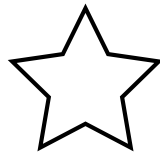
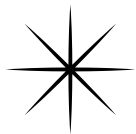
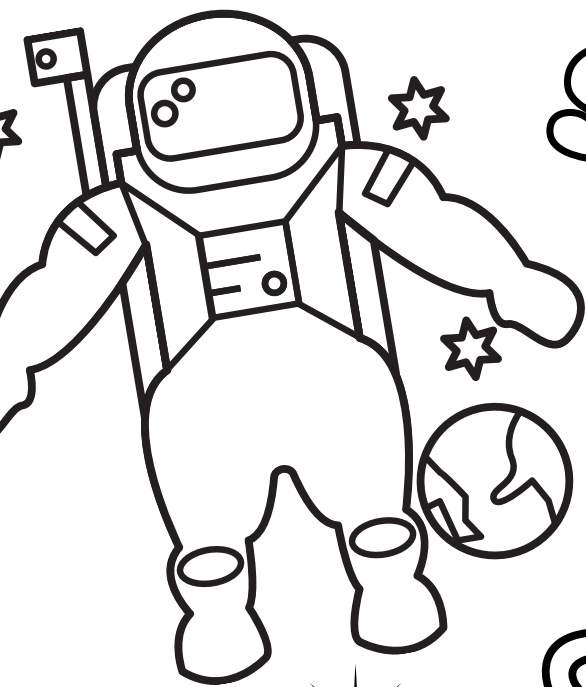
remember



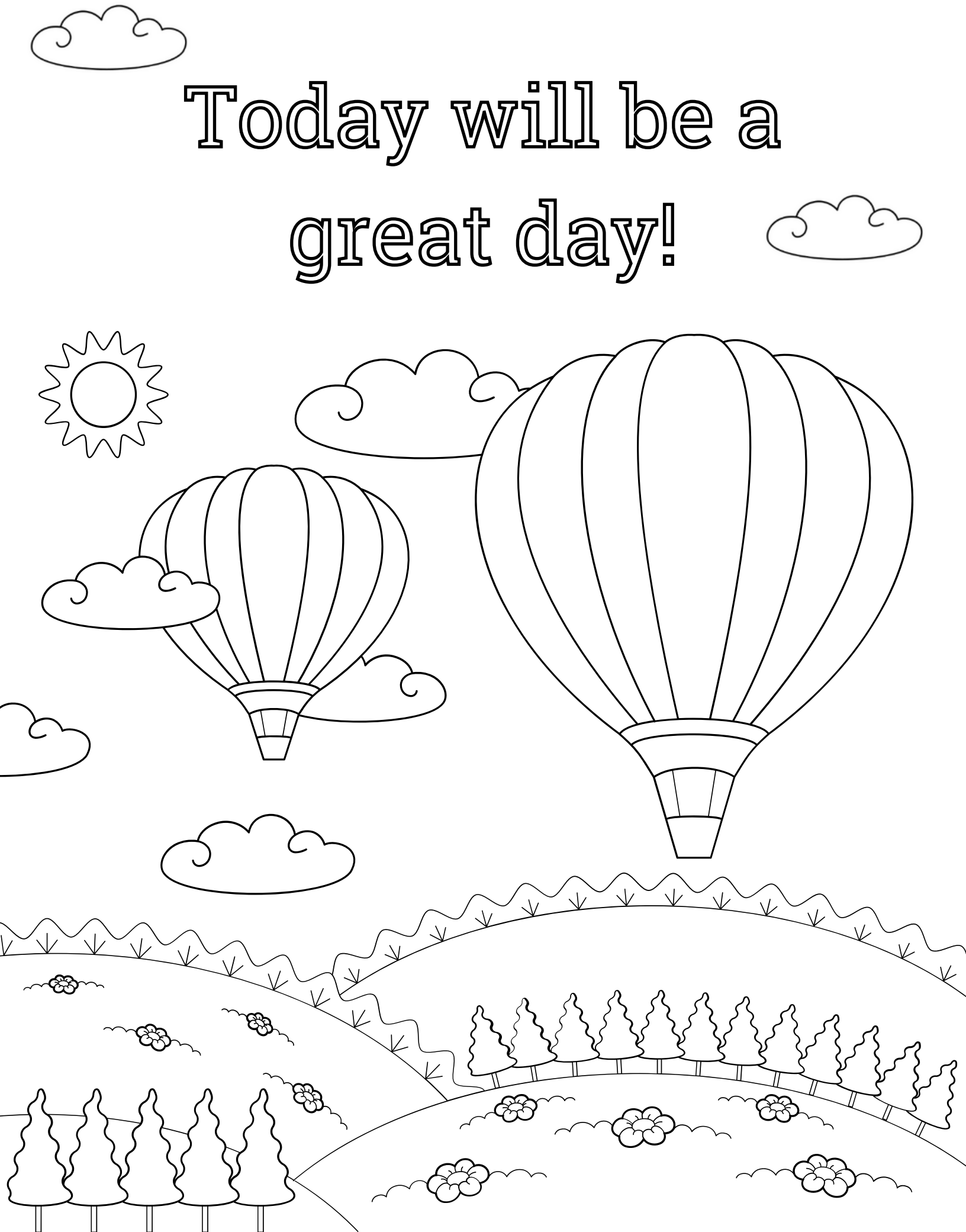
the good



stuff



Today will be a
great day!



I AM
GRATEFUL





**Lesson Plans:
Grades 4-7**

GRADES 4-7: LESSON PLAN A

Topic: Identifying Anxiety & The Fight-Flight-Freeze Response

Learning Objective:

- Students will be able to identify worry and anxiety, as well as the Fight-Flight-Freeze Response. They will learn that anxiety is normal and there are healthy ways to cope.

Materials Needed:

- Computer or projector for YouTube Videos and poster paper or whiteboard to record responses
- Printed Worksheets: "Fight, Flight, Freeze" ([pages 27-28](#)) and "Coping with Stress" ([page 29](#)).

Warm-up: Ask students to define "stress" and "anxiety," or write the definitions below on the board. Ask if they can think of a time that they were anxious. How did they feel in their body? Together, create a list of potentially anxiety-inducing situations. List them on the whiteboard in a column titled, "Stressful Situations." Ask what makes these situations stressful.

Stress Definition: Stress is a common feeling we get when we feel under pressure. You can feel stressed about something real or imagined. *An example: Worry you feel before a quiz or presentation (worried about studying enough or doing well in front of classmates/teacher).*

Anxiety Definition: Anxiety is when you often feel scared or nervous about the future and/or specific situations real or imagined. *An example: When you are always feeling nervous about recess because you're scared of being left out, or you feel anxious about going to school every day, even when there is no quiz or presentation.*

How Stress and Anxiety Overlap: When stress happens a lot or lasts a long time, it can worsen anxiety. Your body can get used to feeling stressed and start feeling anxious even when things aren't so stressful. Stress can also make it harder for your brain to calm down, so anxiety sticks around longer. Stress is like a temporary worry, while anxiety is a bigger, longer-lasting worry.

View Video: Fight, Flight, Freeze for Kids ([click here](#)). Watch the video, which provides an explanation of the fight-flight-freeze response, together as a class.

Video Follow-up: Distribute the "Fight, Flight, Freeze" handout ([pages 27-28](#)). Ask students to cut out the examples and categorize them under the 3 headings on the second page.

Answer Key for Cut/Paste Activity: **Fight:** Yelling, screaming, using mean words; Hitting, kicking, punching, throwing; Blaming, deflecting, or defensiveness; Demanding or trying to control; Approaching what feels like a threat; Irritable, angry or aggressive. **Flight:** Wanting to escape or running away; Trouble paying attention; Restless, fidgeting or hyperactive; Procrastination, avoidance, or ignoring; Fleeing from what feels like a threat; Anxiety, fear, panic, or worry. **Freeze:** Shutting down, mind goes blank; Urge to hide or isolate self; Unresponsive or don't know what to say; Zoned out or daydreaming; Feeling stuck physically and mentally; Numb, stalled, sad, or helpless.

Discussion: Together, create a list of healthy ways to cope with stress or anxiety. Add them to the board in a second column titled "Ways to Cope with Stress." Once you have a list of examples, reinforce that anxiety is normal and everyone manages stress differently.

Independent Activity: Distribute "Coping with Stress" ([page 29](#)). Ask students to select a stressful situation from earlier as a writing prompt. They can write how they think they'd feel in the situation and how they'd cope. Pair them with a partner for a 1:1 share and discussion.



FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE

STEP 1: Cut out the examples below.

The Fight-Flight-Freeze response is an automatic response that affects our thoughts, body, and behaviours. When faced with a potential threat, your thoughts focus on the danger, your body revs up to help protect you, and you take action (fight, flight, or freeze).

Yelling, screaming,
using mean words

Shutting down,
mind goes blank

Restless, fidgeting,
or hyperactive

Urge to hide or
isolate self

Hitting, kicking,
punching, throwing

Wanting to escape
or running away

Unresponsive or
don't know what
to say

Trouble paying
attention

Blaming, deflecting,
or defensiveness

Zoned out or
daydreaming

Demanding or
trying to control

Procrastination,
avoidance,
or ignoring

Feeling stuck
physically
and mentally

Fleeing from what
feels like a threat

Approaching what
feels like a threat

Numb, stalled,
sad, or helpless

Irritable, angry
or aggressive

Anxiety, fear,
panic, or worry



FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE

Step 2: Paste the examples you cut out under the appropriate heading.



FIGHT EXAMPLES

FLIGHT EXAMPLES

FREEZE EXAMPLES



Coping with Stress: Writing Exercise

Write about a specific stressful situation you have experienced or use your imagination to create an example.

How did your body react (for example, heart racing or blushing)?

What kind of thoughts did you have?

What are some healthy ways to cope after this situation?



GRADES 4-7: LESSON PLAN B

Topic: Coping Strategies for Stress and Anxiety

Learning Objective:

- Students will learn that anxiety is normal and there are healthy ways to cope.

Materials Needed:

- Projector or Smartboard.
- Printed Worksheet: “Grounding Exercise 5.4.3.2.1” ([page 31](#)).
- Sheet to Print or Project: “Change Your Thinking: 1 Thought at the Time” ([page 32](#)).
- Printed Worksheets: “Me vs. My Worry” ([page 33](#)) and “My STOP Plan” ([page 35](#)).

Warm-Up: Review the 5 senses and how we use them every day. Ask students to sit comfortably and close their eyes, focusing on the movement of their breath in and out through the nose. Prompt them to notice quietly to themselves what they hear, smell, feel... Ask them to open their eyes. Explain to students that focusing on your surroundings using your senses can help calm feelings like worry, stress, and panic.

Independent Activity: Tell students that they’ll be practicing using their senses to ground them with the “Grounding Exercise: 5,4,3,2,1” worksheet. This exercise uses a proven technique to combat anxious feelings by bringing the mind to the present.

Discussion: Discuss ways students can confront worries and remind them that they have the power to change their thinking. Hand out or share “Change your Thinking: 1 Thought at a Time” ([page 32](#)) on the projector. Discuss how we can help guide our thoughts, which affect how we feel. Brainstorm worries as a class, then come up with balanced thoughts to help ease worries. This exercise can help students see that they have the power to ‘boss back’ their anxiety, because the voice of worry is usually not right or worth listening to.

Worksheet: Distribute “Me vs. My Worry” ([page 33](#)) and have students complete independently or in pairs. See ([page 34](#)) for examples on how a student can challenge a worry using this worksheet.

Additional Activities: Caretoons and The “STOP” Plan/Strategy.

- View ‘Caretoons’ Video, *Time Travelling Pizza - Social Anxiety* ([click here](#)), as a class.
- Distribute “My STOP Plan” worksheet ([page 35](#)) and ask students to identify a common source of anxiety. Students can work through the sheet’s columns to identify their feelings and create a plan to deal with them next time.

Discussion: Ask students to reflect on what they’ve learned today and whether their understanding of anxiety has changed.



GROUNDING EXERCISE 5,4,3,2,1

When you're feeling stressed, this technique grounds you in the present using the 5 senses.

5 things I see

Something you see around you. Notice details, shapes, and colours.

4 things I feel

A physical sensation, like the feel of your feet on the ground, or clothes on your skin.

3 things I can hear

Sounds around you, no matter how small or faint.

2 things I can smell

Example: the scent of hand soap.

1 thing I taste

The taste of something you ate or drank earlier, or you may not taste anything at all.

Change Your Thinking: 1 Thought at a Time

Instead of thinking:

I'm scared to write this test because I might forget everything.

My friends don't like me.

I feel like I embarrassed myself.

Try thinking this:

I studied really hard for this exam, and there may be a few things I forget, but I'll probably be able to remember most of it.

If my friends didn't like me, they wouldn't keep wanting to spend time with me, so I must offer some value to them.

I'm allowed to make mistakes, and no one is judging me as much as I'm judging myself right now.

ME VS. MY WORRY

Sometimes our worries try to take over, but when we identify them, we can confront and overcome them. Challenge your worry using this worksheet.

What do *I* want to do?	What does my *worry* want me to do?	How can I talk back to my worry?

ME VS. MY WORRY

Examples for educators or parents to guide children through the ME VS. MY WORRY worksheet.

When guiding your students through how they would approach their worry, focus on showing them that the voice of worry or anxiety often tries to tell us that we should avoid things, while being brave and facing the situation often has better results.

What do <i>*I*</i> want to do?	What does my <i>*worry*</i> want me to do?	How can I talk back to my worry?
I want to hang out with my friends.	Stay home because there may be germs or danger there.	My friends are more important than germs. Just because anxiety says there is danger, it doesn't mean there REALLY is any danger.
I want to do well on a test.	Get scared and upset and say I can't write the test today in fear that I may fail.	I may not do well, but I'll never know if I don't try. No one expects me to be perfect.
I want to try a new sport or try out for a sports team.	Convince yourself you don't actually want to play the sport. Don't try out since you will only embarrass yourself.	Other people will also be new to this sport. Everyone starts somewhere! By trying new things, I may find something I love! Instead of thinking of what could go wrong, I can think about what could go right: I could make the team. Even if I don't make the team this time, I can practice and try again next year.

MY PLAN

Think about a time you've felt scared or anxious. Fill out the questions below to come up with a STOP plan for the next time you feel worried or fearful.

Scared?	Thoughts?	Other thoughts?	Praise and Plan!
<i>What's going on in your body?</i>	<i>What are you thinking right now?</i>	<i>What is something else you can think or tell yourself that would help?</i>	<i>What is something nice you can say to yourself? What can you do next time?</i>



GRADES 4-7: LESSON PLAN C

Topic: Gratitude and Mindfulness

Learning Objective:

- Expand on anxiety teachings by focusing on the importance of gratitude in everyday life.
- Students will learn additional strategies for coping with stress and anxiety, and that healthy practices like gratitude and mindfulness can positively impact their mental well-being.

Materials Needed:

- Printed Worksheets: “Flexible Thinking” ([page 37](#)), “Calm Breathing Exercises” ([page 38](#)) and/or “Mindful Breathing Script” ([page 39](#)), and Mindful Colouring ([pages 40-42](#)).

Warm-up: Gratitude Brainstorm

- Introduce the concept of gratitude as a practice to help reduce anxiety and improve mental well-being. Explain that gratitude involves focusing on the positive things in our lives and expressing appreciation for them.
- Create a gratitude wall on the whiteboard and record student ideas as they share things they are grateful for.
- Encourage students to think about different areas of their lives, such as family, friends, school, nature, and personal achievements.

Positive Thinking Worksheet: Distribute “Flexible Thinking” ([page 37](#)) and explain that reflecting on what we’re grateful for helps us improve our mental well-being. While anxiety wants us to think in a rigid, harsh way, we can think in a flexible and healthy way. We can stretch our mind (like we stretch our body for sports!). Ask students to respond to the worksheet’s prompts independently. Encourage them to be specific and provide details.

Mindfulness Activities: Define mindfulness for students. ***Mindfulness definition:** a mental state achieved by focusing your awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.*

- Show students calm breathing exercises using [page 38](#) and/or [page 39](#).
- Demonstrate the calming power of mindfulness with Mindful Colouring ([pages 40-42](#)), letting students know that mindful colouring is a great tool for when they need to give their brain a break.

Gratitude & Mindfulness Reflection

- Ask students to reflect on how they feel after practicing gratitude.
- Discuss as a class how focusing on positive aspects of their lives can shift their perspective and reduce anxiety.
- Emphasize that gratitude is a habit that takes regular practice but can be a powerful tool to manage anxiety and improve mental health.
- End the lesson on a positive note, expressing gratitude toward your students for participating and being willing to learn.



Name _____

Date _____

FLEXIBLE THINKING

I am really
good at...

I am loved
by...

I was brave or faced a
fear when I...

I take care of
myself when I...



CALM BREATHING EXERCISES

Box Breathing

1. Breathe in for 4 seconds
2. Hold for 4 seconds
3. Breathe out for 4 seconds
4. Hold for 4 seconds... and repeat!



4-7-8 Technique

1. Breathe in for 4 seconds
2. Hold for 7 seconds
3. Breathe out for 8 seconds... and repeat!

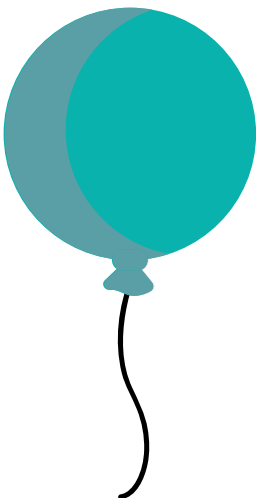
Five-Finger Breathing

Use your thumb to slowly trace the outside of your other thumb. Breathe in as you trace up, and breathe out as you trace down. Repeat with each finger.

Balloon Breathing

INHALE: Place your hands on your belly and breathe in slowly through your nose. Feel your belly, abdomen and chest expanding out like a balloon. Hold your breath for 2 seconds.

EXHALE: Open your mouth and slowly blow all the air out of your lungs, as if deflating your imaginary balloon. Repeat this exercise five times or until you are calm.



MINDFUL BREATHING SCRIPT

Have students find a comfortable space to sit or lay down, then read the script out loud in a calm voice as they practice mindful breathing.

The intention of this brief exercise is to focus your attention on your breath as you allow thoughts and sensations to come and go in the background.

Find a comfortable place to sit. Put your feet flat on the ground and try to straighten your posture. Gently close your eyes. Let your shoulders drop down and away from your ears.

Pay attention to your breathing and just allow yourself to continue to breathe naturally.

Now, rest your hands gently on your belly with the fingertips of each hand lightly touching in the middle.

Breathe in smoothly through your nose. And exhale slowly through your mouth. Continue to take slow, smooth breaths.

When you breathe in, notice your belly push your hands gently apart, as you fill your lower lungs with air. When you breathe out, notice your belly sink back towards your spine as you release your breath. You can imagine that your belly is a balloon. Fill it with air and then watch it deflate.

Now continue to focus on the gentle inhalation and exhalation of your breath. In... and out...

If any other thoughts or images come into your mind during this exercise, just notice them, and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

You may also become aware of feelings in your body. Simply notice them, and then again, bring your mind back to your breath. You don't need to overthink or give these thoughts or feelings any meaning in this moment. Simply acknowledge them without judgment and bring your mind back to your breath.

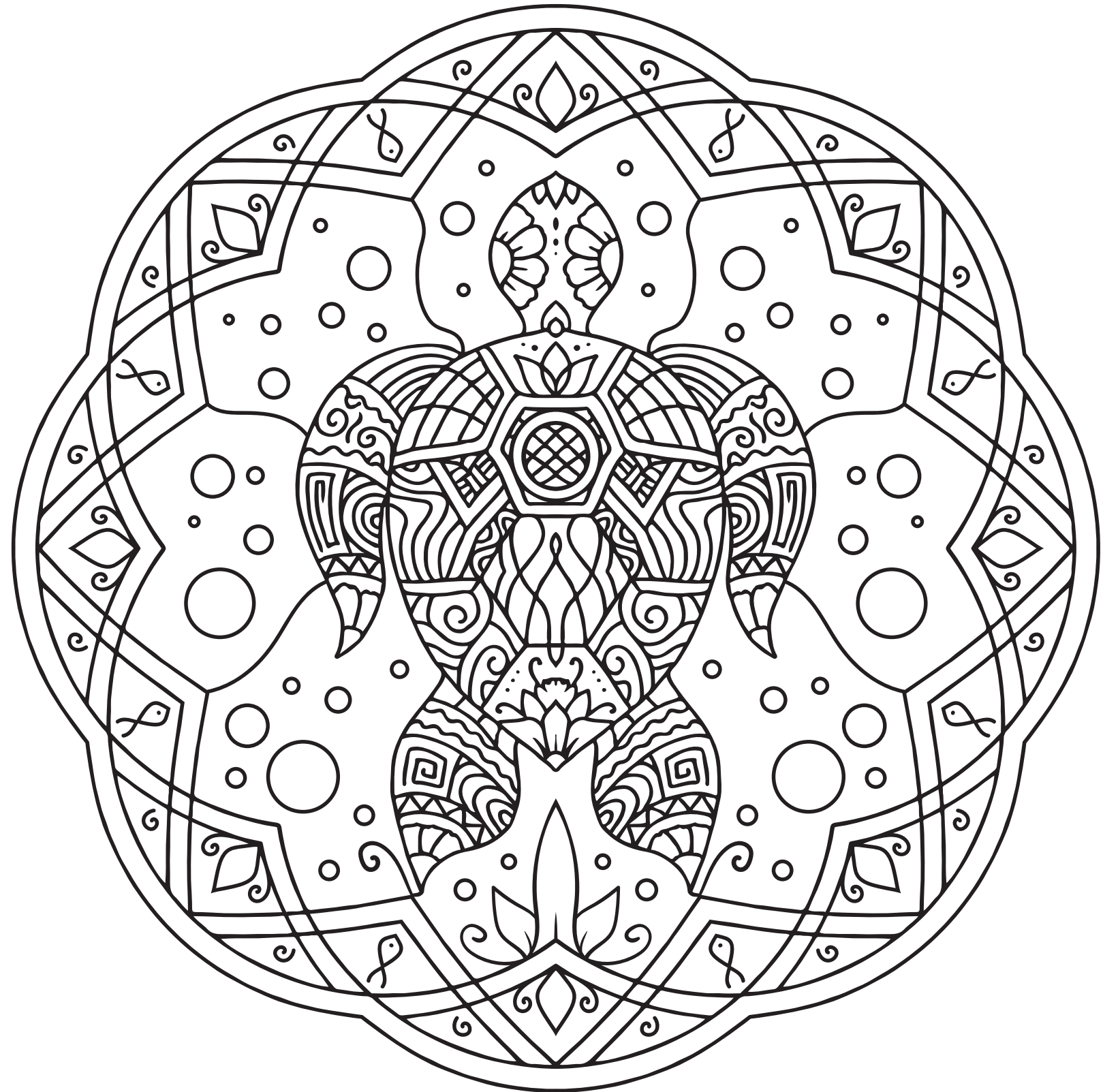
It's normal for your mind to wander. Simply notice that your mind has wandered and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Continue to focus on your breathing and stay in this relaxed state for as long as you like. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and bring your attention back to your surroundings.

Name _____

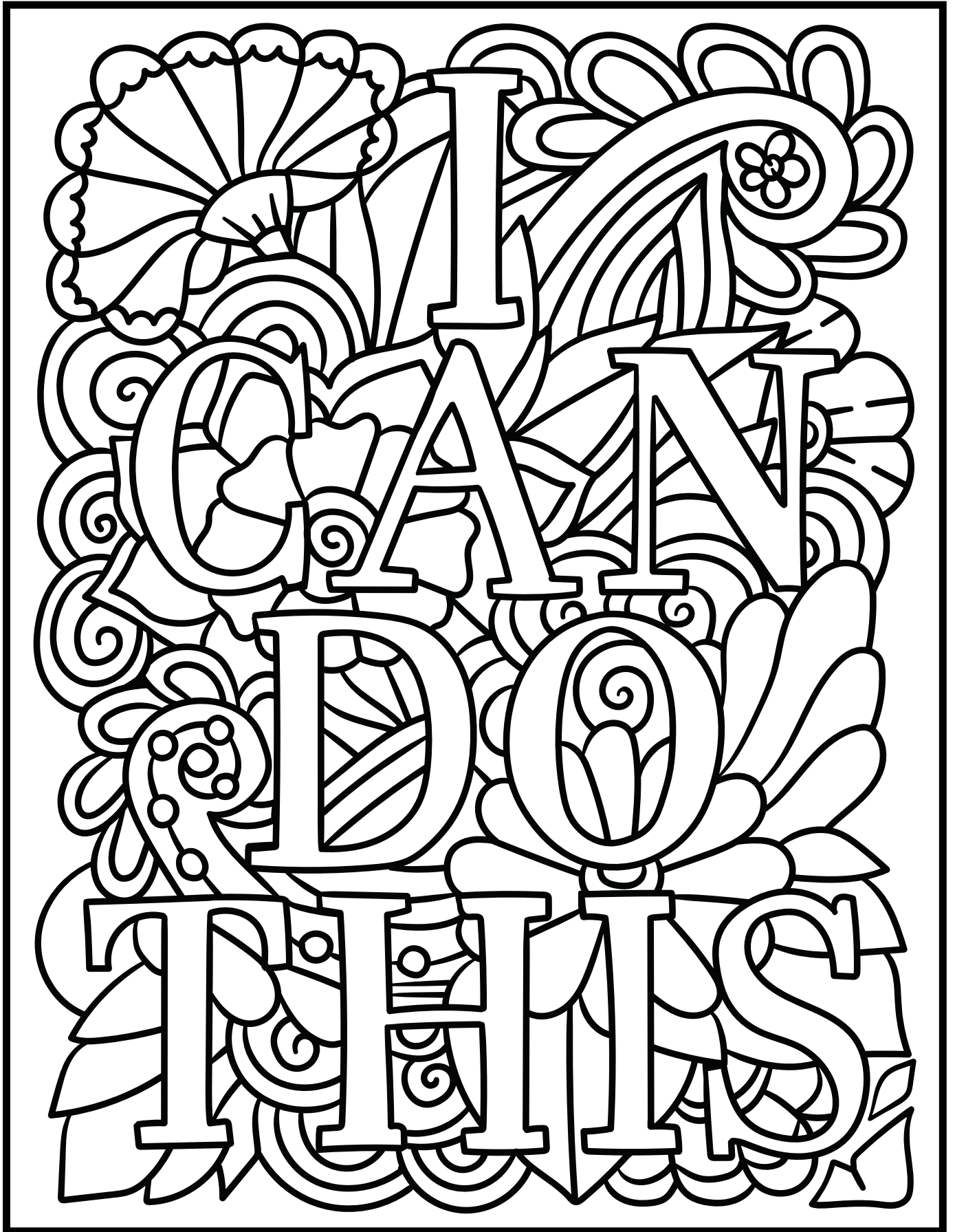
Mandala Colouring

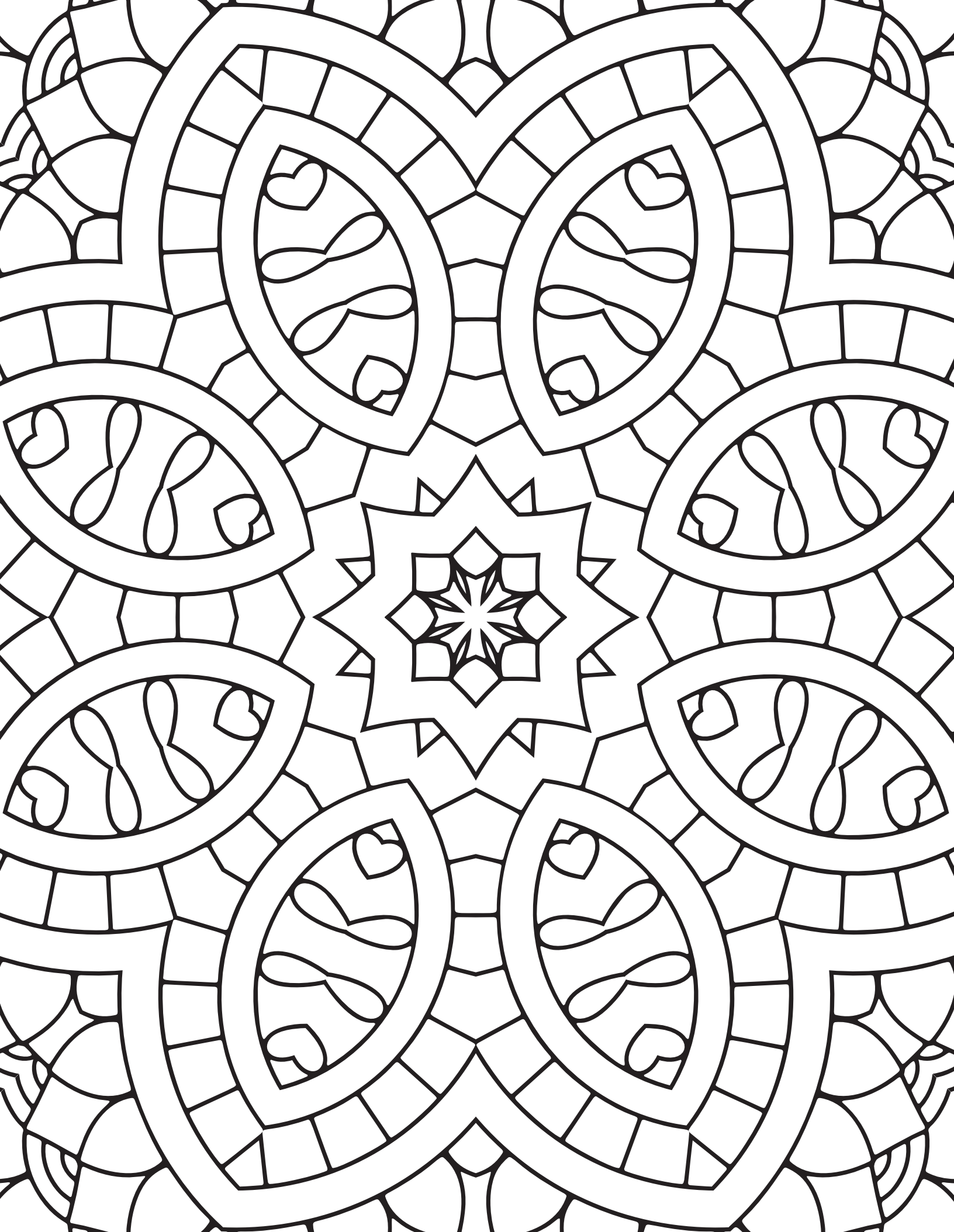
Coloring mandalas helps relieve stress, as doing so allows the brain to enter a peaceful state by focusing on filling in the geometrical shapes rather than focusing on worries.



Name _____

Mindful Colouring







GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Practice mindfulness and gratitude, and get your students comfortable with recognizing and discussing their emotions with various games and activities.

Collecting Bravery Quotes

Materials: Students should keep a pen and paper handy.

Instructions:

- Ask students to research famous quotes about worry and anxiety and report on their top 3 motivational quotes that they think will help them be brave.
- Or, have students ask their parents, guardians, or teachers: “What do you say to yourself when your worry tries to stop you from doing things?” and record responses they get.
- Next, they can share their quotes with the class. This exercise can help children learn about how others cope, and it can also help children with social anxiety face their fears and expose themselves to having more conversations.

Creating a Worry Monster

Materials: A shoe or tissue box, construction or tissue paper, googly eyes, glue or tape, and decorative arts and craft supplies (i.e., ribbons, pom-poms, pipe cleaners, sparkles/glitter).

Instructions:

- Students cut a square opening in the box for the mouth (shoe box) or clear out the opening of a tissue box, then cover box in tissue and/or construction paper.
- Use art supplies to turn box into a monster (think googly eyes, sharp teeth, etc.)!
- Write down worries on slips of paper and “feed” them to the ‘monsters.’
- Have students revisit their ‘worry monsters’ later. Instruct them to open the boxes up and reflect on their worries. They can ask themselves if those worries came true, or if they were simply the voice of the worry monster.

Music Show & Tell

Instructions:

- Ask the class to write down a song that makes them feel calm, peaceful, or happy on a slip of paper with a short description as to why. Collect responses.
- Choose a handful of students to “show” their music to the class each day.

Signing the Proclamation

Instructions: Print out the Action Anxiety Day proclamation and have your students sign and celebrate their progress as a class! See the [next page](#) to learn more.

Poetry and Art Contest!

Instructions: Have your students enter our contest! See [page 46](#) for details.



Congrats!

Congratulations! You have completed the toolkit. Thank you for spreading anxiety awareness and helping ensure your classroom is a safe space to discuss mental health.

We invite you and your students to **sign the Action Anxiety Day Proclamation**. By signing, you and your class celebrate anxiety education and express how much you care about mental health awareness in your community.

To participate:

- Get your class to read and sign our printable proclamation (see **next page**).
- Snap a photo of your signed proclamation and send it to **info@anxietycanada.com**! You will be entered to win a special prize for your classroom.





ACTION ANXIETY DAY PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Anxiety Canada created an annual anxiety awareness day because:

- Anxiety can keep us from feeling our best at home, school, sports, and when we're making friends
- Not talking about our anxiety or seeking help can keep us from living the life we want
- Sharing resources and our stories can make our community stronger and healthier
- Supporting others when they are feeling anxious or not themselves is the right thing to do

THUS, each June 10th, we make time to learn about anxiety on a day called:

"Action Anxiety Day"

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, I SUPPORT ACTION ANXIETY DAY.



SIGN HERE:





Drawing and Writing Contest for Action Anxiety Day

**Pick 1 Drawing or Writing Prompt.
Describe or illustrate the following:**

- How can you act on anxiety?
- Where do you feel most calm?
- How does worry feel for you?

**SHOW US YOUR CREATION
AND BE ENTERED TO WIN!**

Enter: Send us your writing or a photo of your artwork to info@anxietycanada.com.

Prize: 1 of 2 \$100 Gift Cards.

Due: June 11, 2024.

Questions? Email
info@anxietycanada.com



Thank you for bringing anxiety education to your classroom with our toolkit! We'd like to extend a **special thanks** to the following people for their contributions to the 2024 toolkit:

- Dr. Daniel Chorney of our Scientific Committee for his clinical insights and providing the Me vs. My Worry worksheet.
- Jenn Dextras Tyler for her guidance and curriculum expertise.
- Miss Keara Reade, School District 38, for her insights as a teacher.
- Catherine Lamarche from HappyStudent.ca for French Translation
- All the teachers who provided feedback after AAD 2023!

Special Thanks

Thank you to our incredible Mental Health Champions:
Beneva and Telus Health.



**Thank you for supporting
Action Anxiety Day!**

We'd love to hear from you!

Please contact us to provide feedback.

info@anxietycanada.com

604 620 0744



www.anxietycanada.com