

## SECTION 1

# INTRODUCTION

Chances are, if you are reading this book, you want a little help learning how to cope with big feelings. Maybe you get stressed out and don't know what to do. Or you get angry and have a hard time expressing it in a safe way. Or you get really anxious at school or home. Or perhaps you can relate to what these kids are experiencing:

**Aidan, a tired 7-year-old boy, just home from a busy day at school.**

He's a little sleepy and a little hungry. He asked to play with blocks when he got home and his mom helped him get them out. Suddenly, he growls "argh!!!!" and a block tower goes tumbling to the ground. "It's not working!!" he says with tears in his eyes and frustration in his voice. A block bangs off the wall, thrown by this frustrated little guy.

**Julia, an 8-year-old girl, is anxious about her science test.**

She thinks she's going to fail. She worries that her parents will be disappointed in her and she'll lose her privileges of playing with friends and screen time. She studies and studies, but as soon as the test is in front of her, her mind goes blank. Her palms sweat and her cheeks flush. "Why can't I remember?!" she thinks to herself.

**Paul, a 10-year-old boy, whose parents are getting a divorce.**

"Why did it have to change?" he wonders. "I hate changing houses. I always forget something!" He misses how it used to be. "What will happen to me?" His parents keep asking him to talk, but he doesn't want to.

**Isabelle, an 11-year-old girl, worried about her sick grandma.**

In the middle of her math class, her mind wanders to her grandma. She went to visit her this past weekend. She's concerned about her grandma's surgery. "I hope the surgery goes okay. I wonder when grandma will be home?"

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

This book is divided into four categories:

**Calming Coping Skills** - designed to help you relax.

**Distracting Coping Skills** - designed to distract you and keep your attention when you might otherwise be focused on a certain stressor.

**Physical Coping Skills** - designed to help you rebalance your energy, either to energize you or to help you manage your excess energy in your body.

**Processing Coping Skills** - designed to help you work through thoughts and feelings you have about challenging situations.

In each category, there are several skills to try. To get the most use out of this book, use the **Coping Skills Checklist** available later in the section as a way to keep track of what skills you already know work for you and which skills you want to try.

First, go through each section one at a time and:

- Check off the ones that work for you
- Cross off the ones that don't work for you
- Circle the ones you want to try

Only cross off those items that you have already tried and you **know** that you don't like. Don't automatically cross a coping skill off the list just because you *think* you won't like it. Instead, I challenge you to give it a try. And even if it doesn't work for you now, don't be afraid to go back to it later. What doesn't work at one time in your life may work at another point.

You'll notice, on the **Coping Skills Checklist**, there's room for you to add in your own. Think of this book as a starting point of creating a coping skills list. Figure out what works for you that is covered in this book, and then add in your own. The best place to start is by thinking about the hobbies and activities you enjoy right now and add those as ways to cope.

Here's something that people don't always think about when it comes to coping skills. Different types of coping skills will work at different times, in different places and for different stressors. When you're sad, you may want to lie down. And if you're at home, you can totally do that! But what if you're at school in the middle of social studies? I bet the teacher wouldn't like it if you just closed your book and put your head down on your desk.

Faced with stressful situations, these kids could use some coping skills! Everyone needs a good set of coping skills. But people don't always specifically focus on learning these skills. I'm here to let you know that **you can** and **you should**.

Everyone at one time or another experiences stress. Adults can get stressed about tons of stuff like work, money, family or the future. But did you know that kids can get stressed too? Kids can worry about schoolwork, family, friendships, the future, and sometimes kids worry about adult problems, like money.

Stress isn't always bad. A little stress can help you stay alert, focus or study better for tests, but too much stress is harmful regardless of age. When you are experiencing too much stress, it impacts you in three ways: your emotions, your thoughts, and your behaviors.

Too much stress has an impact on your **emotions**. You may feel sad, anxious, restless, angry or a mix of different emotions. Sometimes it's hard to identify what you are feeling, and sometimes it's hard to feel those feelings without getting overwhelmed or shutting down.

Too much stress can impact your **thoughts**. You can have a hard time looking for the positives or problem-solving when you are having a stressful time. It can be hard to focus your mind and pay attention in class to learn new things.

Too much stress can affect your **behavior**. If you are feeling angry, you may punch a wall, or worse yet, another person! You might not feel like eating, or you may have a hard time sleeping, or you might not want to leave your room and refuse to go to school.

I've seen the trouble people have when they don't have healthy coping skills, and the positive things that happen when they learn to replace their negative coping skills with more positive ones. Learning things now as a young person will help you as you get older and become an adult. If you are a kid who has good coping skills, you will likely grow into an adult with good coping skills. When you have good coping skills, you can:

- Pay attention in school and learn
- Get along better with others
- Manage your emotions in a safe and healthy way (something called self-regulation)
- Make connections with other people
- Start and maintain positive friendships



## SECTION 2

# CALMING COPING SKILLS

The techniques described in this section are meant to help you calm down and relax when faced with stressful or overwhelming situations.

The first part of this section focuses on breathing. I know, everyone always says, "take a deep breath," but there is a physical reason why deep breathing is so important.

To help understand why deep breathing and calming coping skills are so important, let's have a quick lesson on your Autonomic Nervous System. The Autonomic Nervous System controls the automatic systems in your body that you don't think about - things like breathing, digestion and heart rate.

## AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

### Flight, Fight or Freeze

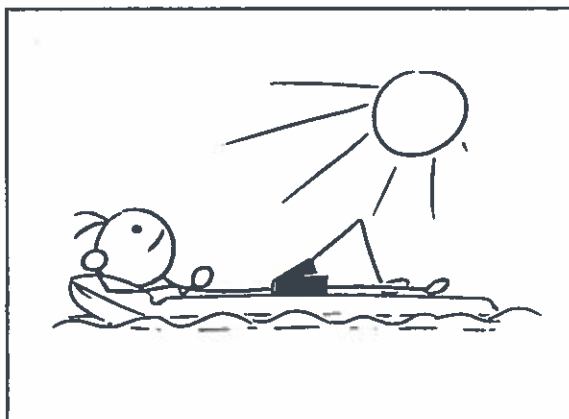
Sympathetic Nervous System



- Your heart rate increases
- Your pupils dilate
- Your muscles contract
- Your stomach stops many of the functions of digestion

### Rest and Digest

Parasympathetic Nervous System



- Your saliva is increased
- Your heart rate drops
- Your muscles relax
- The pupils in your eyes constrict

When you are calm, your body is in what is known as "rest and digest" mode. Your breathing is normal, your muscles are relaxed and your heart rate is normal. When you experience a stressful event your body automatically goes into what is known as "flight, fight or freeze" mode. Your heart rate increases, your stomach stops digestion and your breathing becomes more shallow.

The goal of calming exercises is to get yourself from "flight, fight or freeze" mode back to "rest and digest" mode. Deep breathing helps get more oxygen into your bloodstream, opening up your capillaries. It has a physical effect on your body to help you calm down and lower stress.

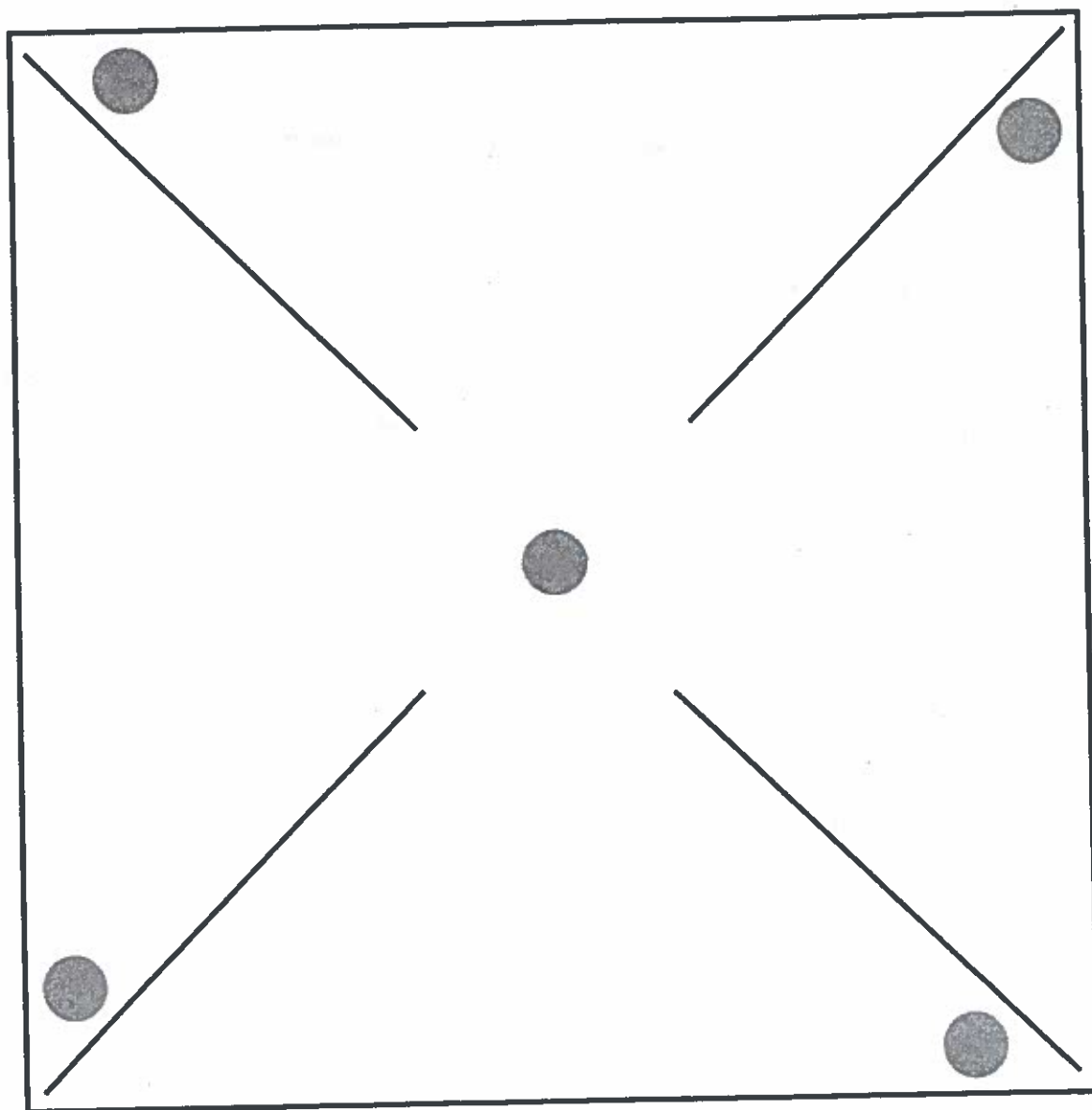
In the first section, there are fun playful ways to work on deep breathing.

The next section focuses on your mind; in particular, mindfulness meditation and yoga. Your mind is a powerful tool you can use to help calm yourself down. You do have control over your thoughts and the more you practice, the better you'll get at it.

The third section has grounding techniques. These are great to use if you are feeling overwhelmed.

The last section has some other ideas for activities you can do, or items you can make or use, to help yourself calm down. Try some today and see how they work for you.

# MAKE YOUR OWN PINWHEEL



## Deep Breathing with Bubbles

Blowing bubbles is a great way to slow down and breathe. Breathe in through your nose and expand your belly, then breathe out. You have to control your breath to make the bubbles without popping them.

## Deep Breathing with Prompts

For some people, just saying take a deep breath is not enough. Having a prompt is a helpful way to learn to breathe in and out. Once you know the prompts, you can say them to yourself to help you. Here are a few of my favorites:

- Breathe in like you're smelling a flower; breathe out like you're blowing out birthday candles.
- Breathe in blue sky, breathe out gray skies.
- Arms up and breathe in, arms down and breathe out.
- Breathe in and out like Darth Vader.
- Pretend your belly is like a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.

## Deep Breathing with Shapes

Sometimes you need a little more structure and playfulness around how to actually teach yourself how to take a deep breath. Using shapes is an easy way to keep track of breaths in and out. You can use your finger to trace the shape so you know where you are in your breathing. Try each and see how they work for you!

*Visit [copingkids.com/videos](http://copingkids.com/videos) to see these in action.*



# MINDFULNESS MEDITATION & YOGA

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Mindfulness is being aware of what's happening in the present moment. It's actually a type of meditation and closely related to yoga. Mindfulness can be a helpful tool if you have a hard time managing your thoughts and emotions or if you want to improve your concentration.

Mindfulness is not about trying to clear your mind, but allowing thoughts and emotions to come and go without judgment and familiarizing yourself with the present moment. It takes practice to be able to do this. When you are aware of the present, you will be more able to see what's happening around you and settle yourself, and your mind, more easily.

These coping skills are designed to help you focus on the present moment and have been found to reduce stress.

## Focus on Sounds

Start by getting in a comfortable position and taking a few deep breaths. After a few minutes, stretch your hearing outside where you are right now. What do you hear?

TRAFFIC FROM THE STREET?



BIRDS CHIRPING?

A GARBAGE TRUCK BACKING UP?

Next, turn your attention to what's happening in the room where you are. Do you hear a sound machine? The lights buzzing? The clock ticking?

Finally, pay attention and listen to what's going on in your body. Can you hear your stomach rumbling? Do you have a headache?



## Take a Mindful Walk

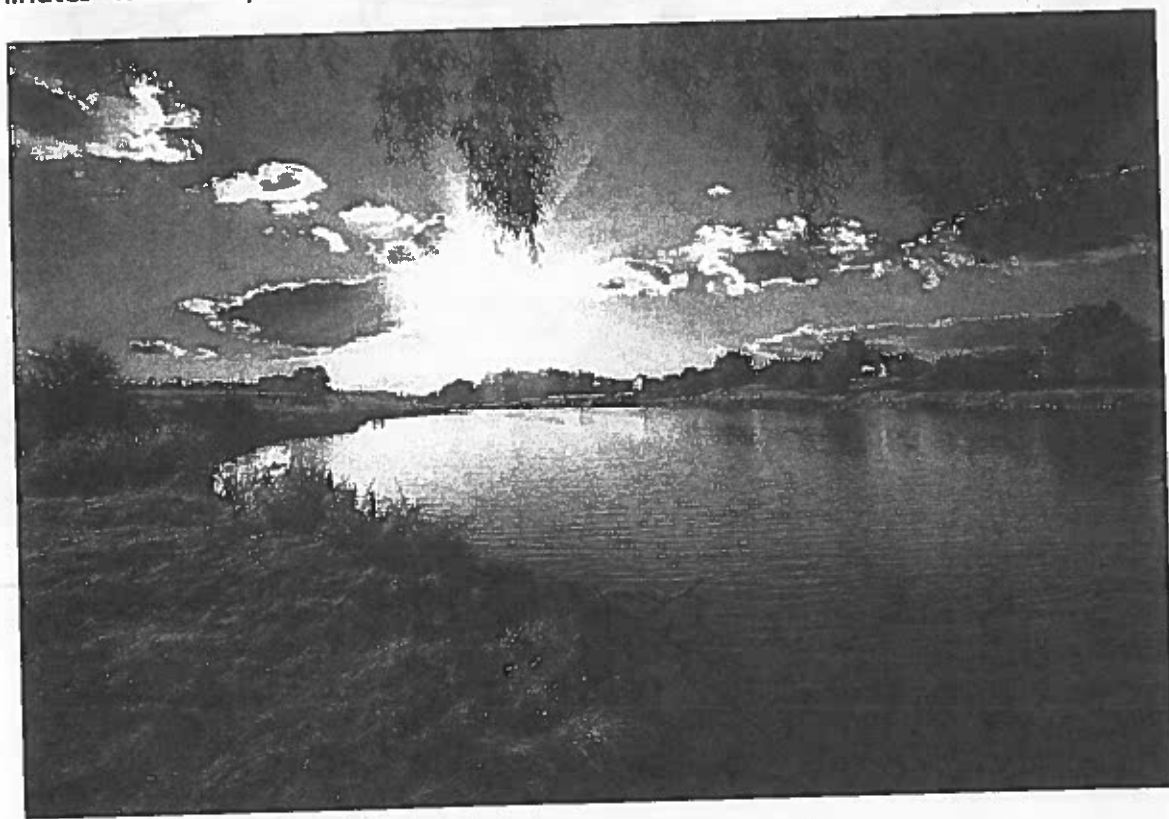
Any time you take a walk, either at home or at school, you can choose to make it a mindful walk. Before you begin, focus your mind to pay attention to your senses. When you are walking, you are going to be paying attention to what you hear, what you see, what you feel, and what you smell.

So, for instance, if you are walking in the woods by a bubbling brook and leaves are on the trail, you may hear crunching leaves and water moving in the stream.

You may see trees and leaves falling from the trees when the wind blows. You may feel a breeze on your skin.

You may smell earth, grass and scents from flowering plants.

Pay attention to what's happening with your senses. If other thoughts come into your mind, that's OK. Go back to the present and re-focus on your senses again. See if you can do this for 5 minutes - it can be quite a challenge.



*There are also several places available online that have audio clips of mindfulness exercises, and they're great to use and practice. See the resources section for those links and other resources on mindfulness you and your family can use together.*

## Yoga

Yoga is related to mindfulness meditation. The goal of yoga and mindfulness meditation is to reduce stress and become more aware of what's going on around you in the present. Try to do a few simple yoga moves. Here are a few that are easy to do.



**Warrior Pose**



**Cobra Pose**



**Easy Pose**



**Seal Pose**



**Downward Dog**



**Camel Pose**

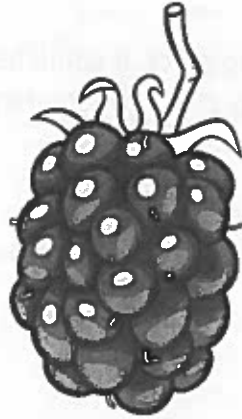
## Have a Mindful Snack

Any time you have a snack, you can eat it in a mindful way.

Let's use a blackberry as an example. Before you do anything, take a moment to look at the blackberry. Notice all the details about your blackberry.

HOW BIG IS IT?

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WHAT COLOR IS IT?

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IS IT SOFTER OR A LITTLE BIT FIRMER?

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Think of what the blackberry may have looked like growing on the vine on the farm in the sun.

Take a moment and sniff it – does it have a strong scent or a faint scent?

Next, place it in your mouth, but don't chew and swallow it quickly. Notice how the berry feels in your mouth. Chew it several times, paying attention to the sensations and the tastes. What changes as you chew? Once you have chewed it thoroughly and you are ready, swallow the blackberry.

You can do this with any snack or sweet treat. Try it with a piece of chocolate or a potato chip. See what you notice about these foods that you didn't notice before.

## Imagine your Favorite Place

Sometimes all you want to do is run away when you're faced with a tough or stressful situation. However, you can't always run away and escape. What you can do is *pretend*. Your imagination is a powerful tool you can use anywhere to help you calm down and relax. The beauty of this coping skill is that you can use it anywhere and people have *no idea* that you are doing it.

Imagine your most favorite, calming place. It could be a beach, a garden, or in nature, even on stage. Take a few minutes and really think about what it would be like to be there.

- What is around you?
- What's under your feet?
- What do you smell?
- What do you hear?
- How warm or cool is it?

Think deeply about all of those senses and imagine you are there for a few minutes.



# BIG PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

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## Go for a Walk

Walking is a natural part of our lives. Have you ever noticed that, after you go for a walk, your mind is clearer? Simply by taking a walk you can give yourself a break and be more alert and prepared to learn.

You can take a walk indoors at school. Go to the bathroom or to the water fountain and give yourself a break. When you're at home, take a walk around your home or you can go outside and get some fresh air. Going out into nature is a simple way to give yourself a break. Even if you live somewhere cold, you can go out for a few minutes.

## Exercise

Need to get out some excess energy quickly? Try doing simple exercises at home. You can

- do jumping jacks
- walk or run in place
- do push ups
- do sit ups
- run laps, etc.

Set a time limit for yourself - for example, I'll do these three exercises for 30 seconds each. Or set a number you'd like to reach - I'm going to do 20 jumping jacks.



## **Move Different Parts of your Body**

Stretching, moving or massaging different parts of your body can help you re-focus or relax. Try some of these:

- Wiggle your fingers or your toes
- Massage the tips of your fingers on one hand with your thumb and index finger of the other hand
- Line up the fingertips on both hands (thumb to thumb, index finger to index finger, etc.) and press your fingertips together
- Place your hands together and push
- Tug on your earlobes
- Shrug your shoulders up and down
- Put your feet on the ground, and push your feet down using your legs
- Massage your temples (the sides of your forehead near your hairline)
- Roll different parts of your body – wrists, neck, shoulders, ankles
- Flex and point your feet

## Shred Paper

Take a pile of papers that you and your family don't mind being ripped up. Tear the papers into little pieces. Try different types of paper to see which one is most satisfying to you. If you wanted to, you could even write down on a paper the things that are making you mad, sad, etc., and then rip it up and throw it out. It can be so cathartic to do that!

Some suggestions of paper to rip:

- Computer paper
- Old worksheets from school you don't need any more
- Newspaper
- Phone books
- Old notebooks

## Bubble Wrap

There is something super satisfying about popping the bubbles in bubble wrap. Experiment with different sized bubbles to see which ones work better for you. Maybe the small ones are more enjoyable for you. Or maybe you like the big ones. There are so many types. Ask your family to set aside any bubble wrap that they find from packaging, so you can try it.

## Keep your Hands Busy

Find an item that you enjoy holding or playing with or an activity you like to do and keep it nearby. When you want to fidget with something, use it. Here are some ideas:

- Jacob's ladder
- Hold a small stone
- Shuffle cards
- Make something - knit, quilt, crochet or sew
- Fidget toys



## **Dance**

You don't have to be a professional dancer or be in a dance class to enjoy dance and use it as a coping skill. Simply turn on your favorite song or playlist and let your body move. It might be fun to do this with other people, like your family or a friend. If you don't feel comfortable dancing in front of anyone, find a private spot in your home where you can let go.

## **Punch a Safe Surface**

Say you get really angry with someone, but you remember the rules about not hurting others and you know that you shouldn't punch them. Find a safe object to use instead. It could be a pillow, your bed, a couch in your house or a punching bag. Make sure other people aren't close by because you don't want to accidentally hurt them. Punch for 30-60 seconds and see how you feel. Do you need to keep going? Try it for a little longer and see how you feel after that.

## **Play at the Park**

You can get out so much energy climbing on the structures, running around, or climbing trees. It's also a great place to meet up with new kids, or visit with others you haven't seen in some time. Play tag, hide and seek, pretend to be on a pirate ship or run a lemonade stand. Moving can help you get out your energy - it can also be a great distraction from stress, too.

## **Balance on a BOSU®**

Have you ever seen a BOSU® ball? It looks like a ball cut in half with a base on it. Balancing on it can be tricky and takes some focus and time to learn. You can start by balancing on the ball part with the base on the floor. If you're feeling daring, then you can turn the ball over and balance on the base with the ball on the bottom. Be careful!

## Obstacle Course

Use your imagination and create your own obstacle course. Once you set it up, time yourself to see how fast you can get through it. Then try a different set up and see how well you get through that one. Below are some ideas for items you can use to set up an obstacle course.

INDOOR OBSTACLE COURSE IDEAS	OUTDOOR OBSTACLE COURSE IDEAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chairs</li><li>• Stepstools</li><li>• Shoes</li><li>• Pillows</li><li>• Jump Rope</li><li>• Cups</li><li>• Blocks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Balance beam</li><li>• Jump rope</li><li>• Plastic cones</li><li>• Sticks</li><li>• Stones</li></ul>

## Swing

Using a swing can be relaxing or exhilarating. It all depends on how high and intensely you choose to swing. First you should figure out how to swing your legs to start yourself so you don't have to rely on anyone pushing you.

As you move forward, stick your legs out and lean back.

As you move backward, move your feet back and lean forward.

As you continue this motion, you'll start to swing higher and higher. When you're comfortable, stop pumping your legs and let yourself enjoy it. If you start to slow down, start pumping your legs again to speed up.

## **Rhythm & Music**

When you listen to some music, sometimes you just have to move. Go ahead and let that happen. Move in whatever way works for you. You could march, clap, count to the beat, move your arms or your feet, shake your body, etc. Have fun and see where the music leads you!

## **Take a Class/Join a Team**

There are lots of different classes and team sports out there to help you get moving. It's a great way to get your energy out, plus you can meet new people and have a shared experience together. Some ideas include:

- Karate/martial arts
- Gymnastics
- Dance
- Swim team/swimming classes
- Ninja warrior classes
- Rock climbing
- Classes at facilities like [mygym.com](http://mygym.com) or [thelittlegym.com](http://thelittlegym.com)
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Baseball

## **Other Physical Ways to Move & Get Energy Out**

- Jump rope
- Use a trampoline
- Scooter
- Go swimming
- Stretches
- Tumbling/gymnastics
- Yoga (for a few simple yoga moves, see coping skill #14 in the Calming Coping Skills section)
- Skip
- Tug of war

## SIMPLE EXERCISES

**Jumping  
Jacks**

**Run  
in Place**

**Sit Ups**

**Walk  
in Place**

**Twist and  
Touch  
Your Toes**

**Push Ups**

**Stretches**

**Yoga  
Poses**

**Jump  
Rope**

# SMALL PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

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## Squeeze Something

Tensing and relaxing your muscles by squeezing something is very similar to a progressive muscle relaxation exercise, but in this case, you are just focused on your arms and hands. Here are a few items you could use:

- Stress ball
- Putty
- Clay
- Play dough
- Sand

Take your squeezable item in your hand and squeeze it for a few seconds. Then let it go. Repeat a few times. Do you feel a difference in your stress level? Switch hands. See how that feels. There are a variety of items you can buy to squeeze that are available online and in stores.

You could also make your own. Here's a simple no cook recipe for play dough:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 tbsp. oil
- 1 cup cold water
- 2 drops liquid food coloring

### Directions:

1. Mix together flour and salt.
2. Add water, food coloring and oil. Mix until ingredients are combined.
3. Knead well. If consistency is too wet, add a little more flour.

# HOW TO MAKE A HOMEMADE STRESS BALL

## What You Need:

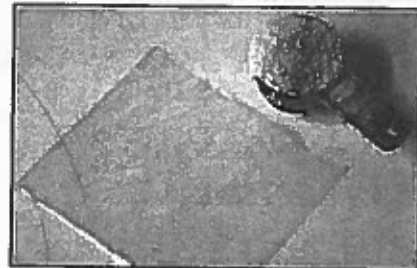
- Two balloons
- Fill Materials: Playdough, flour uncooked rice or uncooked lentils
- Plastic sandwich baggie



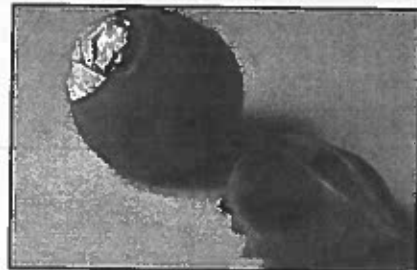
1. Cut the tips off of the two balloons



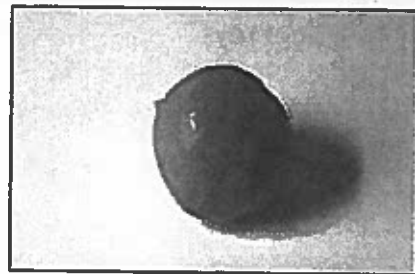
2. Place filler in the plastic sandwich baggie



3. Twist sandwich baggie and put filled bag inside one balloon



4. Take the second balloon, and put it over the first, taking care to cover the hole on the first balloon



## Homemade Stress Balls

Squeezing something is a great way to help you reduce stress. There are many different types of stress balls of the market. But did you know that you can also make your own? You can choose which material to use – whether it's lentils, play dough, flour or rice.

Each of them feels different. Try them all to see which one you like the most.

### What You Need:

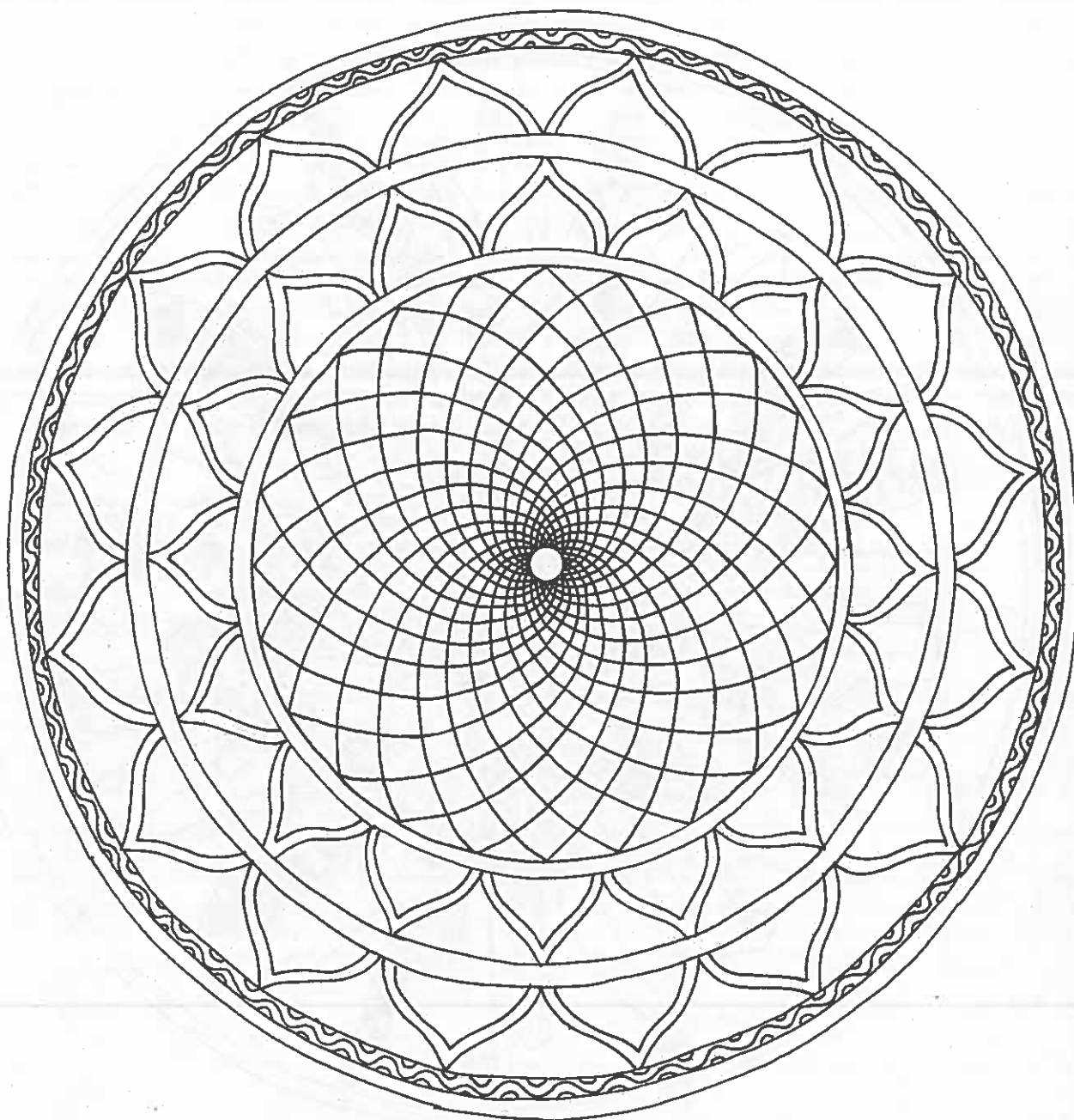
- Two balloons
- Small Plastic Baggie (sandwich bag)
- Fill Material - Play dough, flour, uncooked lentils, uncooked rice

### To Make a Stress Ball:

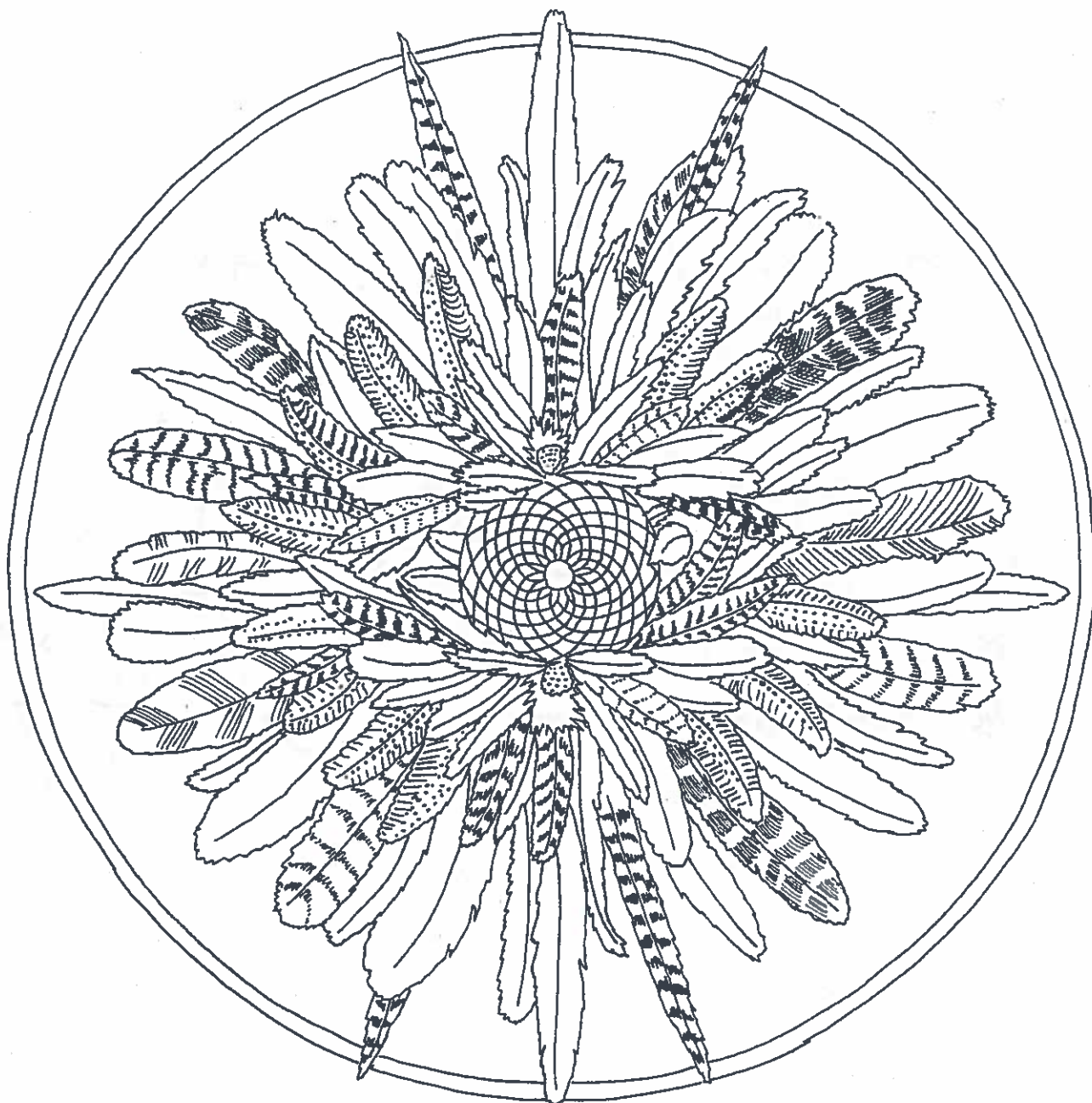
1. Cut the tips off the balloons.
2. Put your materials in the sandwich bag and twist the top.
3. Put the sandwich bag of material into one balloon.
4. Then place a second balloon around the first one.

Your stress ball is ready to use!



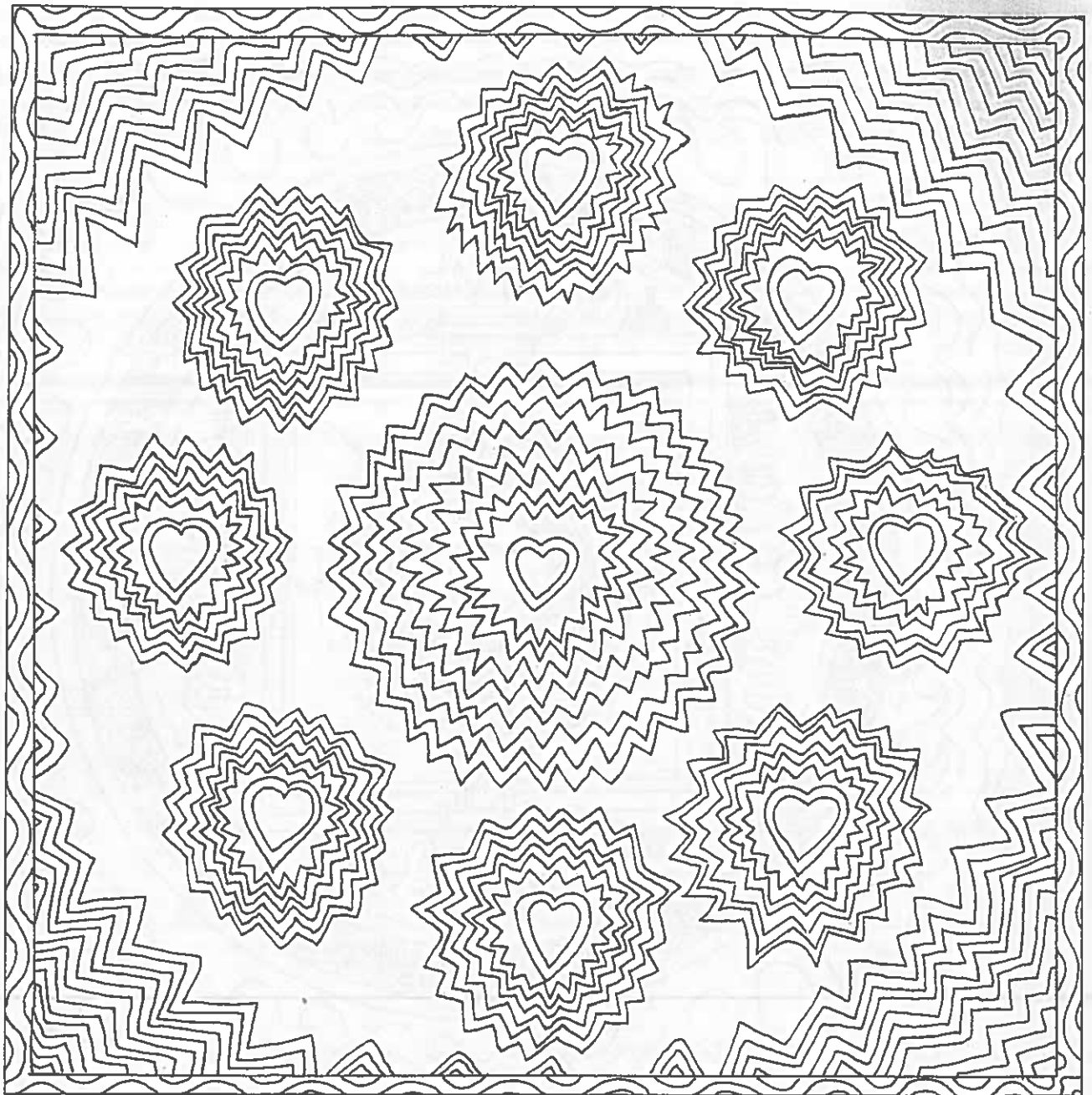


**By concentrating on coloring in, worries of  
the past and anxieties about the future dissipate.**



*"Let your life lightly dance on the edges of time like dew on the tip of a leaf."*

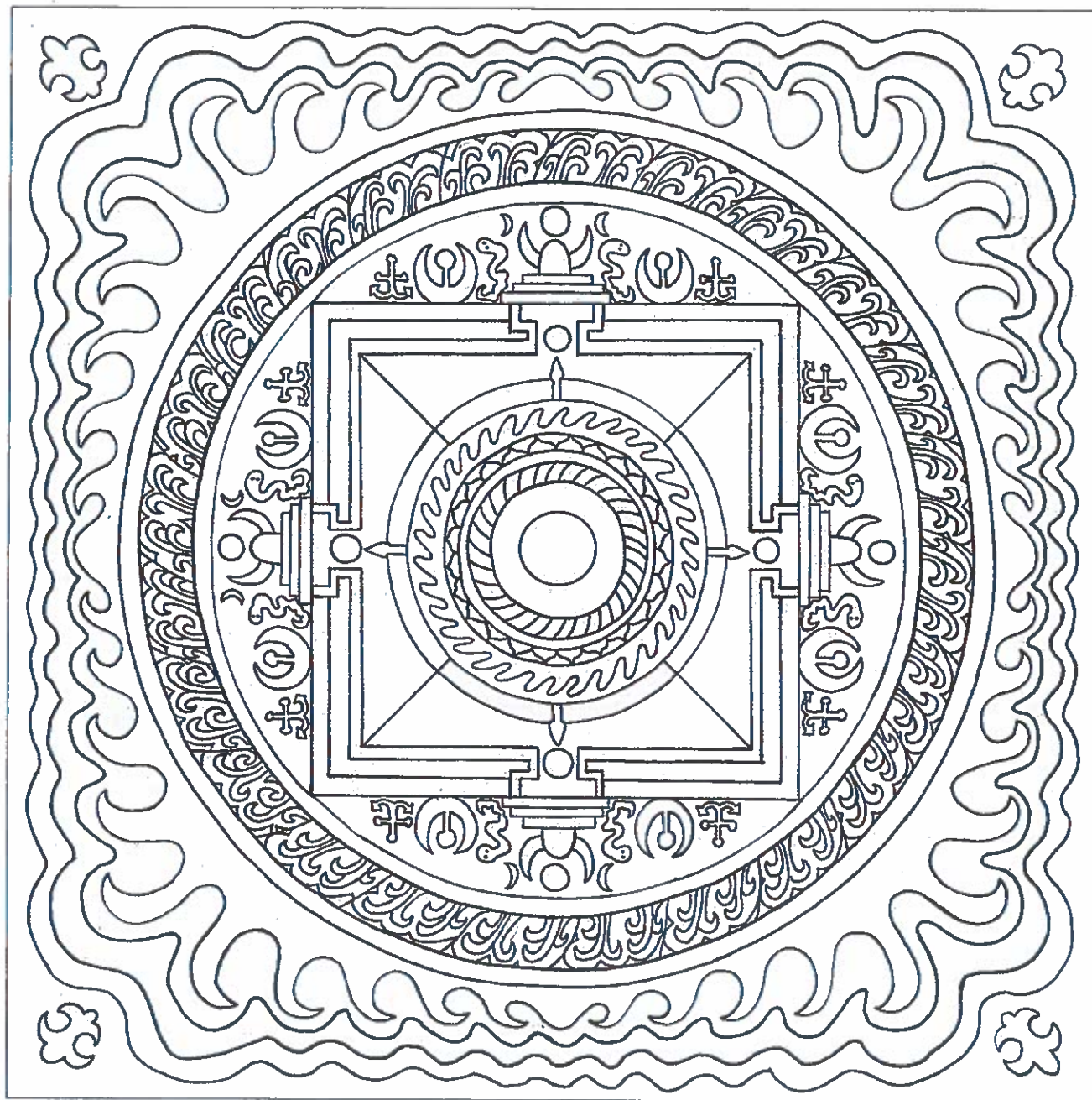
RABINDRANATH TAGORE



*"Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment.  
It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation."*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE





*"The secret of health for both mind and body is...  
to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly."*

BUDDHA

**4-8C**

## **Handling Anger: Discussion Questions**

In your small group, answer the following questions about the role-play situations you observed. Choose one person in your group to record your group's answers.

1. What kinds of behaviors did you see and hear?

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2. How do you think the "victim" in each of these situations felt?

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3. How did you feel as an observer of the behavior? Why?

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4. Did the behavior of the people in the role-play situations help solve the issues? Why or why not?

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5. How does handling anger tie to the 3 R's of First Class (RESPECT for self and others, RESPECT for how we communicate, RESPECT for our surroundings)?

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4-8C (continued)

6. Come up with a list of six good things you can do when you are feeling angry.

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## Activity 4-8: Handling Anger

**PURPOSE:** To help students learn about dealing with anger. Students who learn to deal with their own anger and the anger of others gain strength of character and become more successful both in and out of school. Handling anger is an important step toward *living* the 3R's of First Class: RESPECT for self and others, RESPECT for how we communicate, RESPECT for our surroundings.

**MATERIALS:** Worksheets 4-8A, 4-8B, 4-8C, and 4-8D; pencils

### PROCEDURE:

- Have each student fill out Worksheet 4-8A.
- Ask for volunteers from the class to role-play as many of the role-play situations on Worksheet 4-8B as possible in the time allotted.
- Divide the class into small groups of three to four students.
- Give each group one copy of the discussion questions on Worksheet 4-8C. Ask each group to select a recorder from the group to write down the answers to the discussion questions.
- Allow the groups enough time to complete the discussion questions.
- Reconvene as a large group. Ask the spokesperson from each small group to share the group's responses to questions 1-5 of the discussion questions.
- As a whole group, come up with a class-generated list of six good things we can do when we feel angry (question 6 of the discussion questions). Write the list on the board or butcher paper.
- Ask the students to copy the list onto their copy of Worksheet 4-8A, and keep it where they can refer to it regularly.
- Finish by having the students move into their small groups again.
- Give each group a copy of Worksheet 4-8D.
- Allow the groups enough time to come to a consensus on the best solutions to the role-play situations.
- Have each group share its best solutions with the entire class.



4-8A

## Handling Anger

Answer the following questions about yourself.

1. How do you know when you're angry?

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2. What kinds of words or actions trigger your anger?

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3. Do you think it takes a lot to make you angry or do you get angry quickly?

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4. What do you do when you're angry?

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5. Does what you do when you get angry help solve the problem? Why or why not?

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(If you need more room to write, use the back of this worksheet.)

## When I Feel Angry – 1

### Teacher's Notes

#### Indicators

- Identifies situations that make them angry.
- Identifies how being angry makes them feel.

#### Teacher Information

Showing anger does not necessarily mean someone is displaying bullying behavior. It can become this if behavior is repeated and is physical or verbal to the extreme. Students who bully, however, will more readily adopt aggressive solutions to resolve conflict. They use being angry as an excuse for bullying.

#### Discussion Points

- Brainstorm situations where students feel anger and list them on the board.
- How does being angry make you feel? What do you look like? What do you do? (Discuss body language.)
- Brainstorm verbs and adjectives to describe anger to assist in Question 2.

#### Did You Know?

In elementary schools, the students who bully are often in the same grade as the victim. The victim is usually younger, if there is an age difference.

## When I Feel Angry – 2

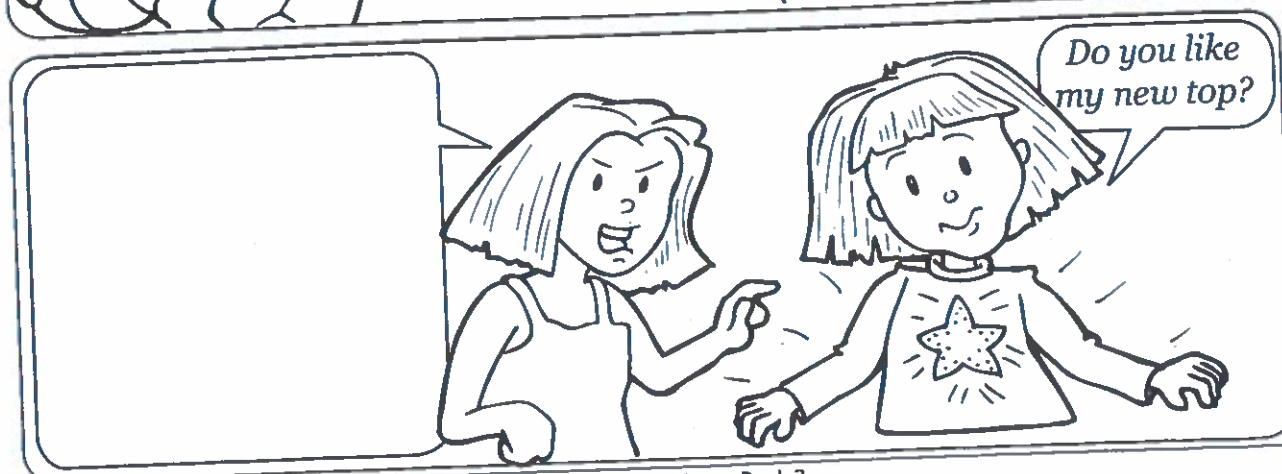
It is okay to feel angry—everyone does sometimes. It's what you do when you feel angry that can be a problem. If you can control what happens when you feel angry, you can avoid doing or saying something that hurts other people.

Here are some things you could practice doing when you feel angry.

- think before you speak
- take deep breaths
- walk away
- say to yourself "I am going to stay calm"
- talk to a friend
- count to 10

- 1 Suggest some other things you could do when you feel angry.

- 2 One of the characters in each picture below has started to feel angry with the other character. Write in the speech balloon what you think he/she would be thinking or saying if he/she was trying to control his/her anger.



## I Statements

When you're in the middle of an argument or trying to explain your thoughts and feelings to someone else, it's quite easy to focus on what the other person did. "You did this to me, you are mean, you made me sad". But that's not the best approach when you're trying to have a productive conversation to figure out what to do next. It puts the other person on the defensive when you start with "you".

The best thing you can do in those conversations is focus on yourself. Start with your own thoughts and feelings by using an "I statement." For example, "I felt sad when you lied to me." or "I felt hurt when you didn't want to play with me."

## What I Can Control vs. What I Can't Control

In life, there are things you can control and things you can't control. You can control yourself, your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions. But there are other things you can't control.

For example, you can't control that you have a social studies test tomorrow. You can control how much you study, how much rest you get, what you eat for breakfast, and how you prepare for the exam.

The same goes for really big situations, too. You can't control if your parents get divorced, but you have control over your words and your actions. You can express your feelings to your parents. You can tell them what you don't like and how it makes you feel.

When you're faced with a stressful situation, take a minute and use the **What I Can Control vs. What I Can't Control** worksheet. On the left, list things that you can control. On the right, list the things that you can't control.

## WHAT I CAN CONTROL VS. WHAT I CAN'T CONTROL

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## Worry Box

Using a worry box is a good way to help manage stressful feelings. Sometimes, to really help deal with stress, you need to take some focused time to think and talk about your worries. However, it's helpful to limit the amount of time that you spend on these thoughts. You don't want to be thinking about it constantly.

By using a worry box, you can focus and think about the things that are making you worry, and then contain your worries in the box for someone else to hold on to for safekeeping. Later, you can come back and talk about your worries again at another specified time. This helps you address your worries and create a physical holding spot for the worries, so you have some relief from feeling like you always need to be thinking about them. You can also have fun decorating your worry box any way you'd like.

### You will need:

- Paper/Sticky Notes
- Pencil
- Small box
- Scale 1 - 10
- Set aside a short amount of time, maybe 15-30 minutes.
- Take pieces of paper or sticky notes and write your worries on the notes.
- Using a scale of 1 (least worried) to 10 (most worried), place your worries along a scale. This will help you get a better idea about what is bothering you. To make your own scale, use the worksheet with the numbers 1 to 10 on the next page. Cut down the middle and tape five and six together to create a scale.
- Take time to talk about each worry, and as you talk about it, put it in your worry box.
- Once all your worries are in the box, give it to your trusted adult to hold on to.
- Set up the next time you will come and discuss your worries. It may be tomorrow or it may be a week from now, but make sure you set up a time to talk with them.
- The next time, start with the worries in the box, and place them on the scale again. Have any of them moved? Do you have any other worries you need to add in?

