

# Regulation and Mindfulness Activity Cards

## A note for caregivers

This collection of ideas and activities are designed to help promote regulation and mindfulness skills for kids and youth.

These activities can help kids to feel more calm and settled by learning to connect with their senses, get their brain and body working together, understand their emotions, and express themselves. Kids can use these activities anytime - when they want to calm themselves, when they feel stressed or overwhelmed, or when they just need a little break.

This package includes printable cards, colouring pages, and Do-It-Yourself instructions to make items and activities using common everyday items. Some instructions for making items may require adult help or supervision. Note that some items use small parts and may not be suitable for children under 3 years.

While we hope these activities are helpful for your child/youth, they are not intended to be a replacement for other mental health treatment and services. If you feel that your child/youth may benefit from therapy or other mental health supports, we can help you find additional options.



SeaStar Child and Youth Advocacy Centre  
(902) 470-8079  
[www.SeaStarCYAC.ca/services/mental-health](http://www.SeaStarCYAC.ca/services/mental-health)

IWK Mental Health and Addictions  
1 (855) 635-4110

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# BREATHE

The way we breathe changes depending on what we're doing and how we're feeling. When we're happy and relaxed, our breathing is slow, gentle, and deep. When we get scared, mad, or worried, our breathing changes and gets shorter and faster.

Taking slow, deep breaths sends a signal to your brain and body to calm down and relax.

Taking a moment to notice and focus on your breathing is something you can do anytime, anywhere, to help yourself feel more calm and settled.

# Pinwheel

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Take a deep breath and  
blow on the pinwheel.  
Notice how you can make  
the pinwheel turn fast or  
slow, depending on how hard  
you breathe out.

Notice how long you can  
keep the pinwheel turning  
using one long, slow,  
gentle breath.

Make it!

## Pinwheel



You'll need:

- Stick (like a pencil, straw, dowel, or chopstick)
- Pin (like a sewing pin or pushpin)
- Printed pinwheel template

To make your pinwheel:

1. Cut out the pinwheel template. You can colour one or both sides if you want to.
2. Cut along the dotted lines.
3. Fold the dot on each tip to the centre and push a pin through the dots.
4. Push the pointy end of the pin into the top of your stick.
5. Blow on your pinwheel and watch it spin!

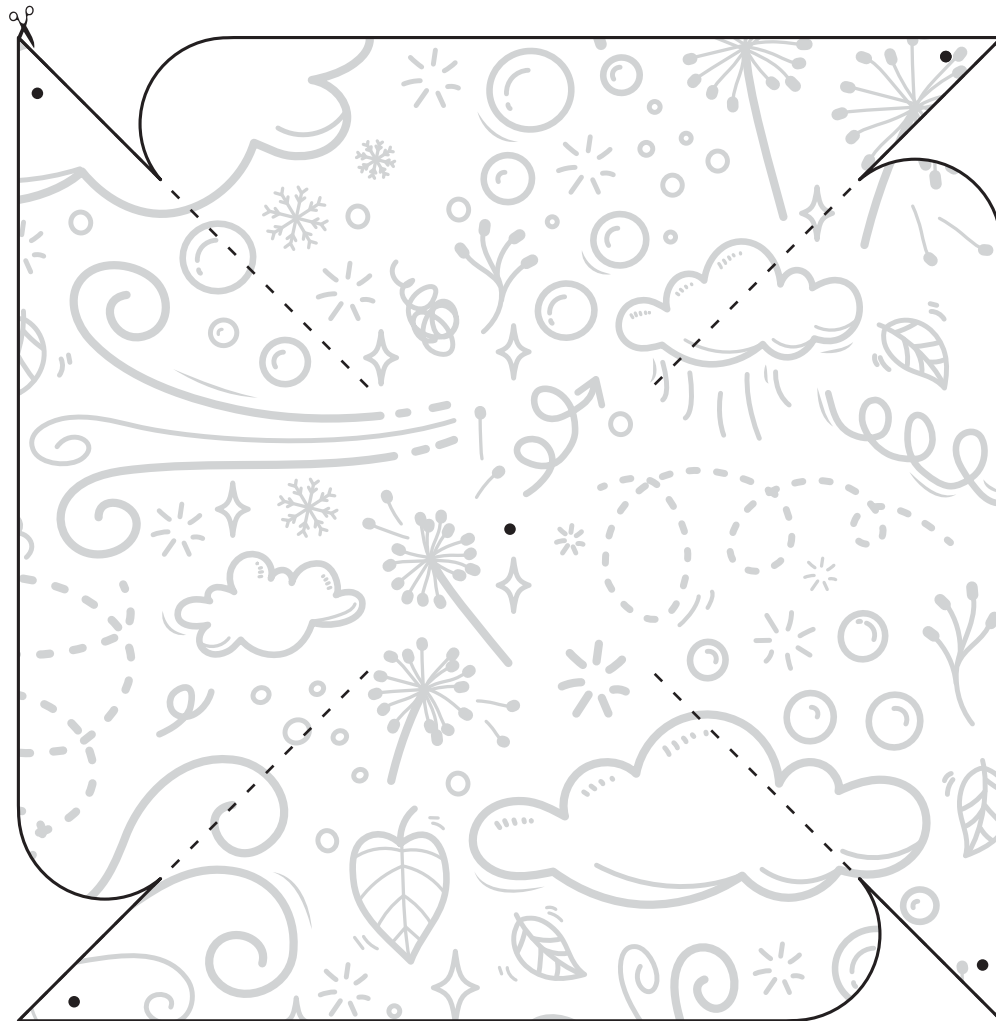
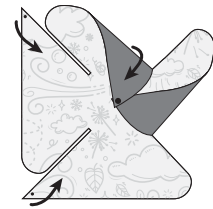
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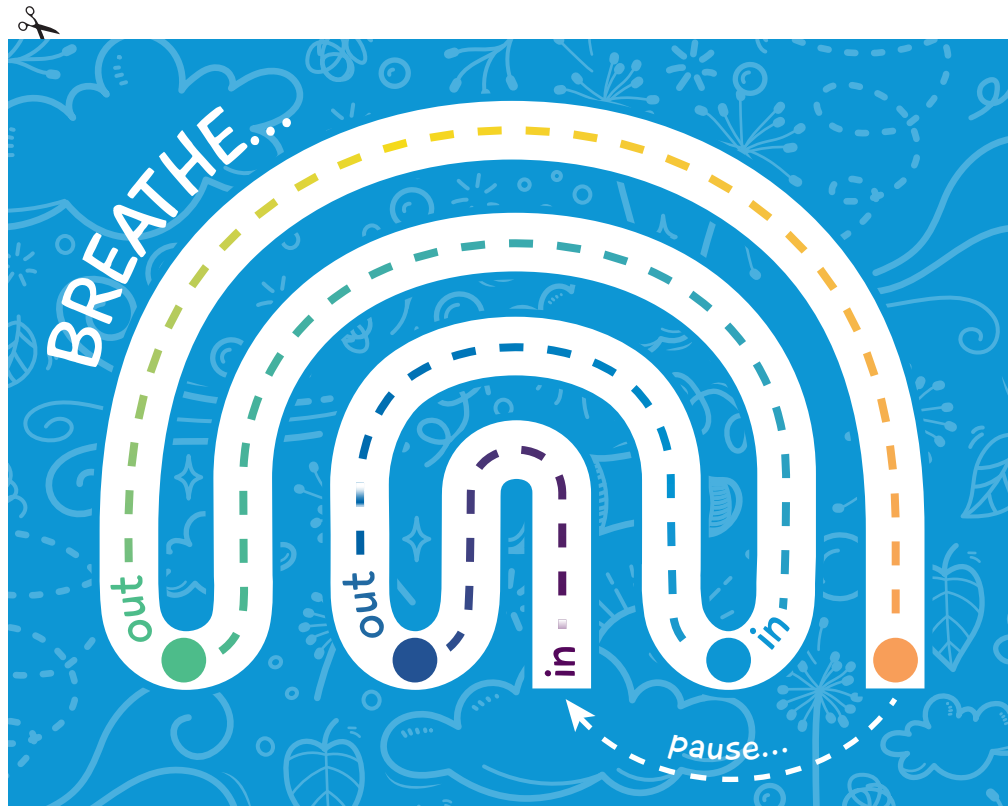
# Maze Cards

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Breathe in as you trace your finger along the path of the maze card. Pause when you get to a dot.

Breathe out as you keep tracing. Repeat as you trace your finger along the whole maze.

# Maze Cards



# FEEL

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What we feel gives us information about what's happening around us. We can feel things through our **emotions** and also through our **senses**.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by big thoughts, worries, emotions, or memories, noticing what you can feel through your senses can help bring your attention back to the present moment to notice that right now you are safe and ok.

You can do this anytime, anywhere.

Try taking a moment to notice...

*5 things you can **see***

*4 things you can **touch***

*3 things you can **hear***

*2 things you can **smell***

*1 thing you can **taste***





# Playdough

Squish and roll the playdough in your hands as you notice how it feels. You can roll and sculpt it into shapes or squeeze it in your fist.

Think about what words you would use to describe how the playdough feels... smooth or rough... warm or cool... squishy or stretchy.

Make it!

## Playdough

You'll need:

- 1 cup Water
- 1 cup Flour
- 1/4 cup Salt
- 1 tablespoon Vegetable Oil
- 2 teaspoon Cream of Tarter
- Food colouring



To make your playdough:

1. Stir all ingredients together in a sauce pan.
2. Turn on medium heat. Keep stirring until dough forms into a big clump.
3. Remove from heat. When dough is cool enough to handle, kneed with your hands until smooth.
4. Store in an air-tight container or Ziplock bag.

# Stress Ball

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Squeeze the stress ball tightly then release your grip, letting the muscles in your hand completely relax. Squeeze and release again, letting your muscles relax even more deeply this time.

Keep squeezing and releasing, each time letting the relaxation extend further... to the muscles in your arms, your shoulders, across your back, and finally to your whole body.

Make it!

## Stress Ball

You'll need:

- 2 balloons
- Empty water bottle
- Filling: Cornstarch, flour, or uncooked rice



To make your stress ball:

1. Put your filling into the empty water bottle.
2. Stretch the opening of the first balloon over the mouth of the water bottle.
3. Turn the bottle upside down and gently squeeze the bottle to fill the balloon with your filling.
4. Remove the balloon and gently squeeze out any extra air. Tie the balloon off tightly with a knot.
5. Cut the mouth off of the second balloon. Stretch the second empty balloon over the full balloon so that the knot is covered.



# Sensory Strip

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Run your finger back and forth over this textured strip to focus your attention on what your fingertips are feeling.

Take deep, gentle breaths as you notice how the bumps and textures feel under your fingers.

Make it!

## Sensory Strip

You'll need:

- Popsicle sticks
- Double-sided tape or glue
- Textured material: Sandpaper, glitter paper, textured washi tape, emery board, etc.



To make your sensory strip:

1. Use double-sided tape or glue to attach your textured material to your popsicle stick.
2. Trim off any extra textured material from the edges of the popsicle stick.
3. Experiment using different types of textured material to create strips with different sensations.
4. (Optional) Add double-sided tape to the back of the popsicle stick to attach it to something you use every day (like a pencil case, binder, or water bottle) to use anytime you need a focus break.

Ask a grownup first!

# Weighted Lap Buddy

Hold your weighted buddy on your lap as you take slow, gentle breaths. Notice the gentle pressure of its weight helping you to feel calm and grounded.

You can sit with your weighted buddy on your lap as you work, or can cuddle with it as you fall asleep. Its gentle weight can help you to feel safe and relaxed.

Make it!

## Weighted Lap Buddy

You'll need:

- Clean sock
- Elastic band, ribbon, or twist tie
- Filling: Dry uncooked rice, beans, or lentils
- (Optional) Markers, googly eyes and glue



To make your weighted lap buddy:

1. Fill sock with your filling until it is almost completely full.
2. Tie off the top of the sock tightly with the elastic band, ribbon, or twist tie.
3. (Optional) Decorate your buddy using makers. Use glue to add googly eyes.

*Alternative: To make a more advanced version, remove stuffing from an old teddy bear or plush toy. Replace the stuffing with rice/beans/weighted filling and sew closed. Keep dry.*



# MOVE



Movement, big or small, releases energy which can help to calm our bodies.

Moving your whole body, like taking a walk, stretching, dancing, or playing sports releases stress and gets your brain and body working together.

Small movements, like using a fidget toy or wiggling your toes, can release extra energy and may help you to feel more relaxed and focused.

# Paperclip Snake Fidget

Notice how the paperclip  
'snake' feels and moves in your  
hands as you make it wiggle,  
crawl, and move around.

You can clip this paperclip chain  
to your bag, backpack, or  
anything else you carry with  
you through the day. Use it  
anytime you need a little  
fidget break.

Make it!

## Paperclip Snake Fidget



You'll need:

- Paperclips (3 or more)
- Beads (optional)
- Googly eyes (optional)

To make your paperclip snake fidget:

1. (Optional) Thread beads onto your paperclips.
2. Link paperclips together.
3. (Optional) Use glue or hot glue to add googly eyes.



# Bead Ring Fidget

Move and spin the rings around your fingers as you take deep, gentle breaths.

Move your fingers along each bead, one by one. As you feel each bead, repeat a positive thought to yourself, like "I am calm and safe."

Make it!

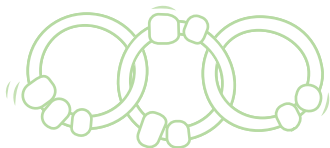
## Bead Ring Fidget

You'll need:

- Split keychain rings or binder rings
- Beads (with bead opening large enough to fit onto ring)

To make your bead ring fidget:

1. Open the ring (if using a split keychain ring you may need to carefully pry the ring open with a small coin or pliers).
2. Thread beads onto to ring.
3. (Optional) Link two or more rings together.



# NOTICE

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⇒ **Mindfulness** means noticing what's happening in the present moment - not deciding if it's good or bad, just noticing it.

You can use your senses to notice what you see, hear, think, or feel. By simply noticing, you give your brain and body space to just be, there's nothing you have to do. You can practice doing this anytime, anywhere.

Using your senses to notice what's happening in the present moment can be helpful when you have big emotions or feel overwhelmed. By bringing your attention back to the present moment, you can notice that right now you are safe and ok.

# Calm Bottle

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Shake the bottle to mix up all the water and glitter.

Then hold the bottle still and take slow, deep breaths, noticing the colours, shapes, and movement of the glitter as it swirls and settles. As you notice these things, also begin to notice the calm, relaxing feelings arriving in your body.

Keep breathing slow deep breaths until the glitter is completely settled at the bottom.

Make it!

## Calm Bottle

You'll need:

- Empty bottle with a cap
- Water
- Clear liquid glue
- Food colouring (Optional)
- Glitter, beads, and/or sequins



To make your calm bottle:

1. Fill bottle about  $\frac{1}{5}$  full with clear glue.
2. Fill the remainder of the bottle with water.
3. (Optional) Add a few drops of food colouring.
4. Add your glitter, beads, and/or sequins.
5. Put the cap on the bottle and close tightly.  
(Optional: Have a grownup add superglue or hot glue inside cap to seal it more permanently)
6. Shake the bottle to mix everything together.



# Lava Lamp Bottle

Shake the bottle to mix the oil and water together.

Then hold the bottle still and notice as the shapes of oil and water swirl and flow around each other. Notice the light you can see coming through the bottle and how it changes and shifts.

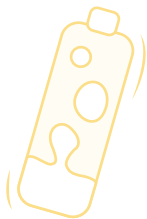
Take slow, deep breaths as you watch the oil and water gradually settle and separate.

Make it!

## Lava Lamp Bottle

You'll need:

- Empty bottle with a cap
- Water
- Food colouring
- Baby oil
- (Optional) Glitter, beads



To make your lava lamp bottle:

1. Fill your bottle about half full with water and add a few drops of food colouring.
2. (Optional) Add beads or glitter and mix gently.
3. Fill the rest of the bottle with baby oil.
4. Put the cap on the bottle and close tightly.  
(Optional: Have a grownup add superglue or hot glue inside cap to seal it more peravmanently)
5. Shake the bottle to mix everything together!

# Flashlight Focus

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Shine a flashlight slowly around in a dark room. As you watch the light move, notice how your mind focuses on where the light shines. Notice differences in how you feel when the flashlight shines on something you like (like a favourite toy), or something you don't like (like a mess you need to clean up).

Your mind is like a flashlight, and what you focus on can change your moods and feelings. Our brains tend to focus on things that are bad or dangerous to help protect us. That can make us feel sad or scared. We can remember to notice and shift our focus to good things too.

# 'I Notice' Cards

Use these cards to tune into your senses and bring your attention to the present moment.

Read each card and see how many items on each list you can notice around you, right now.

What else do you notice?

# 1 Notice...

**LOOK** around you, wherever you are.

Notice **2 things** that are...

- ☐ Your favourite colour
- ☐ Shiny
- ☐ Dark
- ☐ Pointy
- ☐ Smooth
- ☐ Close to you
- ☐ Far away

What else can you **SEE**?

# Notice...

Take a deep breath and **LISTEN**.  
Hear sounds close to you and far away.  
How many sounds can you hear?

- ☐ Birds chirping
- ☐ Wind blowing
- ☐ Cars or trucks driving
- ☐ Someone talking
- ☐ Yourself breathing
- ☐ A song playing

What else can you **HEAR**?

# Notice...

Notice what you **FEEL** with your body.  
Take a deep breath, and notice...

- ☐ The ground under your feet
- ☐ What your fingertips are touching
- ☐ The breath in your lungs
- ☐ Your heartbeat in your chest
- ☐ The feel of your clothes

What else can you **FEEL**?

# CREATE

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Expressing your thoughts, feelings, and memories can help you feel better in your mind, body, and spirit.

Talking about big thoughts and feelings, whether that's talking out loud to another person or just to yourself in a journal, can help those thoughts and feelings feel smaller and more manageable. You can also express how you're feeling without using words at all, by drawing, painting, colouring, or making music.

Whatever you choose to do to express yourself, letting out the thoughts and feelings that you're holding means that you don't have to carry the weight of them inside of you all by yourself, and that can help you feel better.



# Write or draw

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Write, sketch, or draw about anything you want. You can write or draw to let out big feelings. You can make a list, write a story, poem, or song, write as if you're talking to a person you like or one you don't like, or write a letter you wouldn't mail.

You can create a gratitude journal by writing or drawing every day about something that you're grateful for.

There is no right or wrong way to write or draw to express yourself.



# Colouring

Colouring can be a relaxing way to express yourself.

There are no right or wrong ways to colour.

Choose a colouring page and some markers.

Notice the lines of the image and all the amazing colours you have chosen. Notice how the marker feels as you hold it with your fingers. Notice whether it is smooth, hard, sharp, or dull. Notice your hand and arm moving together as you begin to colour.

Notice your thoughts begin to drift away as your body calms and relaxes.

[illegible]

# NOTICE



MOVE



FEEL







BREATHE



# EMOTIONS





# NAME

## *your emotions*

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Feelings are called **emotions**. Everyone has emotions. Emotions are normal, and they come and go. Emotions can come from what's happening around us, our thoughts, and our wants and needs. There are no 'wrong' or 'bad' emotions, and no one can tell you what emotion you 'should' be having.

Emotions can show up in lots of different ways - in our behaviour, how our bodies feel, the expressions on our faces, our thoughts, or tone of voice.

It's not always easy to know what we're feeling, especially if those feelings are big, or if we're having different emotions at the same time.

Being able to put names to our emotions helps us to understand what we're feeling and what we need.

MAD



# MAD

can feel like...

*I need this!*  
*I want that!*

≡ I can... ≡

- Take 10 deep, slow breaths
- Push a wall with my hands
- Hit a pillow
- Throw a stuffy at a wall (safely!)
- Talk about it with someone I trust

**ANNOYED**



# ANNOYED

can feel like...

*Something is bothering me  
and I want it to stop!*

≡ I can... ≡

- Ask for help
- Use my voice and words to solve the problem
- Give myself some space from what's annoying me

FRUSTRATED



# FRUSTRATED

can feel like...

*That's not fair! I can't  
do this! I feel stuck!*

≡ I can... ≡

- Use my voice and ask for help
- Take a break and walk out of the room
- Write down my thoughts and feelings in a journal

**SAD**





# SAD

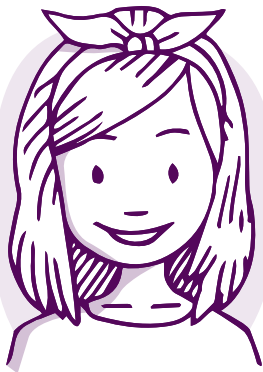
can feel like...

*I need comfort.*

≡ I can... ≡

- Talk to someone I love
- Ask for a hug
- Listen to happy music
- Spend time with a friend
- Make myself a comfortable, cozy spot

HAPPY



# HAPPY

can feel like...

*I'm noticing something good. I feel great!*

≡ I can... ≡

- Share what I'm happy about with someone
- Notice all the nice things about this moment – how I feel, what I can see, hear, and touch

PEACEFUL



# PEACEFUL

can feel like...

*Everything is ok. I'm  
enjoying the moment.*

≡ I can... ≡

- Notice all the nice things about this moment – how I feel, what I can see, hear, and touch
- Enjoy the feeling of peace and calm

SCARED



# SCARED

can feel like...

*I'm afraid!  
I don't feel safe!*

≡ I can... ≡

- Ask a safe adult for help
- Talk to someone I trust
- Draw or imagine myself in a safe, happy place

**WORRIED**





# WORRIED

can feel like...

*I keep thinking about something bad that could happen.*

≡ I can... ≡

- Write down or draw my worries in a journal so I can put them away
- Say a positive statement to myself, like...
  - "I can handle this"
  - "I am strong"

ASHAMED



# ASHAMED

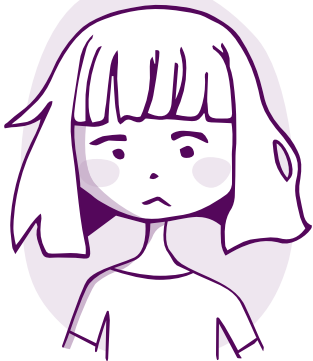
can feel like...

*I feel bad about myself,  
and I need reassurance.*

≡ I can... ≡

- Speak to myself kindly, like I would speak to a friend
- Remember that nobody is perfect, everyone feels ashamed sometimes
- Think of 5 positive things that I like about myself

EMBARRASSED



# EMBARRASSED

can feel like...

*People are paying attention to me in a way I don't like.*

≡ I can... ≡

- Speak to myself kindly, like I would speak to a friend
- Remember that nobody is perfect, everyone feels embarrassed sometimes
- Think of 5 positive things that I like about myself

EXCITED



# EXCITED

can feel like...

*Something good is going to happen and I can't wait!*

≡ I can... ≡

- Share what I'm excited about with someone!
- Move or use a fidget to release extra energy
- Enjoy the feeling of looking forward to something good

OVERWHELMED





# OVERWHELMED

can feel like...

*Too much is going on.  
I feel like I can't handle it.*

≡ I can... ≡

- Take 10 deep, slow breaths
- Take a break
- Take things one at a time
- Notice what I can feel with each of my senses...
  - see ● touch ● taste ●
  - hear ● smell ●