

Mental Health and Wellbeing Activities

1. Gratitude Journaling.

(This is a small copybook that you can decorate the front cover of, if you want to. Each day you record something you're grateful for, and you can use the following prompts if you wish!)

- Write about 3 things you're grateful for today.
- Open the door or window and look outside. What's something you're grateful for outside?
- What's something that you're looking forward to?
- What's something or someone that makes you feel safe?
- What's something that you grateful to have today that you didn't have a year ago?
- Write about a happy memory.
- Write about a friend/ teacher/ family member that you're grateful for.
- Write about somewhere you've been that you're grateful for.
- What is something to do with your body/ health that you're grateful for?
- What's an accomplishment you're proud of?
- What have you been given that you're grateful for?
- How are you able to help others today?
- What public service or organization are you grateful for (i.e. health workers), and why?
- What did you accomplish today?
- What mistake or failure are you grateful for, and why?
- Look around the room and write about everything you see that you're grateful for.

2. Wellbeing Journal.

Similar to the above journal, this can include what you're grateful for, while also recording general wellness too.

See attachments 1 and 2 for a layout you can use with younger children (1), and older children (2).

3. Mental Health Projects and Lessons.

Doing activities and projects surrounding the theme of mental health with a link to the primary school curriculum subjects. Some may be more geared for older children, but with parental supervision, younger children may be able to engage in some of them too!

See attachment 3.

4. Mindfulness Colouring.

There are lots of mindfulness colouring sheets online, especially on [Twinkl.ie](https://www.twinkl.ie). The aim of mindfulness colouring is that maybe you would ask your child to think about something that happened that day that they really enjoyed or something they were looking forward to. You might give them only 3 colours to do the colouring with so they're really focusing on colour. The colouring should be done over a really long period of time, and you would have lots of conversations around growth mindset (having a strong mind and overcoming any negative thoughts- resilience) with them, so that when they display their colouring on their bedroom wall they're reminded of this calm time, and the conversations they had while doing this activity. You should ideally have a calm area with relaxing music on. I always search 'relaxation music' or 'piano instrumental' music on YouTube.

5. Breathing techniques.

Again you would have relaxing music on while you do this.

- a) The five finger breathing technique. You hold out your hand and use your other hand to start at the outside of your thumb, and when you bring your finger up to the tip of the finger, you breathe in, and when you bring your finger down to the bottom of the finger you breathe out. You keep tracing your fingers like this, doing this breathing.
- b) Rainbow breathing. Draw a rainbow in your wellness journal with the colours as so:



You start at the base of the red, on the left, and breathe in until you reach the top of the rainbow. You breathe out until your finger reaches the bottom of the rainbow. You continue doing this with all the rainbow colours until you reach the last colour.

6. Guided Yoga.

Cosmic Kids Yoga on YouTube is amazing. It is guided so all your child needs is a soft surface to do the yoga on!

7. Guided Meditation.

Check out 'Sleep Horizon' guided meditation for kids on YouTube. Again, it is guided so you just make sure they're sitting comfortably away from all distractions, and the speaker will do the rest. There are some gorgeous bed time stories (meditative) on this too.

8. Specific Wellbeing Days

Have a specific wellbeing day each week. For example:

- ☉ Mindful Monday's
- ☉ Time-Out Tuesday's
- ☉ Wise Words Wednesday's
- ☉ Thankful Thursday's
- ☉ Fit Friday's

- Mindful Monday's: you might like to do a specific activity, that you will see on my page, or you find online such as making glitter jars with nice relaxing music in the background, as you chat about your day, how you feel etc.
- Time-Out Tuesday's: you might set aside 15 minutes of the day where the whole family sits together and you chat about how you all feel, maybe write a note and put it in a 'worry box' or chat about notes that have been left in the worry-box throughout the week.
- Wise Word Wednesday's: Display a quote on the kitchen door or on any chalkboard or surface you can wipe clean, or just on a piece of paper, and discuss it together. It may be a quote about having a growth mindset, being positive, or being grateful. One quote I love is "When given the choice between being right & being kind.....choose kind" 😊.
- Thankful Thursday's: Gratitude journaling, or just orally completing the activity based on the prompts in section 1.
- Fit Friday's: You may want to get out for a walk together in the fresh air, do yoga or a guided P.E. class (The Body Coach PE classes on YouTube!), or something else that is fun and that gets you all up and active together!

9. Checking- In.

This one may sound really simple, but its impact will be huge. Each morning when your child wakes up, you ask them to give you a number between 1 and 10, to describe how they're feeling. You would of course discuss this scale, and maybe have a scale visually if the child is younger. 1 would be a 'not-so-pleasant' feeling, 5 is in the middle, and 10 is a great feeling. If your child was on a 5-1, you can ask them what they think is causing this unpleasant feeling, and have a little chat about it, or just be aware throughout that day that they're feeling a bit anxious or worried. Give them our number too, and be honest! It's important for us all to realise a feeling from a 5 to a 1 isn't a 'bad' feeling, it's just a feeling, and our feelings change lots, and that's okay. Before bed, ask your child for their number again. If it's higher than morning, then you know you have reassured your child throughout the day, and they feel better. If it's a low number, then you can have a chat about this before bed.

This will really communicate to your child all of the above, about recognising that it's okay to have unpleasant feelings, and that they can talk to you about these feelings, and you will be there to actively listen and reassure them always. It will make you more aware of your own and your child's feelings too, and makes for an excellent communication system every day.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1

Wellbeing Journal



Date:

One word to describe today:

I was kind to _____ today, because I _____.

_____ was kind to me today, because they _____.

Exercise

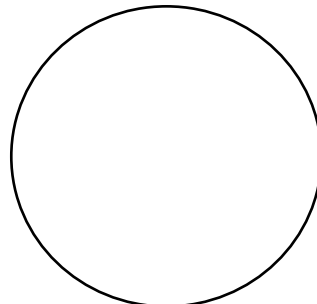
Fruit

Vegetables

Water

Draw one good thing that happened today:

This is how I feel today:



A drawing of something I would like to do tomorrow:

Wellbeing Journal



Date:

Today's Positive Thoughts:

I was kind to _____ today, because I _____.

_____ was kind to me today, because they _____.

Exercise

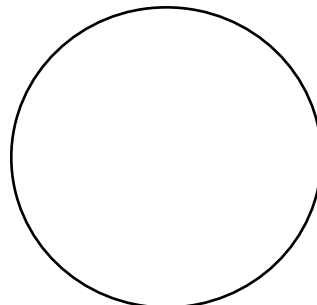
Fruit

Vegetables

Water

One good thing that happened today was:

This is how I feel today:



A goal I want to achieve is

I will do this by

This will be achieved by the __/__/__

Attachment 3

Daily/ Weekly Projects and Activities Surrounding the Theme of Mental Health

Music: write or compose a song/ piece of music that has a positive message for mental health.	Art & English: Create a flipchart (small) to hang on the kitchen wall for each month of the year with a quote for growth mindset/ mental health/ wellbeing.	English: Research how social media can affect mental health, and have a debate in with your family (could also skype other family members or classmates and do this together).
History: research how attitudes to mental health have changed over the past number of years/ century.	Biology: research how stress affects the body and make a list on ways to reduce stress- share these with your friends and family	Geography- research the question 'Does where you live affect your mental health?'. Pick a county to research the general mental health of young people and compare it to Ireland. (Survey Monkey could be used for anonymous surveys!)
Religion: Research the religions that use meditation, and do some meditation.	Home Economics: Research the foods that can improve mental health, and create a menu for someone your age based on these foods.	PE: explore the link between exercise and wellbeing, and create a workout for someone your age to boost their mood with fun and exciting exercises.
PE: follow a yoga/ Zumba/ dance tutorial on YouTube and discuss with someone in your family how it made you feel/ write it in your journal.	Art: design a room that can be used for relaxation and explain your choices i.e. room colour, fabrics, lightening, etc.	Drama: charades- roleplay different emotions/ scenarios and get someone in your family to guess the emotion. Scenario and how the people in the scenario feel, how they're thinking, what they could do, if necessary, to improve this feeling.
Watch a movie that surrounds the ideas of mental health/ having a growth mindset: 'Inside Out' or 'Wonder'. Discuss how mental health was explored in the movie with family or research it online.	Some ideas were inspired from completion of an online course with https://www.jigsawonline.ie/ , National Centre for Youth Mental Health in Ireland.	