



ACT
Government

Wellbeing Activity Booklet & Gratitude Journal

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For Children and Young People



Acknowledgments

**We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people.
We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution
they make to the life of this city and this region.**

This booklet is developed in consultation with Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing
and MIEACT (Mental Health & Wellbeing Education & Training Providers).



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for their contribution to this booklet:

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 - The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing;
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Wellbeing Activity Booklet & Gratitude Journal



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Introduction



2020 has not been an easy year for Canberrans. We have experienced bushfires and hailstorms, and since March, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our daily lives. Through all of this, Canberra's communities have pulled together and risen to the challenge. We have been reminded of our responsibilities to each other and the power of community.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the ACT. Canberra is a community that embraces diversity. Our commitment to social inclusion extends to all cultures, races, genders, sexualities, and ages. It is our diversity and inclusion which has given us a strong foundation for resilience, connection, and recovery during COVID-19.

This booklet provides ideas and activities to support gratitude and resilience for positive mental health and wellbeing.

How to use this booklet



About the activities

Follow the instructions to complete each activity. Revisit the activities every few months or whenever you need. All the activities can be repeated from time to time.

Tips for parents

These activities are aimed for a range of different ages, some activities will require guidance from parents/adults. These activities create meaningful opportunities for children's growth and learning and encourages positive self-care. These activities emphasise wellbeing, resilience and gratitude and provide a means of communicating and validating children's thoughts and feelings.

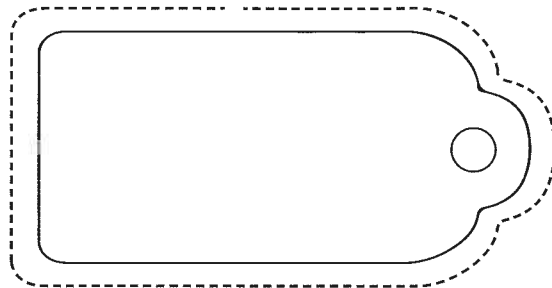
About the gratitude journal

We have provided some templates so you can start your own gratitude journal. Adding gratitude into your daily life can have a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing. For more information check out Headspace: [headspace.com/articles/how-to-be-more-grateful](https://www.headspace.com/articles/how-to-be-more-grateful).



Jar of Awesome

1. Find an empty jar, clean, and dry it. If you don't have jar find an empty tissue box or other container.
2. Cut the tag below and write **Jar of Awesome** (or **Box of Awesome**).
3. Use a pen/hole punch or scissors to make a hole.
4. Find string or a ribbon and thread through the hole on the tag and tie the tag and jar together.
5. Write down good things in your life and pop in the jar. Some prompts and ideas for what to write down are below. Cut the strip, fold it, and put in the jar. TIP: Having trouble thinking of answers? Why not ask a friend or family member for inspiration!
6. Open and read when you feel down. It's awesome!!



- Cut your preferred label to decorate your jar or box

Brave	Resilient	Kind
Funny	Lovable	Happy
I am enough	I believe in myself	
I am loved	I am strong	





I am proud of...



I am really good at ...



Something exciting that has happened to me was...



I am getting better at...



Today I laughed when...



I am awesome because...



Something fun and unexpected that happened today was...



Today I am grateful for...



I feel loved when...



I feel strong when...



I feel brave when...







Affirmation Bracelets and Chains

Option 1: Affirmation Bracelets

- Cut along the lines around the affirmation statements below to create long strips.
- Choose your favourite affirmation and loosely wrap it around your wrist using sticky tape to connect the two ends to make it into a bracelet. Make as many bracelets as you like. Maybe give some to your friends and/or family.

Option 2: Affirmation Chain

- Cut along the lines around the affirmation statements below to create long strips.
- Take the first strip and use sticky tape to connect the two ends to make it a round loop.
- Take the next strip and, put one end through the round loop and connect the other end with sticky tape, this will create two links in the chain.
- Repeat the above process with all the strips to make the chain

You can also write your own quote or favourite affirmation words in the blank space at the bottom.

YOU LEARN MORE FROM FAILURE THAN FROM SUCCESS

LOVE IS THE KEY TO KINDNESS

STRIVE FOR PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION.

DON'T LET IT STOP YOU

I REACH FOR THE STARS

MY SPIRIT SHINES BRIGHT

I AM STRONG

I AM RESILIENT

FAILURE BUILDS CHARACTER





Calming Kit

A calming kit can help relieve worry, panic, and stress by using the five senses – sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell to provide comfort. You can make your own calming kit from things that can be found around the house. Simply find an old box, decorate, and fill it with whatever you like.

Here are a few suggestions:

Touch

- playdough
- fidget spinner
- stress ball
- feathers
- pipe cleaners
- zips

Sight

- favourite toys
- photos
- postcards

Taste

- water or juice
- mints
- chocolate
- chewing gum

Sound

- radio
- music box
- singing toy
- rattle
- whistle
- clackers
- small drums
- drumsticks
- bottle filled with dry rice or pasta

Smell

- perfume
- soap
- candle
- dried flowers
- spices



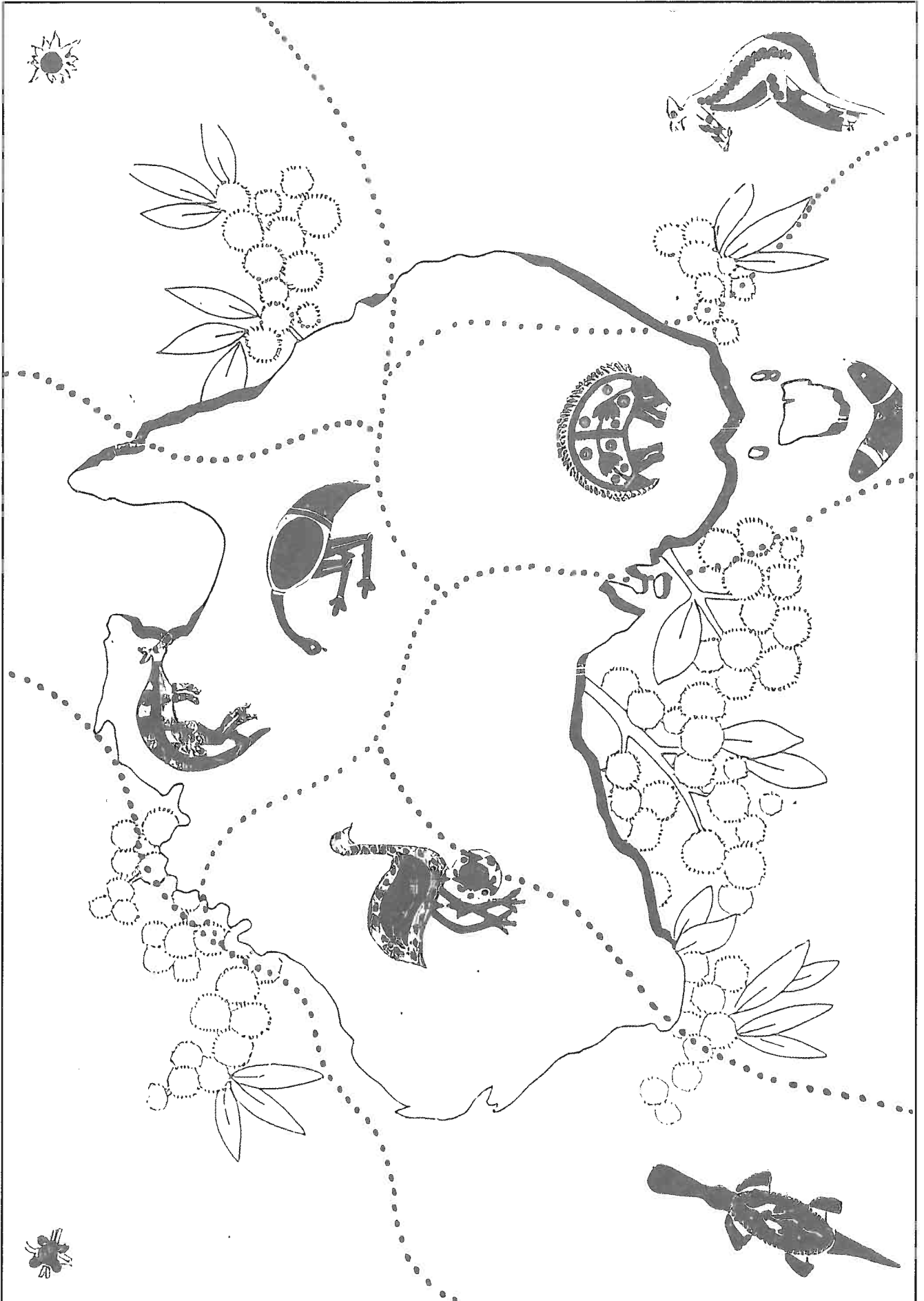
Jigsaw Template

What you will need:

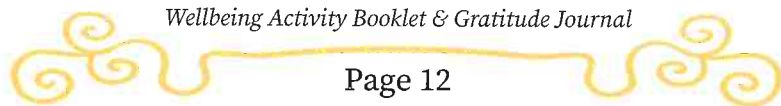
- a copy of the template (see the jigsaw template on the following page)
- cardboard
- scissors
- glue
- some hairspray to spray over the cardboard lightly to seal

Children can colour the template, adding other Aboriginal designs if they desire. When completed, glue onto cardboard and let dry. when dry, cut along dotted lines now have your own jigsaw. This type of jigsaw can be put on ply wood. Other pictures such as drawings or photos can be done in the same way.





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Best Belly Buddies

Breathing is something that we do all the time, it is one of the best tools you have to bring you into the present moment, and there is no better way to engage young children than by using their favourite soft toy.

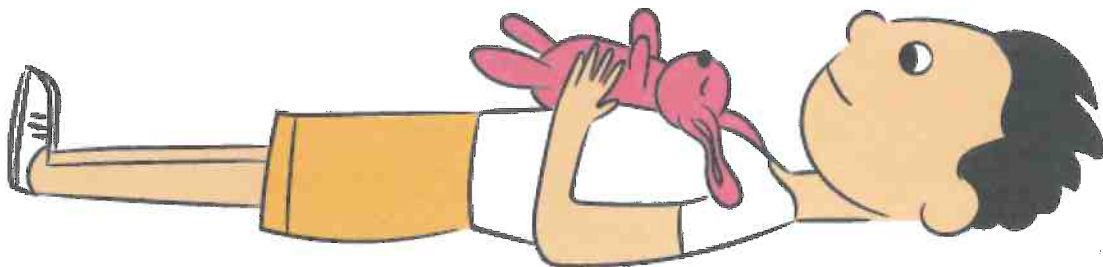
Tip: Pick your favourite soft toy as your belly buddy. Young children will need a parent to guide them while older children may do this independently.

1. Lie on the ground on your back.
2. Place your soft toy on top of your belly.
3. Look at your toes.
4. Slowly breathe in through your nose and count 1, 2 and 3 in your head.
5. Hold your breath and count 1, 2 and 3 in your head.
6. Slowly breathe out through your mouth and count 1, 2 and 3 in your head.
7. Repeat these steps for at least 3 minutes.

Questions to think about

- Can you see the toy on your belly?
- What does it feel like having your toy on your belly?
- What did your toy do when you breathed in?
- What did your toy do when you breathed out?
- What does the air sound like when it comes in your nose and out your mouth?
- What do you think it would feel like to have your toy sitting on your belly?

Based on 'Best Belly Buddies', *Wellbeing Activities for Learning at Home* © State of Queensland (Department of Education) 2020 (CC BY)



Nature Journal

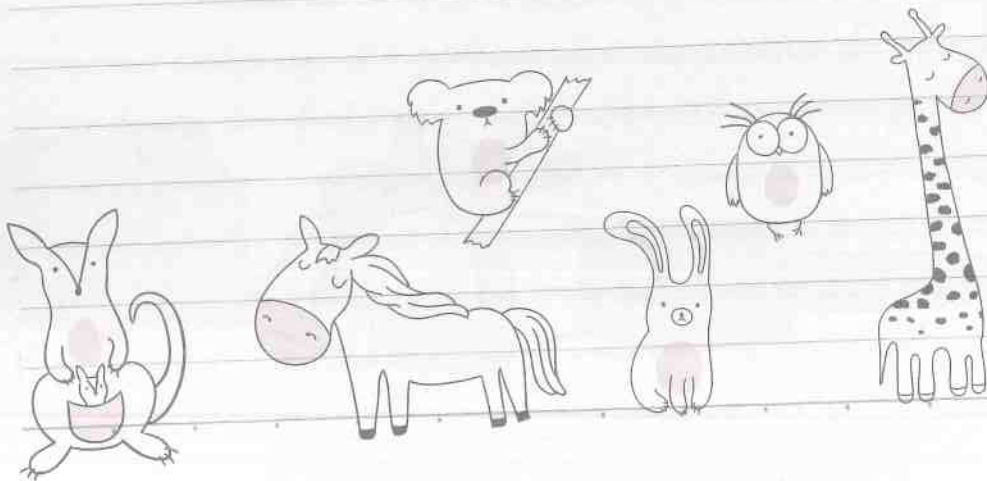
Keeping a nature journal helps record the places you visit, and the plants and animals you see. You could include sketches, or even press flowers and leaves you collect.

DATE: _____

What I saw.....

How I felt.....

What I learnt.....





Mindfulness Word Search

Cross off all the words in the word search below. The first word has been crossed off for you. Hint: words can run forwards and backwards!

N	O	I	T	A	T	I	D	E	M	C	A	L	M
R	N	G	R	A	T	I	T	U	D	E	P	C	I
E	N	A	E	H	A	P	P	I	N	E	S	S	N
F	R	C	S	D	C	P	M	E	I	I	I	G	S
L	E	C	I	L	O	A	I	T	O	I	C	N	P
E	L	E	L	I	M	N	U	Y	L	B	J	I	I
C	A	P	I	C	P	F	E	L	E	I	O	E	R
T	X	T	E	L	A	O	T	L	O	G	Y	B	A
I	A	A	N	A	S	C	L	O	V	E	F	L	T
O	T	N	C	R	S	U	R	G	T	N	U	L	I
N	I	C	E	I	I	S	N	M	N	C	L	E	O
P	O	E	E	T	O	A	S	I	O	N	A	W	N
L	N	I	C	Y	N	V	T	E	G	D	N	I	K
N	O	I	T	A	N	I	M	R	E	T	E	D	I

KIND

- LOVE
- FOCUS
- CALM
- JOYFUL
- CLARITY

- GRATITUDE
- WELLBEING
- HAPPINESS
- RESILIENCE
- REFLECTION
- COMPASSION

- ACCEPTANCE
- MEDITATION
- RELAXATION
- INSPIRATION
- DETERMINATION



Vision Board



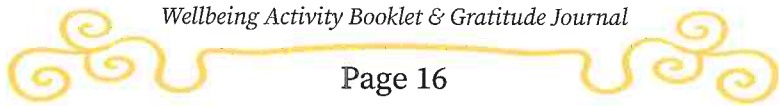
Who do you admire and would like to meet in person?
Find the picture of the person and stick it here

If you could design your dream life/ job/ house/ car/ holiday what would it look like?
Find a picture and stick it here

What skills would you like to have, or new activities would you like to try?
Find a picture and stick it here

What kind of difference do you want to make in this world?
Find the picture and stick it here

What makes you happy?
Find a picture that makes you happy and stick it here



Wellbeing Matrix

Choose one wellbeing activity to do each day. Record how you are feeling before and after.

Place one hand on your chest and take 3 deep breaths. Say something caring to yourself like 'I am putting a lot of pressure on myself; I have tried my best and that is all I can do.'

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Talking to your friends can help you work through the challenges you are facing. Call a friend, or someone else you trust and tell them how you feel.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Take a walk, ride your bike, play with your pet if you have one. Getting your heart pumping really helps to clear your mind.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Try a social media detox! Turn off your phone and get back to nature. Did you know research shows that getting out and about in nature can increase positive emotions? Try spending some time in the great outdoors and really being present. What can you see, hear, and feel?

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

It's time to take a break. Go out for a walk, slow down, listen to music, do some colouring or drawing.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:



Write a gratitude journal. Every day, record something you love in your life or write down your negative thoughts and see if there is any evidence to support them. Try to dispute the thought (make it positive). Put things into perspective and write down positive thoughts about your current situation. Focus on your strengths, or things you are looking forward to.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Make up your own wellbeing activity and write it here.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Ask a friend or family member to do it with you. Watch a movie, read a book, play a game, or do some exercise. Do something you find really FUN & RELAXING. Fake it till you make it.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Mental health does not take care of itself. To have good mental health we need to exercise and strengthen it all the time. One way to do this is to create a weekly self-care plan to ensure you do something that makes you feel good every day.

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

Complete an act of kindness for someone you know. Being kind to others makes us feel really good, (give a compliment, lend a hand, ask how someone is, listen well).

How do you feel before:

How do you feel after:

For more information visit www.mieact.org.au

Self-Care

Research is showing that by building positive wellbeing strategies we can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety.

- Self-care is any activity that we deliberately do to look after ourselves and our own wellbeing.
- It is the act of attending to our needs and refueling ourselves.
- Regular self-care positively effects our physical, social, emotional, and mental health.
- Self-care is very individual. Everyone’s self-care activities differ greatly.
- It is easy to forget about the importance of the basics.

The acronym below can help remind us how important the basics are in supporting our mental health and wellbeing.

Sleep - Exercise - Leisure - Food

Example:

- S** - make sure I get 8 hours and go to bed before 10 pm
- E** - going for a regular run
- L** - spending time with friends and family
- F** - eating lot of veggies and little sugar makes me feel good

What do the basics look like for you?

S
E
L
F

Self-care plan

Fitting in self-care can sometimes be hard in our busy lives. The best way to ensure it happens is to plan for it. Put a reminder in your phone, organise a friend to do it with you to keep you accountable or print the plan below and display it somewhere you’ll see it often.

	Physical	Mental	Emotional	Social
Monday	Going for a walk, Having a nap	Reading a book, Meditating	Saying nice things to myself	Calling a friend for a chat
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

For more information visit www.mieact.org.au

Don't Worry, Be Happy!

Our body makes chemicals that can drastically effect our mood. Four common chemicals are responsible for feelings of happiness: Dopamine, Endorphin, Oxytocin and Serotonin.

You can consciously create opportunities for your body to release these chemicals, increasing your wellbeing, stabilizing mood, improving motivation and increasing connection. See our list of suggestions to DIY your happy chemical kick!

Dopamine

- Completing a task
- Participating in self-care
 - Eating food
- Celebrating small wins

Endorphin

- Laughter exercise
- Watching a comedy
- Sharing a joke with a friend
 - Exercising
- Eating dark chocolate

Oxytocin

- Playing with pets
- Playing with your baby/child
 - Holding hands
 - Getting a massage
- Giving loved ones a hug
- Giving a compliment

Serotonin

- Walking in nature
 - Running
- Catching some (safe) sun
 - Swimming
 - Cycling



For more information visit www.mieact.org.au

Building Positive Self-talk

Our thoughts can have a big impact on how we feel. Sometimes when we have repetitive negative worrying or unhelpful thoughts it can cause us to feel anxious and stressed. The exciting thing is that we can change our thoughts. Building positive self-talk helps.

Situation	Physical symptoms	Unhelpful Thoughts	Evidence for	Evidence against	Helpful thoughts
<i>Example: I didn't get a good result on a Maths test</i>	<i>I had butterflies in my belly. I felt nervous and worried.</i>	<i>I am so bad at Maths. I am never going to get better.</i>	<i>I didn't do well in this test.</i>	<i>I am getting better everyday My teacher has said she can see me improving.</i>	<i>Maths isn't something I find easy. If I work hard and ask for help I will get better.</i>

Tip

Treat yourself like you would a friend. What would you say to a friend who was going through the same thing? Write it down. Read it back to yourself.

Fact

Did you know giving yourself the same care and kindness you give to others can reduce your risk of experiencing depression or anxiety? This is called self-compassion.

For more information visit www.mieact.org.au



Random Acts of Kindness

Let's all participate in random acts of kindness to bring a smile to someone's face without expecting anything in return. These random acts of kindness can range from a small compliment to an inspiring gesture that could be life changing. Kindness is contagious!

Kindness increases:

- The love hormone
 - Energy
 - Happiness
 - Lifespan
 - Pleasure
 - Serotonin

Kindness decreases:

- Pain
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Blood pressure



Make Someone SMILE today!

Acts of Kindness Calendar

Say something nice to someone

1

Smile at someone

6

Say "good job"

11

Write a thank you note

16

Tell your parents how much you appreciate them.

21

Email or write to an old teacher or mentor who inspired you.

26

Hold the door for someone

2

Put a dollar on a vending machine

7

Clean up without being asked

12

Let someone else go first

17

Donate canned goods to your local food bank.

22

Write a letter to your grandparents or a senior citizen to express your love for the elderly.

27

Let a sibling go first

3

Play with someone new

8

Give someone a flower

13

Run or walk 5K for a cause

18

Donate clothes, towels or blankets to a shelter or charity

23

Let someone go ahead of you in line at the grocery store.

28

Give a hug

4

Share

9

Colour a picture for someone

14

Volunteer or help someone in need

19

Leave a kind note on a stranger's car.

24

Say 'thank you' to someone who makes a difference in the community (firefighter, police, doctor, etc.)

29

Decorate a kindness rock

5

Write a nice letter

10

Say hi to someone

15

Give a compliment to a stranger

20

Reconnect with an old friend.

25

Write a note telling someone how much you appreciate them.

30

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt for Kids

Finding little things and focusing on the good around us, take notice and be thankful.

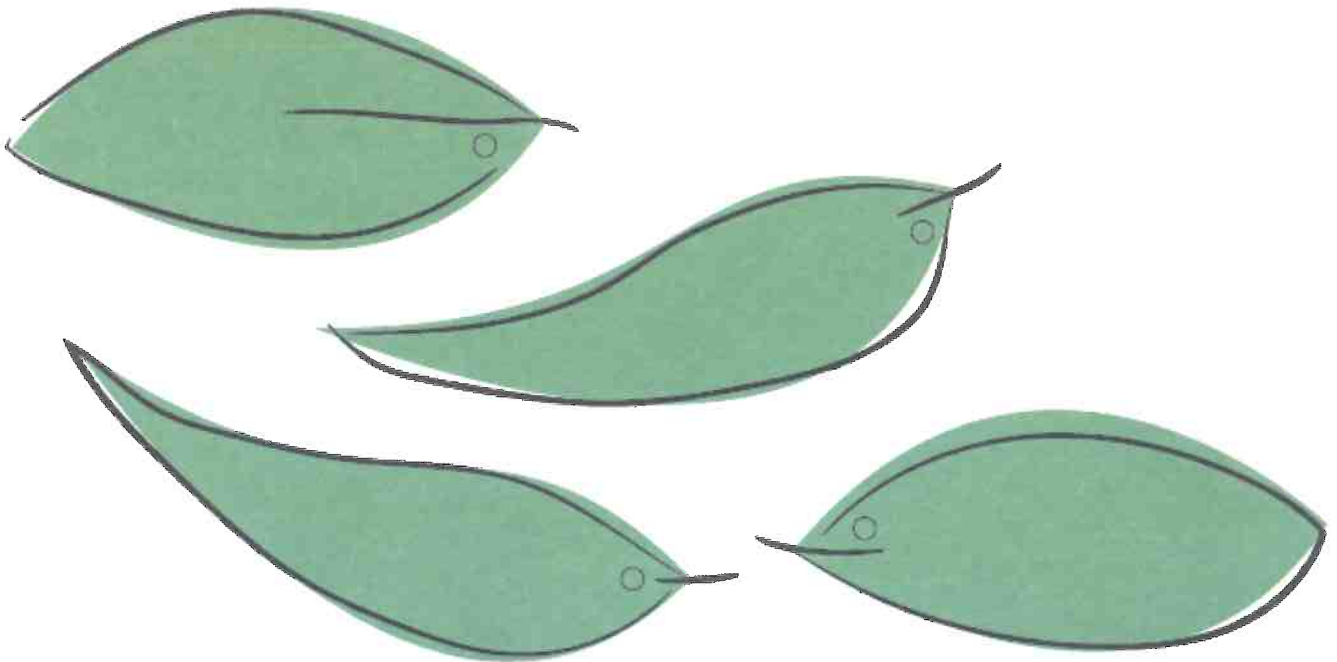
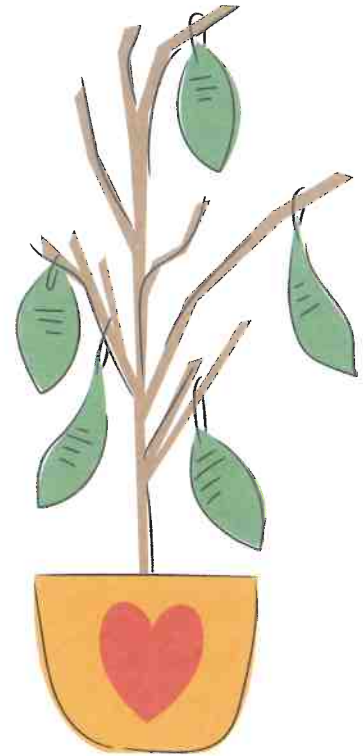
Take a photo of your finding and post on your social media #gratitudescavengerhunt

- Find something that **makes you smile**
- Find something that **makes your day easier**
- Find something that **helps you every day**
- Find something that you would **like to use more**
- Find something that **makes you feel safe**
- Find something **delicious to eat**
- Find something that is **special to you**
- Find your **favourite place to sit and just be**
- Discover **something new**
- Find something that is **unique to you**
- Find a **place that you love**
- Find something that **relaxes you**
- Find something that **makes a beautiful sound**



Gratitude Tree

- Find a tree branch and a small pot or bucket
- Find some rocks to fill the bucket, insert the tree branch in the centre
- Cut paper into the shape of a leaf and write the names of the people or things you love and are grateful for on the leaf
- Or you can use or trace the leaf template below to write the names of the people or things you love and are grateful for on them
- Use a pencil or a pen to make a hole on the leaf
- Put a string or ribbon through the hole and tie the string on the branch
- Be creative, you can paint the branch or add some glitter



Gratitude Journal

Embracing gratitude, not just by recognising what you are grateful for, but by expressing it too. It can have a positive impact on all areas of people's lives. Studies have shown gratitude enhances happiness, improves health, and improves both personal and professional relationships. To get you started on your gratitude journal, we have created the template below. Find a notebook to continue this practice every day. Happy Journaling!

Date

Today I am grateful for...

Today I am feeling...

Today I am practicing or learning...

Date

Today I am grateful for...

Today I am feeling...

Today I am practicing or learning...

Date

Today I am grateful for...

Today I am feeling...

Today I am practicing or learning...

Date

Today I am grateful for...

Today I am feeling...

Today I am practicing or learning...

Gratitude

Gratitude Journal

Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Gratitude Journal

Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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Date

Today I am grateful for...

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Today I am feeling...

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Today I am practicing or learning...

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3 Things I am grateful for today Date _____



3 Things I am grateful for today Date _____



3 Things I am grateful for today Date _____







3 Things I am grateful for today

Date



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3 Things I am grateful for today

Date



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3 Things I am grateful for today

Date



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3 Things I am grateful for today

Date



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3 Things I am grateful for today

Date



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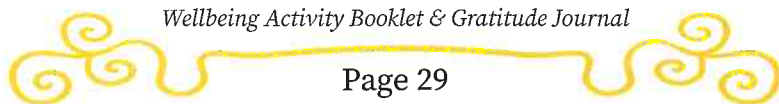
3 Things I am grateful for today

Date



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Produced by the Community Services Directorate
December 2020

