

Introduction

Our Summer Mental Health Activities for Kids provides a range of resources to support your **children's mental well-being in innovative and new ways**, emphasizing self-care and reducing the stigma around mental health during the summer break. The toolkit is designed to integrate effortlessly into your family's summer plans. Whether you're organizing a picnic, a beach day, a camping trip, or a backyard barbecue, these resources are crafted to complement your activities. Featuring interactive games and mindfulness exercises, each activity is intended to be both enjoyable and beneficial for mental health. By incorporating these tools into your summer routine, you create meaningful moments with your children while nurturing their mental well-being in a natural and positive way. Enhance your summer with this toolkit, fostering stronger family connections and making a lasting impact on your loved ones' well-being.

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Summer Mental Health Worksheets

These easy and engaging activities can help foster a safe and supportive space where teens can learn about themselves and develop valuable strategies when dealing with isolation, loneliness and other mental health challenges during the summer break.

How to use:

Writing and drawing activities

Explain the purpose of the activity. Writing and drawing can help your teen better express their emotions and communication skills, develop and strengthen coping strategies, and participate in self-reflection.

Encourage your team to think about the emotions or ideas they want to convey through the exercises. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers in art – foster a supportive and nonjudgmental atmosphere.

Provide inspiration to spark creativity and imagination. Share examples of artwork that depict various emotions, or show them gratitude journals, share stories or a self-portrait collage that centers on navigating challenges.

Set up the workspace or an environment that ensures your teen has access to the necessary material, like colored pencils and markers. Head outside to enjoy the outdoors during the activity – soak up the sun and create a space to allow them to be creative and expressive.



Prompt your teen to discuss their artwork by creating an open dialogue so they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings behind their creations.

Celebrate and showcase opportunities for your teen to display their artwork, whether hanging it somewhere in their bedroom or online through social media.

Sample

Close your eyes and think about your favorite vacation spot.
Draw your dream destination.

Think of a quiet and peaceful place. Now, notice how this place smells, its temperature, lighting, any soft noises, its size. Write how it makes you feel.

Close your eyes and think about your favorite vacation spot. Draw your dream destination.

Draw a big red stop sign. Then stop and think about your current feelings and thoughts –

if they're causing you stress, try redirecting them toward positive ones.

Where do you see yourself after next year? Map out the next stage of your life.

How to use:

Quotes

Explain the purpose of the activity – that you will be reading and discussing inspirational quotes related to feelings and emotions. Emphasize the value of self-expression and emotional well-being.

> Read the quote aloud and pause to allow your teen to reflect on its meaning. Encourage them to listen and consider how the quotes connect to their own experiences and emotions.

Use open-ended questions in a discussion about the quotes such as "What does this quote mean to you?" or "How does it make you feel?". Foster an inclusive and respectful environment, allowing your teen to share their own thoughts and interpretations.

Reinforce positive messages by emphasizing the importance of kindness, self-confidence, and the ability to ask for help when needed. Convey the message that it's okay to experience a range of emotions and that seeking support is a sign of strength.

> Summarize the key messages from the quotes and the discussion. Encourage your teen to carry the positive messages with them. Here are some ideas: stick the messages on the bathroom mirror, or keep them in a visible place where you can share quotes and affirmations together.

You're never going to please everyone, and if you do, there's something wrong.

-Constance Wu

44 If there's any definition to being perfect, you're perfect at being yourself.

-Zendaya



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-Constance Wu



Your imperfections make you beautiful, they make you who you are. So just be yourself, love yourself for who you are and just keep going.

-Demi Lovato



You have to find support.
Find someone you can talk
to. It doesn't have to be
a therapist only but your
mother, a friend or
someone else.

-Priyanka Chopra Jonas





How to use:

Coping techniques breakdown

Explain the purpose of this resource, emphasizing the importance of understanding and developing coping skills for dealing with difficult emotions and mental health challenges.



Provide relatable examples on when and how to use these techniques, such as "ways to help us feel better when we're upset or facing something difficult."

Start a brief discussion about different emotions and situations that may require your teens to use coping techniques.



Highlight that there are no right or wrong answers, and that the goal is to explore and discover what works best for each individual.

Address support and resources by reassuring your teen that they can talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns or need additional support. They can also reach out to Crisis Text Line by texting SUMMER to 741741 for free, 24/7, and confidential emotional support or through our webchat service.

Pro Tip

Play our Summer Vibes Music
Playlist in the background while
your children work on some of
the activities. Head outside to
enjoy the summer air, and remind
your children that it's okay to
seek help and that learning about
mental health is an important
part of growing up.



Sample

Coping Techniques Breakdown



Need to vent?
Scan to chat

Take time to rest

Allowing yourself to rest physically and mentally will help you reset and clear your mind.

Create art

Practice a hobby or try something new. These activities can help with feelings of stress and burnout and allow you to be present in the moment.

Seek mental health support

Need additional support? Consider reaching out to <u>Crisis Text Line</u> by texting **SUMMER** to **741741** or contacting mental health professionals in your area.

Listen to music

Pick an upbeat tune to feel energized or go for that slower beat for a soothing and relaxing effect on your mind and body.

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Quality time with your core circle is key. Find a moment to meet with them, talk, text or joke together. Having a support system is a game changer!

Tune into TV, video, or podcasts

Your favorite show can be a healthy temporary coping skill to lower anxiety. Some shows offer new perspectives and learning opportunities.

Let's get physical

Choose an activity that best suits you. Exercise can help boost your mood, decrease anxiety and depression and improve sleep quality.

Play with pets

It helps diminish feelings of loneliness and depression. If you don't have pets, visit a nearby shelter and show those little critters some love!

Take it slow with meditation

Doing this can provide a sense of calm, balance and relaxation. Find a quiet place to connect with yourself and your senses.

Get lost in a good book

It'll help relax and distract your mind, and can significantly help decrease your stress.

For more resources, visit https://www.crisistextline.org/resources

Poster

Help us spread awareness and empower teens to seek assistance by bringing our mental health posters to your local library, pool or community center. Our posters feature a question to prompt children to check in with themselves and provide Crisis Text Line as a resource for your child to use when needing mental health support by texting **SUMMER** to **741741** or using our webchat service by scanning the QR code.

How to use:

Posters in Your community

Promoting Awareness: Displaying mental health posters in prominent areas, such as local businesses, libraries, and other community gathering areas, can help raise awareness and normalize discussions about mental well-being. You and your children could also download the poster and send it to neighbors, friends and family via email or text. Spread the word!

Providing Information: Our posters offer information about Crisis Text Line as a mental health resource and easy ways to get in touch with our live trained volunteer counselors.

Fostering a Supportive Environment: By displaying these mental health posters, parents can create an inclusive and supportive environment that validates and prioritizes the mental well-being of all children during the summer break.



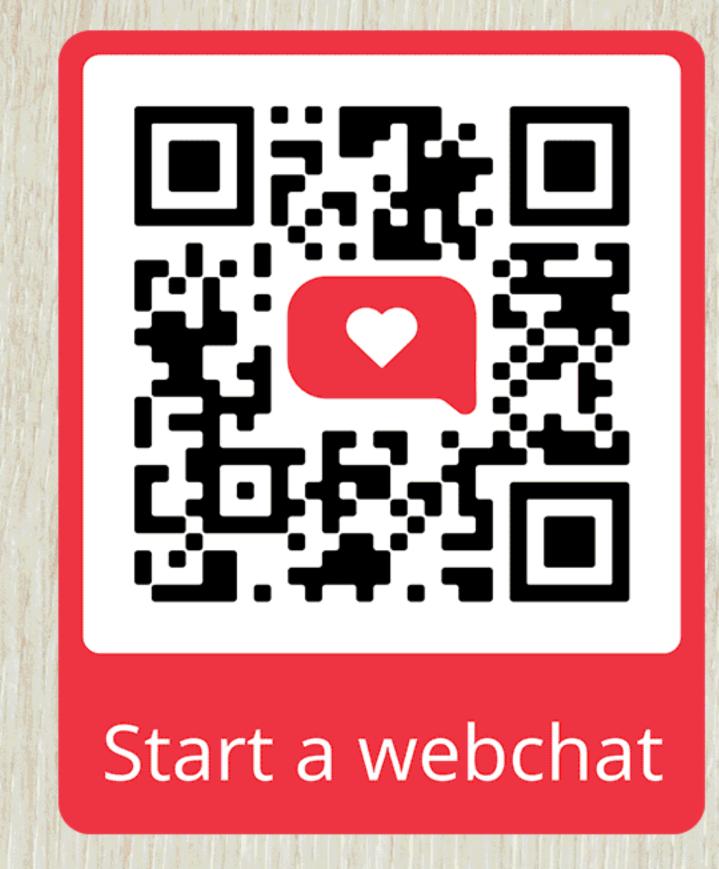


TEXT

SUMMER

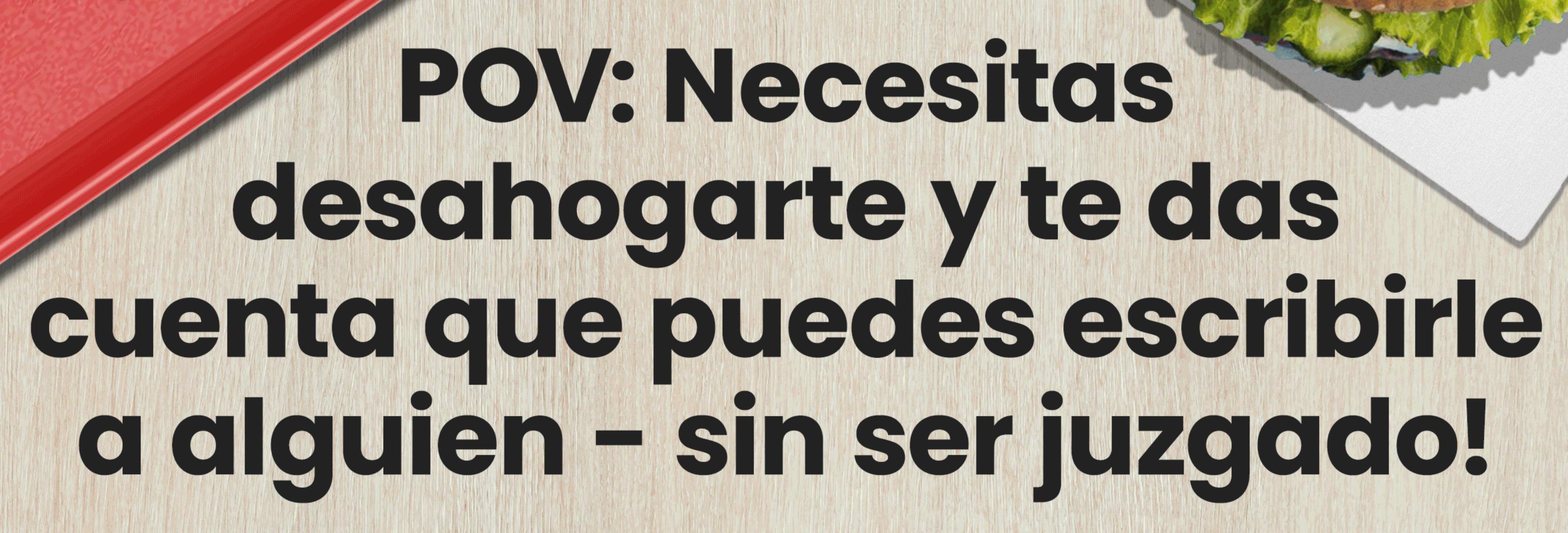
T0741741

to reach a volunteer counselor.



Free - 24/7 - Confidential

CRISIS TEXT LINE





si necesitas hablar con alguien.



Gratis, 24/7 y confidencial

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Stickers

Positive images, turned into stickers, are a great way to remind children about self-love and positive affirmations. Stickers are a versatile and fun tool to engage children in various activities.

Here are some creative ways to use stickers to capture your children's interest and support their mental well-being:



Stickers at home

Use stickers with motivational quotes or affirmations for your teens to stick where they want and **create reminders for themselves wherever they go**.



Teens can stick their new stickers on their phones, laptops, water bottles, or on their travel gear. Colorful stickers are a creative and stylish way to express themselves.

Teens can use these stickers for gifts, or to spruce up their social media and photography by using them as props for their posts and pictures.



Challenge teens to **create visual stories or comic strips** using stickers as the main characters or props. This activity not only sparks creativity but also helps improve storytelling skills and visual literacy.

Explain the word "empathy" to your teen: The ability to be aware of the feelings of other people and put yourself in their shoes to try to understand their thoughts and emotions.





What you need

- 1. Print the sticker sheet on adhesive paper or regular paper, depending on whether you prefer the stickers to be peeled and stuck or simply cut out and glued. Gather any additional supplies such as scissors, markers, and a suitable surface for sticking the stickers.
- 2. If you have a die-cutting or card machine, you can use it to print and cut the stickers together.

Sticker Mule Template

6 x 7



To use with die-cut machines

(Cricut, AccuCut, Silhouette Portrait, Gemini)

Download individual stickers at

Crisistextline741741.com/SummerStickers

Summer Vibes Music Playlist

Our <u>Summer Vibes Music Playlist</u> adds a shot of energy and positivity to your summer plans. Music is a great tool to promote strong mental health due to its ability to affect emotions, thoughts, and physiological responses. Listening to music is the most common technique that allows our texters to go from a hot moment to a cool calm.

How to Use:

Music at home, in the car, or during activities

Music can enhance the environment you and your teen are in. Music has numerous benefits for mental health, offering a variety of ways to improve their emotional and psychological well-being. Engaging teens with music can be both fun and educational, helping to foster a meaningful connection while supporting their development and mental health.

Use the playlist to set the mood for a variety of activities – like going for a drive, coloring at home, and more. The **Summer Vibes Music Playlist** will create a fun and uplifting atmosphere that you and your kids can enjoy together.



Encourage teens to engage in mindful listening as a way of relaxation after lunch or a high intensity activity, where they focus on the music without distractions. Paying attention to the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms can help them unwind and center themselves before the next

Encourage teens to use music as a means of expressing their emotions – start with the **Summer Vibes Music Playlist** and then give them the space to create their own playlists. Whether they're feeling happy, sad, anxious, or excited, they can find comfort and release by listening to or creating music that reflects their mood.

Listen to our Summer Vibes Music Playlist

https://crisistextline741741.com/SummerVibes

Mindfulness Art

Coloring or artwork can be a quick and easy activity that promotes mindfulness for teens. Over 1 in 10 texters from our own research mentioned arts and crafts as helpful ways to feel better. Young people in crisis also identified that engaging in visual arts is a resource needed to help them cope.



How to use:

Mindfulness art at home

How does it work?

As teens focus on coloring, their attention is solely absorbed in that specific moment. This allows them to tune out the distractions and dedicate their mind to experiencing the movements, sensations, and emotions of the present moment.

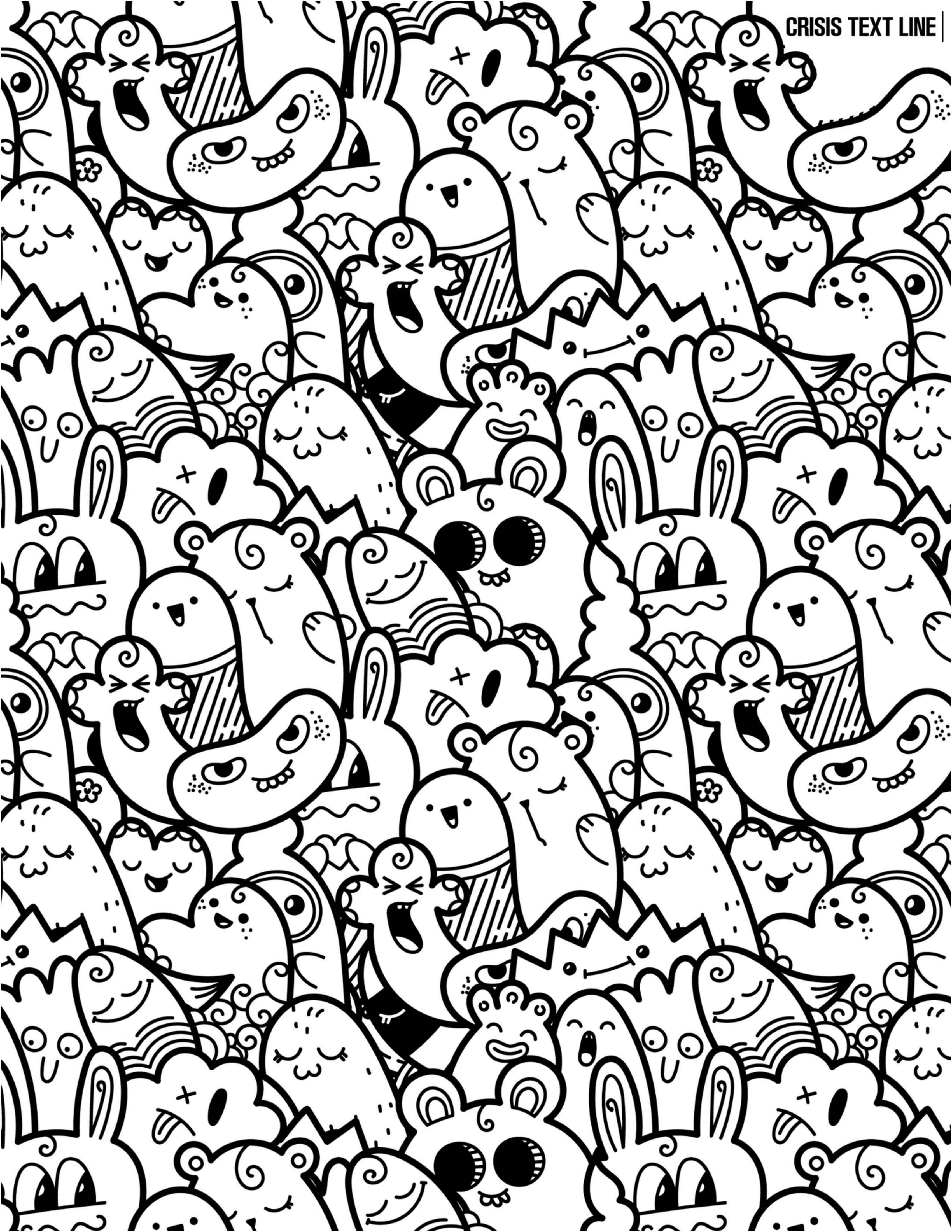
How to use this page?

You could dedicate a special time outdoors, or in your favorite place at home for you and your child to do this activity together. Explain how this relates to their mental health and remind them that it's ok if their minds wonder. All they have to do is refocus on the activity.

What you need

- 1. A printer and paper.
- 2. Markers or colored pencils. You could also use water colors, paint, and brushes.







How to talk to Your Children about mental health

Teens often find it challenging to discuss their mental health with their parents or caregivers for various reasons. Pre-teens and teens may fear being misunderstood or judged, worry about causing their parents distress, or feel pressure to meet their parents' expectations. Additionally, they might struggle to find the right words to express their emotions or may be uncertain about how their parents will react. The fear of being stigmatized or invalidated can also contribute to the difficulty of opening up about mental health with adults.





Handouts at home

Start by introducing the "How to talk to your children about mental health" worksheet, explaining its purpose as a tip sheet to help teens feel more comfortable sharing their feelings about mental health with their parents or caregivers.

Encourage Self-Reflection. Prompt teens to review this worksheet on their own, encouraging them to reflect on which strategies resonate with them personally.



Follow-Up Support. Let your teens know that you're there for them and be prepared to offer support and guidance to those who may require additional assistance in how to start a conversation about mental health.

How to talk to your Children about mental health

Take some time this summer to connect with your children – get to know them, and don't be afraid to talk about the important things, like their mental health. By approaching the topic of mental health with empathy, understanding, and openness, parents can create a supportive environment where their children feel comfortable seeking help. Check out these tips and talking points to help connect with your child this summer:

What to do

- Express concern and listen first
- * Create a safe and supportive environment
- Reassure and validate their feelings
- Normalize mental health conversations
- Help them identify triggers or cause of stress
- Encourage them to relax go for a walk together, do breathing exercises, listen to music, or practice grounding exercises
- Respect privacy
- Follow up
- Encourage them to seek help (Text SUMMER to 741741 to connect with a live counselor)

What not to do

- Take over the conversation
- Force confrontation
- Share your own personal story about a similar feeling or situation
- Normalize mental health conversations
- Pressure students to share where they might not feel comfortable
- Get frustrated or angry with the student who is going through a difficult moment
- Use stigmatizing language
- Generalize what the student is going through
- * Expect or force sudden or immediate change in their behavior
- Suggest solutions if you're not wellinformed about their situation

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How to get started

- Open up the conversation by asking open-ended questions you could ask,
 "What does mental health mean to you?" or "How do you cope with stress?"
- Instead of saying "Stop overthinking" or "Be present" try saying "I can tell you're having a hard time" or "I'm here to help you get through this"
- Instead of saying "Calm down" or "It's all in your head" try validating their feelings by saying "I'm here for you" or "I'm here to listen if you want to talk" or "I'll stay with you if you'd like"

Affirmation Stars

These affirmation stars are a fun way to teach and practice positive affirmations and coping skills with your teens.

Developing strong positive thinking and self-talk skills can be an effective coping strategy for a number of mental health challenges, including anxiety, anger, depression, and more.

Affirmations could be positive words about how we feel, or reminders about how well we might play sports, manage stress and more. Teens could use positive reminders throughout the day that they are strong, kind, etc., which will keep them coming back to the stars, serving as reminders for what they're most proud of. Need inspiration for your affirmations?

Check out this blog post!



Affirmation stars at home

Print a piece of **8.5x11 paper with dotted lines along the page**. We provided the template below.

Lay the paper down horizontally and cut along the dotted lines, creating **16 even strips**.

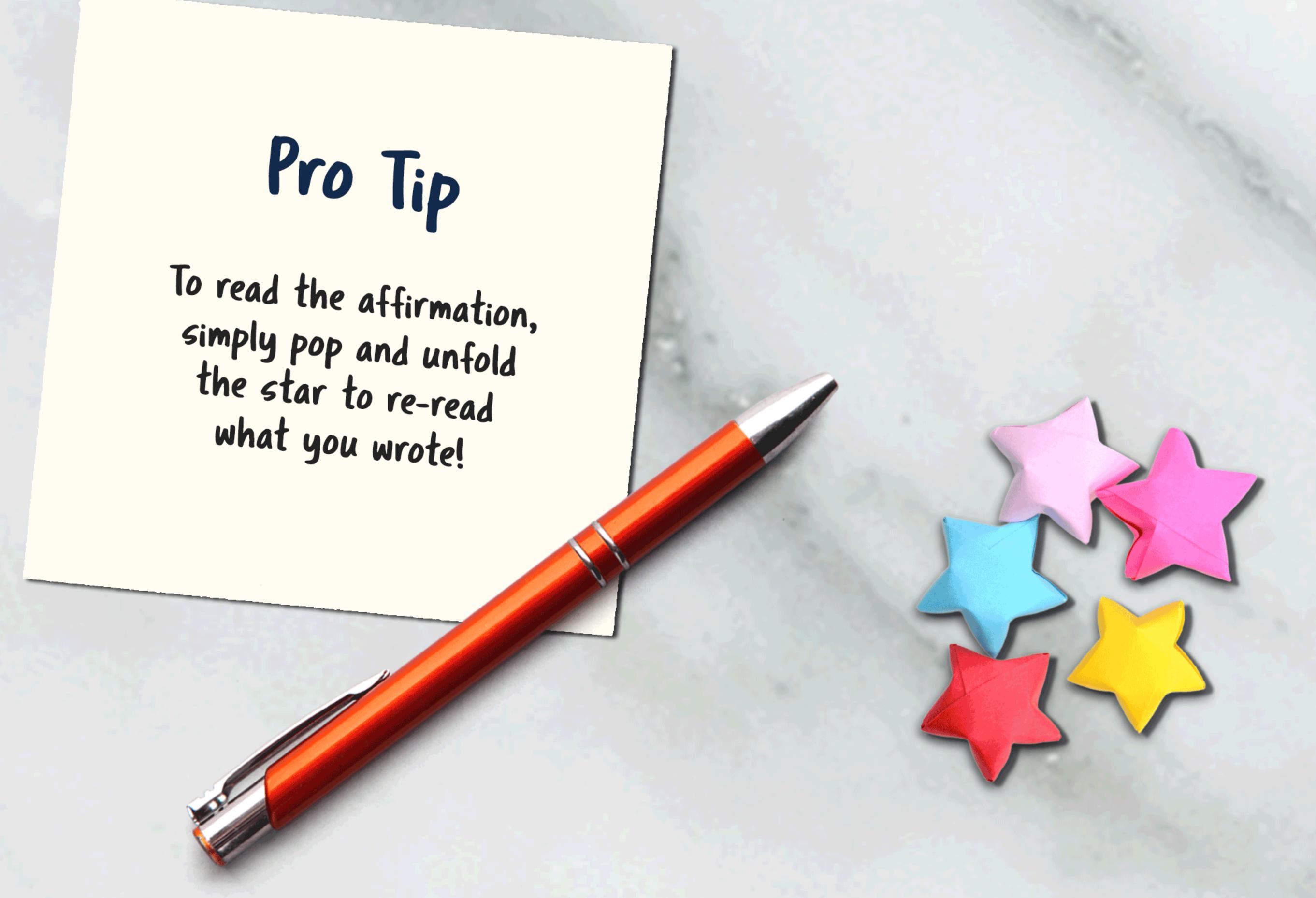
Your teen should write one affirmation on each strip.

They should **fold the strips into stars** (watch this video or read the directions on folding below).

Ask the teen to **deposit their stars into a jar** that can be kept at home in their room, or in a shared area where you can look at the affirmations together.

Each morning, have your teen take one star, open it, and that will be their daily affirmation.

Encourage your teen to read the affirmation throughout the day multiple times.



Other ways to use them:

- Tie a knot toward one end of the strip. Leave just enough room at the short end to tuck it back into the knot when you're done - but don't tuck quite yet.
- Crease the knot to form a tight, flat pentagon with a short end and a long end.
- Fold the short end back toward the pentagon and crease the edge.
- Tuck the short end into the pentagon.
- Fold the long end of the strip back over the pentagon and crease the edge.
- Continue to fold the strip around the pentagon, loosely creasing the edges as you fold it. Stop once the strip is too short to fold again. You want it long enough to be able to securely tuck it into the pentagon. If it's not long enough, cut off the last fold to create a new end.
- Tuck the end into the pentagon.
- Pinch each corner of the pentagon between your thumb and forefinger to create an indentation.
- Continue with each point until the star is defined.

What you need Construction or Origami Paper printed with the dotted lines 2. Scissors 3. Markers, pens or colored pencils











