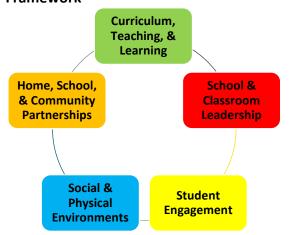


Schools are a key setting to promote the health and well-being of children. Mental health is an important part of our overall health and wellness and includes our emotional and social wellbeing. Our mental health affects how we think, feel, and act. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Educating youth about mental health is important as it helps them develop skills and knowledge to help them make healthier choices. This Mental Health Series toolkit has been developed to provide educators with the knowledge and resources to prepare them to talk with students about stress and anxiety in the classroom and school community.

According to the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey, 2021, only one-third (33.5%) of Ontario students in grades 7 to 12 report that they have very good or excellent mental or emotional health. In Windsor-Essex County, 39% of students felt nervous, anxious, or on edge in most days in the last 2 weeks; 24% felt depressed most days in the last week; and 64% reported feeling that their life is purposeful and meaningful (COMPASS, 2023). With these numbers in mind, it is important to consider how classrooms and school environments can support and facilitate positive mental health for their students.

Using the Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School framework, schools, school boards, parents and community partners can work together to develop healthy school environments that promote and support student well-being.

Figure 1. Foundations of a Healthy School Framework



The Foundations for a Healthy School Framework resource from the Ontario Ministry of Education promotes and supports student well-being.

Including the five interconnected areas to develop a comprehensive approach to healthy school policies, programs and initiatives related to mental health will help schools, school boards, parents, and community partners work together.

Visit the Foundations for a Healthy School web page to understand how the Health Unit applies this framework in area schools.

EVALUATION

We ask educators to provide feedback on this toolkit to assist us in making improvements for future editions. A brief survey for educators can be found at this <u>link</u> or by scanning the QR code below:















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MENTAL WELLNESS SERIES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Mental Wellness Series is a four-week program aimed at teaching students about stress and anxiety, along with healthy ways to cope with their feelings surrounding this. Over the course of four weeks, students will learn the basics of stress and anxiety, how it can impact their overall health, and how the body physiologically reacts during stressful situations. Three different coping methods (physical relaxation, art therapy, and self-care) will be covered, giving the students a variety of tools to use in the future.

This program is targeted to students in grades 6 and can supplement the Mental Health Literacy Modules (MH 78) for students in grades 7 and 8. It is intended to be run once per week, for four weeks. Each week will build on the previous week's information. Alternatively, it can be used in grades 5, 6 and 9. If the weekly schedule does not fit in the class schedule, it may be altered to suit the needs of the class.

The goal is for students to increase their awareness of what stress and anxiety is and be able to use healthy coping strategies to deal with their emotions.

Curriculum Expectations

Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education (2019)

- Grade 6- Mental Health Literacy, Connecting thoughts, emotions, and actions: D1.5
- Grade 7- Mental Health Literacy, Mental Health, mental illness: D1.6
- Grade 8- Mental Health Literacy, Routines and habits for mental health: D2.4

Depending on the day of the week the program is being implemented in the classroom, please use the following names for the program:

- Monday: Mindful Mondays
- Tuesday: Terrific Tuesdays
- Wednesday: Wellness Wednesdays
- Thursday: Thoughtful Thursdays
- Friday: Feel Good Fridays









Mental Wellness Series Schedule & Topic Details

Week	Topic	Lesson	Activity / Resources
Week 1	Stress and Anxiety	Introduction to stress & anxietyWhat causes stress?How stress effects our bodiesWays of coping with stress	 Physical stress symptom diagram Stress, Anxiety, and YOU quiz
Week 2	Peaceful Movement	 Physical ways to cope with stress Teach deep breathing, progressive relaxation, and visualization 	 Deep breathing Guided visualization Progressive relaxation
Week 3	Express Yourself Through Art	Introduction to art therapy	Coloring sheetsButton makerPaper airplane competition or origami
Week 4	Keeping Life in Balance	Self-care strategiesApps to help with stress	Physical activity with yoga, nature walk, dancing.Student handbook

^{*}All links for activities are found below*

Mental Wellness Series Lessons and Activities

- Week 1: Stress and Anxiety
 - Week 1 PowerPoint
 - Person Outline Handout. Use the outline found in Appendix A or draw an outline of a person on the white board or chart paper.
 - Stress and Anxiety Quiz- Kahoot (Appendix B)
- Week 2: Peaceful Movement
 - Week 2 PowerPoint
- Week 3: Express Yourself Through Art
 - Week 3 PowerPoint
 - Mandala Colouring Pages (Link to printable resources) may be used as follow up/continuation of Art Therapy
 - Paper Airplane Challenge (link to The Best Paper Airplane, video)
 - Button Making (available to loan from WECHU, School Health Nurse must attend session)
 - Origami (<u>Link to Origami resource</u>)
- Week 4: Keeping Life in Balance
 - Week 4 PowerPoint
 - Yoga Activity-10 Benefits of Yoga (Appendix C).
 - Jenga Game Questions (Appendix D). Use your own Jenga game or contact your School Nurse to loan a large Jenga from the WECHU.
 - Nature Walk Scavenger Hunt (<u>Appendix E</u>)
 - My Self Care Plan (<u>Appendix F</u>)













- Wellness Series Student Handbook
- Student Evaluation Survey
- Teacher Evaluation Survey

Accessing the Kahoot Presentation

- To access the Kahoot Mental Wellness resources, complete the following steps:
 - Login to Kahoot with your account information (email address), or create a new account for free following the instructions on the webpage.
 - Make sure you have selected **teacher account** when creating your account. Free basic teacher accounts allow up to 40 participants to play at once.
 - Click on the "Discover" header at the top of the webpage, and search "WECHUSchools" to find the WECHU Healthy Schools Department Kahoot slides and games. The following guizzes can be selected in Kahoot:
 - Mental Wellness Series Quiz Week 1
 - Have students navigate their electronic device the webpage <u>Kahoot.it</u>. Have players enter the numerical code on the Kahoot website, or have students scan the QR code for students to join-in.
- As students answer the quiz/question slides, points will be awarded, based on the speed they answer and whether their answer is correct.
- If available, award the top 3 students with a prize.

After your 4-week session is over, keep the discussion going! Use the following ideas to encourage students to continue bringing wellness and stress reduction techniques into the school!









CURRICULUM, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

The resources in this section are to support educators in understanding the issues related to mental health. The resources are guidelines and suggestions that allow educators to choose which ones work best for them.

For Educators

Resources

- MH LIT- Mental Health in Action: The MH LIT Mental Health in Action course from School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) is designed to provide educators with basic knowledge and information related to mental health, strategies to enhance student mental health, and everyday practices for use in the classroom. LEARN about mental health. INSPIRE through your actions. TEACH in ways that encourage belonging and that support student mental health. (French)
- <u>Common student mental health concerns (SMHO)</u>: Early identification and prevention services can make a critical difference for a student who is having difficulty with their thoughts, behaviour, or emotions. Educators have a role in helping to identify students in need of more support and reinforcing helpful skills and strategies in the classroom. (<u>French</u>)
- To find more resources about mental health, visit our <u>Mental Health Resources for Educators</u> web page.

Lessons and Activities

- The First 10 Days and Beyond- School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO): created for the start of the school year, but the information and activities are relevant year-round. The activities focus on relationships, connection, and community. They are designed to help students ease into school routines. (French)
- Start Well Five days of ready to use classroom activities to connect, calm and deign your day
 (SMHO): Resources are designed to help you start your day, whether virtual or in-person, in a
 good way while supporting students as they navigate and understand this unique transition back
 to school. (French)
- <u>Health & Physical Education Curriculum Mental Health Literacy Lesson Plans- SMHO:</u> Lesson
 plans to support the development of basic mental health literacy and social-emotional learning
 skills for grades 1-8. (<u>French</u>)
- <u>Virtual Field Trips: Stress Management and Coping-SMHO and OPHEA</u>: SMHO and OPHEA
 partnered in 2021 to produce a series of virtual field trips embedded in three-part lesson plans
 (Grades JK-12). (<u>French</u>)
- <u>Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource- SMHO and the Elementary Teacher's Federation</u>
 <u>of Ontario</u>: Easy to implement, evidence-informed mental health practices for elementary
 classrooms. (<u>French</u>)



SCHOOL & CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP

Improving school and classroom leadership involves all members of the school community to work together to create a positive classroom and school environment. Continue the conversation about stress and anxiety by registering for the OPHEA Healthy Schools Certification- French Version (check website for registration deadline). Ophea's Healthy Schools Certification gives your school the tools to promote and enhance the health and well-being of students, school staff, and the broader school community. Contact your school nurse for more information on how they can support your school in achieving a Healthy Schools Certification.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

When students feel empowered and value their learning they become engaged and have better learning outcomes. Below are resources that support improving student engagement in the topic of stress and anxiety.

School Campaigns and Messaging

- Start a Student Wellness Committee. Ask your school nurse to help support this initiative.
- Advocate for Mindful Minutes- encourage teachers to give 2 min each day to allow students to take time to reflect on their feelings and allow students to relax in a way that is helpful to them.
- Use Self-Care 101 for students- to keep morning announcements positive.
- Encourage the development of a walking club on nutrition breaks.

Tag the health unit on social media when posting about activities your students are taking part in:

> Facebook: @TheWECHU Twitter: @TheWECHU Instagram: @thewechu









SOCIAL & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

Social and physical environments are important for student learning. Social and physical environments that feel safe, caring, and healthy, contribute to better learning. It also supports social, emotional, and physical development.

- Post mental wellness statements throughout the classroom to remind students of the healthy coping strategies available to deal with their emotions.
- Create bulletin boards to display messaging relating to positive mental health thought the school.

School Board Policies

School boards can set policy that influence the social and environmental norms that student's experience. Please review your specific school board and/or school's policies that promote mental health for further information. Individual schools should speak to their school boards about whether they can develop individual school policies.

HOME, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Home, school, and community partnership involves connecting parents, school staff, family programs, and the community to support and promote opportunities for well-being. In order to get students more in touch with their mental health, here are some activities that families can do at home with their child. You can find more of these activities for your students at School Mental Health Ontario:

- Expressing Gratitude
- <u>5, 4, 3, 2, 1</u>
- Deep Belly Breathing
- Positive Self-Talk

If you are looking for more support for children and youth, you can visit the health unit website, or:

- Call 2-1-1 or visit 211ontario.ca to find mental health resources near you.
- The Youth Wellness Hub Windsor-Essex offers walk in services to youth ages 12 to 25 without a wait list or referral.
- Windsor-Essex Youth Services Card
- Kids Help Phone is available 24/7 at 1-800-668-6868. Their team of trained counsellors provide a free texting service and live online or live telephone chat for kids, teens, and young adults in both English and French.
- If a child is in a crisis, follow you school board policies. Visit the Ontario webpage to find more services.



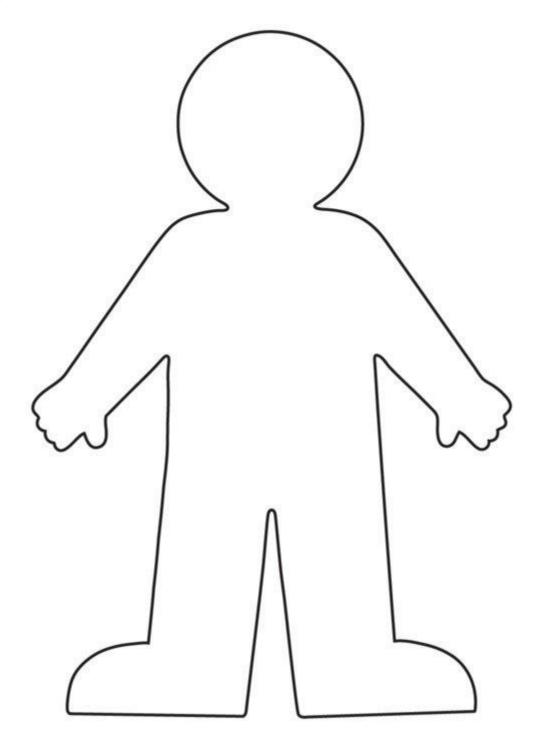






Appendix A: Week 1- Stress Activity

When you are stressed, where do you feel it in your body? Put the stickers on the body part where you feel stress.









Appendix B: Stress and Anxiety Quiz

- 1. Stress is always a bad thing.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 2. Things I find stressful, everyone will find stressful.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 3. What percentage of teens feel their mental health is fair or poor?
 - a. 21%
 - b. 38%
 - c. 78%
 - d. 95%
- 4. Feeling anxious means you are weak.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 5. Which of the following in NOT a common physical symptom of anxiety?
 - a. Sweating
 - b. Pounding heart
 - c. Dizziness
 - d. Sleepiness
- 6. Feeling anxious is different than having an anxiety disorder.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 7. Which of the following is a stress hormone?
 - a. Adrenaline
 - b. Norepinephrine
 - c. Cortisol
 - d. All of the above
- 8. The best way to lower stress is to:
 - a. Be active
 - b. Eat well
 - c. Do the things you enjoy
 - d. All of the above











- 9. How many teens are sleep deprived?
 - a.
 - b. 26%
 - c. 35%
 - d. 89%
- 10. Long term stress can be harmful to my health.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers:

1.B 2.B 3.B 4.B 5.D 6.A 7.D 8.D 9.B 10.A











Appendix C: Week 4 - 10 Benefits of Yoga

1. Yoga increases your flexibility.

This is why many people start yoga, and it's certainly a great benefit of yoga practice. Yoga postures and sequences help to increase the body's range of motion. The mindful approach of yoga helps to ensure that stretching is done safely, allowing the nervous system to release the muscles into gentle, effective stretches. This reduces the risk of injuring ligaments and tendons, which can occur through more aggressive approaches to flexibility training. Releasing tension in the muscles can also help them to relax and let go, helping your body to open up more.

2. Yoga helps you to build strength.

Although many people overlook this one, seeing only yoga's benefits for flexibility, yoga is actually a fantastic strengthening practice. Yoga helps to strengthen the muscles that support the body's weight, leading to functional strength. It is also fantastic for building core strength. This improves athletic performance and your functionality in everyday life, while keeping you safe from injury.

3. Yoga improves your posture.

One of the great things about the strengthening and stretching work of yoga is that it is a balancing practice. Yoga can help to address any muscular imbalances, lengthening tight areas and strengthening weak areas. Our posture can often deteriorate as we age, in a large part due to our habitual movement patterns during the day. For instance, if you spend a long time working at a computer, you may find yourself vulnerable to slumping with rounded shoulders. Over time the back muscles become weak, and the chest muscles become tight, exacerbating the rounded posture. Yoga can help you to stretch out the chest and strengthen the muscles of the back. It can also make you far more aware of your body and posture, so that you find yourself automatically self-correcting to come into a healthier alignment throughout the day.

4. Yoga helps to keep your joints healthy.

Yoga will strengthen the muscles around the joints, helping to stabilise them. By moving the joints in their full range of motion, yoga can help to promote better joint health. The mobilisation of the joints improves the flow of synovial fluid, which lubricates them, allowing for smooth and healthy movement of the bones. Synovial fluid also delivers fresh oxygen and nutrients to the joint cartilage, helping to restore it and keep it healthy. Yoga can even help those with more serious joint problems such as arthritis, improving physical function and reducing pain.

5. Yoga is a powerful mindfulness practice.

Yoga is about uniting the mind, body and breath. In doing this it brings you into the present moment. Mindfulness has proven benefits for a whole range of health conditions and is particularly effective in promoting positive mental health. In particular, mindfulness practices have been shown to strengthen the immune system, improve social relationships and reduce depression, anxiety and neuroticism. The benefits of increased mindfulness through yoga clearly reach far beyond the mat.









6. Yoga reduces stress.

Many people begin yoga to improve their flexibility, but they keep coming back because they find it makes them feel so much better. The focus, centring and breathing of yoga all help to reduce stress and can be the ideal antidote to a hectic modern lifestyle. In part this is another wonderful benefit of the mindful aspect of yoga. It is also due to the positive impact of increasing activity levels and exercise, along with the relaxation and reduction of physical tension that yoga brings. Yoga can leave you feeling relaxed and refreshed, physically, mentally and energetically.

7. Yoga lowers blood pressure.

Having high blood pressure is a serious medical condition, which is associated with increased risk of both heart attacks and strokes. As well as reducing stress, which can be a contributing factor to high blood pressure, several aspects of yoga practice are thought to directly improve blood pressure. The relaxation and deep breathing of yoga can reduce high blood pressure even after the practice is finished. Certain postures such as Supported Bridge Pose, Legs Up the Wall Pose and of course Savasana or Corpse Pose are particularly beneficial for those with high blood pressure.

8. Yoga helps you to make healthier life choices.

There is a story in yoga about the student who asked their yoga teacher whether their smoking habit would interfere with their yoga. The teacher smiled and replied. "No, but your yoga will interfere with your smoking." Whether or not that was the case, one of the great things about yoga is that it helps you to tune into what your body wants and needs. Many people find that the acceptance and self-love that they practise on the yoga mat can have a profound impact to the way they treat their bodies off the mat, whether that is through improved activity levels. better nutritional choices or reduced reliance on alcohol or tobacco.

9. Yoga improves breathing.

The basis of yogic breathing practices lies in pranayama, or yogic breathing techniques. These techniques, which are integrated into the vast majority of yoga classes, can be amazing for restoring balance and vitality to the body and mind. Controlled breathing can increase energy levels and relax the muscles, while reducing stress, anxiety and depression. On a physiological level, regular yoga practice has been found to improve lung capacity and breathing both in healthy adults and those who suffer from asthma.

10. Yoga encourages your body's natural healing process.

The body has an incredible ability to heal itself, given the appropriate conditions. Yoga practice can be a wonderful way to create an environment which allows the body's innate healing powers to kick in. In part this is due to the effects of mindfulness on the immune system, increasing the body's ability to fight disease and restore health. The strengthening and lengthening effects of yoga can improve mobility and function, helping the body to recover from physical injury. And the benefits for mental health can lead to improved sleep patterns and enhanced wellbeing, greatly improving your quality of life.









Appendix D: Week 4- Jenga Game Questions

BLACK- Stress and Anxiety

- 1. Stress is always a bad thing.
 - a. True
 - b. False (good thing...motivate you)
- 2. Things I find stressful, everyone will find stressful.
 - a. True
 - b. False (everyone's stress is different)
- 3. What percentage of teens rate their mental health as fair or poor?
 - a. 21%
 - b. 78%
 - c. 95%
 - d. 38%
- 4. Feeling anxious means you are weak.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 5. Which of the following in NOT a common physical symptom of anxiety?
 - a. Sweating
 - b. Pounding heart
 - c. Dizziness
 - d. Sleepiness
- 6. Feeling anxious is different than having an anxiety disorder.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 7. Which of the following is a stress hormone?
 - a. Adrenaline
 - b. Norepinephrine
 - c. Cortisol
 - d. All of the above
- 8. The best way to lower stress is to:









- a. Be active
- b. Eat well
- c. Do the things you enjoy
- d. All of the above
- 9. How many teens are sleep deprived?
 - a. 89%
 - b. 35%
 - c. **26%**
 - d. 2%
- 10. Long term stress can be harmful to my health.
 - a. True
 - b. False

BLUE - Peaceful Movement

- 11. Relaxation is the state of being free from tension and anxiety.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 12. Physical relaxation refers to physical actions we can take to relax our mind and our bodies.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 13. Deep breathing is NOT an effective method of relaxation.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 14. Most of us spend our time breathing deeply, filling the lungs completely with air.
 - a. True
 - b. False (breathe shallow, don't fill the lungs completely with air)
- 15. Deep breathing can decrease stress, lower your blood pressure and slow your heart rate.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 16. Guided imagery is a type of focused relaxation. Focused relaxation involves concentrating on a specific object, sound, or experience in order to calm your mind.
 - a. True
 - b. False









YELLOW- Guided Imagery

17. What is the goal of guided imagery?

In guided imagery, you intentionally think of a peaceful place or scenario. The goal is to promote a calm state through relaxation and mindfulness. The idea is that your body reacts to your own thoughts.

- 18. When you focus your attention on pleasant scenarios, your mind and body tend to relax.
 - a. True
 - b. False

You may feel less tightness and tension in your muscles, while your mind might feel calmer and more at ease.

- 19. Progressive Muscle Relaxation teaches you how to relax your back when you are feeling stressed.
 - a. True
 - b. **False** (relaxes your whole body)
- 20. Progressive muscle relaxation will help you to lower your overall tension and stress levels, and help you relax when you are feeling anxious.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 21. Progressive muscle relaxation will increase your physical problems such as stomach aches and headaches, as well as cause sleep problems.
 - a. True
 - b. False (decrease)
- 22. It is better to first practice progressive muscle relaxation when you are calm. That way, it will be easier to do when feeling anxious.
 - a. True
 - b. False

RED- Art Therapy

- 23. Art therapy can help to resolve conflicts and problems, manage behavior, reduce stress, and develop new skills and hobbies.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 24. List two pro's of art therapy:





- a. Non-judgmental
- b. Individual-lead (can do whatever art YOU find enjoyable)
- c. Allows individual expression
- d. Outlet for bottled up feelings, feelings you don't know how to release
- e. Develop creativity and other helpful skills
- f. Can be done for cheap or free depending on what you choose
- g. There's no right or wrong way to do art therapy you do what you enjoy & create what you want!
- 25. Name two examples of Art Therapy:
 - a. Coloring
 - b. Drawing or painting
 - c. Playing or learning to play music
 - d. Making jewelry
 - e. Crafting
 - f. Origami
 - g. Writing or journaling
 - h. Baking or cooking
 - i. Dancing
- 26. According to a 2016 study published in the Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, just minutes of creative activity can reduce your stress and have a positive effect on your mental health regardless of artistic experience or talent.

Answer: 45 min

- 27. Art therapy gives you an outlet to channel your energy to something you enjoy doing.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 28. Creating art can give you relief from overwhelming thoughts or emotions.
 - a. True
 - b. False

GREEN- Self-care

- 29. Self-care is the practice of taking time to pay attention to you.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 30. Self-care should be practiced once a month.









- a. True
- b. False (once a day)
- 31. Self-care improves your physical health by promoting relaxation and gives you a break from stress and offers soothing feelings.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 32. Having a well-cared-for body contributes to short-term feelings of well-being.
 - a. True
 - b. False (long term)
- 33. There are 7 types of self-care, name 2 of them:
 - 1. Sensory- eg: listening to the outdoors, the sounds around you, enjoying the smell form your favorite candle, listening to music
 - 2. Pleasure- eg: watching a favorite movie, journaling, crafting
 - 3. Mental- eg: trying a new activity, doing a word search, cleaning out your closet
 - 4. Spiritual eg: reading poetry, praying, thinking about what you are thankful for
 - 5. Emotional- eg: crying when you need to, writing your feelings down
 - 6. Physical- eg: yoga going for a walk, napping
 - 7. Social- eg: calling a friend, going out with a friend
- 34. Self-care is about your friends and what they like to do to feel good
 - a. True
 - b. False (YOU and what you like to do)









Appendix E: Week 4- Nature Wall Scavenger Hunt

Nature A-Z Scavenger Hunt by pocketot.com			
A	N		
В	0		
C	P		
D	Q		
E	R		
F	S		
G	T		
H	<u> </u>		
I			
J			
K	X		
L	Υ		
M	Z		







Nature Walk SCAVENGER HUNT





Grab a pen or pencil and go for a nature walk! Check off each of these elements of nature as you find them. Good luck, and have fun!

- A WORM
- A BUTTERFLY
- A BEE
- A SQUIRREL
- A NEST
- A SNAIL
- AN ANT
- A PUDDLE
- A PINE CONE
- AN EVERGREEN TREE
- A TREE STUMP
- A BROWN LEAF
- A REALLY LONG STICK
- A SMALL SMOOTH ROCK
- A DANDELION CLOCK
- AN ACORN

- A WILDELOWER
- A FLUFFY CLOUD
- MUD
- GRASS
- A FERN
- A WILD MUSHROOM
- A FLYING INSECT
- WILD BERRIES
- A SPIDER
- A WINGED SEED
- A SMALL YELLOW LEAF
- A BIRD
- A REALLY BIG ROCK
- A PIECE OF MOSS
- A SHELL
- A CATERPILLAR





https://schisandraandbergamot.com/nature-scavenger-hunt/











Appendix F: Week 4- My Self-Care Plan

This worksheet can be downloaded from the MindyourMind website.

