



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

SHOW-ME
H☀**PE**
MISSOURI

SHOW ME HOPE MISSOURI



Show Me Hope is Missouri's crisis counseling program (CCP) in response to a disaster or critical event. Counselors are based in the local community to teach coping and stress management skills to anyone dealing with the anxiety and uncertainty caused by the event. The CCP helps individuals and communities recover from natural and human-caused disasters through community outreach and access to resources including mental health services.

FOSTERING WELLNESS

You Should Know

When times are challenging, stress can take a toll on your physical health as well as your emotional health. Without proper sleep, nutrition, and exercise, it can be difficult to cope, stay focused, and solve problems. According to numerous scientific studies, developing healthy wellness habits strengthens your body's resilience and reduces the impact of stress on your ability to cope.

The following strategies can build your resilience by enhancing your physical wellness:

Physical activity. Regular physical activity is essential to overall health and resilience. Active people are less likely to be depressed or anxious, and they have lower stress levels because exercise increases mood-boosting chemicals like endorphins and dopamine. Exercise also improves information processing and memory. Aim for two-and-a-half hours of physical activity each week, or thirty minutes most days of the week. The thirty-minute segments can be broken up into increments throughout the day (three ten-minute walks, for example). Consider taking virtual fitness classes, going for a swim, or hiking out in nature.

Posture. Some studies show that shifting your posture can change your mood. If you are feeling nervous or anxious, try striking a pose that expresses the opposite, such as putting your hands on your hips and holding your head high (sometimes called the "power" or "superhero" pose). Additionally, certain yoga poses increase confidence and well-being.

Sleep. Adequate sleep increases mood stability and cognitive function. When you get enough sleep, you are better able to process new information, avoid overreacting, and make better decisions. For optimal energy and functioning, the Centers for Disease Control recommend adults sleep from seven to nine hours a night to recharge mentally and physically. Avoid consuming caffeine and eating heavy meals at least three hours before bedtime. It is also important to eliminate screen use at least an hour before you fall asleep. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.

Diet. Several studies found a link between poor diet (processed foods or other junk foods) and the worsening of anxiety, depression, and insomnia. There is growing evidence that the Mediterranean diet lowers the risk of depression and improves cognition. Avoid skipping meals, eat less junk food, and limit your intake of stimulants to decrease your irritability and anxiety.

Meditation and mindfulness. Research indicates meditation, yoga, and practicing mindfulness are effective in increasing your capacity to tolerate change and stress, while focusing your attention on more positive aspects of life. Your problems are put into perspective, and you gain clarity to solve them. Try integrating five minutes of a mindfulness practice into your day. Follow a guided breathing exercise on YouTube, or use an app such as Headspace or Calm. Or, take a moment to focus your attention on the sensations you experience (touch, smell, sight, sound) while washing dishes or taking a shower.

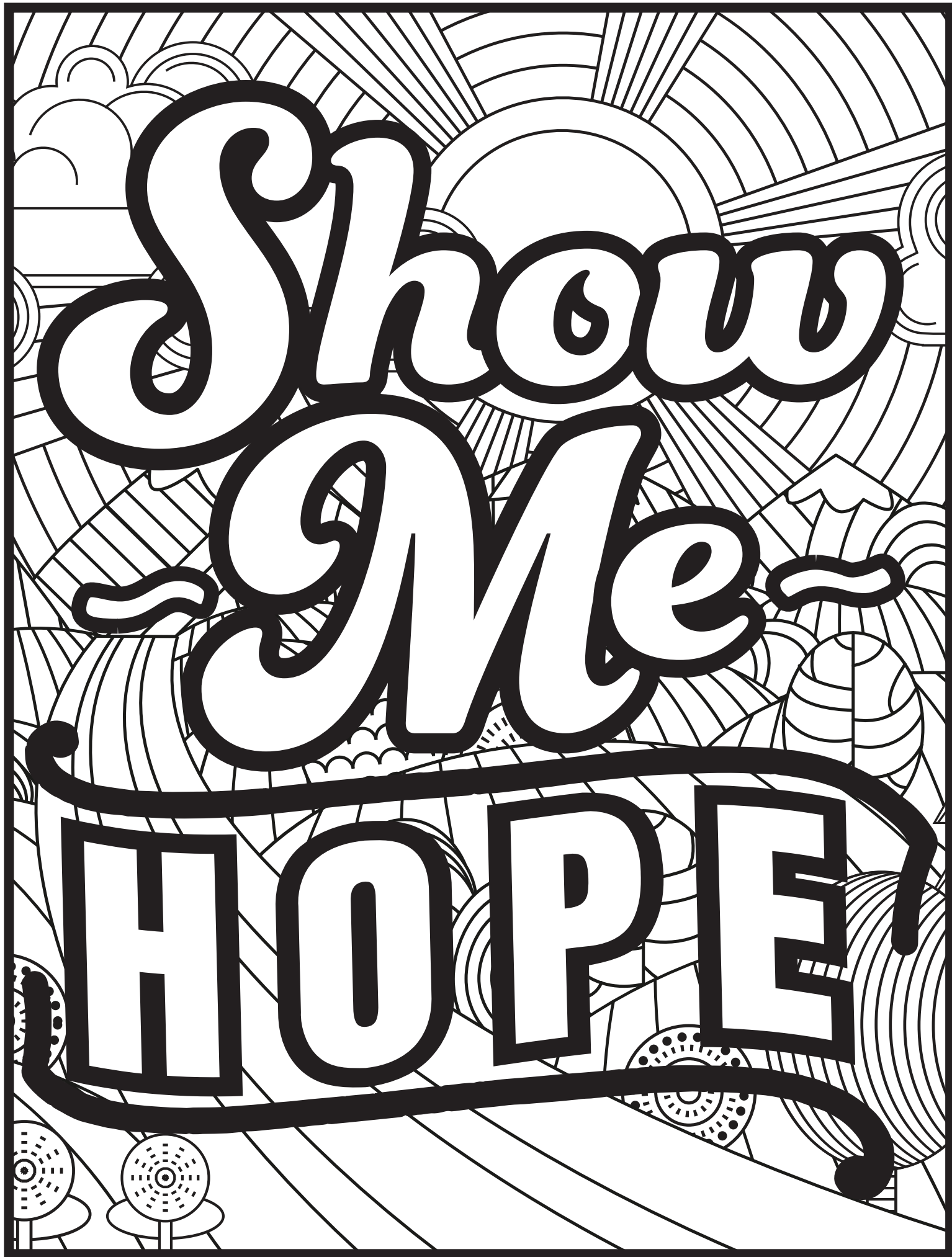
Limiting intake of alcohol and drugs. While using substances may dull uncomfortable emotions caused by stress, they will not help you manage your reactions to the problems or allow you to solve them.

What to Do

Write down your own ideas for increasing your physical wellness:

Of the strategies listed above, what small changes can you make now to increase your physical wellness and your resilience? Write down those actions or goals:

Which healthy habits are most challenging to maintain when you feel stressed?



Show
Me

HOPE!

FINDING MEANING

You Should Know

During the coronavirus pandemic, it might be difficult to stay positive and proactive—especially if you are quarantined and housebound. When confronted with constant change and unpredictability, it can be easy to develop a “why bother?” mindset. This makes it challenging to care about things that used to bring joy or satisfaction, or to find new sources of fulfillment and purpose.

This worksheet provides suggestions to help you find meaning during this frightening—but temporary—experience.

What to Do

Here are several strategies for improving your mindset and finding meaning in your present situation:

Appreciate the present moment. Concentrate on the present instead of what has already happened or what might happen in the future. You are okay in this moment. Breathe. You have food. You are not sick. You can go outside and take a walk.

Write down the sights, sounds, and smells that you are experiencing at this very moment. Is your chair soft and comfortable? Do you hear birds tweeting outside? Do you smell coffee brewing or dinner cooking?

Express gratitude each day. Think of at least one thing you are grateful for each day. This is an important practice for yourself, as well as your loved ones, and it has a positive impact on your emotional health. What things are you grateful for today: Your family's health? Your ability to connect with old friends online? A safe place to live? Write them down:

Master a new skill. You can find meaning when you use your talents and abilities to learn something new. Now is a great time to learn something that may have been too time-consuming in the past. What new skill or hobby would you like to learn or practice?

Help others. Volunteering your time and energy is an effective way to give your life meaning. Even during social distancing, there are ways you can support individuals and organizations: make financial donations, deliver food to homebound seniors, send thank-you cards to health care workers, or make check-in phone calls to sick friends and neighbors. What are some ways that you can share your time or talent to help others?

What other activities give your life meaning? List them here.

What to Do

Choose three activities from the list above that you will do over the next week to create meaning in your life.

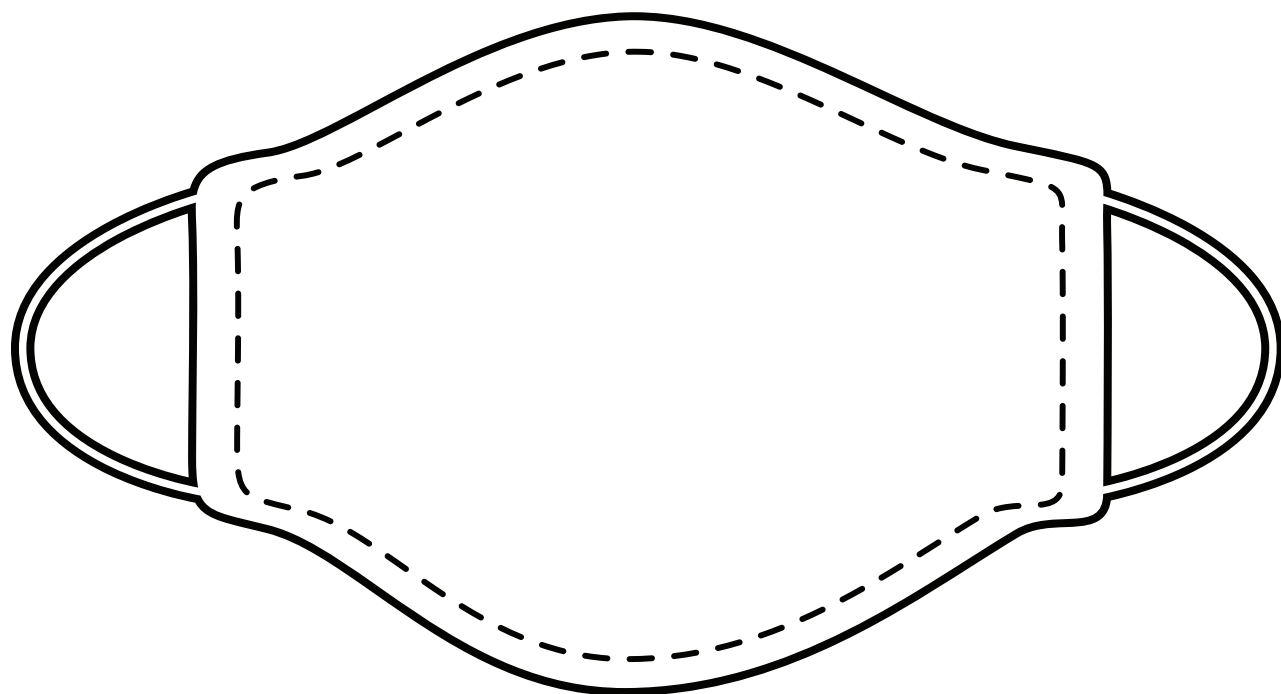
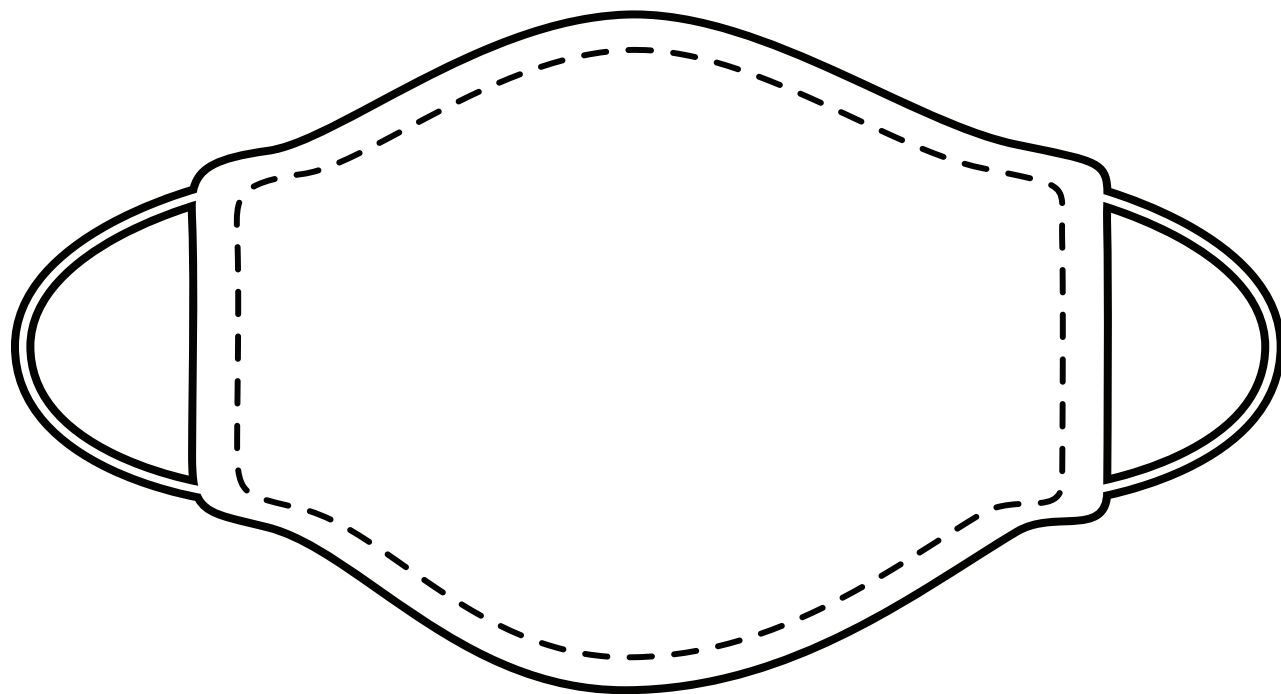
1.

2.

3.

DESIGN YOUR MASK

Be creative! Color in your own mask... or a couple of them!



MANAGING UNCERTAINTY

You Should Know

Almost everything about the coronavirus pandemic is uncertain: how many people will be affected, how much the economy and job market will be impacted, and how soon things will return to “normal.” Uncertainty can cause feelings of extreme discomfort. You might try to avoid uncertainty by watching the news for up-to-date information, but this can actually increase your level of fear and anxiety, and distract you from completing daily tasks. Uncertainty might also lead to focusing on worst-case scenarios, which will interfere with your ability to solve problems or make decisions.

While uncertainty can be frightening, panic and worry are ineffective methods of preparing for unforeseen events. And consider this—elevated levels of stress can actually compromise your immune system, making you even more vulnerable to illness.

What to Do

These suggestions can help you manage uncertainty during the coronavirus pandemic. First, think of a time you successfully handled uncertainty, and then answer these questions:

What was the situation?

How did you react?

What strengths and skills did you tap into?

To whom did you reach out for support?

What did you learn about yourself from this experience?

Next, focus on things you can control during this pandemic, such as steps you can take to protect yourself. These include:

- washing your hands frequently
- avoiding touching your face
- staying home as much as possible, even if you feel well
- avoiding non-essential shopping and travel
- practicing social distancing by staying at least six feet away from others in public
- supporting your immune system by getting enough sleep and eating well
- following recommendations from official health agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization

What other ways to protect yourself are within your control?



Let go

of what

you can't

change

RECOGNIZING AND APPRECIATING YOUR RESILIENCE

You Should Know

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from difficulties. It is an inner strength that people who persevere under the most difficult circumstances exhibit. Resilient people tend to maintain a more positive outlook, effectively cope with stress, and solve seemingly insurmountable problems.

In order for you to develop your resilience, it is important to focus on your strengths instead of your weaknesses by reminding yourself of the ways you have coped with difficulties in the past. Ask yourself, "How can I identify and appreciate my strengths?" or "How have I managed to carry on during the toughest times?" or "How did I manage to prevent things from becoming worse?"

Research has demonstrated that your self-esteem plays an important role in coping with stress and recovering from difficult events. Remind yourself of your strengths and accomplishments. When you make negative statements to yourself, immediately replace them with positive ones, such as, "I can do this," "I'm a great friend/mother/partner," or "I'm good at my job."

Becoming more confident in your own abilities, including your ability to respond to and deal with a crisis, is a great way to build resilience.

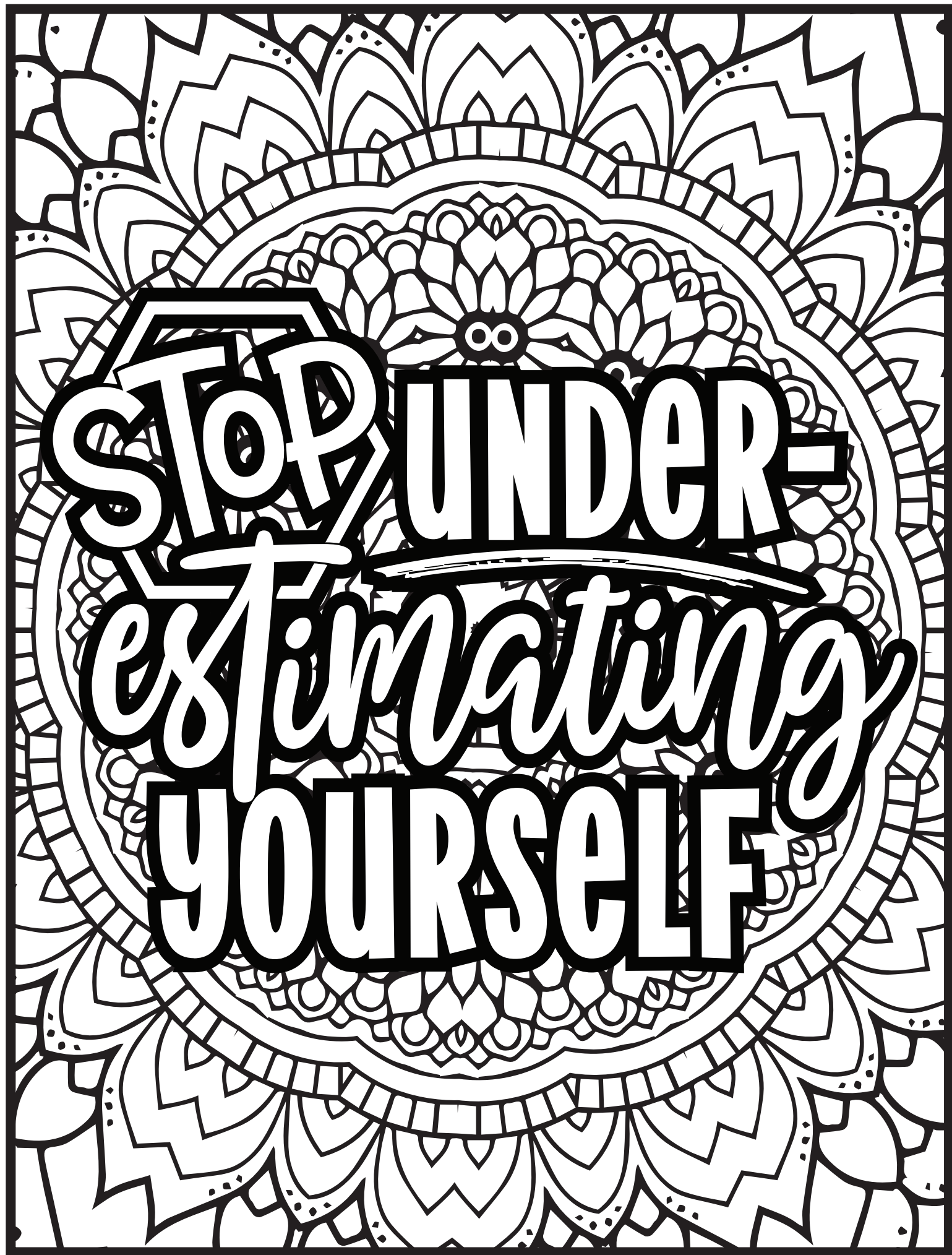
What to Do

This activity will help you identify your strengths and abilities so you can recognize and appreciate your resilience.

First, write down your strengths and skills. You might want to ask a friend or family member to add to the list.

Using the chart, write down things you have accomplished, including ordeals, dilemmas, or problems you have overcome. Reflect on what personal strengths were required for you to achieve each one. For example, completing a certification program might take determination and resolve. Refer to your list of strengths and skills. Include how you felt. Share your chart with someone who is supportive; they might think of an accomplishment you have not included, perhaps because you forgot about it or didn't even think of it as an accomplishment.

Accomplishment	Strengths	Feelings and Emotions



STOP UNDER-
estimating
YOURSELF

DEVELOPING PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

You Should Know

When you are facing challenging and stressful situations, it can be easy to spend more of your energy coping with your emotions, rather than addressing the problems themselves. Waiting for the problem to resolve or go away on its own can amplify the negative impact on your well-being.

If you actively work on solutions, you are better able to emotionally cope with problems; you will also feel more in control. Life will seem more manageable and less stressful. Developing problem-solving skills is an effective way to strengthen your resilience so you are better able to address—and cope with—problems during times of adversity.

Check off the statements that describe you:

- ☐ My fears about making mistakes affect my decision-making ability.
- ☐ When faced with a problem, I feel hopeless and helpless. It's hard for me to look at the problem from different angles to come up with the best solution.
- ☐ I have little faith in my capabilities and skills.
- ☐ If I could, I would ask other people to make difficult decisions for me.
- ☐ When others get stuck, I am unable to think of solutions to problems.
- ☐ I am fearful of what life will "throw" at me because I don't think I can handle it.
- ☐ I have a hard time asking for other people's ideas or advice.
- ☐ Once I've found a solution that I think will work, I stop looking for other options.
- ☐ It's impossible for me to think "outside the box" to address problems.
- ☐ When faced with a difficult problem, I tend to get discouraged easily.

If you checked off three or more statements, you probably have a difficult time solving problems. Your well-being is probably negatively affected by your lack of problem-solving skills.

What to Do

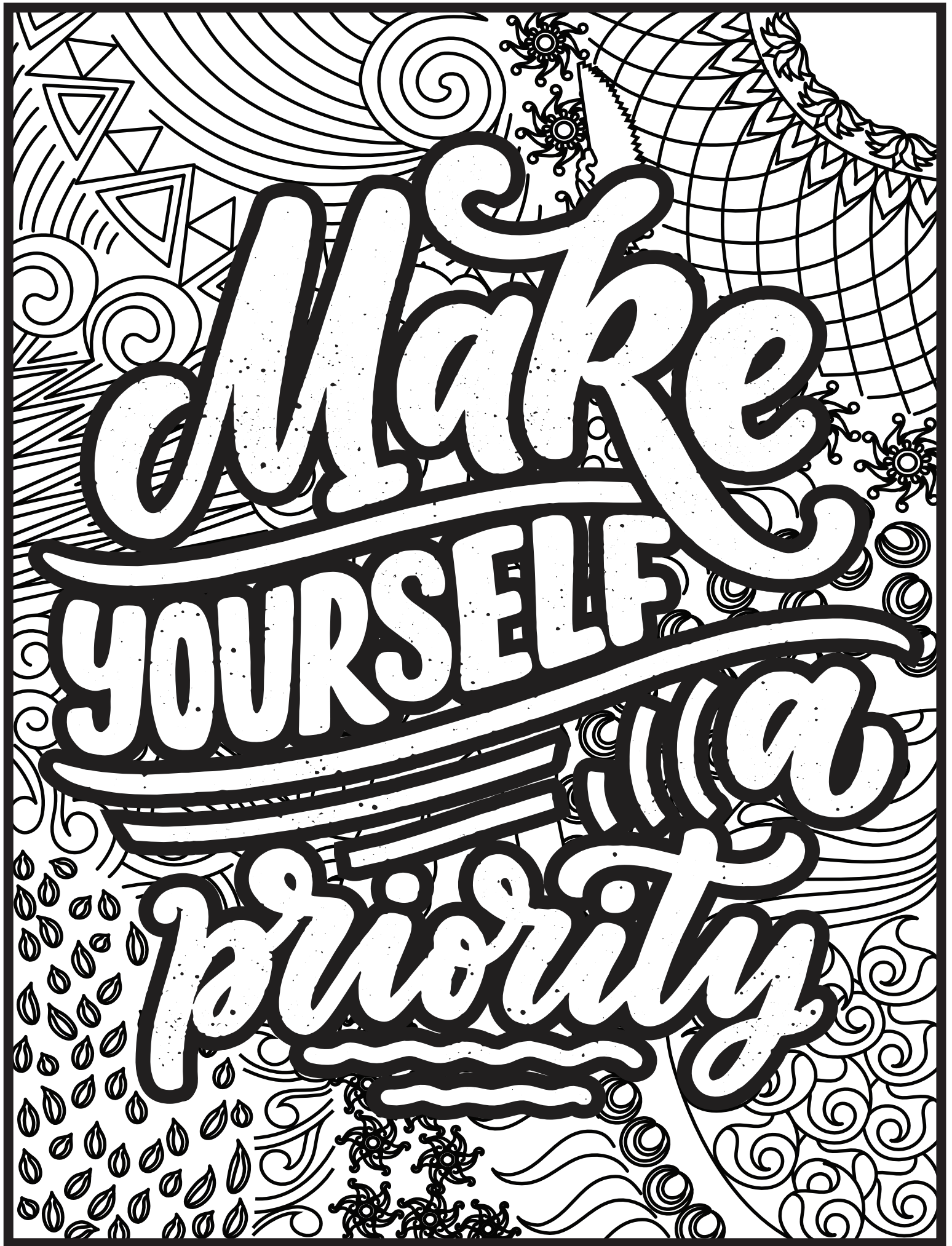
There are five basic steps to problem solving:

1. Identify and understand the actual problem. Be specific and objective.
2. Break the problem down into smaller, more manageable parts.
3. Consider possible solutions. Make a list of potential ways to solve your current problem. Be as open-minded as you can.
4. Weigh the options to decide which solution should be applied to the problem.
5. Choose the best strategy and put your solution into action.

These strategies can help you develop problem-solving skills:

Ask for help. When you feel overwhelmed by a situation, your emotions might make it difficult to see the problem objectively. Identify people you trust who can provide an unbiased point of view and provide suggestions to your dilemma.

Who are some of the people in your life that can support you in solving problems?



Make

YOURSELF

a
priority

MAINTAINING STRONG SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

You Should Know

During times of suffering, it can be a natural impulse to reach out to others for support. However, the quality of your social connections matter. The stronger your social connections—the people who know you well and will care for you during difficult times—the more resilient you will be when facing an emotional or physical crisis.

In its resilience report, the American Psychological Association wrote, “Many studies show that the primary factor in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family. Relationships that create love and trust, provide role models and offer encouragement and reassurance, help bolster a person’s resilience.”

Additionally, strong social connections reduce loneliness while providing a sense of belonging. If you have superficial connections to a large number of people, you might still feel lonely. On the other hand, if you have a limited number of quality connections, you can be alone yet not experience loneliness.

What to Do

Identify the quality relationships in your life. When you think of your quality relationships, consider not only your romantic partner but also other important people in your life: family members, friends, coworkers, classmates, fellow members of worship centers, clubs, or groups, etc. These are people who are committed to you and the relationship you share; they are not just acquaintances.

Who are the quality relationships in your life?

How do they support you during challenging times?

Identify other sources of social connection. Social connections include professional relationships and community groups that are positive and supportive. Belonging to a professional or social group can increase your sense of value and belonging as you share common experiences, interests, or talents. Some examples include professional networking groups or an online book club. These groups can share helpful resources.

To what professional and social groups do you belong?

How do these groups or members help you cope during challenging times?

Identify sources of emotional support. A therapist, counselor, or support group can be effective in providing social and emotional connection during tough times. Social media support groups and virtual chats can also be a source of compassion, empathy, and nonjudgmental support, as members share experiences and stories of resilience.

Who are the emotional supports in your life?

How do they support you and provide resources during challenging times?



WELCOMING MINDFULNESS INTO YOUR LIFE

You Should Know

Have you ever driven your car along a familiar route only to arrive not remembering how you got there? Have you ever promised yourself just a few pretzels only to suddenly realize that somehow you have eaten the whole bag? This is what it means to be mindless, to travel through life on autopilot, never stopping to recognize what is really important to you.

Mindfulness means being attentive and aware of the thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations that are happening in your immediate environment. It means accepting all this information without judging it as right or wrong, bad or good. Being mindful allows you to function and grow along with the moment instead of flailing about in a past that you cannot change or a future impossible to predict. If you are mindful, you take your time and allow yourself to appreciate every moment of your present.

Practicing mindfulness meditations will help when you

- need to turn your attention away from worrisome fears and what-ifs and instead become attuned to the sensations, sights, sounds, and smells of what is taking place right in front of you;
- are at your wits' end with the realization that you cannot escape the relentless disturbing images that are flashing through your mind;
- find yourself criticizing your past mistakes;
- find yourself agonizing over a potential future calamity;
- find yourself desperately trying to stop yourself from engaging in some kind of unhealthy behavior.

You don't need to buy lots of fancy equipment or learn complicated words. You can sit, stand, or lie down with or without a yoga mat or cushion. You just need to commit to a set amount of time every day. To introduce mindfulness meditation into your life:

Understand that your breath is important. The focus is often on the breath because the physical sensation of breathing is universal and natural to everyone. It is the center of life. Always come back to focusing on your breath, no matter what else your thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations tell you to do.

Know that the goal is not relaxation. Mindfulness meditation does not equal relaxation. The goal is not to escape or avoid your pain but to observe it without attaching any meaning to it and move on from it by turning your attention to the present moment.

Return and repeat. It is natural for your mind to wander at first but simply recognize what is happening and return to your practice until you can focus for a longer period of time.

Be nice to yourself. Don't criticize your abilities. This is not a contest, and you don't win or lose by being the best or the worst. You win by becoming one with yourself and leaning in to your world as it currently is.



PAUSING DURING A DISTRESSING SITUATION

You Should Know

When confronted with distressing situations, it can be challenging to remember healthy coping strategies you have learned. It might seem easier and feel more natural to return to unhealthy habits than to identify helpful techniques to manage your emotions. Taking a step back from an emotionally upsetting situation gives you the opportunity to examine the situation more objectively. As a result, you are more likely to choose healthier solutions and coping techniques.

Think of a recent situation when you experienced upsetting emotions and responded by acting impulsively or resorted to harmful urges. Then, answer these questions:

What happened?

What were your emotions during this situation?

How did you react?

How did you feel afterward?

What to Do

The following strategy, which uses the acronym REST, lays out the steps to help you pause, clear your head, and then determine a helpful plan of action to address the situation. By encouraging you to briefly shift your attention from emotions and urges to facts and solutions, REST can be used as the first step in changing your unhealthy habits.

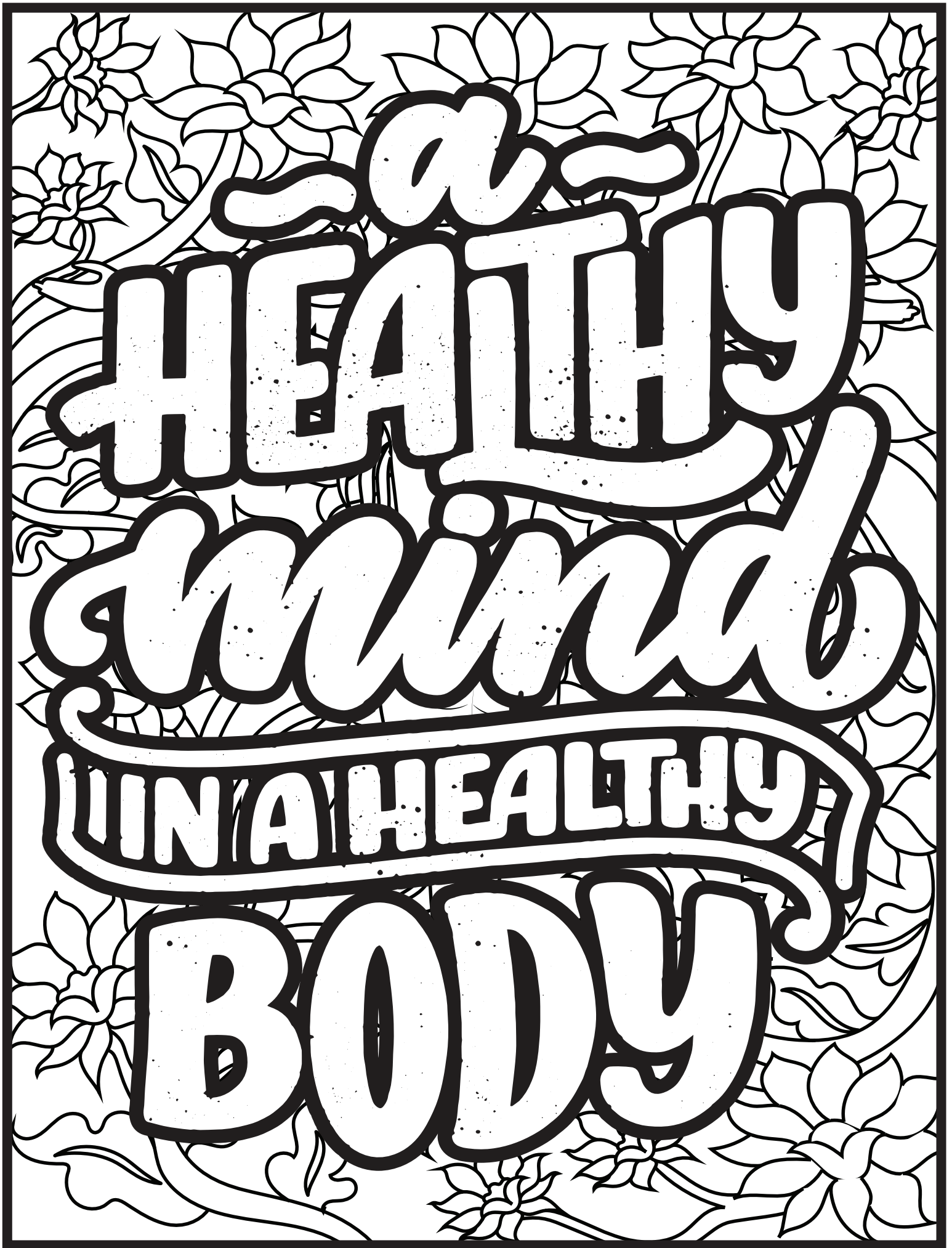
Relax. Take a "time out" from the situation to focus on your well-being. Go for a walk, take a hot bath, call a supportive friend, or even just take some deep breaths or count to ten.

Evaluate. Identify the facts within the distressing situation. Notice how you feel physically and emotionally. Observe what other people are doing and how they are reacting. Identify any threats to your safety.

Set an intention. Create a goal or plan to address the situation; for example, by choosing a coping skill, asking someone for help, calling a family meeting, or negotiating with others.

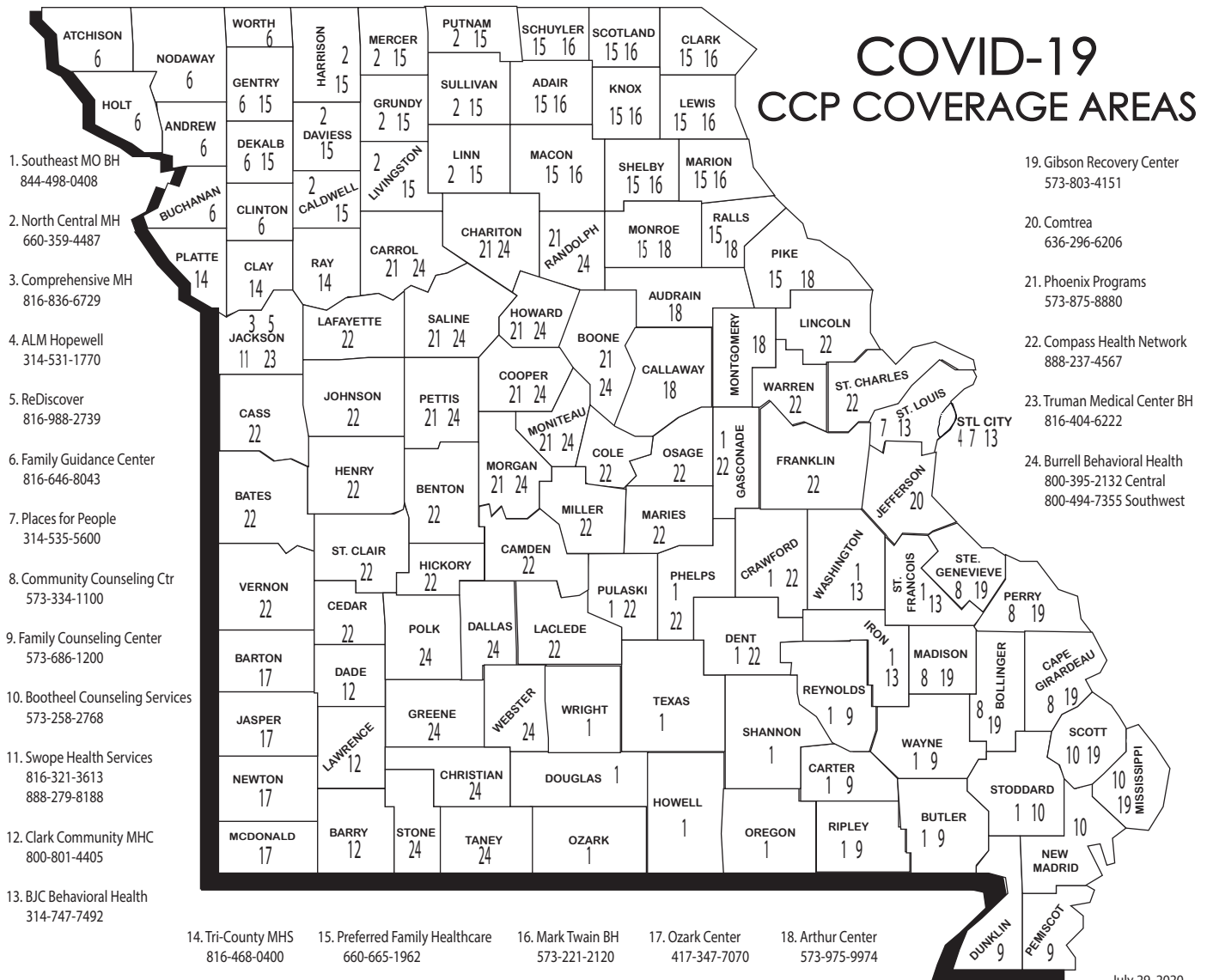
Take action. Put your plan into action with intention and awareness. While you may not necessarily resolve the situation, this action will be more effective than the impulsive behavior you would have otherwise carried out.

You might need to repeat some or all of the REST steps during a particularly overwhelming or upsetting situation. But with practice, it can become a new habit to help you manage your emotions and cope in healthier ways.



SHOW ME HOPE MISSOURI

COVID-19 CCP COVERAGE AREAS



July 29, 2020

CALL OR TEXT: 1-800-985-5990

FIND THE MASKS



There are 24 face coverings total. Can you find them all?

SHOW-ME
HOPE
MISSOURI

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FOR OUR
WEBSITE**

