

Arts Resources to Relieve Stress and Support Mindfulness & Connection

Creative movement, singing, dancing, drawing and acting encourages the use of multiple modalities for expression. In a community responding to trauma, art can be used as a nonverbal pathway to reduce stress and anxiety, acknowledge and manage emotions, and build connections when verbal means of communications are more hampered by the trauma response.

Here are a few resources to consider using in the classroom or at home:

Color in Mandalas: Research shows that coloring in mandalas is particularly therapeutic, activating the pleasure center of the brain, helping people to manage emotions and feel hope for the future. Access free coloring pages here. For more on the multi-cultural context and origins of mandalas: bit.ly/3XN5KhW

P.S. ARTS Hand & HeART Booklet: This activity booklet is packed with activities and resources for all ages that center on gratitude, breathing, and mindfulness: Check it out here.

Strike a beat! Rhythm and music-making can help release tension and increase mindfulness. These rhythm activities from Arts & Healing can be adapted easily for a number of settings, with or without instruments. Check it out here.

Do The Brain Dance! The Brain Dance has 8 patterns of movement that are shown to feed the brain – increase oxygen and blood flow, re-pattern or calm the neurological system, and develop body connectivity. Check out the Brain Dance from smART Breaks

Draw Your Breath: Relax and de-stress by taking a few minutes to slow down your breath through drawing, video included.

Who Is There For You? Ask participants to draw a picture of someone who listens to you (crayons and stick figures encouraged). Reflect as a group on the importance of communicating and being heard.

Joy Collage: Make a collage, drawing or list of all the things that make you smile, and perhaps of smiles themselves. This activity can help spark joy when we need it the most. Reflect on how you feel looking at your creation. The goal is to reconnect with what makes you, you.

Thank Community Helpers: Creating thank you cards for firefighters and other first responders can give students a sense of agency from contributing to the community. This resource outlines the card-making activity.